

Felicjan Bylok

Czestochowa University of Technology, Faculty of Management
e-mail: byl.f.s@zim.pcz.pl

Meanders in consumption in contemporary society: consumerism versus deconsumption

The characteristic discriminant of contemporary societies, particularly in economically developed countries, is, on the one hand, the expansion of consumerism in various spheres of economic and social life, while on the other hand, it is the attempt to restrict excessive consumption. The principal aim of this paper is the description of the chosen changes in consumption in contemporary society and their economic consequences. The author searches for answers to the following question: What orientations mark out the behaviour of consumers in the market? In the search for answers to this question, the orientation towards excessive consumption that is stimulated by the ideology of consumerism and deconsumption as a protest against consumerism have been placed under analysis. In analysing the ideology of consumerism, the main styles of consumerism have been indicated as follows: consumption of pleasures, compulsive consumption and symbolic consumption. In contrast to the behaviour associated with over-consumption, the behaviour in pursuit of the restriction of the consumption of goods indirectly connected with actual needs has been described, namely sustainable consumption and anti-consumption, as well as the voluntary simplicity movement in consumption.

Keywords: consumptionism, consumption, sustainable consumption, consumption styles, consumption society

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