

SUMMARY

The aim of the doctoral thesis - according to its title - is the concept of sustainable consumption and barriers and possibilities of its implementation in Poland. In general, sustainable consumption refers to the use of goods and services which enables the accomplishment of objectives of sustainable development, i.e. balance, durability and sustainability. This development is defined in Polish scientific literature as a new paradigm of development (see. e.g. [Borys 2014 p. 9-11]). The new paradigm of consumption is closely connected with the new paradigm of development and is broadly known as “sustainable consumption”.

The hypothesis made in this thesis assumes that beside the positive trends there are also significant barriers in the implementation of the concept of sustainable consumption in Poland. As a part of its verification the author carried out a detailed analysis of real processes and changes of the consumption in Poland with formulating the background and specifics of the EU's consumption.

The aim of the thesis was to identify possibilities and barriers in the implementation of the concept of sustainable consumption in Poland – the concept contributing to the improvement of living standards. Apart from this aim there are also eight specific objectives connected with the above-mentioned hypothesis, which are complementary and explanatory to the main aim.

The form of accomplishment of the first specific objective was to discuss the concepts of sustainable and unsustainable consumption. The second specific objective was realized by presenting a sectoral approach to consumption – the concept which is one of the sectors of the new development paradigm and the current concept that plays an important role in the development of other sectors. The second chapter of the thesis discusses the manifestations of sustainable and unsustainable consumption in the following sectors: transport, tourism, energy, agriculture, food, and households.

The third aim of the thesis was identification of the structure of instruments that affect the sustainable consumption, which include: strategic planning instruments (policies, strategies, and programs), regulatory instruments, social instruments and economic instruments.

The fourth objective of the thesis was identification and analysis of barriers in the implementation of the sustainable consumption concept, which is presented mainly in the second, empirical part of the thesis and in conclusions of the subsequent chapters.

The fifth objective was addressed in the fourth chapter of the thesis in which measurements of sustainable consumption were discussed. The author suggested that a system of sustainable consumption indicators should be developed in Polish conditions.

Defining the necessary conditions for balancing the consumption was the essence of the sixth objective. As part of the seventh objective the author analyzed the trends in the consumption patterns in Poland, both in the subjective system ("who consumes?") and in the objective system ("what is consumed and how?").

The eighth and the last aim was an empirical illustration of the implementation of principles of sustainable consumption on the example of the consumers' behavior - an adult population of the Silesian Voivodeship. The research questionnaire consisted of forty questions grouped in four thematic areas: food consumption, consumption associated with the equipment and maintenance of households, consumption associated with the use of transport and the general issues of consumption. The survey was an attempt to indicate some of the problems that are associated with the consumption in households and it stressed the importance of economic, regulatory and social instruments in the development of sustainable consumption. The author believes that the results of the study will contribute to the development of more comprehensive Polish research programs in various areas of human activity associated with consumption.

The material presented in this thesis indicates that not only in Poland but also in Europe it is still not clear enough what strategies should be adopted to effectively implement patterns of sustainable consumption, or to consume less and - at the same time - to achieve better quality of life. How to reconcile such different requirements, how to prevent one form of unsustainable consumption (low consumption) from changing into another one (excessive consumption)? How to avoid moralizing, how to make sustainable consumption postulates clear and convincing to a wider public? How to work out various programs and strategies for sustainable development in terms of incentives or motivation (i.e. taking into consideration how individual people will react to them) and not in terms of proclaimed goals or wishes (an example of which is the so-called "rebound effect" observed in many workplaces). These are just only a few examples of questions that arise in the author's mind. Their complexity goes far beyond the scope of this thesis, nevertheless, it may become the beginning of the development of further studies in this important - and affecting everyone - issue connected with sustainable consumption.