

Collaborative Consumption as a Manifestation of Sustainable Consumption

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Sustainable consumption refers to the concept of sustainable development, and collaborative consumption is one of its manifestations. The aim of the article is to identify attitudes and behaviours of Polish consumers related to the idea of sustainable consumption. The implementation of the objective required the use of relevant Polish and foreign literature sources as well as the results of empirical research carried out as part of the research projects financed with the resources of the National Science Centre (2011/03/B/HS4/04417 and 2013/09/B/HS4/01965). The research findings point to the fact that the respondents' knowledge on collaborative consumption is limited in Poland, and not everyone is interested in using this form of consumption.

Keywords: sustainable development, sustainable consumption, cooperative consumption.

Konsumpcja kolaboratywna jako przejaw zrównoważonej konsumpcji

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Zrównoważona konsumpcja odwołuje się do koncepcji zrównoważonego rozwoju, a jednym z jej przejawów jest konsumpcja kolaboratywna. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja postaw i zachowań polskich konsumentów wobec idei zrównoważonej konsumpcji. Realizacja założonego celu wymagała wykorzystania polskiej i zagranicznej literatury przedmiotu, jak również wyników badań empirycznych przeprowadzonych w ramach realizacji projektów badawczych finansowanych ze środków Narodowego Centrum Nauki (2011/03/B/HS4/04417 i 2013/09/B/HS4/01965). Wyniki badań wskazują, że w Polsce wiedza respondentów na temat konsumpcji kolaboratywnej jest ograniczona i nie wszyscy są zainteresowani wykorzystaniem tej formy konsumpcji.

Słowa kluczowe: zrównoważony rozwój, zrównoważona konsumpcja, konsumpcja kolaboratywna.

JEL: D12, C46, E21

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1. Introduction

“The achievement of sustained and equitable development remains the greatest challenge facing the human race”, the opening sentence of the 1992 World Bank report entitled *Development and the Environment*, is still valid (World Bank ..., 1992; Hess, 2016).

Sustainable development is the prevailing concept of socio-economic development in the 21st century. The turning point towards the path of sustainable development was the report entitled *Our Common Future* published in 1987 by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (the so-called Brundtland Commission). In that document, sustainable development was defined as development that satisfies current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The essence of sustainable development is to ensure a lasting improvement in the quality of life of the present and future generations. To this end, it is necessary to change the current way of thinking, recognise new values and needs in the life of societies and new lifestyles. The idea of sustainable development has emerged as a result of and response to the problems that the modern world has been facing since the second half of the 20th century, in particular degradation of the natural environment.

The leitmotiv of this idea is the preservation of the environment and natural resources for future generations, associated not only with traditionally understood environmental protection but, above all, with a change in the model of civilisation development. Such a change should involve a more environmentally friendly consumption model, an altered system of values and a method of management whereby the pressure on the environment does not exceed its capacity. This development is based on such consumption and production patterns that do not lead to the degradation of natural resources but protect the natural environment, promote a fair distribution of prosperity and reduce poverty.

In the context of sustainable development, the issue of consumption, which is now the main regulator of social life, deserves particular attention.

The aim of the article is to identify attitudes and behaviours of Polish consumers related to the idea of sustainable consumption. The implementation of the objective required the use of relevant Polish and foreign literature sources as well as the results of empirical research carried out as part of the research projects financed with the resources of the National Science Centre (2011/03/B/HS4/04417 and 2013/09/B/HS4/01965). An omnibus survey for the project *Kompetencje konsumentów jako stymulanta innowacyjnych zachowań i zrównoważonej konsumpcji* (Consumers' Competencies as a Stimulator of Innovative Behaviours and Sustainable Consumption) was carried out in a representative, nationwide sample of 1000 people aged 15–74 between June and July 2013. The CAPI technique was applied, with random-quota sampling. Respondents were selected according to the quota,

based on sex and age. The representative sample allowed for extrapolating the results to the adult population of Poles, with a $\pm 3.2\%$ error. Poles were presented with 20 statements that could differentiate their attitudes towards sustainable consumption. Moreover, 10 individual in-depth interviews with experts were held from May to June 2013. The third, main survey under the project was carried out among 1000 respondents in August 2013. The respondents were adult Poles aged 18–74 who were considered to be minimally competent¹. That survey employed the CATI method with two modules as the research technique. The first module included questions about actual consumer behaviour of respondents. The second one contained a statement test examining the attitudes of consumers, which was necessary for segmentation. The two modules allowed for confronting two levels at which consumers function in the market: behavioural and motivational.

A quantitative survey for the project *Zachowania przedsiębiorcze i konsumpcyjne w rodzinach opiekujących się dziećmi i młodzieżą z niepełnosprawnościami* (Entrepreneurial and Consumer Behaviours in Families Caring for Children and the Youth with Disabilities) was conducted in the first quarter of 2015. In that survey, information was from 686 adults from all over Poland by means of a questionnaire. Respondents declared that they were parents or legal guardians of children with disabilities. The tool used to collect data was a telephone interview (CATI) or an Internet interview (CAWI) held at the express request of the respondent.

2. Sustainable Consumption as a Challenge for Sustainable Development

Sustainable consumption should be regarded as an interpretation of the idea of sustainable development referred to the sphere of consumption (Janoś-Kresło, 2009).

One of the earliest definitions of sustainable consumption was formulated in 1994 at the Oslo International Symposium on this issue, where it was specified as: “the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimising the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardise the needs of future generations” (Lorek & Fuchs, 2011, citing: Ministry of the Environment of Norway, 1994).

Many authors invoke or refer to this definition, emphasising its environmental aspects or identifying it with green consumption². In turn, D. Kielczewski (2008), who represents a broader approach, claims that sustainable consumption “involves processes that enable the achievement of sustainable development goals” and consumption needs to be sustainable in the following aspects:

- economic – an efficient proportion is established between current and future consumption,

- environmental – the utility of consumption is maximised, while maintaining the utility and quality of natural resources and the natural environment,
- social – consumption is relatively evenly distributed, meaning that it is available to all people regardless of time and space, which concerns at least socially desirable goods,
- psychological – consumption processes contribute to improved quality of life,
- demographic – demographic conditions do not constitute a permanent barrier to consumption growth,
- spatial – ways of satisfying needs do not compromise the spatial order,
- temporal – the above dimensions of consumption sustainability can operate in an unlimited time perspective.

A wide range of aspects related to sustainable consumption is the reason why it is difficult to provide an unambiguous definition. This is reflected in the terminology used to refer to such consumption: conscious, ethical or green, although each of these terms carries a slightly different system of meanings, as noted by experts in sustainable consumption during interviews carried out for the research project entitled *Kompetencje konsumentów jako stymulanta innowacyjnych zachowań i zrównoważonej konsumpcji* (Consumers' Competencies as a Stimulator of Innovative Behaviours and Sustainable Consumption)³. "Sustainable consumption is an environmental discourse, whereas conscious consumption is an individualistic discourse. And ethical consumption is a moral discourse. In the meaning that something is either good or bad."

Sustainable consumption, as pointed out by experts, is balanced consumption that encourages an equilibrium in choices, avoidance of excess, collaboration, responsibility for the choices made, awareness of all production costs of a good or service: "People should try to understand that their choices affect something more and in various ways. They affect other people, animals, nature, even themselves, yet to the extent that they do not understand, for example, their health in a longer period. Sustainable consumption should take into account other aspects of our consumer choices than just the wish to own." As one of the experts aptly defined, "The idea of sustainable development is an idea about the world where everything fits together like jigsaw puzzle and everything goes hand in hand".

S. Lorek points to two perspectives of achieving sustainable consumption based on different assumptions: "weak" sustainable consumption anchored in technological solutions and "strong" sustainable consumption that relies on the premise that changes are needed in consumption patterns to achieve sustainable consumption and emphasises social innovation. Under this approach, the concept of the quality of life plays a meaningful role, going beyond consumption and perceiving people not only as consumers but also as citizens (Lorek & Fuchs, 2011).

As stipulated in *Principle 8* of the Rio Declaration (1992): *To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.*

The issue of sustainable consumption and production first appeared in the international arena during the UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the so-called Earth Summit, held under the heading “Environment and Development”, whose prime topic was the adoption of a global strategy for sustainable development. The EU Sustainable Development Strategy, updated in 2016, recognised sustainable consumption and production as one of seven key challenges to be tackled. Ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns was also included as one of the goals (Goal 12) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development announced at the Session of the UN National Assembly in September 2015. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary, among others, to implement ten-year framework programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns for all countries. Furthermore, what should be achieved by 2030 is sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels⁴; reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses; ensuring that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature. The underlying reason is that sustainable consumption concerns lifestyles, consumer purchase behaviour and the use and disposal of goods and services (European Union ..., 2010).

The idea of *homo economicus* is more and more frequently contrasted with the idea of *homo sustinens*. D. Kiełczewski (2011) notes that the concept of *homo economicus* is being increasingly criticised. That author (citing G. Kirchgassner) refers to the basic premises of *homo economicus* behaviours, namely:

- people make their decisions independently of themselves, hence it is the individual that is the basic unit of economic analysis;
- individuals behave rationally in an economic sense;
- the whole behaviour of individuals is oriented towards multiplying their own gains.

A legitimate question is asked why contemporary economically rational behaviour of individuals leads to irrational social and environmental consequences, and thus an increase in the prosperity of selected individuals does not contribute to the overall growth in prosperity but quite the contrary. On the other hand, in view of the development of behavioural economics and theories arguing that emotions are the foundation of consumer behaviour (Stasiuk & Maison, 2014), references to rationality may raise objections.

Fiedor and Graczyk (2011) emphasise that the concept of *homo sustinens* means a transformation from a society excessively exploiting environmental resources to a society that preserves these resources. B. Fiedor (2008)

adds that “even the best conceived and most coherent actions of the state and international activity in the field of legal, administrative, economic and market regulation on environmental protection and management of environmental resources will be of no avail unless there are major changes in awareness and *homo economicus* becomes, at least partially, *homo sustinens...*”.

3. Collaborative Consumption as a Form of Sustainable Consumption

Collaborative consumption, often termed shared or participatory consumption, is currently experiencing its renaissance⁵. It refers to the traditional sharing, bartering, lending, renting and gifting redefined through modern technology and online communities.

The term “collaborative consumption” was first used in 1978 by M. Felson and J. Spaeth⁶, but only when this idea was described in the book “What’s Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption” by Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers, who are among the most renowned authors of books on collaborative consumption, did it become widespread and prominent.

R. Botsman and R. Rogers (2010) define this concept as “an economic model based on sharing, swapping, trading, or renting products and services, enabling access over ownership”, as a socio-economic idea with the potential to revolutionise the way in which we consume. R. Belk (2014) proposed a more conceptual definition stating that collaborative consumption is people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation. By including other compensation, the definition also encompasses bartering, trading, and swapping, which involve giving and receiving non-monetary compensation. This definition excludes non-compensated activities like those of CouchSurfing or gift giving where the object changes its owner. According to A. Małecka and M. Mitreġa (2015), on the other hand, collaborative consumption is a form of consumption whereby at least two participants jointly use goods and services owned by some of them, motivated by a complex set of consumer beliefs and inclinations, which stresses that it involves sharing goods that are private property of consumers rather than of rental companies which are not a new form of consumption.

The interest in collaborative consumption was undoubtedly stimulated by the global economic crisis, which worsened household living conditions. However, what is also indicated is unresolved environmental problems, renewed faith in the importance of the community, growing criticism of consumerism, and the search for a different way of life (Burgieł, 2015). The intensification of collaborative consumption proves that sharing is perceived as a desirable behaviour. Consumers swap goods, provide accommodation, share skills and sometimes real property, exchange clothes, jointly lease

recreational plots, spend time and organise barbecues there together, etc. Thus, people have more access to goods and services without the need to own them. On the other hand, they can use assets that they already have but not always use. The Internet and social media that make it possible to engage in cooperative activities also play a role. “Collaborative or participatory consumption represents a third wave of the Internet, where people meet online to share offline. It is also aptly described as putting into circulation everything that exists” (European Economic and Social Committee, 2014b).

According to R. Botsman and R. Rogers (2011), collaborative consumption is a new socio-economic factor that transforms not only business and consumption but also the way we live. It is the discovery of not only what we consume but also how we consume, and the way we do it now is unlike anything we have done in the past (Belk, 2014; Buczynski, 2013).

Collaborative consumption can be organised under three systems (Botsman & Rogers, 2011): product service system, redistribution market, and collaborative lifestyles.

The product service system relies on the shift from ownership-based thinking to the use of goods without having to own them. Within this system, products are offered by companies (such as car rental companies) or private individuals and shared or rented; the product life may also be extended (repair services). Known examples in this category include blablacar or zipcar. Consumers need the utility of a good, its capability to meet their needs, and they gain access to goods in this way. This is particularly true of the young generation, which grasps the opportunities offered by new technologies, where it is not necessary to be the owner of anything else than devices with access to the Internet. Those who engage in such consumption save the costs of purchase and maintenance of a good. Moreover, this system has a positive effect on the environment.

Redistribution markets allow redistribution (free, for points, for money or in mixed systems) of goods that are no longer needed, with the transfer of ownership. Examples of frequently swapped goods include clothes, also children’s clothes, books, toys that are exchanged for similar goods or goods of similar value. Swaps often take place between strangers, a situation that raises security issues on the one hand but often connects people at the local level on the other. According to R. Botsman and R. Rogers (2011), redistribution is an addition to the four “Rs” – reduce, recycle, reuse, repair and redistribute, the latter being more and more frequently considered a sustainable form of trade. These markets challenge traditional relationships between producers, traders and consumers and distort the existing doctrine of “buying more” and “buying new things”. Examples include the relatively early emergence of eBay⁷ and Craglist⁸ in 1995, but also free platforms for the exchange of goods, for example freecycle (Schor, 2014; Frenken & Schor, 2017).

A collaborative lifestyle is based on the cooperation of people who are willing to share and swap intangible goods locally. For instance, one can share working space, home, goods, tasks, time and shopping but also gardens, food or parking space. The development of this form is fostered by the Internet, which enables the coordination of activities and crosses borders, thus allowing for travel coordination or peer-to-peer lending, for example, to be present all over the world. A collaborative lifestyle is conditioned by a high level of trust because it concerns interpersonal relationships resulting in numerous contacts.

Collaborative consumption lies in the interest of consumers but its benefits should be viewed from a broader perspective. The following benefits are indicated: social, also called “resurgence of community” – they stimulate contacts among people, including neighbours; economic, called “cost consciousness” – they allow for saving money through access to rather than purchase of goods and services; “environmental concerns” – they allow a more efficient use of existing products and resources. In this context, peer-to-peer (P2P) technologies are also mentioned – traditional forms of exchange are reappearing, yet on a scale and in the fashion that have never been possible before.

The report *The New Consumer and the Sharing Economy* reveals a new economic model – focused less on ownership and accumulation and more on community and cooperation (Havas Worldwide, 2014). In Poland, the question: “I prefer to share things rather than own them” was answered in the affirmative by over 60% of respondents, with 14% of people being of a different opinion. The percentages for the whole sample were: 46% and 22% respectively. In the light of further statements, the willingness to share can be said to still be a theory rather than reality since 37% of prosumers and 38% of typical consumers would prefer to borrow/rent things rather than own them, with 63% of prosumers and 62% of consumers preferring to own them. The Internet plays a special role. As regards the statement “I think I could go online and find someone willing to lend/rent me just about anything”, 66% of prosumers and 56% of typical consumers and 69% of Polish respondents aged 16–34, 60% aged 35–54 and 49% aged 55+ agreed.

In turn, the survey carried out by PwC for the purposes of the report (*Współ)dziel i rządz! Twój nowy model biznesowy jeszcze nie istnieje* (Share and Rule. Your New Business Model Does Not Exist Yet) reveals that about 40% of adult Poles have heard about services that enable private individuals to provide services for a fee, such as BlaBlaCar, Airbnb, Uber, JadeZabiore, Polak Potrafi, etc., of which 26% already actively use such services (PwC, 2016).

What motivates or may motivate people to engage in collaborative consumption is primarily saving money (72%) and feeling active and useful (54%) – such were the replies given by respondents to the question about the

most attractive aspects of collaborative consumption. These were followed by: supporting individuals and/or small/independent companies (43%), meeting new people (42%), reducing my consumption/carbon footprint (38%), having an interesting experience/doing something most people haven't yet tried and contributing to the broader movement away from hyperconsumption (35% each). Every fourteenth person said that they had no interest in collaborative consumption (7%) (Havas Worldwide, 2014).

Collaborative consumption is not the area of interest for all consumers. One of more common reasons is the lack of time since participation in collaborative consumption requires a little effort, involvement, and these take time. Sharing with others also implies trusting other people. Consumers may feel at risk especially when unknown people are involved and when they cannot control all variables. Indeed, not everyone will decide to experiment as an alternative to traditional solutions (e.g. temporary sharing of a flat instead of staying at a hotel, where consumers know what to expect).

4. Attitudes Towards Sustainable and Collaborative Consumption

Increasing attention is being paid to the fact that consumers, while purchasing goods and services to meet artificial needs, that is such that feed into the very form of their satisfaction, should be responsible and more reflective not only due to a constrained budget but also, for example, so that they do not waste food or pollute the environment with electronic waste⁹.

In a consumer survey on consumer competences, respondents were asked how they understood the notion of "sustainable consumption". Such consumption was associated primarily with carefully considered purchases (25%), buying products that are needed (24%) and consuming moderately according to financial capabilities (21%). It should be emphasised that about 1/3 of Poles could not define the behaviours ensuing from sustainable consumption (ignorance as regards these matters is significantly more often declared by people with basic/vocational education – 49%, assessing their knowledge about sustainable consumption negatively – 40%).

Although many respondents asked about the readiness to change their shopping habits along the lines of this idea (with an example description of what it is) cannot define sustainable consumption, most of them say that they are willing to make such a change (83%, including 46% saying "definitely yes"). People who claim that they are ready to change their shopping habits more frequently return products that they do not like or that are defective. Besides that, they do not differ significantly from others (less willing or opposed to changes in their current lifestyle) in terms of shopping. Those who statistically more often declared their readiness to change shopping habits along the lines of the idea of sustainable consumption ("definitely yes" and "rather yes") were people aged 50–59 (91%).

Those who statistically more frequently claimed that they were ready to change their shopping habits taking into account the idea of sustainable consumption (“definitely yes”) were men (51%) and university graduates (52%). In addition, this relatively more often concerned people aged 18–29 (50%) and 40–49 (51%) who negatively assessed their financial situation (54%) and had no children (47%) (Dąbrowska et al., 2015).

In a strive to find out about Poles’ attitudes and behaviours as regards sustainable consumption, Poles were asked in the omnibus survey to respond to 20 statements that included answers from “definitely not” to “definitely yes”. Respondents more commonly agreed than disagreed with the statements, with the most frequently chosen answer being “rather yes” (Table 1).

The answers “definitely yes” indicate that respondents consider regional and local products to be healthier than mass-produced ones manufactured by global corporations and buy them carefully – only in such amounts as needed at the moment. They are followed by: I always check the expiry date of a product (which allows consumers to avoid buying products with a short lifespan and throwing away food) and I regularly sort waste. Nevertheless, every fifth respondent admits that Polish consumers are more focused on consumption than on living in an environmentally friendly way. On the other hand, also every fifth respondent gives away unnecessary things to others. Among the “definitely no” responses, the highest percentages were recorded for: I am borrowing more than saving now and I check if a product is biodegradable, which can be considered a consumerist lifestyle, with the care for the environment being disregarded in purchase decisions.

Respondents in the main survey were asked whether they would be interested in collaborative consumption (i.e. exchanging goods, sharing accommodation, skills, etc.). The obtained results indicate that collaborative consumption is not yet a leading paradigm of the use of goods in Poland. Most consumers would not like to participate in it (63%). However, there is a large proportion of respondents (37%) who find such an idea of access to goods or services interesting (including “definitely yes” for every 10th respondent, with a significantly greater percentage of men – 12%). People who statistically more often declare the interest in collaborative consumption are those with secondary education (41%), unmarried (47%), and younger than 49: aged 18–29 (42%), 30–39 (44%), 40–49 (41%).

One of the forms of collaborative consumption are time banks. Most commonly, these are informal groups operating on the basis of free-of-charge exchange of services between their members (self-help in the field of services) in line with the principle “Help me and I will help you”. Depending on skills, talents, knowledge and time, bank members declare what types of services they can provide to other participants. Time bank coordinators keep a register of persons and direct assistance to those who need it, according to the demand. Services listed in time banks are as varied as their members’ skills: from baking cakes, teaching foreign languages, including the

sign language, playing instruments (e.g. guitar, piano, keyboard), through credit advice and online payments, helping to write official letters, repairing cars and other vehicles, to facial massage, teaching salsa. The services are not paid for with money but with the provision of a service to another member of the bank. The unit of account is usually the clock hour rather than the market value of the service. “Earned” hours can be “spent” on other needed services (Dąbrowska, 2013).

	Statements	Definitely not	Rather not	Rather yes	Definitely yes
1	I more often buy cheaper and less durable products instead of one more expensive good that can be used longer	8	36	48	9
2	I am borrowing more than saving now	20	43	31	5
3	If the product is eco-friendly and bears a label to this effect, I will gladly buy it even if it costs 10% more than that without such a label	11	40	36	3
4	In Poland, parents give the youth a good example of how to live in harmony with the natural environment	8	39	45	9
5	Poles are now more focused on consumption than on life in an environmentally friendly way	3	21	55	21
6	I would like the first producer to receive a fair payment for the product even if I have to pay 10% more for it	11	38	42	9
7	Regional, local products are healthier than mass-produced ones manufactured by global corporations	2	14	51	33
8	Before I buy a product, I almost always check its expiry date	3	21	49	27
9	I regularly sort waste	9	28	42	21
10	When I want to buy a durable good (household appliances, electronics, computer, touch-screen phone, etc.), I wait for seasonal price reductions/promotions/sales	9	35	43	14

	Statements	Definitely not	Rather not	Rather yes	Definitely yes
11	I throw away used batteries into special containers	11	32	40	17
12	When I buy something new, I first hear the opinions of my friends about it	7	35	49	9
13	I almost always read the ingredients of food products being purchased	10	38	40	12
14	I buy carefully – only as much as needed at the moment	2	14	52	31
15	When I buy a product, I check if it has quality certificates and/or environmental (and/or other) labelling indicating that it is “environmentally friendly”	16	45	32	7
16	Before I buy a product, I check if it is biodegradable (recyclable)	20	49	26	5
17	I give away unnecessary or used things to other people	5	25	50	20
18	I try to read all contracts, instructions and regulations when I buy a product or service	6	24	51	19
19	Friends ask me for advice on products and services before they buy anything	12	43	38	8
20	I know where it is best to buy products and services that I need at the moment	2	18	59	21

Tab. 1. Attitudes and behaviours of respondents as regards sustainable consumption (%). Source: The tabular report from the (omnibus) survey carried out for the purposes of the project *Kompetencje konsumentów jako stymulanta innowacyjnych zachowań i zrównoważonej konsumpcji (Consumers' Competencies as a Stimulator of Innovative Behaviours and Sustainable Consumption)*.

In Poland, this idea has found adherents and the range of services depends on the people forming a specific time bank. The more diverse the user group, the more attractive the offer. An online time bank most frequently offers: foreign language teaching, private lessons, walking, baby sitting, sewing. Poznań time bank is noteworthy. It is the largest time bank in Poland, offering unique services: tarot, Arabic language teaching and interpretation of dreams. In turn, Silesian banks offer grand piano tuning and icon painting.

In the main survey on consumer competences, respondents were also asked whether they knew the idea of time banks. Unfortunately, only 2% of them said that they had heard about time banks and knew what they were about, while 9% claimed that they had heard about the idea but did not remember the details. The others had not come across the notion of time bank.

The vast majority of respondents (79%) – parents/guardians of children with disabilities – had not heard about collaborative consumption either. The survey was carried out for the purposes of the project: *Zachowania przedsiębiorcze i konsumpcyjne rodzin opiekujących się dziećmi i młodzieżą z niepełnosprawnością* (Entrepreneurial and Consumer Behaviours in Families Caring for Children and the Youth with Disabilities)¹⁰. 18% of them had heard something about such consumption but did not know any details and 4% not only had heard about it but also knew the details. Collaborative consumption was known (“I heard something but I do not know any details” and “I know the details of this idea”) to more: men than women, oldest respondents (aged 50 and over) than younger ones, university graduates than those with secondary, in particular basic, education, residents of big cities, those positively assessing the financial situation of their households. People who worked were aware of collaborative consumption significantly more often than those who did not work. Considering the age of the disabled child, families with children aged 13–15 represented the biggest proportion of respondents who had heard about collaborative consumption.

Parents/guardians of children with disabilities were also asked whether they used the opportunity for mutual provision of services. 39% of respondents answered in the affirmative, including 18% of those who answered yes and 21% of those who answered that they sometimes did it. As regards the forms of the services provided, those most often mentioned were child care (42%), transport to joint activities (33%), shopping (32%), and transport to school/home (29%). Other forms are: care during leisure activities in the place of permanent residence (12%), care during tourist trips away from permanent residence (11%) and education/private lessons (10%). The specific situation of families with disabled children showed that the mutual provision of services was mainly aimed at achieving benefits for children with disabilities. It is also difficult to identify areas with a high potential for development of such consumption in this group. Due to the hermetic nature of these families, it would probably be problematic to initiate and develop community activities.

Collaborative consumption, therefore, was not highly appreciated by families raising children with disabilities. Major reasons, as in the aforementioned survey, included a lack of time (38%) and the inability to talk about it with other people (30%). These were followed by: we manage ourselves (14%), I do not know what it involves (13%), help from my family is enough (12%). The other reasons are: an unsuccessful attempt

to undertake such activity (8%), reluctance to accept help from others and the difficulty in other people caring for a disabled child (4% each) (Janoś-Kresło et al., 2016).

5. Conclusion

Sustainable consumption is a humanistic concept consistent with the actions for sustainable development aimed at improving the quality of life of societies. Its contents regard various aspects of life. Since 1999, the United Nations has recognised sustainable consumption as a basic consumer right.

New phenomena affecting consumer behaviour may be said to comprise collaborative consumption – the movement for conscious and sustainable consumption that remains in opposition to consumerism, the cult of possession. Given the pressure to buy but also to throw away, as confirmed by statistical data, it is difficult to arbitrarily conclude that the nearest future will see collaborative consumption rise as a new economic model where how people consume matters more than what they consume.

The presented research results show that the attachment to ownership prevails, yet the declarations of interest in this relatively new form of consumption in Poland demonstrate that the situation may change. Undoubtedly, fatigue with consumerism and more attention paid to the environment encourage the search for new, opposite phenomena, and collaborative consumption fits in with this trend. It is driven by young generations, in particular individuals free of stereotypes and sensitive to innovations, using the Internet and mobile applications. Media can play a meaningful role in developing collaborative consumption. No wonder that a typical client of sharing economy platforms is a young person intensively using a smartphone, mobile and open to people, who however looks for more affordable solutions due to limited financial capacities (Kryśkiewicz, 2017). It is new technologies that enable contacts and cooperation to be established. It is thanks to them that bartering, borrowing or renting can develop fast on a hitherto impossible scale. In 2010, collaborative consumption was mentioned by the “Time” magazine among 10 ideas that would change the world (10 ideas..., 2010).

It is worth referring in this context to the contrasting trends presented in the report “13 for 2013”. The development of the latest technologies that undoubtedly facilitate life (time and money savings, overcoming the barrier of space) contrasts with the drive to slow down also in the area of consumption, to return to a simpler life. All trends include a distinguishing element also present in collaborative consumption, “time banks” or digitisation, namely a constant need to connect and establish interpersonal contacts.

The trends encompass (Havas Worldwide, 2013):

1. The meaning of “co” – cooperation, which is currently the hottest trend in both professional and private life. All the “co-” words (co-creation,

coincide, collaboration, even co-existence) will become more and more important. “Co-” is already noticed by the followers of collaborative consumption and time bank members. Yet prosumers can also be perceived in these terms.

2. Make solutions, not problems. This seems to be taking on a special meaning in services due to their intangibility. Innovation in services is likely to occur as the creation of solutions, not problems.
3. 2013 living: Austerity with double-dip frugality. Individual consumerism will be replaced by collaborative consumption and the “less being more” approach implemented through micro-ownership. It is anticipated that consumers will strive to reduce consumption and reuse products in order to minimise the need to do shopping and resort to services. The idea of sustainable consumption, including consumption of services, is visible in this trend.
4. Economies go alternative. New is now old, and old is next. The exchange of services and goods in specific situations may even become an alternative to cash transactions, for example time banks. This is supported by the Internet, which makes it easier for sellers and buyers of specific services to find their feet. The Internet may be said to have become a virtual map of companies.

From the perspective of service companies, this can be regarded as the “seed” of competition, the search for other methods of satisfying needs for services. The development of collaborative consumption will depend on the very consumers, their lifestyles, values, economic situation but also on the ability to act jointly. It is worth mentioning that according to data on projected revenue from sharing economy projects, this revenue is expected to reach 335 billion dollars by 2025 globally (Olaya, 2016). The future of collaborative consumption will be, however, conditional upon the attitudes and behaviours of consumers, their awareness and often openness to changes in their current lifestyles, openness to future generations.

Endnotes

- ¹ On the basis of the responses in the omnibus survey, five statements were selected to develop a qualifying filter: 1) If the product is eco-friendly and bears a label to this effect, I will gladly buy it even if it costs 10% more than that without such a label; 2) I would like the first producer to receive a fair payment for the product even if I have to pay 10% more for it; 3) I regularly sort waste; 4) When I buy something new, I first hear the opinions of my friends about it; 5) I almost always read the ingredients of purchased food products. The respondents who indicated three of these statements qualified for the next quantitative study, which was a consumer survey. The research sample characteristics: sex: women – 51%, men – 49%; age: 18–29 (26%); 30–39 (16%); 40–49 (19%); 50–59 (15%); education: basic (6%), vocational (14%), secondary (46%), higher (34%); net household income: up to PLN 2000 (29%); PLN 2001–4000 (34%), PLN 4001 and more (16%), refused to answer (21%); place of residence: rural area (39%), city of below 25 thousand inhabitants (13%), city of 25–49 thousand inhabitants (11%), city of 50–99 thousand inhabitants

- (8%), city of 100 thousand and more inhabitants (30%), voivodeships: Dolnośląskie – 7%; Kujawsko-pomorskie – 5%; Lubelskie – 5%; Lubuskie – 3%; Łódzkie – 7%; Małopolskie – 9%; Mazowieckie – 14%; Opolskie – 3%; Podkarpackie – 5%; Podlaskie – 3%; Pomorskie – 6%; Śląskie – 12%; Świętokrzyskie – 4%; Warmińsko-mazurskie – 4%; Wielkopolskie – 9%; Zachodniopomorskie – 4%.
- ² Reviews of sustainable consumption definitions are contained, among others, in: Łuczka, W. (2016). Zrównoważona konsumpcja i uwarunkowania jej rozwoju. *Handel Wewnętrzny*, 6(365), pp. 136–145. yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/.../c/IBRKK-handel_wew_6-2016.136-145.pdf; Jaros, B. (2015). *Koncepcja zrównoważonej konsumpcji – problemy implementacji w Polsce*. A PhD thesis under supervision of Prof. T. Borys, PhD (habilitated), Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny we Wrocławiu, Wydział Ekonomii, Zarządzania i Turystyki w Jeleniej Górze, Jelenia Góra.
 - ³ Research project no. 2011/03B/HS4/04417 financed by the National Science Centre. Project manager: Prof. Anna Dąbrowska, PhD (habilitated).
 - ⁴ It is estimated that 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted in the world, this figure stands at about 173 kg per person for the EU, Poland ranks 5th in the EU – 247 kg per person (data from 2012). In the European Union, 55 million citizens (almost 10%) could afford only one high-quality meal every two days in 2014, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/headlines/society/20170505STO73528/marnowanie-zywnosci-w-ue-miliony-ton-jedzenia-do-kosza-infografika> (access date: 31.01.2018)
 - ⁵ Throughout this text, these terms will be used interchangeably. For more on the notions used, see: Sobiecki, G. (2016). Chapter 2. Sharing economy – dylematy pojęciowe. In M. Poniatowska-Jaksch & R. Sobiecki (Eds.), *Sharing economy (gospodarka współdzielenia)*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza SGH; Kryśkiewicz, Ł. (2017). *Sharing economy – ekonomia dzielenia się*. di.com.pl/sharing-economy-ekonomia-dzielenia-sie-56911 (access date: 18.11.2017).
 - ⁶ This notion was applied by Felson and Spaeth defining it as: “those events in which one or more persons consume economic goods and services in the process of engaging in joint activities with one or more others”, Felson, M. & Spaeth, J. (1978). Community structure and collaborative consumption: A routine activity approach. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 21(4).
 - ⁷ The largest online auction site, currently operating in 37 countries.
 - ⁸ An American classifieds service, the company operates in 70 countries.
 - ⁹ According to the data of the United Nations University, 45.7 million tons of electronic waste was generated in 2016 and it is predicted to be 49.8 million tons in 2018, <http://tvn24bis.pl/z-swiate,75/bogaty-swiate-zatruwa-biedny-rosna-gory-elektrosmieci,535890.html>
 - ¹⁰ Research project no. 2013/09/B/HS4/01965 financed by the National Science Centre. Project manager: Prof. Mirosława Janoś-Kresło, PhD (habilitated).

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