

## PARADIGM OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN MARKETING

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**Abstract.** It is commonly perceived that the marketing and sustainable development are two different terms, since according to existing stereotype they are on two opposite sides of the consumption level. In the article it has been shown that the relationship between the marketing and sustainable development is exceptionally strong, which results from the functions fulfilled by the marketing in the market economy consisting in mating goods and demand on a market and taking actions in the area of creating and satisfying needs of customers. The concept that fully reflects interest of the marketing in sustainable development is sustainable marketing. Even though this concept is becoming increasingly popular in Poland, it has not been discussed in broader terms than from the perspective of an enterprise. In the article has been discussed the issue of the sustainable marketing from the macromarketing perspective. Particular emphasis has been placed on the role that it plays from the perspective of redefining the assumption of the traditional marketing concept.

**Key words:** sustainable marketing, marketing in sustainable economic development, macromarketing

### INTRODUCTION

Interest of the marketing in the issues of the sustainable development is currently one of the most dynamically developing paradigms of the marketing, which derives from the need to explain and detail the assumptions of the marketing from the social and environmental perspective. Numerous terms referring to the issue of the marketing and natural development such as: green marketing, greener marketing, environmental marketing, ecological marketing, or last but not least the sustainable marketing proving significant interest of the marketing in the issue of the natural environment inclining to provide more detailed explanation of the place of the paradigm of the sustainable development both in the practice and theory of the marketing.

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In the article has been taken an attempt to define the role of the paradigm of the sustainable development in the marketing. Moreover, it has also been presented the manner of understanding the sustainable marketing and to what extent does it constitute a change of the traditional manner of thinking about the marketing issues denoting redefinition of the issues considered as the binding canon of the traditional marketing thinking. The purpose of the conducted analysis is to better understand the gist of the sustainable marketing, indicate its innovative nature and opportunities following from the sustainability for further development of the marketing theory.

Due to the fact that the sustainable marketing is strictly linked to the sustainable development in the article at first has been defined the term sustainable development. Then, it has been explained from where stems the interest of the marketing in the sustainable development. In consideration of the fact that both in the economics and humanities interest in the environmental issues creates the need to substantially redefine the theory, there have been presented the main assumptions of the sustainable marketing by focusing on proving how it contributes to redefining the traditional manner of thinking about the marketing issues. In the last part of the article has been presented modification of the marketing mix from the perspective of the requirements of the sustainability.

## **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The term sustainable development is most frequently connected with the activity of the World Commission of Environment and Development commonly known as the Brundtland Commission established in 1983 by the United Nations. In its report from 1987 the Commission considered that both the pace and process of the social and economic development constitutes threat to the natural environment [United Nations 1987]. Therefore, in order to prevent such phenomena as dwindling of natural resources and increasing threat to humans health the Commission requested the governments of the countries to change their manner of approaching the issue of economic and social growth by recommending the sustainable development. It has been defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” [United Nations 1987].

Since publication of the report of the Brundtland Commission the term sustainable development has been applied in various manners depending on whether it is used in academic, planning, business or environmental politics context. In spite of highly diversified manner of understanding this term, there may be discerned substantial features of the sustainable development.

Considered in theoretical terms the sustainable development is based on reversal of the paradigm of the neoclassical economy, which assumed that goods such as earth, air, water, woods are infinite (therefore, they are defined as free goods) and may be used by humans in the production process in indefinite manner. According to the sustainable development concept these are rare goods and should be treated at least just as capital created by the human beings. On the other hand, the economic growth should ensure better use

of raw materials and other natural resources, rational use of power and work, as well as ecological technologies and protection of environmental and cultural heritage [Kamiński 2012]. Apart from the fact that the sustainable development brought new dimension to the economic category of scarcity (limitation), it has also caused that economists apart from balancing the needs in the interpersonal dimension have also faced the challenge of balancing the needs in the intergeneration dimension [van Dam and Apeldoorn 2008].

In practical understanding the sustainability is equivalent to life based on use of renewable natural resources. This means that non-renewable raw materials should be used to smaller extent, whilst renewable raw materials (of plant or animal origin) should be used in pace resulting from the cycle of their regeneration. By using the language of the financial market it could be said that according to the idea of the sustainable development the society should as much as possible live “from interest” and not “from capital”.

Along with safety and protection of the human right ensuring the sustainable development became one of the three primary tasks of the United Nations [Rotfeld 2015]. This need follows from disastrous condition of the natural environment. Some data depicting this situation have been presented below:

- according to the data of the United Nations the use of the natural resources of the Earth had been exceeded already in 1980;
- in the year 2008 1.4 billion people on the Earth were living without access to fresh water;
- 80% of the human population lives in the countries where there are used more resources than they may be reproduced within the boundaries of these countries. If all people on the Earth consumed on the same level, in order to live the human kind would need five planets such as the Earth;
- using slight assumption of growth if humans do not change they manner of living and consumption of the natural resources, it is forecast that since 2030 it will be indispensable to sustain the natural resources of two planets such as the Earths and in 2050 almost four.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR INTEREST OF THE MARKETING IN THE ISSUE OF SUSTAINABILITY**

If we assume that the role of the marketing in the market economy leads solely to limit demand barriers [Krzyżanowska and Wrzosek 2009], it becomes obvious that the marketing shows natural tendency towards direction contrary to the sustainability [Borland and Lindgreen 2012]. Planned aging of a product and stimulation of extending desire to material consumption constitutes the key factor of driving the growth of the traditional marketing paradigm that contributes to creating the environmental issues. However, the sole role of the marketing is not to encourage to incur by consumers increasingly more expenses, but its role in the market economy exceeds substantially beyond the limitations of the demand barriers and increase of the consumption level. Interest of the marketing in the issues of the sustainable development follows primary from the function of the marketing consisting in distribution of resources, organization of network of communication and

exchange as well as creation of level and style of life [Kamiński 2014, Mish and Miller 2014, Wilkie and Moore 2014]. Potential of the marketing to contribute in the sustainable development follows from the possibility to prompt conducts that may be used in favour of the sustainable development. Therefore, the role of the marketing in the sustainable development is not impassive and as aptly noticed by van Dam and Appeldoorn “marketing can be part of problem or part of solution” [2008, p. 266]. This interpretation is most broadly reflected in the concept of the sustainable marketing.

## THE TERM SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

Most generally the sustainable marketing may be defined as “marketing within and supportive of sustainable economic development” [van Dam and Appeldoorn 2008, p. 254] or use of the sustainable development in the field of the marketing [Mitchell et al. 2010]. The term sustainable marketing may also be defined by adjusting the needs of the sustainability to the currently binding definition of the marketing of the AMA<sup>1</sup> [Kamiński 2009]. In this manner the sustainable marketing may be defined as process of creation, communication and provision to customers of values that both protect and strengthen the natural (environmental) and human capital [Martin and Schouten 2012].

The sustainable marketing may also be defined from the perspective of the effects of the marketing activities, from which the most fundamental is continuous consumption which is opposite to non-continuous consumption, i.e. hitherto developed threatening the natural environment by questioning human existence for propagation of which are substantially responsible marketing departments of enterprises whose main task according to the binding marketing paradigm is to increase sale. This is proved, for instance, by the criteria of assessment of the effects of marketing activities published in popular marketing workbooks. The sustainable marketing is considered as a derivative of the “sustainable consumption”, i.e. “achievement of optimal satisfaction of consumer wants by allocating the use of environmental functions in the shape of products or services without exceeding externally determined limits” [van Dam and Appeldoorn 2008, p. 265]. The sustainable marketing understood in this manner raises one of the main issues of the marketing by trying to answer the question how to accommodate the traditional purpose of the marketing that is considered to be increase of sale (market share and profit) with the sustainable consumption constituting one of the keystones of the sustainable development.

From the theoretical perspective the sustainable marketing is expression and attempt of broader view on marketing management resulting from ecological, social and economic influences that result from globally material events affecting the market. The reasons of its increased popularity are practices questioning validity of the market orientation (MO) focused on achieving short-term profits and causing damage to the long-term interests of the interested parties such as cutting down tropical forests, irresponsible exploitation of some fish species (e.g. codfish) in seas or imprudence shown by bankruptcy of large enterprises, banks and insurance companies which led to the global financial crisis in the year 2009 [Mitchell et al. 2010].

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<sup>1</sup> [www.marketingpower.com/\\_layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=M](http://www.marketingpower.com/_layouts/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=M) (accessed 09.03.2016).

## **THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE SUSTAINABLE MARKETING**

Due to the fact that there are some views that the sustainable development is the traditional marketing supplemented with environmental elements or opportunity to gain competitive advantage that may be achieved by reaching a group of consumers interested in environmental issues, below has been presented the theoretical basis of the sustainable marketing showing the consequences borne by the theory and practice of the marketing resulting from referring by the marketing to the idea of the sustainability and explaining to what extent the sustainable marketing constitutes redefinition of the assumptions of the traditional marketing.

**Epistemological assumptions.** Contrary to the traditional marketing assuming constant increase of sale and share of an enterprise in the market the sustainable marketing acknowledges that, since the time when the reproduction ability of the Earth has been extended the consumption should not increase, but rather stabilize or even decrease. Therefore, the primary challenge faced by the marketing in the sustainable economy is taking responsibility for transformation of the society towards consumption culture and lifestyles supporting the sustainability and providing support in redefining quality of life in the intangible categories [Assadourian 2010]. By offering proposals regarding values that reflect broader scope of the human needs it attempts to create consumers whose lifestyle comes in response to the listed conditions of the system ensuring the sustainable development [Mish and Miller 2014].

The sustainable marketing also constitutes redefinition of the traditional assumptions of the marketing concept (the marketing management) presented over fifty years ago by McCarthy [1960], which may be found in the current marketing workbooks [Perreault and McCarthy 1999, Perreault et al. 2013], which assumes that the scope of the marketing issues is exemplified through three concentric circles out of which the internal comprises a consumer as the main subject of marketing effort, the second “controlled factors” (product, price, distribution and promotion) and the third refers to the “uncontrolled factors”, i.e. elements of the surrounding of an enterprise that comprise, i.e.: (1) resources and goals of the enterprise, (2) current business situation, (3) economic environment, (4) political and legal surrounding as well as (5) cultural and social surrounding.

The sustainable marketing substantially changes this traditional conceptualization. Firstly, it extends the list of the surrounding factors by the natural environment that is not included in the abovementioned model of E.J. McCarthy. Secondly, it assumes that similarly as other “uncontrolled factors” the natural environment should constitute important subject of interest of marketing departments of the enterprises. Therefore, it far more expressly than in the traditional marketing assumes that the effects of the marketing activities are “transferred” to the factors hitherto considered as the “uncontrolled”. In the marketing this is a manner of thinking where the enterprise is not in the centre of interest and the main object of interest of the marketing science is the marketing system.

Indications of applying simple and obvious solutions from the scope of the environment protection should not be referred to as the sustainable marketing [van Dam and Appeldoorn 2008]. As noticed and considered as being subject of influence of environmental factors of marketing departments it is “an appeal to lengthen corporate time horizons and to value continuity over profit. Most importantly, sustainable marketing is an appeal to ac-

cept the limitations of marketing philosophy and acknowledge the necessity of regulatory constraints to the market mechanism” [van Dam and Appeldoorn 2008, p. 266].

Acceptance of the assumptions of the sustainability in the economy means “for marketing theory (...) a shift in focus from competitive strategy and its economic grounds (such as profit, cost, and market potential) toward restricted competition that balances corporate objectives, like market share, with societal objectives, like sustainability” [van Dam and Appeldoorn 2008, p. 259].

**“Natural Step”.** Consideration of the “uncontrolled factors” as the object of the marketing management and extension of the time horizon of the marketing activities are not the sole properties of the sustainable marketing. In order to specify its assumptions there is applied a scientific frame of the sustainability known as “The Natural Step” [Martin and Schouten 2012, Martin and Schouten 2014, Mish and Miller 2014], which has been created by a team of international experts from over 50 countries representing various disciplines of science who by responding to the report of the Brundtland Commission identified four “systemic conditions” that must be met for the purpose of the sustainable development that have been called the Natural Step. The team members agreed that in order to achieve the sustainable development the nature may not be subject of [the Natural Step 2009]:

- constant increase of extraction of the Earth’s crust (e.g. coal);
- concentration of poisonous substances produced by the human beings (e.g. plastic);
- degradation through physical intervention (e.g. cutting down forests). Apart from the abovementioned conditions referring to the sustainable natural environment (ecological), there was presented the fourth condition regarding use of the natural resources and raising the issues of social justice and life conditions. It has been considered that in sustainable society;
- people may not live in conditions that reduce their chances of satisfying their needs.

When referring the above listed conditions to the marketing activities it is assumed that in order to be able to talk about the sustainable marketing the marketing activities should be limited by: (1) delivery of production materials extracted from the Earth’s crust; (2) ability of the Earth to absorb the substances produced by the human beings that have negative effect on the ecosystem; (3) ability of the Earth to conduct reclamation of the losses resulting from human activity consisting in degradation of the ecosystem; (4) systemic conditions that question the human ability to sustain their basic needs. Taking into consideration the abovementioned criteria it has been ascertained that, e.g. these limitations quite substantially infringe marketing of the consumer electronics. It depends on a production process that requires rare metals coming from the Earth’s crust and chemical components, which are not available in the nature as well as other components obtained by physical degradation of the ecosystem. The production activities taken in this sector frequently threaten human ability in favour of satisfaction of the basic needs by decreasing access to water, emission of toxins or employment in dangerous conditions, and in numerous cases are realized based on considerations that are too low to satisfy the human needs.

**Sustainable market orientation.** The sustainable marketing also assumes that change of the marketing model of the enterprises. It is suggested in the sustainable marketing the market orientation that constitutes a basis of the marketing strategy of the most of the

enterprises should be replaced by broader conceptualization, i.e. the sustainable market orientation (SMO) [Mitchell et al. 2010].

Since the second half of the previous century it has been emphasized in the marketing workbooks that neither time nor energy should be used as activities if they are of no meaning to a consumer. This view is defined as the market orientation (MO). However, it does not exclude attention of the consumers to the environmental issues. It has been known for a long time that most consumers are unwilling to pay substantially more for more environmentally friendly products if their cheaper alternatives are available [Grunert 1992, Lewicka-Strzałecka 2015]. Moreover, expectations of the consumers usually manifest themselves with regard to a short-time perspective, whilst the environmental effects of the marketing activities concern the future generations. Therefore, it is assumed in the sustainable marketing that the marketing activities may not constitute simple reflection of expectations of the consumers. This constitutes the main prerequisite justifying replacement of the market orientation (MO) with the sustainable market orientation (SMO).

The SMO differs from the traditional market orientation by the fact that it offers management that is more socially and environmentally responsible and encourages to seek marketing strategies that guarantee positive results by connecting the marketing activities with the social and environmental norms. According to Mitchell et al. “under the SMO model, corporate marketing management moves beyond MO’s market-based fundamentalism to corporate marketing characterized by long-run strategies that aim to meet market expectations by the competitive and environmentally responsible application of resources and stakeholder-focused marketing enriched by dimensions of environmental and social responsibility” [2010, p. 163–164].

Reconceptualization of the market orientation towards the sustainability constitutes effect of the synthesis of observation resulting from four various areas of literature. First of all, these are works devoted to the market orientation (MO), in particular within the area concerning its limitations. Meta-analysis of literature devoted to the market orientation [Kirca et al. 2005] encouraged researchers to go beyond the conventional approach to the micromanagement and analyse of the factors affecting its application, including, among others, the environmental changes. It has been enriched with debate on how the powers having influence on the market orientation should be identified, measured and assessed [Cadagon et al. 2008, Lawer and Knox 2008]. The second source of the literature on which was based the reconceptualization of the market orientation are the works devoted to the macro-marketing, in particular those devoted to use of the systemic approach towards the marketing activities [Dixon 1984, Layton 2011, Layton 2015]. The third source of the literature are the works devoted to liability of the enterprises towards stockholders [Greenley et al. 2005, Laczniak and Murphy 2012], whilst the fourth source is the literature devoted to management conducted in compliance with social and environmental rules [Bansal 2005, Stubbs and Bocklin 2008].

**Marketing mix.** Apart from the new view on the “uncontrolled” factors of surrounding the sustainable marketing imposes an obligation to take a new view by a marketing manager on the “controlled” factors, i.e. the marketing instruments commonly used by the marketing managers commonly known as the marketing mix. These instruments differ so substantially from the traditional marketing mix that for the sustainability purposes

are referred to as 4Cs [Belz and Peattie 2009] contrary to the 4Ps (price, product, place, promotion) used in the classical marketing.

In place of a product (the first P) the emphasis is put on offering the values proposal, i.e. customer solutions (the first C). This is an expression of an assumption that in the sustainable marketing a product does not necessary have to be a physical product and the most material role is to find a solution for a customer, as well as the aim of the sustainable marketing to dematerialize a product or provide customers with solutions that are rather services than goods in the traditional understanding of the material goods [Mish and Miller 2014]. Equipment of cars, hire purchase of devices and equipment are traditional examples, where the ownership is not transferred, but is found a solution to an issue of a customer. This frequently requires correction of the general business strategy of an enterprise consisting in use of a form of service and production systems which is based on noticing the fact that in the event of use of services instead of products more needs may be satisfied with the use of less power and materials. The most known expressions of the dematerialization are the common in numerous countries, including Poland, municipal bike rentals, short-term car rental offered by Zipcar, or the copy offices of Xerox constituting an alternative to purchase of a photocopiers of this company [Brzustewicz 2012]. An example of innovations, connected with a product created on a basis of a concept of the sustainable development is also the collaborative consumption otherwise known as co-consumption [Rostek and Zalega 2015] and increasingly more popular “smart shopping” [Reformat 2014].

In place of price there is proposed the second C, i.e. the customer cost. Traditionally it is assumed that a market price driven by economic mechanism of demand and supply constitutes an effective tool of making division in the market economy. Due to the fact that the concept of the sustainable development had substantial influence on the economy, the new understanding of scarcity (limitation) must be reflected in the deliberations of the marketing on the value, the reflection of which is a price. In the traditional marketing one of the most common methods of determining a price is based on costs incurred by the enterprises [Pindakiewicz 2009]. According to the assumption of the sustainable marketing they should comprise not only economic, but also social and environmental costs that are incurred not only at the production stage, but also in the course of use or disposal of a product. This means that important is not only the price that customer has to pay for the product, but also all costs connected with its use, including utilisation of the product conducted after completion of its use.

Instead of the place there is proposed convenience – the third C. It emphasizes the value for a customer created by sustainable networks of distribution. As far as the traditional marketing is interested in the most effective delivery of product from a producer to a consumer, the most effective construction of a channel and elimination of any conflicts that arise therein, the sustainable marketing broadens this understanding by following the road taken by the product from “a producer to a trash bin” and does not consider waste as external element, but rather an integral element of the marketing system. This approach is closer to the attempt that design, production, use and utilisation of products occurs in a closed circle, namely free from waste and contamination [Borland and Lingreen 2012].

Promotion has been changed into the fourth C, i.e. the communication. This is an expression of the view that the purpose of the marketing activities in the sustainable market-



ing is creation of a specific attitude of a consumer, as well as reflection of the main role of information in creating trust and dialogue in the exchange relations that are present in the sustainable marketing and conviction that the basis of an effective market exchange is both information and trust. In order for a customer to understand and believe that it received both social and environmental benefits the proposed values should be communicated and presented in a reliable manner.

## CONCLUSIONS

Transformation of consumption societies into sustainable societies is one of the main challenges of present day. Particular role in this process plays the marketing. Therefore, there is urgent need of providing further explanation and detail the marketing assumptions from the environmental perspective. Thus, the sustainable marketing and more broadly the relationship of the marketing with the natural environment undoubtedly requires more thorough research serving both the practice and development of the marketing theory. The detailed review of this issue presented in this article shows that the concept of the sustainable marketing means redefinition of the primary assumptions of the traditional marketing thinking.

The scope of the presented issues of the sustainable marketing, as well as depth of evolution of the traditional marketing shows that the sustainable marketing is most of all a macromarketing term and understood in this manner assumes precedence of the sustainable development considering the marketing as a tool to achieve it. This also means that instead of about the sustainable marketing it is better to talk about the marketing in sustainable economic development.

Apart from research at the enterprise level the sustainable marketing requires research explaining to what extent it contributes and may contribute to solving the issue of lack of sustainability and what other actions, including also supporting the marketing (legal regulations at national, international level, certifications) should be taken in this regard.

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## **PARADYGMAT ZRÓWNOWAŻONEGO ROZWOJU W MARKETINGU**

**Streszczenie.** W powszechnym odbiorze dominuje pogląd, że marketing i zrównoważony rozwój to pojęcia od siebie dość odległe, bowiem zgodnie z obowiązującym stereotypem zajmują one przeciwstawne krańce płaszczyzny konsumpcji. W artykule wykazano, że związek marketingu ze zrównoważonym rozwojem jest wyjątkowo silny. Wynika on z funkcji spełnianych przez marketing w gospodarce rynkowej polegających na kojarzeniu dóbr i potrzeb na rynku oraz aktywności w sferze kreowania i zaspokojenia pragnień konsumentów w celu osiągnięcia przez nich satysfakcji. Koncepcją, która najpełniej odzwierciedla zainteresowanie marketingu zrównoważonym rozwojem, jest zrównoważony marketing (ang. sustainable marketing). Pomimo iż jest on w Polsce coraz bardziej popularny, brak jest do tej pory jego omówienia z punktu widzenia szerszego niż punkt widzenia przedsiębiorstwa. W artykule ukazano problematykę zrównoważonego marketingu z makromarketingowego punktu widzenia. Szczególny akcent położono na rolę, jaką odgrywa on z punktu widzenia przededefiniowania założeń tradycyjnej koncepcji marketingowej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zrównoważony marketing, marketing w zrównoważonym rozwoju gospodarczym, makromarketing

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