

Tomasz Zalega

University of Warsaw

NEW CONSUMER TRENDS

1. Introduction

The changes taking place in today's world, under the influence of globalisation and the internationalisation of the world economy, have a significant impact on the consumption attitudes of households. Consumer behaviour on the market is affected by many, not just purely economic, but also social and cultural determinants. From an economic point of view, according to mainstream economics, every household seeks to fulfil its consumption aspirations by maximising the expected utility of consumption, assuming that there is a set of axioms sufficient for the existence of such a function. On the other hand, from the point of view of non-economic factors (such as household size, family life cycle, personality, lifestyle, habits, customs, traditions, imitation, system of values) consumers may strive to achieve a level of consumption that is characteristic for the social groups to which they aspire.

The aim of this discussion is to examine the new trends observed in consumer behaviour of today's households around the world. This chapter contains a purely theoretical analysis of the new trends. Its structure is as follows: after explaining the concept of a consumption trend and its main characteristics, the further part of the text analyses the key "new" or "alternative" consumer trends, such as: deconsumption, eco-consumption, conscious consumption, collaborative consumption, freeganism, prosumption, smart shopping and cocooning, followed by a conclusion.

2. The concept and characteristics of consumer trends

The term “trend” is understood as a direction of development in a particular area, or more generally as a monotonic component of the dependence of the characteristic examined on time. H. Vejlggaard, an expert in this field, defines a trend as a long or short-term, regional or global process of change considered from a psychological, economic or sociological perspective.¹ From this point of view, a trend in consumer behaviour is understood as a specific direction of change in a model consumer’s lifestyle, which is objective, i.e. independent of the consumer’s will or consciousness. More generally, trends in consumption may be said to arise as a result of the social, economic, legal, political, demographic and technological impact of the surroundings on consumers’ purchasing behaviour, ultimately leading to changes in consumption patterns. According to F. Shaw, emerging consumer trends affect the operation of enterprises, thereby creating new rules for the functioning of modern organisations.² The basic characteristics of trends include their volatility, overlap (co-existence) and the simultaneous emergence of counter-trends (divergence).

3. New trends in consumer behaviour of today’s households

Consumer trends, especially “new” consumption trends, are the basis for innovation as they form a rich source of incentives to develop new products. “New” or “alternative” consumer trends are understood as objective and long-term trends in the general choices, behaviours and preferences of consumers, being a consequence of socio-political, legal, cultural, demographic and technological changes continuously taking place in the market environment. They are thus a rich source of incentives to develop new products.³ An important role in creating new trends is played by trend creators and the so-called “trendsetters”. The former are a small and elite group of inventors, innovators, pioneers and courageous entrepreneurs willing to take the risks of launching new products and business models on the market. In turn, trendsetters, or precursors and promoters of alternative trends, form a much larger group and come from different social and professional groups.⁴ The trendsetters are the first to accept a new product or style and start to

¹ H. Vejlggaard, (2008), *Anatomy of trend*, McGraw-Hill, New York, p. 9.

² F. Shaw, (2009), *Uncertainty and the New Consumer*, Foresight, Vol. 4/2009.

³ T. Zalega, (2013), *Nowe trendy w zachowaniach konsumpcyjnych miejskich gospodarstw domowych w okresie kryzysu* [*New trends in consumer behaviour of urban households during the crisis*], „Marketing i Rynek”, nr 2/2013, p. 26.

⁴ M. J. Penn, E. Kinney Zalesne, (2009), *Mikrotrendy. Małe siły, które niosą wielkie zmiany* [*Microtrends: the small forces behind tomorrow’s big changes*], MT Biznes, Warszawa, p. 13–15.

use and promote it, thereby becoming the most important link in the formulation of new consumer trends. The baseline trends identified at the end of the first decade of the 21st century include primarily: deconsumption, conscious consumption, collaborative consumption, innovative consumption (prosumption), smart shopping and cocooning.

Deconsumption, also known as anti-consumerism or self-protection consumption, is understood as a conscious and deliberate limitation of the volume of consumed products and services to the levels that are reasonable from the point of view of an individual. This reflects that consumers are responsible for their decisions and choices. It should be borne in mind that deconsumption is a very broad term, which can include a limitation of quantities for the sake of quality; reduced tangible consumption for the sake of intangible consumption; consumption reduced to a reasonable volume because of disappointment and boredom or because of downgrading consumption in the system of values, which may encompass a desire to save the environment. Hence, self-protection consumption is determined by objective and subjective factors. The former include globalisation and the de-traditionalisation process, migration, the extension of human life and the blurring of clear divisions between its stages, civilisation progress, intensification of innovative activity, changes in commodity trading and changes in traders' operation as well as direct interference of the state in consumption. Among the subjective factors determining the deconsumption process, the following should be indicated: rising awareness of the need to reduce consumption, downgrading consumption in the system of values, boredom and disappointment with high consumption, increased interest in environmental assets (objection to the increasing amount of post-consumption waste) and a desire to change one's lifestyle.⁵ The literature on the topic generally distinguishes four key dimensions of deconsumption:

- reduced consumption due to a more uncertain situation of households,
- a shift from the quantity of consumed goods to their quality,
- reduced tangible consumption with servicisation of consumption,
- reduced consumption due to rational considerations.

These consumption processes are associated with eco-consumption, also known as eco-friendly or sustainable consumption. Eco-consumption means that individuals deliberately seek to minimise the adverse effects resulting from the consumption of consumer and investment goods and services through rationalisation and utilisation of production factors (resources) and reduction of generated post-production and post-consumption waste. Similarly to sustainable development, sustainable consumption should be both stable and sustainable.

⁵ W. C. Clark, (2000), *Environmental globalization*, [in:] J. S. Nye, J. D. Donahue (eds.), *Governance in a globalizing world*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, p. 86–108; P. Norris, *Global governance and cosmopolitan citizens*, [in:] J. S. Nye, J. D. Donahue (eds.), *Governance in a globalizing world...*, p. 155–172.

Stability means that the consumption processes ensuring maximum consumer satisfaction become well-established within an unlimited period of time. In other words, eco-consumption means optimum, conscious and responsible use of available natural resources, goods and services at the level of individuals, households, local communities, business communities, local, regional and national governments and international structures, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. It should be emphasised that sustainable consumption is based on the wish to reduce wastage as well as waste and pollution generation and to choose goods and services which comply, as far as possible, with certain ethical, social and environmental criteria. Examples of eco-friendly consumption may include healthy food, purchasing reusable bags, and transport and tourism which do not lead to the degradation of the environment. The basic assumptions of such consumption, as expressed in the slogan “to help and not harm”, are:

- defining the principles of “clean production” aimed at obtaining consumer products in a cheaper and healthier way;
- replacement of non-durable products with durable goods which may serve their purpose(s) in a longer, rather than a single, consumption cycle;
- efficient use of consumer goods;
- use of more eco-friendly goods (especially organic food) obtained by natural methods, as well as limiting the use of such goods whose production involves non-renewable natural resources and toxic waste generation.

Eco-consumption results in two consumer trends: conscious consumption and collaborative consumption. Conscious consumption, also known as “ethical consumption” or “responsible consumption”, is understood as making consumer choices based on one’s knowledge about their social, environmental and political consequences. In practice, conscious consumption means searching for information on products and services, including practices used by their providers, production processes, recycling possibilities, and making socially and environmentally responsible choices on that basis.⁶ In other words, conscious consumption involves rational consumer behaviour, focused on health, eco-friendliness, sustainable development and a knowledge-based economy. This consumption trend manifests itself not only when we purchase goods and services that are friendly to people and the environment, but also when we leave the wallet in the pocket and look for better solutions. This proves that we are undergoing a slow transformation towards becoming a consumer society where “to have” is increasingly becoming “to be”. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that conscious consumption explores such solutions as the reduction of product use, product sharing and reuse. Furthermore, in ethical (conscious) consumption, it is important to take into account the entire life cycle of a product, not only how it was made, but also what will happen to it when no longer needed. The products covered by this

⁶ www.fed.home.pl/teg/images/m1_swiodoma_konsumpcja_fin.pdf [download 10.08.2012].

trend are handicraft items and low-processed goods – the entire group of products known as slow food,⁷ i.e.: slow life, slow travel, slow parenting and slow city. In the recent period, clothswaps and up-cycling (processing waste into more valuable items) have once again become fashionable in many countries of the world due to the present economic crisis.⁸ This trend is also associated with the efficient use of water and energy, limited use of chemicals, product and energy recycling, and the development of passive construction. Conscious consumption is connected with the 3R principle, which is an acronym derived from three English verbs: reduce, reuse and recycle. The first verb means “limit” in Polish. It encourages consumers to limit consumption and refrain from buying new, often unnecessary items. The verb “reuse” means “use again” in Polish and encourages consumers to, as far as possible, use products many times or use reusable products, which in turn will help to reduce waste generation. The verb “recycle” means “reprocess” and promotes waste sorting, which allows for its reuse and thus protects the environment from over-exploitation and littering. With this in mind, conscious (ethical) consumption may be said to often denote an idea of how to repair the modern world with “your own wallet”.

A specific type of conscious consumption is the consumer trend called eco-buddhism. It involves buying organic food and fair trade products as support for respecting human rights. In other words, eco-buddhism involves the following behaviours: people reduce consumption and purchase selected product categories (e.g. energy-efficient light bulbs), shop near their place of living, save and invest their money in a responsible way, avoid buying certain product categories which they are critical of (e.g. eggs laid by caged hens, fuel-intensive cars, *etc.*) and purchase second-hand or recycled products.

Collaborative consumption, also referred to as “sharing”, “mesh”, “sharing economy” or “peer-to-peer economy”, is in turn based on the idea of sharing and the so-called product service approach – which entails a focus on the product’s function instead of the product’s ownership. In other words, we do not need a DVD, but the film recorded on this carrier that we can watch. After reading a book, we can replace it with another one. Collaborative consumption solutions range from the usual neighbourly exchange of favours, i.e. through various types of libraries, to practices increasingly prevalent in Europe, such as city bikes (a system that allows residents to use bicycles hired for a short time from special sites

⁷ Slow food is opposed to a rapid and convenient, but also unhealthy and irrational, life. In other words, slow food, promoting the slow lifestyle symbolised by a snail, furthers the right to taste that which we have lost in the civilisation of consumption and refers to rational consumer decisions.

⁸ T. Zalega, (2012), *Konsumpcja w wielkomiejskich gospodarstwach domowych w Polsce okresie kryzysu finansowo-ekonomicznego* [The consumption of large-city households in Poland during financial and economic crisis], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Zarządzania UW, Warszawa, p. 225.

in selected parts of the city) or car-sharing schemes (e.g. ZipCar).⁹ Collaborative consumption can therefore be said to form a consumption model that involves, among others, borrowing, exchange, barter agreements or payment for access to goods as opposed to ownership¹⁰ – a model which, in addition to the reduction of individual consumption and unnecessary purchases, also enhances social integration and social ties. French sociologist M. Maseffoli, commenting on the nature of collaborative consumption, draws attention to the fact that the economic sphere is being altered by changes in lifestyles and values of the post-modern world's inhabitants. Environmental awareness and the importance of fundamental feelings associated with food, clothing and living environment are continuously increasing. This, in turn, leads to the discovery of ancient forms of economic exchange that refer to the idea of barter or gift, rather than market transactions. What is observed is an explosion of economic practices which aim at satisfying needs in combination with gestures of solidarity and emotional involvement. It is enough to point out the networks for sharing cars or overnight accommodation; economic activity in the form of a widely understood exchange of goods, services, words and feelings is becoming increasingly important.¹¹ It should be mentioned that there are different forms of collaborative consumption that concern specific goods or services. The most important forms include:¹²

- clothswap, toyswap: cashless exchange of clothes or toys;
- cohousing: linking completely independent flats by means of a shared space used by all residents, e.g. kitchen, laundry room or playground;
- couchsurfing: a platform where users can offer free accommodation to people from around the world or find free accommodation for themselves while away from home;
- crowdfunding: social fund-raising for a particular purpose, e.g. setting up a business or publishing a book; people who like the idea can support the initiator with small amounts;
- coworking: hiring premises to work in; this form of collaborative consumption is very popular among freelancers and people working remotely for a company;
- carpooling: sharing a car drive for a fee to reduce the cost of travelling to a given destination;

⁹ http://www.pi.gov.pl/PARP/chapter_86196.asp?soid=B99FA4D5106242D08CE07F-C8D77DFC5E [download 08.05.2012].

¹⁰ R. Botsman, R. Rogers, (2012), *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*, Harper Collins, New York, p. 15–16; L. Gansky, (2010), *The Mesh: Why the Future of Business Is Sharing*, Penguin Books, New York, p. 56.

¹¹ „Polityka”, 10–16.04. 2013.

¹² P. Wardak, T. Zalega, (2013), *Konsumpcja kolaboratywna jako nowy trend konsumencki [Collaborative consumption as a new consumer trend]*, „Studia i Materiały”, nr 1(16), Wydawnictwo Wydziału Zarządzania UW, Warszawa, p. 10.

– roomsharing: renting a room on certain dates via web services; this is usually a short-term lease, e.g. 2–3 days long, mostly for tourists.

Another trend associated with eco-consumption is freeganism. It is based on saving, rational purchases, and the minimisation of consumption. This anti-consumerist lifestyle originated in the United States of America in the second half of the 1990s. The word “freeganism” is a portmanteau of two English words: “free” and “veganism”, i.e. a lifestyle which involves avoiding animal products. However, the term can be misleading because even an orthodox carnivore can become a freegan. Freegans are often followers of LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability), i.e. consumers who are interested in health, the environment, social justice, sustainable lifestyles and personal development.¹³ Freeganism spread very quickly in many countries in Western Europe, especially in Germany, Spain and Portugal, where it has become a mass movement. In some European cities, such as Barcelona, Berlin or Madrid, there are even special freegan guides which describe not only the places where people can receive free food or exchange things, but also the best time to go there. Mostly, these are containers located near hotels, restaurants, fast food facilities, confectionery shops and bakeries. In Poland however, information about freeganism is only available on the Internet. Nevertheless in our country many people support this social movement through their actions.

The freegan philosophy of “ethical eating” holds that capitalism and mass production are based on the exploitation of workers, animals and the environment. Therefore, freeganism is seen as an anti-consumerist lifestyle that reduces participation in the economy and encompasses both searching for food in dustbins and asking for redundant or unnecessary products before they are discarded by sellers in local markets, restaurants, or large retail chains. This is why consumers tend to use second-hand products and products withdrawn from retail chains. This primarily involves acquiring unattractive or damaged products or products whose expiration date has just passed free of charge before they are discarded by traders. Freegans not only search for food, but also look for discarded clothes and shoes, electronic equipment, and even acceptable abandoned urban spaces.¹⁴ Freeganism also involves repairs of broken items instead of discarding them, DIY (do it yourself), sharing possessions, exchanges of possessions with other people, and perhaps above all always asking the question “Do I really need this product?” before buying it.¹⁵ Freeganism followers may therefore be said to be protesting against

¹³ LOHAS is a term first used by American sociologists in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Consumers belonging to this group follow social and environmental values when choosing products. In addition to reducing their own negative impact on the environment, LOHAS followers consider as extremely important: their personal development, making full use of their potential, striving to achieve a balance between what they receive from and give back to the environment and between their body and spirit. LOHAS followers are mainly young, well-educated people with high salaries, living in big cities.

¹⁴ www.elejdys.pl/692,Freeganizm [download 12.10.2012].

¹⁵ www.m.onet.pl/biznes,cbjb [download 25.09.2012].

rampant consumerism and the pursuit of new commercial products, strongly opposing the madness of consumption while having fun at the same time. A freegan, unlike people driven to the street due to poverty, can afford a high standard of living while consciously refraining from excessive consumerism, treating his or her freeganism as a specific lifestyle. Also, the environmental dimension to their activities should be noted because, according to the 'reduce, reuse and recycle' principle, freegans contribute to the reuse of many products so that they do not end up in landfills.¹⁶

Freeganism is undoubtedly a fashion for an economical lifestyle and people who consider themselves freegans are generally well-educated, live in good districts of large cities, and many of them go to work in high quality cars. Five key principles that guide freegans can be defined. They include: recovery of waste (including food), minimising the amount of waste produced, eco-friendly transportation (starting from the use of public transport through to the use of organic fuels, to hitch-hiking), squatting, which means occupying vacant residential premises, self-sufficiency (search for food in dustbins, cultivation of fruits and vegetables for own use and production of everyday items), and reducing work time to spend more time with the family and local community.

In Poland, freeganism is in its infancy, but in light of the crisis it is gaining strength and attracting many followers. Polish freegans are referred to as "dumpster divers". Many Polish consumers have not yet satisfied their need for the multitude of products in supermarkets and shopping centres, which can be partly explained by its communist period, when a permanent goods' deficit prevailed on the market. However, the development potential for freeganism in Poland is significant, especially in large cities and among students and young people who have become bored with life in glass office buildings and eating lunches at expensive restaurants. In view of the applicable law, the managers of super- and hypermarkets in Poland are required to destroy or discard stale or damaged food in chained and padlocked dustbins (in many Western European countries some hypermarkets secure waste against bacteria for freegans, who thus receive food, while hyper- and supermarkets are treated by alter-globalists in a kinder way). Nonetheless, more and more hotels and restaurant owners, especially in large cities in Poland, are placing the dishes that have not been sold on a given day at the back of their facilities. Furthermore, many local retailers and markets are putting aside fruit and vegetables and dairy products in specially marked cartons on certain days of the week.

Prosumption, on the other hand, also known as intelligent or innovative consumption, developed against a different background. It is most commonly defined as the phenomenon of intertwining consumption and production processes,

¹⁶ www.biznesodpowiedzialnie.blog.pl/tag/kontenerowcy [download 03.08.2012].

blurring the boundaries between them,¹⁷ with consumers becoming producers at the same time. It can be argued that prosumption is also an expression of consumers' opposition to mass, unified and standardised production. Innovative consumers want to be treated individually, targeted personally and not generally, given that individual needs, tastes and preferences differ. Such consumers do wish to receive only ready-made identities previously prepared by producers, but also some elements which they can use to build their own identity, becoming creators of their own ideas about themselves.¹⁸ Innovative consumption may be considered in terms of both benefits and costs. In the first instance, prosumerism is aimed at achieving maximum satisfaction with the purchased good. Such behaviour manifests itself in, *inter alia*, a variety of product modifications made by the users themselves or through their active involvement in the development of goods in cooperation with the manufacturers. The practices described allow consumers to adapt products to suit their individual preferences. On the other hand, prosumers can direct their efforts towards minimising the costs of purchased goods. To do so, they actively explore alternatives for the chosen goods, employing different methods to obtain objective and subjective market information. Moreover, a significant role here is played by self-supply. Individuals may decide to manufacture products (or their equivalents) or carry out specific activities (like services) themselves and thus satisfy their needs at a lower cost. This form of prosumer behaviour is called rationalistic prosumption. It generates significant costs arising, for example, from the transfer of such tasks (e.g. transportation) from the producer to the consumer, mental effort (creativity, development of new product applications) or the independent improvement of goods. The described prosumer behaviours perfectly fit in with the new consumer trend called hyper-personalisation, where a whole range of tools is used, beginning from information technologies and transfers of business activity and ending with the personalisation of market offers tailored to individual consumer preferences.

The development of prosumption is a consequence of the development of education, changes in work organisation due to the disappearance of a traditional division between work time and leisure time, as well as more leisure time and the need to use it in an attractive way. Undoubtedly, the development of innovative consumption in recent years has been boosted by the economic crisis, forcing consumers to be more active, manufacture products themselves or gradually replace the use of services with self-catering for their needs in this regard. Such a form of prosumption is connected with natural consumption, i.e. manufacturing products independently. In addition, the development of prosumption is also affected by the virtualisation of life and easier access to new technologies such as

¹⁷ B. Jung, (1997), *Kapitalizm postmodernistyczny* [*Post-modern capitalism*], „Ekonomista”, nr 5–6/1997, p. 145.

¹⁸ A. Toffler, (2006), *Trzecia fala* [*The Third Wave*], Wydawnictwo Kurpisz, Poznań, p. 580.

the Internet or mobile phones. Through the use of new technologies, consumers can communicate both with other consumers and directly with companies, sharing their opinions about products and brands. Hence, it can be argued that by making these efforts, prosumers are becoming the driving force of innovation for companies that wish to use their potential and become involved in the continuous exploration process in the post-industrial society.

There is no clear evidence that prosumption is determined by the individual characteristics of the 'economic man.' Neither is it fully known how much the presence of prosumerism in consumer behaviour is influenced by surroundings. It seems most likely that both internal (personality) and external factors play simultaneous roles. The former include, among others, willingness to take risks, creativity, openness to cooperation, innovativeness, and interpersonal skills. External determinants comprise social stimuli such as the influence of various social groups, e.g. family responsible for instilling basic moral values and certain behavioural patterns. Age and membership of a particular social class and status are also significant. In addition, economic factors such as income, macroeconomic trends, the economic situation in the country and in the world, prices and market offers, *etc.* should be mentioned.

Smart shopping is another consumer trend identified at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. According to G. Lipovetksy, this trend is a response to the hyper-consumption prevailing in the prosperity period at the turn of the century.¹⁹ H. Mano and M. T. Elliott define "smart shopping" as a tendency for consumers to invest considerable time and effort in seeking and utilising promotion-related information to achieve price savings.²⁰ According to T. Zalega, "smart shopping" consists in investing time to search for promotion-related information, comparing prices of different products (e.g. through the use of web browsers), catching bargains, avoiding excessive prices, resisting emotions fuelled by advertising and saving money.²¹ The foundations of smart shopping can be traced to the effects of the global economic crisis of 2008. Therefore, it is fair to say that the father of smart shopping is the Internet, while its mother is the poor economic situation. Many economists see "smart shopping" as a typical post-recession trend of global importance. Others regard it as a part of an alternative lifestyle and a pursuit of uniqueness. Undoubtedly, the idea of "smart shopping" promotes rational household budget planning by purchasing low-priced necessary items and products which were actually intended to be bought. This is mainly because "smart

¹⁹ G. Lipovetksy, (2006), *Le bonheur paradoxal. Essai sur la société d'hyperconsommation éditions*, Gallimard, p. 30.

²⁰ H. Mano, M. T. Elliott, (1997), *Smart Shopping: The Origins and Consequences of Price Saving*, "Advances in Consumer Research", No. 24/1997.

²¹ T. Zalega, (2013), *Smart shopping – nowy trend konsumencki* [*Smart shopping: A new consumer trend*], „Handel Wewnętrzny”, nr 6/2013, p. 48.

consumers” undertake two types of activity, namely: search for information and shopping management. The Internet, together with mobile devices, are ideal tools for “smart consumers” to do shopping in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. Through the Internet, they are able to access comprehensive databases of products and services and the opinions about them via online shops, collective buying sites, special offers search engines, price comparison sites, auction sites, *etc.* “Smart shoppers” consider the obtainment of good value for their money to be important, which encompasses product composition, functionality and necessity. Hence, this trend is most popular among better educated people who make a conscious decision to purchase products or services of a particular kind and in a particular way. People with lower education tend to have a bigger problem with the correct analysis and evaluation of offers that are prepared by manufacturers in a deliberately intricate and hazy way. As a result, they often choose cheaper, but lower quality products or even refrain from their purchase. It should, however, be borne in mind that consumers buying cheap non-durable products need to replace them more frequently, so their savings are only apparent.

A consumer trend that has become much stronger in the past few years is the cocooning²² of consumption. This involves the transfer of consumption from public institutions to the home, which is simultaneously becoming a place where cultural, educational, leisure, health, *etc.* needs are satisfied, which were previously met outside the home (e.g. in cinemas, cafés, shopping centres). Cocooning is largely a consequence of: the presence of better high-end infotainment equipment (plasma and LCD TV sets, home cinema, video-on-demand, pay-per-view, *etc.*) in households, the development of atypical forms of employment (especially teleworking and part-time work) and the reduction in working time, the continuous globalisation process, the individualisation of lifestyles and recourse to privacy, population ageing, the increasing popularity of the Internet and wireless phones, as well as the increased presence of means of transport and modern information and cultural media in households (tablets and e-readers are changing the use of cultural heritage). Consumption cocooning contributes to consumers focusing on their own home and immediate family, seeking seclusion at home and celebrating domesticity. It can therefore be argued that a return to hearth and home is likely to result from rejection of the hyper-individualism concept, which naturally leads to the rehabilitation of family and restoration of its primary value. This escape to privacy is especially widespread among those who can work at home (e.g. teleworking). It should also be pointed out that through the development of cocooning, households are spending more money on services, which is conducive to the servicisation of consumption (increased share of services in consumption) and its dematerialisation (consumption of intangible assets such as

²² The English term *cocooning* was first proposed by Faith Popcorn in 1990.

information, knowledge, actions to improve the well-being and health of household members, *etc.*). The development of cocooning is also leading to the emergence of a prosumer, or an innovative consumer, who sees work and consumption as times and places that are intertwined. In turn, the technologies used in cocooning have contributed to the emergence of a “non-stop” trend, due to the constant and ever present contact with the whole world. This involves the elimination of non-productive interruptions and downtime from life, such as spending time “on the road” using the wireless Internet, eating on the road (ready-to-go products), thus contributing to the logistical optimisation of household activities (e.g. ordering services via text messages, using GPS technology).

The new consumption trends presented in this study do not cover the entire complex of factors that determine the purchasing behaviours of modern consumers. This is partly due to the fact that some of the trends presented are only beginning to develop (e.g. collaborative consumption, deconsumption and smart shopping), although others are already clearly visible (conscious consumption, prosumption and cocooning). The nearest future will show which of these trends are transient and which are symptoms of significant changes, not only in the level and structure of consumption, but also in consumer purchasing behaviour.

4. Conclusions

The new consumption trends presented in this article, which are emerging in the first decade of the 21st century, do not constitute a comprehensive and extensive list of such trends. It should be borne in mind that the characteristics of the new trends include their variability, co-existence, and divergence. Identification and classification of new trends and analysis of changes undoubtedly expand the knowledge about the market and the behaviour of economic agents thereon, and guide the research aimed at exploring new trends, taking into account predictions for the future. The clash of new consumer trends is a logical step in the evolution of modern civilisation. This means that consumers, focused on a variety of new trends, may create a completely new model of the economy and society on the one hand, while companies, by monitoring new trends, can predict potential changes in consumer behaviour more easily on the other hand, thus adjusting their strategies and matching their offers and output supply with market requirements. Conclusions resulting from the identification of new consumer trends may also help companies to build their competitive advantage on the market. Identification of new, still evolving trends is very useful in specifying new development scenarios and identifying which evidence is relevant in making decisions about future actions and investments. This, in turn, may translate into

better economic results of companies, i.e. a greater margin between total revenue generated from sales of products and the total costs incurred in the process of their production.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the discussion is to examine the new trends observed in consumer behaviour of today's households around the world. This article contains a purely theoretical analysis of the new trends. Its structure is as follows: after explaining the concept of a consumption trend and its main

characteristics, the further part of this text analyses the key “new” or “alternative” consumer trends, such as: deconsumption, eco-consumption, conscious consumption, collaborative consumption, freeganism, prosumption, smart shopping and cocooning, followed by a conclusion.

Key words: consumption, consumption trends, deconsumption, eco-consumption, collaborative consumption, freeganism, smart shopping, cocooning.

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