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## **Consumption Megatrends in the Conditions of Globalization**

### INTRODUCTION

Globalisation may be viewed as one of the key determinants of today's economic processes. Globalisation processes, together with related progress, innovation and liberalisation of international information, money, people and material goods flows, are leading to the emergence of a socio-political and economic environment of a new quality. The ongoing integration of countries and citizens of the world and the abolition of cross-border barriers are bringing about not only free movement of capital, knowledge and workers, but also increased accessibility and availability of products. These processes affect the market behaviour of modern consumers, thereby fostering the international intertwining of consumption patterns and creating a global consumer culture and global consumer segments distinguished by values, behaviour and attitudes to goods and brands. Consumers who purchase similar products begin to discern interrelated patterns and start to form groups around shared interests, experiences and needs. The exchange of experiences between consumers contributes to the spread of purchasing habits, crowding out those products that failed to meet expectations. Thus, the consumer begins to affect the functioning of the producer [Aldridge, 2006, pp. 156–158]. According to Z. Bauman, everyone (...) considers globalisation to be the inevitable fate of the world and an irreversible process that affects all of us to the same extent and in the same way [Bauman, 2000, p. 5]. This opinion is obviously right, since changes in modern consumers' behaviour that accompany globalisation are manifested, among others, as initiating new forms of consumption, developing new products and new points of sale, satisfying needs in new ways and increasing consumer activity on the market.

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This article aims to reveal the relationships between globalisation processes and the market behaviour of today's consumers. The study contains a purely theoretical analysis of the processes of consumption globalisation. In view of the requirements concerning its length, imposed by the journal, the first part of the paper concentrates solely on discussing the key determinants of globalisation as well as mechanisms and manifestations of consumption globalisation processes. Further, the focus is on consumption megatrends emerging in the era of globalisation and the Internet. The final part of this study contains a synthetic conclusion.

#### DEFINITION AND THE MULTIPLE ASPECTS OF GLOBALISATION

The concept of "globalisation" was first mentioned in 1953 in Germany, in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Subsequently, the term was used in *The Economist* in 1959 in the context of a bigger globalised number of imported cars. Two years later, in 1961, "globalisation" appeared as an entry in *Webster's Dictionary* [Waters, 1995, pp. 2–4].

Globalisation is understood in different ways and is a catch-all concept that comprises multi-thread aspects of the modern world [Weinberg, Eubank, 2004, pp. 81–102]. The difficulty in defining this concept stems from the basic features of globalisation, including [Zorska, 1998, pp. 16–18]: multidimensionality, a multi-thread character, integration, international interdependence, an inherent link between globalisation and scientific and technical progress, compression of time and space, i.e. "shrinking world", a dialectic and multi-level nature. For these reasons, globalisation is most frequently interpreted in economic, sociological and political terms. In the first case, it is defined as a process of building a single market for goods, services and production factors, covering all countries, regions and continents of the world [Misala, 2004, p. 260]. The OECD definition is similar and indicates that globalisation is a process whereby national markets and manufacturing processes are becoming increasingly connected through the exchange of goods and services and flows of capital and technology [Oręziak, 2004, p. 155]. G.W. Kołodko defines it in a similar vein, claiming that globalisation is a historical and spontaneous process of liberalisation and parallel integration of thus far isolated and loosely connected goods, capital and (...) labour markets as well as technology and information into a single interdependent global market [Kołodko, 2008, p. 98]. J. Stiglitz assumes that globalisation may be understood as integration of countries and citizens of the world through lowering the cost of transport and communication and through the abolition of cross-border barriers, leading to free movement of capital, knowledge and labour [Stiglitz, 2006, p. 26]. Similarly, W.C. Clark defines globalisation as a process of building network connections among economies through a flow of people, in-

formation, ideas, capital and goods [Clark, 2000, p. 87]. M.E. Porter sees it as a transformation of various industries into a global industry where a company's competitive position on one country's market depends on its competitive position on markets of other countries [Porter, 1986]. Furthermore, A. McGrew believes that globalisation involves the propagation of habits, values and technologies that affects human lives worldwide [Albrow, 1997, p. 88].

According to sociological definitions, globalisation means the sudden widening, deepening and speeding up of global interdependence among people [Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, Perration, 1999, pp. 24–26], and a process that can make people perceive the globe as a whole in the face of the world compression [Robertson, 1992, p. 8]. A. Giddens regards globalisation as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa [Giddens, 1990, p. 64]. Most sociological definitions highlight social changes brought about by the globalisation process.

In political sciences, globalisation is most often understood as an international network of interdependent links that became a reality after World War II [Nye, 2002, p. 81]. A. McGrew believes that globalisation is based on relationships and mutualities among countries and societies which interact and form the present global system [Held, McGrew, 2007, pp. 31–32]. M. Guillen argues that globalisation is a process leading to greater interdependence and mutual awareness among the economic, political and social units in the world, and among actors in general. Moreover, he stresses that this phenomenon is sometimes seen as an impersonal and inevitable force that is supposed to justify certain policies [Guillen, 2001, pp. 236–237]. S. Huntington, who does not highlight the name itself, but rather puts an emphasis on the phenomenon, mentions the danger of conflicts between different parts of the world representing different civilisations [Huntington, 2000]. He understands that globalisation deepens mainly cultural differences among various regions of the world.

The quoted definitions suggest that globalisation, in all its dimensions, is not a homogeneous process and may be studied at different levels and in different contexts. Therefore, the concept of globalisation involves multiple aspects. P.H. Dembiński's definition of globalisation fits perfectly into this view, because he interprets it as a set of five dimensions, including [Dembinski, 2001, pp. 21–30]:

- the services sector – where particular importance has been attributed to an increase in the share of personal and general services in the economy and the GDP since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century;
- finance – forming a subcomponent of the services sector. Global finance is a unification of business practices, transmission of signs and communication, which results in procedure standardisation and finance homogenisation, with simultaneous related innovation processes;

- multinationals – established through capital consolidation, transnational interdependencies, and organisational capacities allowing for integrating resources and production spread throughout the world;
- society – where differences in income and a polarisation process occur as part of globalisation;
- *homo financierus* – an anthropological dimension of globalisation that highlights the emergence of a new human species. It is a human whose aim is to maximise the value of his or her wallet while controlling the risk level.

Considering globalisation at different angles, it can be defined as a process whereby people in the world are becoming increasingly interconnected in cultural, economic, political, technological and environmental aspects of their lives [Greenberg, Baron, 2003, p. 14]. It should also be borne in mind that the characteristics of the present stage of globalisation clearly show how complex and multi-dimensional this process is. This is the main reason why researchers have not distinguished the one and only characteristic of the analysed phenomenon.

#### THE ESSENCE OF GLOBALIZATION

The globalisation process began with the great geographical discoveries, which later led to the colonisation of newly discovered lands. The dynamics of transnational economic links rapidly accelerated with the development of the capitalist system. The market as a key element of this system increasingly pressed for actions to eliminate various trade and regulatory barriers. Countries began to use their international trade advantages stemming from geographical conditions, natural and human resources, but also from their military power [Nowak, Zalega, 2015, p. 579]. That is why globalisation processes are firmly set in broader cultural, socio-political, and economic contexts. Many determinants of the development of these processes can be identified. The major ones include, in particular [*Mastering global business*, 1998, p. 5]:

- 1) development and liberalisation of foreign trade,
- 2) spread of market economy patterns,
- 3) increased foreign direct and portfolio investment,
- 4) liberalisation of capital markets,
- 5) impact of international organisations,
- 6) rapid diffusion of innovation and new technologies,
- 7) increasing mobility of modern societies.

A factor contributing to globalisation is, undoubtedly, the rapid development of modern information technologies, which are the main instrument for international and global dissemination and uniformisation of behavioural patterns. Their development has not been limited solely to information flow, but also involved the disappearance of barriers among societies. Important determinants of

globalisation also include a greater role of science and education in the creation of knowledge, ideas and innovations, continuous restructuring processes aimed at improving and producing goods and providing services, and conversion of knowledge into new designs, formulas, technologies and organisational solutions [Stonehouse, Hamill, Campbell, Purdie, 2001, pp. 25–27].

The effects of globalisation processes are also of importance. It should be borne in mind that the consequences of globalisation are felt differently in countries with different levels of economic development. In economically developed countries, globalisation is an opportunity to maintain their accelerated economic development, while in countries undergoing an economic transformation, globalisation creates opportunities to accelerate changes and eliminate delays in their economic development. Advanced economies mainly benefit from unique and rare human capital skills, which ensures their efficient operation on the global market, a growth in income of people with such skills, and benefits for countries and companies using and developing this capital. In less developed countries, there is more demand for well-qualified employees and scarce resources, increasing the income of their owners [Żurkowska, 2000, p. 485]. In addition, direct investment should be seen as a big advantage for developing countries as it introduces technological progress, supplies skills, changes the organisation and management of companies and improves opportunities for greater access to global demand. The inflow of portfolio funds may, in turn, reduce the current deficit in developing countries [Szymański, 2007, pp. 197–198].

Clear benefits of globalisation include intensified social integration processes driven by technological discoveries and interacting cultural patterns. Globalisation thus creates potential opportunities for increased efficiency and improved standard of living for most countries in the world, because it enables producers to gain access to a larger outlet market, and consumers to enjoy a wider choice of goods and services and lower prices. Globalisation also allows for effective use of labour and capital resources and creates a climate for an expansion of entrepreneurship, import, export and foreign investment, leading to economic growth and development [Liberska, 2002, p. 22].

It should be remembered that dynamic changes of the globalisation process may bring about economic, political and social benefits as well as costs for economic operators involved in it. The most important negative consequences of globalisation comprise [Flejterski, Wahl, 2003, pp. 204–208]:

- 1) in the economic sphere – fierce international competition, rising unemployment, extension of areas of poverty and hunger;
- 2) in the political sphere – reduced sovereignty of states, smaller role of governments;
- 3) in the social sphere – international crime, income gap in societies, homogeneous systems of values, disappearing cultural differences, growing consumerism.

GLOBALISATION IN THE AREA OF CONSUMPTION – CONCEPT,  
DETERMINANTS, DEVELOPMENT STAGES AND CONSEQUENCES

Globalisation affects not only the functioning of economies of individual countries, but also the functioning of societies, including, in particular, consumer behaviour as regards making consumption decisions and consumption patterns. The process of dissemination and extension of the world-market supply offer, leading to alignment of consumption patterns, purchase and consumption behaviours in different regions of the world, is known as globalisation of consumption [Mazurek-Łopacińska, 2003, p. 33]. A. Olejniczuk-Merta describes globalisation of consumption as a more complex phenomenon, noting its three areas: market environment and conditions conducive to meeting consumers' needs (retail and service infrastructure, expansion of hypermarkets, legislation governing the protection of consumers' interests), ways of meeting the needs (shopping habits, brands, product range in various consumer segments) and the structure and hierarchy of needs resulting from accepted systems of norms, values and lifestyles that have emerged within the existing and developing Western civilisation [Olejniczuk-Merta, 2001]. This phenomenon is interpreted even more broadly by K. Włodarczyk, who defines globalisation of consumption as alignment of consumption patterns with global trends as a result of the same products/brands becoming popular around the world, which is facilitated by easy access to modern sources of communication, easy movement, the presence of multinationals offering the same or very similar products on all continents [Włodarczyk, 2013, p. 57].

In order to identify the drivers of globalisation of consumption properly, it is necessary to take into account the determinants that not only foster this process, but also hinder it. Globalisation of consumption is driven by the following changes [Ślusarczyk, 2013, pp. 174–207]:

- 1) economic changes – these involve regional economic integration, i.e. the emergence, in the 1990s, of powerful markets: Europe (Single European Market), Asia-Pacific (Osaka Declaration), North America (North American Free Trade Agreement), increasing influence of international organisations in the economy (e.g. World Bank), development of digital economy and growing dominance of the so-called intangible economy, where products are based on information, and development of transnational corporations;
- 2) socio-cultural changes – these include the development of consumer society, acquisition of global awareness, converging patterns of socio-economic development, openness to different cultures and disappearance of local identity;
- 3) political changes – these are associated with liberalisation and democratisation of the world system, reduction of customs barriers under the GATT, growing importance of highly integrated international structures (the European Union, North American countries) and international NGOs (Greenpeace,

the Red Cross), gradual disappearance of barriers to international cooperation, greater pluralism on the global political scene, and so on.

Undoubtedly, the key conditions favouring globalisation of consumption also include [Mróz, 2013, pp. 21–22]:

- 1) development of cable and satellite TV, computer network and the Internet;
- 2) cooperation of companies engaged in direct marketing with the entertainment industry;
- 3) technological progress in production of many goods, hence in standardisation of consumer products;
- 4) easy movement thanks to more and more modern means of transport and communication and reduction, or even elimination, of cross-border barriers;
- 5) easier payments by private consumers through the introduction of payment cards.

In contrast, the determinants that definitely hinder the processes of consumption globalisation encompass:

- 1) cultural factors,
- 2) ethnocentrism,
- 3) income disparities,
- 4) unemployment (especially structural unemployment),
- 5) fear of losing national identity.

Speaking about globalisation of consumption, four degrees (development stages) of its prevalence in the society may be distinguished. The first and the lowest degree involves two phases: proliferation of products and proliferation of brands. The second degree, which also comprises two phases, concerns proliferation of tastes and, consequently, proliferation of consumer preferences. The third degree is a further effect of the ongoing globalisation of consumption, that is implementation of generally accepted consumption patterns in the society, with the second phase involving adoption of specific consumption patterns by consumers. The final consequence of globalisation of consumption is the fourth degree manifested as the emergence of global consumer segments [Adams, 2011, pp. 19–20].

The processes of globalisation of consumption are the outcome of increasing integration of markets, which, in turn, encourages companies to standardise their products and advertising. Globalisation also brings new global products and services for which new outlet markets are then sought and, consequently, further civilisation and cultural parameters emerge. A clear effect of globalisation processes is the spread of such consumption patterns in societies that ignore environmental and social costs, ultimately contributing to the waste of goods, resources and nature and making an individual dependent on possession of goods.

The reasons why consumers are inclined to follow global consumption patterns include [Holt, Quelch, Taylor, 2004, pp. 68–75]:

- 1) new values and philosophy of the modern life imposed by the Western civilisation culture where an important role is played by attractiveness, modernity and a desire for global products;
- 2) high-quality global products, functionality, comfort, adaptation to new realities;
- 3) easier communication among consumers in different countries, allowing them to exchange opinions, experience and market knowledge.

When assessing globalisation of consumption, both positive and negative consequences can be discerned, and their scale and scope depend on the socio-economic development of countries. The first group of consequences comprises [Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, 1999, p. 464]:

- 1) proliferation of global consumption ethics,
- 2) increased access to advanced technology products,
- 3) better conditions for meeting the needs and expectations of consumers,
- 4) stronger consumer preferences,
- 5) harmonisation of consumer safety laws,
- 6) infrastructure development.

On the other hand, negative consequences of consumption globalisation are as follows [Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, 1999, p. 465]:

- 1) artificial inclusion of foreign influences and products in local traditions (hybridisation of consumption),
- 2) the risk of changes in local consumption habits,
- 3) risks of purchasing global products, rather than meeting basic needs,
- 4) a lack of correlation between market globalisation and the globalisation of democratic and civil society institutions.

## GLOBALISATION AND CONSUMPTION MEGATRENDS

The social, political and economic changes as well as the continuous technological progress (in particular, the development of information technologies) and increasing globalisation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries impact the long-term behaviour of economic men (and thus consumers) and are referred to as megatrends. Megatrends have been an area of considerable interest among sociologists, cultural anthropologists, psychologists and economists for many years. Therefore, the literature dealing with this topic includes their various definitions. The notion of megatrends was first used by John Naisbitt, an American futurologist, in *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives* published in 1982. He defined megatrends as large social, economic, political and technological changes that unfold gradually but have a lasting impact on our lives for seven to ten years. Megatrends can be said to determine long-term socio-political, cultural and technological changes accompanying the transition

from the industrial to post-industrial era, where specific empowerment of workers takes place with an increasing role of knowledge and creativity. These changes are global and slow to form, but once in place, they continue for a longer time [Zalega, 2012, p. 132]. Megatrends can be defined as permanent (6–10 years) global and macroeconomic development forces that are formed slowly and spread rapidly, simultaneously exerting a significant and irreversible impact on culture, law, economy and society (lifestyles of households and the operation of companies on the market) [Zalega, 2013, pp. 11–12]. It is necessary to remember that megatrends are not objective, i.e. independent of human consciousness and will. Megatrends result from a combination of original trends that are generally easier to recognise. It can be argued that while trends affecting the society cause “evolution”, megatrends bring about a “revolution” due to their far-reaching social, economic, legal and technological consequences. It should also be borne in mind that both studies on and analyses of megatrends largely consist in deductive reasoning based on a wide range of observations that are difficult to generalise. According to J. Naisbitt and P. Aburdene, an emerged megatrend usually “sweeps” through certain industries, dominating and transforming them, and thus contributes to new megatrends being formed [Naisbitt, Aburdene, 1990, pp. 53–56]. In today’s world, many large megatrends can be observed. Their relevance for explaining and forecasting the developmental situation depends, however, on how they are classified. Given the issues raised in this article, we will focus exclusively on megatrends in consumption. Taking into account this criterion, megatrends can be defined as objective and long-term directions of general consumer choices, behaviours and preferences.

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the mentality of consumers changed as a result of globalisation of consumption, which was reflected as the adoption of a specific system of consumption values. What is observed is a shift from consumer civilisation based on the quantitative growth in consumption towards a focus on its qualitative aspects allowing for a higher quality of life.

The consequence of globalisation are changes in the level and distribution of income. Today’s economy is witnessing increasing wage disparities between low wages of blue-collar workers and high salaries of managerial staff. In addition, the asymmetry of income distribution both among groups of countries and within individual countries translates into changes in the interest in luxury goods with unique functional and aesthetic properties and sophisticated design produced by companies such as: LVMH, Luxottica, Swatch Group, Gucci Group, Coach, Hermes, Phillips-Van Heusen or Prada SpA. The products of these companies have long been affordable to economic elites only. I would call this megatrend **luxurisation (prestigiousation) of consumption**, since consumers purchasing luxury goods do not rely solely on their functionality, but are often motivated by the potential of such goods to create a certain image in the minds of other people, i.e. a kind of prestige. Consumers inclined to follow this megatrend are themselves

willing to imitate the behaviours of economic elites, treating this as social advancement. In many countries of the world, those who mostly contribute to increasing demand for luxury goods are entrepreneurs accumulating wealth. An interesting classification of luxury goods beneficiaries was provided by a US consulting firm – SRI Consulting Business Intelligence, which identified three groups of consumers [<http://www.adage.com/article/american-demo-graphics/good-life/44684/>]:

- 1) luxury is functional (i.e. consumers purchasing luxury goods for their functionality);
- 2) luxury is a reward (i.e. consumers treating luxury goods as a reward for their hard and responsible work);
- 3) luxury is indulgence (i.e. consumers addicted to buying luxury goods).

In Poland, the demand for such goods is generated, in particular, by some high-income households belonging to the fifth quintile group with a monthly disposable income per capita exceeding PLN 10,000.00.

Another important source of the megatrend commonly known as **role-relaxed consumption** are changes in consumers' value systems. This is reflected in a bigger interest in their own appearance and quality of life. Today's consumers who are interested in a healthy lifestyle regularly do sports (e.g. Nordic walking, jogging, cycling, swimming etc.), care about their appearance (e.g. do aerobics in fitness clubs) and well-being (e.g. concentration meditation: anapana, jhana or vipassana, moving meditation, mindfulness meditation, visualisation, homoeopathy, natural medicine, etc.). As they attach greater importance to the quality of life, consumers (especially those from high-income households) do not focus solely on furnishing their flats and homes, but increasingly concentrate on their own health. Therefore, they purchase better-quality cosmetics for hair and body care, organic food and food supplements (e.g. "light" products) and use pharmacological products, undergo plastic surgeries, attend wellness and spa centres, etc. Consumers who are concerned about a healthy diet buy fresh products from reliable sources, mainly organic farms, and from good and reliable suppliers.

Changes in the structure of employment resulting from the prevalence of atypical (non-standard, flexible) forms of employment are causing the so-called **restrained (cautious) consumption** megatrend to emerge. It should also be mentioned that the dynamic development of flexible forms of employment allows young people and women to work more frequently, on the one hand, and contributes to increased uncertainty associated with the employment relationship, on the other hand, which, in effect, influences individuals' behaviour as regards spending and saving their disposable income, thereby affecting the level and structure of consumption in the long term. This megatrend is somewhat correlated with the feminisation of social life<sup>2</sup>, which means a changing and contin-

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<sup>2</sup> Feminisation involves adopting standards and beliefs previously regarded as "feminine" and blurring the boundary between male and female value systems, e.g. metrosexual fashion style.

uously rising position of women in the economic, political, social and cultural life of modern societies.

Women's professional work has contributed indirectly to the development a megatrend called **lazy (comfortable) consumption**. In this case, the focus is on products that facilitate a comfortable life. This has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the demand for highly processed products fitting into the flexi-eating trend (e.g. sweet treats, instant soups, instant noodles, etc.), the use of convenience foods, ordering food and eating out, and the use of professional catering services (for family celebrations, communion receptions, religious festivals etc.). All of these consumer behaviours of today's households have contributed to the dynamic servicisation of consumption (e.g. the development of tourist, hotel and catering services). It should be noted that, owing to standardisation of fast food offers and automation of catering services provision system, the consumer is also becoming an apparent link in this system, precisely because self-service entails the consumer's active involvement in value creation.

Another megatrend ensued from globalisation processes is **celebration of consumption** associated with a specific way of eating. Consumers themselves organise receptions and invite guests to prepare dishes together, using the ideas suggested by each guest. Traditional visits to restaurants are being replaced by meetings in dinner clubs organised at home, but also in familiar restaurants. The idea is to enjoy the celebration of good food in good company. Such initiatives, launched in the US and the UK, are also being implemented in Poland, where dinner clubs in every major city allow for tasting new dishes and meeting interesting people. This cooking fashion and a drive to new kitchen arrangements are being enhanced by mass-media promotion of chefs who are becoming celebrities strongly influencing the behaviours and consumption culture, not only in the area of food (i.a. K. Okrasa, M. Gessler, R. Makłowicz).

Another megatrend affecting the modern consumer is the increasing mobility of people. This megatrend is called **functionalisation of consumption** and is a direct consequence of the ongoing globalisation of the world economy. It has contributed to a very rapid development of the aviation industry, in particular cheap airlines such as: Wizzair, Ryanair, Centralwings, Easy Jet, Germanwings, etc. The dynamic development of passenger transport has boosted the so-called secondary demand, or demand for goods and services that are directly connected with travel. Namely, a large increase in demand has been observed for travel bags, cameras, video cameras, smaller packaging designed for short trips, products combining functionality and simplicity and labelled with such keywords as "smart", "mini" or "go", to name a few. In addition, given more frequent and faster travelling from one place to another in the "shrinking world", many people feel the need for contacts with others, especially those having similar or identical values and interests. That is why various consumer clubs are being established

and meetings and gatherings are being organised to allow those interested to share their experiences and opinions on a particular topic with other consumers with similar interests. It should also be mentioned that the megatrend labelled as functionalisation of consumption is creating a group of consumers who are open to the world and see globalisation processes as an opportunity to build relationships with inhabitants of other countries and to benefit more from the achievements of civilisation. They are, therefore, interested in a global product offer, since it makes them feel like citizens of the world. Global consumers are also very mobile in space, because they wish to learn about other cultures, recognising cultural diversity as an important value. At the same time, they are aware of the trends towards homogenisation of consumption and cultural patterns, which they accept as they spot the related benefits these may bring for them. Aspiring to be citizens of the world, they embrace new urban solutions whereby land is developed so as to promote comfort of the residents. They strive to overcome communication barriers by investing in learning foreign languages and other forms of education.

A megatrend observed in the behaviour of today's households on the market is a change in their consumer behaviour as regards shopping places – a change stemming from clients' preference to purchase and use products in a convenient way. This phenomenon is referred to as **mallisation of consumption**. Guided by a well-known marketing principle of "one stop shopping", consumers prefer to do quick and complete shopping in one place, e.g. in shopping malls, hypermarkets and supermarkets or discount shops. This megatrend has also created a consumer group of "lovers of commercial space" called postflaneurs and smaller by some authors. They include both those who like shopping in mall surroundings and those who regard the very being in a retail chain shop as a treat, because they delight in watching displays and people and in strolling around the malls. These are people hungry for unusual feelings who wish to break away from the everyday reality, routine and life problems.

Another megatrend that has emerged as a result of globalisation and relates partly to the mallisation of consumption is **consumption sacralisation** whereby celebration of various religious and national festivals has been converted to commercial habits. The beginning of the year sees big sales, followed by St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Easter, Mother's Day, Children's Day, Halloween, and the most important commercial holiday – Christmas. It is obvious that this cycle is associated with the religious calendar. Time returning to the starting point allows people to feel safe in the face of infinity. It used to be the time associated with religious events and the cycle of nature, whereas today these are accompanied by consumption. In shopping malls or shopping centres, the atmosphere is similar to that prevailing in the church, hence a consumer who is not adequately involved in shopping may feel like an intruder [Fiske, 2004, p. 64]. This comparison was even further elaborated by D. Miller, claiming that the

act of consumption is an equivalent of a ritual sacrifice. Both making a sacrifice and doing shopping are expected to metaphysically transform the product. The moment of purchasing, spending money resembles the moment of sacrifice – the actor is rewarded with a form of grace or power. The only difference is that instead of gods magically providing power, the consumer receives the power of a brand, a cult product, membership of a privileged group. Another issue associated with consumption sacralisation is the protection against the fear of death. Both death and old age have lost their place in the public sphere. The blame for this is put on new generations that have abandoned traditional values including respect for the elderly. The media, however, are reassuring, arguing that virtually every disease has its cause. If that is the case, it can be prevented through consumption – proper diet, following hygiene rules, fitness, etc. Simultaneously, death is now being perceived as a medical phenomenon only, removed from sight and hidden behind hospital curtains and sterile doors. On the other hand, the media are dazzling audiences with dirty scenes of murder, news programmes are massively showing death, making it both too abstract and too common to be worth any concern whatsoever [Fiske, 2004, p. 177].

Globalisation, on the one hand, and the rapid development of the Internet, on the other, have contributed to a fast development of a megatrend known as **information technology civilisation** or **cyberconsumerism** (with reference to online consumption). The use of the Internet by consumers (*homo informaticus*, or e-consumer, also called consumer of the new era) and improvements to the consumption process undoubtedly facilitate their access to unlimited sources of information, consumer goods and services. Information and communication technologies make it easier and faster for e-consumers to access rich sources of information about goods and services offered on the web. Consequently, consumer choice increases, expanding opportunities for online shopping. In this way, consumption styles may be personalised as consumers of the new era are increasingly willing to shop online with home delivery of the goods so purchased. Information technology civilisation as a megatrend is a result of new trends such as: social media, virtual consumption and multitasking<sup>3</sup>. It should be highlighted that the achievements of civilisation, notably in information and communication technology, foster the rise of “ambitious and creative” consumers who most fully benefit from these achievements and try to participate in such developments. At the same time, huge fascination with technology, in particular the Internet, makes consumers excessively reliant on technology, which paradoxically creates a restriction whereby users are inevitably influenced by communicated messages. The category of *homo ambitious* was indicated by Francis Fukujama, emphasising their desire for continuous development and appreciation of intangible values. The presented group of consumers also comprises creative

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<sup>3</sup> For further information on these consumption trends see: [Zalega, 2013].

consumers who, given their intellectual potential and professions pursued (authors, engineers, doctors, etc.), play an important role in initiating and creating innovation. These “active and creative” consumers want access to detailed information about purchased products and their impact on human health and fitness. As participants in virtual communities, they share their views and follow advice and recommendations of others, especially experts. This gives them a sense of control over their lives and related problems. According to J. van Dijk [1999, p. 159], new media, by creating a virtual space, contribute to the phenomenon of “lost communities”, because lifestyles and customs that prevailed in traditional communities are changing.

## CONCLUSION

Definitions of globalisation contained in the relevant literature often stress a change in the operating conditions of the global economy. As a result of this change, events and processes in one part of the world are important for individual operators and societies in distant parts of the globe.

Globalisation is stimulated by market determinants (emergence of transnational companies; development of new international distribution channels), cost factors (economies of scale and scope of production, trade and services; availability of better and cheaper supply sources; savings resulting from centralised logistics systems), government factors (trade policy liberalisation; internationalisation of quality, technical, environmental and safety standards; international economic integration processes) and competition factors (growing competition in domestic markets and the emergence of companies able to compete on global markets). The key drivers of globalisation are: technical forces (industrialisation; information and communication revolution; transport revolution), economic forces (increasing individual income; world trade; global financial markets; market forces), social forces (consumption; education and skills; harmonisation of consumer preferences) and political forces (reduction of trade barriers; intellectual property rights; technical standards).

Globalisation manifests itself in multiple aspects of human life and affects many areas of human activity. Its influence is also of great importance for consumption as such. The outcome of globalisation impacts is an increase in consumption in different countries and a spread of various behavioural patterns that are transferred along with the development of telecommunications, all-embracing Internet, mass media, access to various information sites, more widespread tourist mobility and unification of goods. Such direct globalising forces bring an indirect effect, namely megatrends in consumption. What should be borne in mind is also the fact that globalisation of consumption is treated as both a cause and a result of changes in consumer behaviour on the market.

Distinguishing and classifying new megatrends as well as analysing changes obviously expand our knowledge about the market and the behaviour of economic agents operating there, and set directions for research on new megatrends, with account being taken of forecasting the future. Clashes of various megatrends are a logical step in the evolution of modern civilisation, meaning that, on the one hand, consumers focused on megatrends may cause a completely new model of the functioning of the economy and society to emerge and, on the other hand, companies, by monitoring megatrends, can predict potential changes in consumer behaviour more easily and thus adjust their strategies by matching both their product offer and supply with market requirements. Conclusions drawn from the identification of new megatrends may also help companies build a competitive advantage on the market.

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### *Summary*

Globalisation is one of the challenges at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This notion is used in everyday life and may be considered from different points of view, because globalisation is a process relevant to and significantly affecting various aspects of human existence. Globalisation processes determine the changes in the system of consumer values. Globalisation of consumption is also treated as both a cause and a result of changes in consumer behaviour on the market. It involves a spread and extension of the product offer promoted on the global market, leading to convergence of consumption patterns and purchase and consumption behaviours in different parts of the world. Societies in developing countries relatively quickly adopt patterns that emerge in developed countries, often at the expense of their local cultural identities. This article aims to reveal the relationship between globalisation processes and the market behaviour of today's consumers. The study contains a purely theoretical analysis of the processes of consumption globalisation. In view of the requirements concerning its length, imposed by the journal, the first part of the paper concentrates solely on discussing the key determinants of globalisation as well as mechanisms and manifestations of consumption globalisation processes. Further, the focus is on consumption megatrends emerging in the era of globalisation and the Internet.

*Keywords:* globalisation, consumption, megatrends, consumer behaviour

## **Makrotrendy konsumenckie w warunkach globalizacji**

### *Streszczenie*

Globalizacja jest jednym z wyzwań przełomu XX i XXI wieku. Jest to pojęcie, które funkcjonuje w życiu codziennym, które można rozpatrywać z różnych punktów widzenia, gdyż jest to proces dotyczący różnych aspektów ludzkiej egzystencji i w istotny sposób na nią wpływający. Zasadniczy wpływ na zmiany układu wartości konsumpcyjnych mają procesy globalizacji. Globalizacja konsumpcji jest przy tym traktowana zarówno jako przyczyna jak i skutek zmian zachowań konsumentów. Globalizacja konsumpcji polega na upowszechnieniu i rozszerzeniu oferty produktów lansowanych na rynku globalnym, co prowadzi do ujednoczenia się wzorców konsumpcji, zachowań nabywczych i konsumpcyjnych w różnych częściach świata. Społeczeństwa krajów rozwijających się stosunkowo szybko przyjmują wzorce ukształtowane w rozwiniętych państwach, często kosztem utraty lokalnej tożsamości kulturowej. Celem artykułu jest ukazanie zależności między procesami globalizacji a rynkowymi zachowaniami współczesnych konsumentów. Opracowanie ma wyłącznie charakter teoretycznych rozważań na temat procesów globalizacji konsumpcji. Z uwagi na wymogi objętościowe czasopisma, w pierwszej części opracowania skoncentrowano się wyłącznie na omówieniu najważniejszych uwarunkowań rozwoju globalizacji oraz mechanizmów i przejawów procesów globalizacji konsumpcji. W dalszej części artykułu uwagę skoncentrowano na makrotrendach konsumenckich powstałych w epoce globalizacji i Internetu.

*Słowa kluczowe:* globalizacja, konsumpcja, makrotrendy, zachowania konsumentów

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