

# PRACE NAUKOWE

Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu

# RESEARCH PAPERS

of Wrocław University of Economics

Nr 423

**Social Responsibility of Organizations.  
CSR 1.0, CSR 2.0 and what's next?**



Publishing House of Wrocław University of Economics  
Wrocław 2016

Copy-editing: Marcin Orszulak  
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Wrocław 2016

**ISSN 1899-3192**  
**e-ISSN 2392-0041**

**ISBN 978-83-7695-573-5**

The original version: printed

Publications may be ordered in Publishing House:  
Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu  
ul. Komandorska 118/120, 53-345 Wrocław  
tel./fax 71 36-80-602; e-mail: [econbook@ue.wroc.pl](mailto:econbook@ue.wroc.pl)  
[www.ksiegarnia.ue.wroc.pl](http://www.ksiegarnia.ue.wroc.pl)

Printing: TOTEM

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	7
<b>Magdalena Andrejczuk:</b> The development of CSR in Poland as seen by managers / Rozwój CSR w Polsce w opinii menedżerów.....	9
<b>Grażyna Aniszewska:</b> Cultural background in CSR communication / Kulturowe uwarunkowania komunikowania działań społecznie odpowiedzialnych.....	23
<b>Katarzyna Bachnik:</b> Sustainable consumption through the sharing economy / Konsumpcja zrównoważona stymulowana gospodarką wspólnego użytkowania.....	35
<b>Wojciech Huszlak:</b> Ecomediations in managing company stakeholders / Ekomediacje w zarządzaniu interesariuszami przedsiębiorstwa.....	45
<b>Ewa Jastrzębska:</b> Reporting of non-financial information as a stakeholder engagement method / Raportowanie danych pozafinansowych jako sposób angażowania interesariuszy.....	61
<b>Janusz Kroik, Jan Skonieczny:</b> Value exchange in CSR strategy / Wymiana wartości w strategii CSR.....	79
<b>Maria Roszkowska-Menkes:</b> What does CSR really stand for? An analysis of corporate definitions of CSR in Poland / Co naprawdę oznacza społeczna odpowiedzialność biznesu? Analiza definicji CSR najbardziej odpowiedzialnych firm w Polsce.....	94
<b>Adam Skrzypek, Nella Saadi:</b> Profitability of socially responsible public listed companies in Poland / Rentowność społecznie odpowiedzialnych spółek giełdowych w Polsce.....	107
<b>Justyna Szumniak-Samolej:</b> Changes in the business environment that support the creation of socially responsible initiatives / Zmiany w otoczeniu przedsiębiorstw sprzyjające powstawaniu społecznie odpowiedzialnych przedsięwzięć.....	122
<b>Dorota Teneta-Skwiercz:</b> Acquaintance with the fair trade idea in Poland – results of the research / Popularność ruchu sprawiedliwego handlu w Polsce – wyniki badań.....	138

## Introduction

The presented volume of the Research Papers, devoted to the social responsibility of organizations, refers to the Visser's concept of CSR 1.0 and CSR 2.0. The concept does not concern so much the computer science categories but the progress and need to redefine its role in society. It is worth emphasizing that the CSR transition has different features depending on a company and country. It is a complex and diverse process, both from the perspective of time and space.

Within the framework of scientific discussion held on the CSR transition, several key areas of changes are pointed out. Firstly, early CSR understanding, often identifying it with philanthropy, slowly gives way to partnership relations and cooperation based on good communication between a company and a community. Secondly, the initiatives now should not be a minimalist response to social and environmental stakeholders' expectations but should be initiated by company's initiatives included in strategic plans and well-thought-out investments. Thirdly, the actions marked by image aspects and "produced" by PR departments will no longer constitute a credible motives confirmation for taking pro-social initiatives by a company. Enterprises will be judged on actual credible initiatives in the area of environment, society and ethics. Fourthly, a specialization (although still valid) will be gradually replaced by performances integrated into core companies' operations. Fifthly, the effects of pro-social activity of enterprises, being visible as a form of a product or service, should not be any longer a niche project, but should be directed to a wide audience. In other words – it is about converting the "nice-to-have" product to the "must-have" one. Sixthly, the expansion of the CSR concept from the local initiatives to the global venture will allow a more culturally diverse and internationally applied concept.

Summing up the transition from CSR 1.0 to CSR 2.0, it is important to mention the five principles that constitute the new approach: *creativity*, *scalability*, *responsiveness*, *glocality* and *circularity*. It is worth noting that the content presented and discussed by the Authors of the Research Papers, directly or indirectly relates to the above-mentioned principles. For example, the issues discussed by J. Szumniak-Samolej, K. Bachnik and M. Andrejczuk refer to the principle of *creativity*. The *scalability* principle corresponds with the issues mentioned by D. Teneta-Skwiercz, E. Jastrzębska, N. Saadi and A. Skrzypek, J. Kroik and J. Skonieczny, M. Roszkowska-Menkes as well. The next principle – *responsiveness* – can be visible in the papers written by G. Aniszewska, W. Husztrak, D. Teneta-Skwiercz, K. Bachnik, E. Jastrzębska and J. Szumniak-Samolej. The core idea of *glocality* principle is represented in the papers of K. Bachnik, E. Jastrzębska, D. Teneta-Skwiercz, J. Szumniak-Samolej. The last principle – *circularity* – is visible in K. Bachnik's and J. Szumniak-Samolej's paper.

In response to upcoming changes and parallel emerging questions “what’s next?,” I present with pleasure the Research Papers of Wrocław University of Economics, which not only describe current problems connected with the CSR concept, but also point out the new perspective and directions of CSR.

At this point, I would like to address my thanks to the reviewers of the Research Papers, whose efforts in the form of comments and suggestions expressed in the reviews contribute also a special part to the CSR discussion held on the pages of the current volume.

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## SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION THROUGH THE SHARING ECONOMY

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## KONSUMPCJA ZRÓWNOWAŻONA STYMULOWANA GOSPODARKĄ WSPÓLNEGO UŻYTKOWANIA

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DOI: 10.15611/pn.2016.423.03

JEL Classification: M1

**Summary:** The aim of this article is to uncover sustainable consumption through the assumptions behind the sharing economy. The more the profile of the modern consumer has changed, the bigger changes of his or her perception of ownership. The consumer trend that we can observe as growing is about meeting the needs and being satisfied with product/service usage, but without making a transaction about ownership transfer. The proliferation of companies, such as Zipcar, Uber, Airbnb, proves that consumers withdraw from traditional options and experiment with the ones that rely on the potential of social media. With the focus on social media, the attitude toward temporary usage of products, perception of mutual agreements and understanding of loyalty comes into play and transforms the relationships between consumers and producers/service providers. The idea that one does not need to own a product in order to satisfy one's need creates room for more sustainable consumption that is guided by resource sharing. Sustainability may be achieved here by the fact that people limit their actual purchases, do not have to worry about divestment options, are more selective when comparing various options, find cheaper solutions also attractive from the environmental or the social stand (they may value a solution more just because it reduces negative impact on environment or because it additionally offers socializing opportunities). The article is based on desk research with the use of a brief case study approach. Two industries seem to be prone to the sharing economy model: automotive/transportation and hospitality services, that is why the article draws brief practical illustrations from those sectors.

**Keywords:** sustainable consumption, sharing economy, collaborative consumption.

**Streszczenie:** Celem niniejszego artykułu jest pokazanie jak mechanizmy gospodarki wspólnego użytkowania sprzyjają konsumpcji zrównoważonej. Wraz ze zmieniającym się profilem współczesnego konsumenta, zmianie ulega jego percepcja własności. Na rynku pojawiają się rozwiązania pozwalające zaspokajać potrzeby bez konieczności dokonywania transakcji o przeniesieniu własności. Dynamiczny rozwój firm, takich jak Zipcar, Uber, Airbnb, dowodzi, że konsumenci odstępują od tradycyjnych opcji własności i eksperymentują z tymi, które polegają na współużytkowaniu i wykorzystują potencjał mediów społecznościowych. To wszystko tworzy przestrzeń dla bardziej zrównoważonej konsumpcji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zrównoważona konsumpcja, gospodarka wspólnego użytkowania, konsumpcja oparta na współpracy.

## 1. Introduction

Sharing economy, peer economy, collaborative consumption are among the terms coined to illustrate a distinctive mechanism of sharing of human and physical resources in order to achieve one's goal.<sup>1</sup> The transfer of ownership is not required to complete the transaction and feel satisfaction out of meeting one's need. Just as traditional models of consumption are based on business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions, the new model of consumption that emerges connects spare capacity to demand using peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions. People are now able to get what they need from each other instead of always going to large organizations. This socio-cultural system includes "the shared creation, production, distribution, trade and consumption of goods and services by different people and organizations."<sup>2</sup>

Botsman tries to be clearer about the terms and assigns clear boundaries between the terms.<sup>3</sup> According to her, the sharing economy should be defined as "an economic system based on sharing underused assets or services, for free or for a fee, directly from individuals" and collaborative consumption as "the reinvention of traditional market behaviors – renting, lending, swapping, sharing, bartering, gifting – through technology, taking place in ways and on a scale not possible before the internet." In this view, the sharing economy is just part of collaborative consumption that relates to B2C and P2P transactions.<sup>4</sup>

Because of severe consequences that the sharing economy has for businesses, some call it disruptive technology.<sup>5</sup> Taking another angle, one can say that businesses want to size the revenue opportunity that resides within the sharing economy. As PwC estimates,<sup>6</sup> the potential value of the five main sharing economy sectors will amount to USD 335 billion by 2025.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See: B. Mróz, *Konsument w globalnej gospodarce. Trzy perspektywy*, Oficyna Wydawnicza SGH, Warszawa 2013.

<sup>2</sup> J. Morgan, *Why The Collaborative Economy is Changing Everything*, Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2014/10/16/why-the-collaborative-economy-is-changing-everything/> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>3</sup> R. Botsman, *The Sharing Economy Lacks a Shared Definition. Giving Meaning to the Terms*, 2013, <http://www.fastcoexist.com/3022028/the-sharing-economy-lacks-a-shared-definition> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>4</sup> R. Botsman, *The Sharing Economy...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> D. Wesson, *The New Sharing Economy – The Next Era of the Social Web*, [http://davidwesson.typepad.com/david\\_wessons\\_digital\\_cul/2011/04/the-new-sharing-economy-the-next-era-of-the-social-web-.html](http://davidwesson.typepad.com/david_wessons_digital_cul/2011/04/the-new-sharing-economy-the-next-era-of-the-social-web-.html) (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>6</sup> *The Sharing Economy: How Is It Affecting You and Your Business?*, PwC, <http://www.pwc.co.uk/issues/megatrends/collisions/sharingeconomy.html> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>7</sup> In 2013 Forbes estimated that the revenue flowing through the share economy right into people's pockets will exceed USD 3.5 billion that year, and the growth will be more than 25%. A. Rudenko, *The Collaborative Consumption on the Rise: Why Shared Economy Is Winning over the "Capitalism of Me"*, <http://popsop.com/2013/08/the-collaborative-consumption-sharing-wins-over-ownership/> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

Interestingly, this system can take variety of forms, just because the transactions can offer various forms of access over ownership (renting, lending, subscribing, reselling, swapping, donating). However, they all are rooted in the ability to realize more choice while mitigating the costs associated with ownership. What is more, very often, these are information technologies that leverage the sharing economy, because they empower customers and organizations and allow them to juggle the data in order to optimize decision making and balance the information asymmetry. Many sharing economy business models are hosted through digital platforms that enable a more precise, real-time measurement of spare capacity and the ability to dynamically connect that capacity with those who need it.<sup>8</sup> For example, Airbnb, a vast peer-to-peer network allows people to rent out spare rooms in their homes (or entire homes or just sofas) to anyone they deem trustworthy for certain amount of time. If a customer wants to participate in this platform, he or she first needs to register in the website as a host or as a traveler. With the sharing economy it is vital to create value to all engaged parties: homeowners get some extra spending cash, travelers get a radical increase the variety and price of lodging options, and money gets spent in local neighborhood economies. Airbnb claims that they contribute USD 56 million annually to the San Francisco economy alone.<sup>9</sup> The same approach is implemented by the oldest car sharing company Zipcar, which matches spare cars with local demand. The business model is simple and so is the process of joining Zipcar network: To join, the client has to register on Zipcar website and pay a fee membership, then he or she receives a Zipcar card right in the registered address, after this step he or she can search for available cars and make the reservation with a few clicks in the mobile app. The simplicity of the “ordering” process is coupled with convenience: the cars are located along the city in Zipcar-branded parking slots (for the moment Zipcar operates in 50 cities in Europe and North America) and the customer can open the car automatically with the Zipcar card.

The technological innovation constitutes however only one driver of the trend. The other three include:

- values shift, which means that a connected society is rethinking what ownership and sharing mean in the digital age;
- economic realities, which translates into a growing understanding that people need to think about wealth and assets through a new lens, and measure “growth” in a more meaningful way;
- environmental pressures, which create or sustain the need to make a much better use of finite resources.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *The Sharing Economy. Consumer Intelligence Series*, PwC, 2015, <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/technology/publications/assets/pwc-consumer-intelligence-series-the-sharing-economy.pdf> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>9</sup> N. Aster, *Why the Sharing Economy Has a Branding Challenge*, <http://www.psfk.com/2012/12/sharing-economy-branding-challenge.html> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

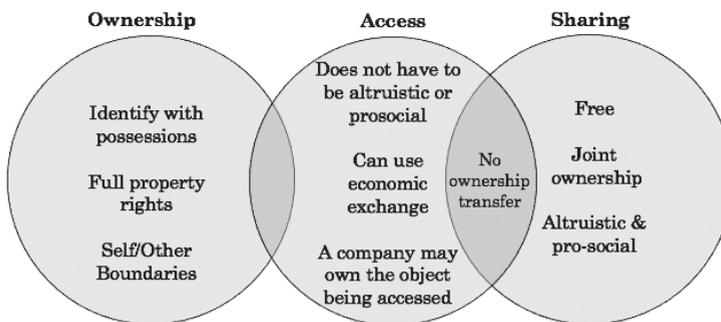
<sup>10</sup> R. Botsman, *The Sharing Economy...*, *op. cit.*

Altogether these drivers make up the friendly environment for collaborative consumption. However, to make it work, people engaged in sharing must conform with some behavioral rules and principles. According to Botsman and Rogers, there are four of them:<sup>11</sup>

- trust between strangers, which is a must in order to close the deal and facilitate the exchange;
- belief in the commons, which means believing that society can secure access to goods for as much of the public as possible;
- idling capacity, as the basic observation leads to realization that some assets might be underused and in effect solutions to change the picture are appreciated;
- critical mass of followers and advocates that build the socio-economic system and facilitate its functioning.<sup>12</sup>

Both trust and critical mass of followers and advocates are strictly linked to the online venue. These are requirements of social media platforms to flourish. On the other hand, these are also critical circumstances of sustainability projects.

Having in mind the drivers and principles of the shared economy, it is much easier to position collaborative consumption within more sustained consumption modes (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Three modes of consumption

Source: F. Bardhi, *Consumer Behavior Lecture*, Cass School of Business, 2014.

From Figure 1 it becomes more visible that sharing does not only have the economic dimension. It is guided also strongly by the social concerns and deliberations on the role of business when searching for the options of satisfying one's needs. However, the economic potential is a driver of business proliferation in this model. Let us just

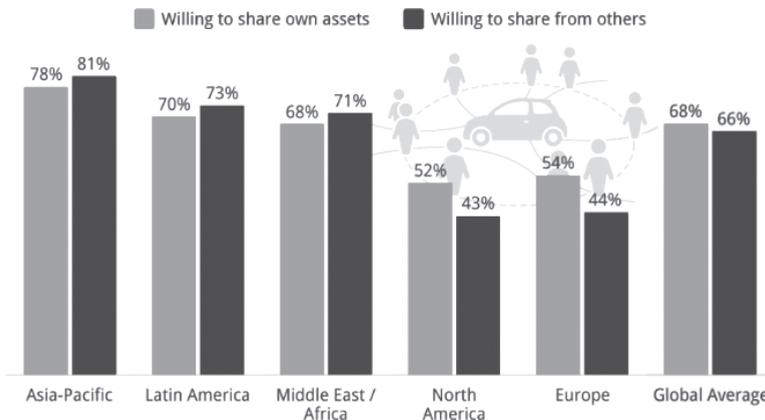
<sup>11</sup> R. Botsman, R. Rogers, *What's Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*, HarperCollins, New York 2010.

<sup>12</sup> A.-L. Nilsson, *Collaborative Consumption – Threatening Markets and Marketers?*, <http://www.brandba.se/blog/collaborativeconsumpti-nilsson> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

consider the recent numbers for Uber service: The five-year-old Uber operates in more than 250 cities worldwide and as of February 2015 was valued at USD 41.2 billion – a figure that exceeds the market capitalization of companies such as Delta Air Lines, American Airlines and United Continental.<sup>13</sup> It is also worth noting the difference between Uber and Zipcar: Zipcar owns inventory, while Uber develops, markets and operates the Uber application (available on smartphones and tablets) – this app enables consumers to submit a trip request, which is then routed to Uber drivers who use their own cars.

## 2. Why is the sharing economy booming?

The sharing economy as a consumer trend is developing. The number of consumers willing to join the movement is steadily increasing over the years. Also the number of consumers willing to participate in sharing communities is pretty high (see Figure 2). From Nielsen's research it stands out that the trend is not regional but global. If we look closer, then UK dominates Europe accounting for one-in-ten of the world's companies in this new digital sector, more than Europe's next three most prolific hubs – France, Spain and Germany – combined, and generally speaking, the US produces more than half of the 865 start-ups in the sharing economy.<sup>14</sup>



**Figure 2.** Sharing economy preferences around the globe

Source: F. Richter, *The Rise of the Sharing Economy*, Statista. The statistics portal, <https://blog.udemy.com/the-next-wave-of-the-sharing-economy/> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>13</sup> *The Sharing Economy. Consumer Intelligence Series...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> L. Davidson, Mapped: how the sharing economy is sweeping the world, *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/mediatechnologyandtelecoms/11882122/Mapped-how-the-sharing-economy-is-sweeping-the-world.html> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

There are several factors explaining why the sharing economy gains momentum and from a temporary fad has turned into a profitable disruptive business model. The economic crisis in the first place made the idea worth noticing. Apart from the smaller disposable income, consumers started to favor the connotation that being thrifty might be cool again. Then the assumptions of knowledge society lead to the realization that true value relies on cultural rather than tangible resources and assigned priority to experiences above possessions. The maturation of the social web underlines the empowerment of consumers. They are more skilled and eager to use digital tools and become more interactive, connected, participatory. Also the increasing environmental concerns are aligned with new models based on collaboration, knowledge sharing and willingness to cater for greater good. The other trend called “demanding brands” rests upon similar observations. “Switched-on brands that are embarking on the journey towards a more sustainable and socially-responsible future will demand that consumers also contribute. Even if that means some pain – financial or otherwise – for their customers.”<sup>15</sup> The meaningful demand that companies may impose on customers may relate to one of four:

- the planet: customers’ action shall be good for the environment. This may take the form of waste reduction, product re-use or recycling;
- society – customers shall contribute to the well-being of other people;
- their lifestyles – through the products, consumers change their lifestyles, usually by adopting new behaviors;
- non-profit organizations – brands collaborate with non-profit organizations to make consumers aware of the causes and support these institutions.<sup>16</sup>

In order to raise sustainability to a new level and guarantee the idea a critical mass of advocates and supporters, not only the buy-in mechanism must be simple, transparent and authentic, but also it needs to be linked to some values and norms of behavior.

Some figures give evidence that these observations turn into consumer actions and as such may speak more than just declarations:

- bike sharing is the fastest growing form of transportation in the world which grew 200% in 2010;
- freecycle, an online that circulates items to reuse, had 5.7 million members across 85 countries;
- couchsurfing, a global website that connects travellers with locals in more than 235 countries, was the most often visited hospitality website in 2010 with over 3 million visits.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *September 2013 Trend Briefing: DEMANDING BRANDS. Screw ‘the Customer Is Always Right’: These ‘Demanding Brands’ Are Taking the (Painful) Lead Again*, <http://trendwatching.com/trends/demandingbrands/> (date of access: 23.06.2014).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>17</sup> D. Wesson, *The New Sharing Economy...*, *op. cit.*

When thinking about the sharing economy in the light of sustainability, the question of who is riding this wave becomes relevant. Although the trend seems to be global, not all consumers may be appealed to the same extent. Research suggests that there are perceptual differences between generations but those differences relate more to the motivations and fears rather than to the attractiveness of sharing economy. As many as 31% of representatives of generation X, 24% of Millennials and 15% of Boomers agree to be attracted to the sharing economy.<sup>18</sup> They all perceive trust as the most important personal barrier to sharing (“What I lend will get lost or stolen”, “I might not trust others in the network”, “My privacy might be compromised”), concerns about quality of goods/services and of value (whether the end result is worth the effort) come as secondary.

### 3. Sustainable consumption fueled by the sharing economy

Apart from the notion that environmental concerns were among the factors spinning the sharing economy, it seems that the basic idea of utilizing underused assets is part of the sustainable consumption concept. The trend helps fighting overconsumption and promotes smarter usage of resources at hand. Even if not deliberate, these motivations translate into actions. The economic dimension of the sharing economy speaks for maximizing product’s productivity. Instead of being used several times by one person, goods are available for dozens of peers. This allows saving time, money and other resources, generate extra income for the owner and reduce impact on the environment. The concept of sharing is quite universal in business and affects various industries. Automotive/transportation, hospitality/dining services, retail/consumer goods, and media/entertainment are among the most commonly used (see Figure 3 for more examples).

In the attempt to frame the sharing economy into sustainability, the triple bottom line comes to mind. Various motives to share: economic, environmental and social do play here a tremendous role. For example, when it comes to Airbnb, it is not only about cheaper housing alternatives (affordability). It is also about granting authenticity to the experience and meeting new people. Airbnb averages 425,000 guests per night, nearly 22% more than Hilton Worldwide, which just indicates how popular – and competitive – the service is.<sup>19</sup>

The environmental dimension can be seen through the multi-use of products and through the simultaneous use of a product by multiple people. According to some estimates, up to 72% of US CO<sub>2</sub> emissions can be potentially reduced by sharing cars.<sup>20</sup> Sharing meals with others also helps generate less waste by saving on water, gas, electricity and food products.

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<sup>18</sup> P.D. Ross, *Sharing Economy/Collaborative Consumption Defined*, <http://projectpdr.com/sharing-economy-collaborative-consumption-defined/> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

<sup>19</sup> *The Sharing Economy. Consumer Intelligence Series...*, *op. cit.*

<sup>20</sup> A. Rudenko, *The Collaborative Consumption on the Rise...*, *op. cit.*



**Figure 3.** Examples of sharing economy companies

Source: D.L. Yohn, *What You Can Learn about Customer Experience from Sharing Economy Companies*, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/deniseyohn/2015/03/04/what-you-can-learn-about-customer-experience-from-sharing-economy-companies/> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

The social potential of the sharing economy rests in the creation of stronger communities and forging interpersonal relationships. The sharing economy model forces people to push the boundaries of their lives and turns consumers into active members of societies. They not only lend or borrow goods, but also write reviews and recommendations for their peers, which translates into trust building and critical mass growing.

When trying to link the sharing economy with sustainable consumption, the perspective of broader communities cannot be overlooked. The changing profile of an individual consumer is an important building block of the trend, but sustainability calls for a more holistic view. Therefore, it makes sense to analyze benefits from the sharing economy and concerns with the sharing economy identified or raised by city officials.

As usual to avoid a biased opinion, it is worth taking into account contrary insights about the sharing economy. Although the sharing economy can be placed within the sustainability context, it is debatable whether simply sharing surplus or under-utilised personal goods is a sufficient response to a global problem that requires a systemic change at all levels to be resolved. The sheer scale of the ecological crisis might be too big. The massive overshoot in global consumption levels is just one part of the picture (some figures show that humanity as a whole is consuming natural resources 50% faster than the planet can replenish them). The other create huge imbalances (around 20% of the world's population are responsible for 80% of all resource consumption).<sup>21</sup> Still,

<sup>21</sup> R. Makwana, *Global Justice, Sustainability and the Sharing Economy*, <http://www.sharing.org/information-centre/articles/global-justice-sustainability-and-sharing-economy> (date of access: 13.12.2015).

in order to make any difference, transformations in consumer perceptions, attitudes and decisions need to happen. And the sharing economy model allows making another step in the right direction.

## 4. Conclusion

The sharing economy implies collaborative consumption of physical, virtual and intellectual goods. The new model of consumer relationship emerges at the intersection of online social networking, mobile technology and the social movement that comes as a response to the reduction in purchasing power, greater environmental awareness, perceptual changes of being thrifty. Even though it may not have the potential to solve global problems that outrank in their size and scope, it definitely shows how consumers are changing and how their understanding of consumption is evolving. As such the sharing economy constitutes a useful framework and a foundation for profitable business model – as the examples of Zipcar, Uber and Airbnb prove. The growing number of advocates and the growing number of companies that embed sharing and collaborative component to their offerings allow assuming that this consumption model can be long lasting – as long as people are willing to use mobile devices, have desire to be connected 24/7 and expect companies to be transparent about their strategies and policies. What speaks in favor of the sharing economy is also the fact of considering value for all engaged parties. The social, environmental and economic dimension of this phenomena allows positioning it within sustainability context and the sustainable consumption idea is embedded in the quest for more optimal utilization of resources.

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