

CONSUMO VERDE E ECONOMIA COMPARTILHADA COMO TENDÊNCIAS RENOVADORAS DAS RELAÇÕES SOCIOAMBIENTAIS

*GREEN CONSUMPTION AND SHARING ECONOMY AS TRENDS THAT RENEW OF SOCIO-
ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS*

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RESUMO

O principal objetivo da investigação é examinar a conexão do consumo verde e da economia compartilhada aplicada às relações socioambientais em prol da sustentabilidade. O problema é verificar como o consumo verde e a economia compartilhada colaboram com o compromisso de melhoria social e ambiental. A metodologia foi desenvolvida mediante leitura pelo método hipotético-dedutivo. Trata-se de pesquisa básica, exploratória e bibliográfica, estruturada em três partes. A primeira fase verifica a conscientização do consumo sustentável e do consumo verde. O fragmento seguinte observa a existência de uma aliança entre tecnologia e economia compartilhada. Por fim, a última etapa afere a relevância do consumidor verde na economia compartilhada.

Palavras-Chave: Consumo Verde. Economia Compartilhada. Sustentável. Tecnologia.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the research is to examine the connection between green consumption and sharing economy applied to socio-environmental relations for the benefit of sustainability. The problem is to see how green consumption and the sharing economy can collaborate with the commitment to social and environmental improvement. The methodology was developed through reading by the hypothetical-deductive method. It is basic, exploratory and bibliographical research, structured in three parts. The first phase shows awareness of sustainable consumption and green consumption. The following fragment notes the existence of an alliance between technology and sharing economy. Finally, the last stage addresses the relevance of the green consumer in the sharing economy.

KEYWORDS: Green Consumption. Sharing Economy. Sustainable. Technology.

I INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, a phenomenon facilitated by technology is emerging. People have begun to organize themselves to share, that is, to exchange, participate and share. This practice is called the sharing economy and has social, cultural, financial and environmental repercussions.

The fact is that this new form of reciprocity is notably more sustainable and has an impact on green consumption, which in turn aims for quality, good prices and concern for the environment.

Furthermore, the research shows that this period of transition means that limited ownership of a good can be transferred to shared use, whether tangible goods or not.

This innovation in the field of consumption acts as a trend that implies the production of more durable goods, which consequently reduces harmful impacts on the environment, a factor that influences the well-being of the community.

The proposal is justified by the constant search for a balance between human actions and the environment. Thus, innovations resulting from the connectivity promoted by technological advances have been able to awaken sharing platforms which, as far as they are concerned, encourage awareness of the need to consume with concern for the maintenance of natural resources.

The research is based on studying the relevance of this new form of mutual access to goods, its convenience and the way in which it affects the relationship between human beings and products and services.

The first specific objective addresses the need to raise awareness of sustainable consumption and green consumption, which includes aspects of consumer psychology, the latter as responsible and the protagonist of change.

The second phase looks at the sharing economy in its relationship with technology, presenting examples of sharing platforms, among other things.

The last segment relates the dimension of green consumption in the sharing economy. To this end, socio-environmental impacts resulting from sustainable practices within the sharing paradigm are addressed, especially based on the stimulated idea that using is more important than having.

The investigation uses textual language via systematic reading. The hypothetical-deductive method is used. This research is classified as basic (since it generates knowledge of universal interest). It is an exploratory analysis, since it uses a bibliographic survey. In terms of technical procedures, the research is bibliographical.

2 AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN CONSUMPTION

In order to understand the practice of sustainable consumption and the implementation of the ideas of green consumption, it is important to consider studies that verify the behavior of human beings as consumers.

Firstly, it is important to be clear that consumption has always been part of human customs. "The act of consuming was more focused on food survival, housing needs and the protection of humans, among others, at the beginning of civilizations" (DA SILVEIRA; PETRINI; DOS SANTOS, 2016).

In addition, according to Quintanilla (2002, p. 1), the citizen of the end of the 20th century is a consumer man, "people acquire most of their role as citizens, before themselves and others, through a complex network of social, cultural and economic relations whose maximum expression is the market".

This practice is known as consumer psychology, which is nothing else but the study of

[...] of how people relate to the products and services that they purchase or use. [...] Consumer psychologists study virtually all psychological and behavioral responses that

can occur within the context of a person's role as a consumer. And consistent with the goals of psychologists from other areas, research carried out by consumer psychologists is designed to describe, predict, explain, and/or influence consumer responses to product- and service-related information and experiences (FRIESTAD, 2001).

Thus, the analysis of the way in which people relate to the products and services they buy has a broad influence that has repercussions on the market, which can be both positive and negative for the economy, the environment and the behavior of companies.

Thus, "consumers have a responsibility to use this power not only for their own benefit, but also for that of the whole community - and this will only be possible through the formation of a new awareness, built through environmental education" (GOMES, 2006).

With this in mind, the perception of the collective impact of attitudes, coupled with the main way of resolving social imbrolios (which is education), we can see that the acceleration of historical time in recent decades and the resulting changes in production and consumption patterns reflect on the landscape and generate socio-environmental scars.

We are experiencing a "[...] high degree of environmental degradation that is triggered by the intrinsic characteristics of perverse economic-industrial development fueled by the contradictory relations of need and consumption in the contemporary world" (CORTEZ, 2007, p. 07). Therefore, it is necessary to reflect on the sustainable act of consuming in a scenario that echoes in the social body.

Sustainable consumption can therefore be seen as one of the ways in which there can be "a new form of struggle against irresponsible development and economic growth at all costs. By observing that the entire production process has consumption as its ultimate goal, we realize that creating a responsible consumer is a highly preventative project" (CORTEZ, 2007, p. 13).

In this sense, sustainable consumption translates into changes in the perception of consumer attributions in society. Conscientious consumers need to be more clear-sighted in their purchases, since they generate effluents. It is therefore important to manage resources and make use of goods for the sake of profitable socio-environmental progress.

It is worth saying that "the growing concern about environmental and social responsibility that contemporary society has cultivated raises questions about the contexts of humanity's evolution, including overconsumption" (DA SILVEIRA,; PETRINI; DOS SANTOS, 2016).

In other words, sustainable consumption means

o consumo de bens e serviços promovido com respeito aos recursos ambientais, que se dá de forma que garanta o atendimento das necessidades das presentes gerações, sem comprometer o atendimento das necessidades das futuras gerações. A promoção do consumo sustentável depende da conscientização dos indivíduos da importância de tornarem-se consumidores responsáveis. Depende ainda de um trabalho voltado para a formação de um consumidor-cidadão. (FURRIELA, 2001).

And more:

Esse trabalho educativo é essencialmente político, pois implica a tomada de consciência do consumidor do seu papel de ator de transformação do modelo econômico em vigor em prol de um novo sistema, de uma presença mais equilibrada do ser humano na Terra. O consumidor é ator de transformação, já que tem em suas mãos o poder de exigir um padrão de desenvolvimento socialmente justo e ambientalmente equilibrado (FURRIELA, 2001).

Thus, it is possible to understand that the consumer is the main source of power in capitalist economic systems, since neoclassical economics simply assumes "[...] the concept of 'consumer sovereignty', a rational and free-thinking individual who seeks to maximize his satisfaction through a broad calculation of the various merits and limitations of the goods on offer against their prices" (PORTILHO, 2003, p. 53).

In this sense, the consumer is an important agent of change, since it is through the acquisition of goods and services that are committed to environmental preservation that sustainable development is idealized, i.e. building prosperity without compromising the capacity of natural resources.

Zygmunt Bauman (2008, p. 28) stated that in a world of

em que uma novidade tentadora corre atrás da outra a uma velocidade de tirar o fôlego, num mundo de incessantes começos, viajar esperançoso parece mais seguro e muito mais encantador do que a perspectiva da chegada: a alegria toda está nas compras, enquanto que a aquisição em si, com a perspectiva de ficar sobrecarregado com seus efeitos diretos e colaterais possivelmente incômodos e inconvenientes, apresenta uma alta probabilidade de frustração, dor e remorso.

The awareness that consuming is a complex attitude, since it has psychological, sociological, cultural, economic and anthropological aspects, means that the effects of purchases must be considered not only for the health of the consumer themselves, but for the community as a whole, especially with regard to the environmental impacts of the act of consumption. It is therefore important to highlight the emergence of the idea of green consumption and the green consumer.

This concept arose from the combination of three interrelated factors: "the advent of public environmentalism in the 1970s; the environmentalization of the business sector in the 1980s; and the emergence of concern about the environmental impact of the lifestyles and consumption of affluent societies in the 1990s" (PORTILHO, 2004). As such, it can be seen that the rise of the expression in question is gradual and incorporates various perspectives into its composition.

Thus, private, informed attitudes towards environmental setbacks have emerged as a strategy for resolving environmental problems and transforming towards a sustainable society. Simple, everyday activities have begun to be seen as behaviors that have an impact on the quality of the environment.

It means that the green consumer has been "defined as one who, in addition to the quality/price variable, includes the environmental variable in their 'power of choice', preferring products that do not harm, or are perceived as not harming, the environment". (PORTILHO, 2004). Having said this, we will now look at the influence of technology on the sharing economy in favor of conscious, sustainable and green consumption.

3 THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY AND THE SHARING ECONOMY

The prominence of the sharing economy, also known as the collaborative economy, which is "originally practiced by organizational networks, has intensified the demand for innovations in production processes and business management in search of better standards of competition and productivity" (PAULA, 2017).

Thus, this desire to increase performance through procedural and managerial renewal has socio-environmental repercussions.

In this respect, considering that the sharing economy emerges from a connectivity that has never been experienced before, that is, one that is unprecedented, fast and far-reaching in the history of humanity (given that today many people communicate with each other in real time and,

in this way, plot integration), it is permissible to perceive vigorous economic metabolisms of a new industrial revolution, capable of boosting an ethical element and bringing the economy closer to the social sphere, bringing solidarity economies to fruition (LISBOA, 2017).

In this sense, "the sharing economy is sometimes touted for teaching people skills and helping them learn new things" (SCHOR, 2015). In other words, the sharing economy has the notorious ability to instruct and educate people in practices that, consequently, help them to understand the emerging skills that stem from technology and impact the social and environmental environment.

In this way, the sharing economy signals sustainability, acting as an opportunity to meet the needs of many more human beings. In this way, technology and innovation expand the potential of resources. Concern about environmental demands makes the sharing economy a mechanism for efficient resource management.

The fact is that the sharing economy has matured considerably. The socio-economic impact of the development of this economy is the result of its combination with technology. Thus, the so-called "sharing platforms" generate benefits for everyone involved, especially with regard to access to goods and services.

In this sense, it can be said that the sharing economy

[...] has been on an exponential growth curve over the last couple of years and has been the subject of considerable interest to the stakeholders and policy-makers across the globe. Technology is pivotal to the growing concept of sharing economy, to enable scale and enhance economic impact. A number of sharing platforms have emerged which enable individuals to share goods and services like cars, houses, household products and services. The proliferation of mobile devices has heralded a digital revolution to serve as a catalyst of growth. The appeal of the sharing economy lies in the fact that the sharing platforms create a win-win situation for all the stakeholders. The benefits of the sharing economy are manifold - including on-demand access to goods and services, efficient utilization of unused inventory of assets across industries, leading to a multiplier effect such as increased employment, consumerism, digital literacy and the rise of micro-entrepreneurship (GURURAJ, 2015).

At the same time, it is important to emphasize the need to regulate this form of economy if it is to be successful. In this sense, "while the impact of the sharing economy is significant and definitely cannot be overlooked, its success in changing the traditional market system in a positive way depends largely on the success of regulations" (SEN, 2018).

That said, even if not everyone believes that the sharing economy can bring about significant changes, its growth is undeniable, since several companies have joined the practice in question. The sharing economy is an innovative mechanism for trading and consuming, made possible and at least facilitated by the advance of technology.

Furthermore, we can reflect that

recent years have seen the emergence of a number of businesses that enable consumers to share assets in new ways. Some have predicted that this "sharing economy will change the world; others are skeptical. Whatever the future holds, the sharing economy has already experienced tremendous growth and attracted considerable investment capital and talent (BARRY, 2015).

Moreover, the sharing economy has become a paradigm

apto a revolucionar diversos setores, o que, no entanto, exige forte atenção da sociedade. De fato, apesar de prestarem serviços semelhantes, esse ramo da economia

não pode ser interpretado a partir de modelos antigos, que certamente não respondem aos desafios próprios da sharing economy. Sem o entendimento desta grande revolução econômica que vem alterando os rumos dos mercados, tende-se a enxergar as empresas oriundas da economia compartilhada com base em um paradigma único e ultrapassado. O fenômeno Uber, nesse contexto, é entendido como uma espécie de táxi e o Airbnb é tido como nada mais do que particulares fazendo o papel de hotéis (MENDES; CERÓY, 2015).

It's important to clarify that Uber is an app that was initially used to order cars in some metropolitan areas and is now changing the logistical fabric of cities all over the world. Furthermore, for those who drive, it is a flexible way of earning money; for the city, it is a means of strengthening the local economy and improving access to transportation, so it is considered a network of benefits (UBER, 2018).

It should also be noted that Airbnb was developed with trust in mind, as there are more than four million listings in almost two hundred countries. It is a mechanism for hosting travelers that requires a certain level of commitment, since there is risk assessment, background checks, secure payments and information about any accommodation, experience, guest or host before booking (AIRBNB, 2018).

That said, the proliferation of the sharing economy is favored by the need to produce and consume in a sustainable way, so that this model responds to this convenience by producing business patterns that adjust economic growth with progress, such as the examples described above. Thus, it is clear that the sharing economy "and sustainable development appear to have the potential to produce new forms of organization and competition, as well as alter or refine existing models" (SILVEIRA, 2016, p. 298-305).

4 SHARED

It is no coincidence that the sharing economy acts as one of the main mechanisms for incorporating consumer practices that seek quality, price and lower levels of environmental aggression. It is therefore important to raise awareness that a preserved ecosystem reflects on the (sustainable) development of the planet, and that this has a very close relationship with the economy.

In this sense, Enrique Leff argues that

la acumulación de capital, las tasas de explotación de los recursos y los patrones dominantes de consumo han llegado a sobrepasar la capacidad de carga y de dilución de los ecosistemas, llevando a formas y ritmos sin precedentes de degradación ecológica, de extinción biológica, de erosión de suelos y destrucción de biodiversidad. Esta crisis ambiental no solamente ha llevado a cuestionar la racionalidad económica prevaleciente y a revisar el papel de la naturaleza en la economía, planteando el imperativo de internalizar las condiciones ecológicas y culturales para un desarrollo sustentable, equitativo y diverso (LEFF, 2004, p. 138).

Regarding the relevance of the green consumer in the sharing economy, it can be argued that such an attitude is a commitment to the well-being of society, and even more so: by defining a "green product as merchandise produced in accordance with sustainability practices or environmental certification standards, this so-called well-being would become compatible with this form of production" (PRESTES, 2018, p. 4).

Bearing in mind that in the sharing economy, using is more important than owning the goods, it is possible to see that this practice has mature planning with convenient socio-environmental impacts.

In addition, this behavior induces a posture on the part of companies that is conducive to sustainability, since it is a paradigmatic, gradual and conceptual change, closely connected to the rise of green consumption.

In addition to the mentioned Uber and Airbnb, which are active examples of the sharing economy, it is possible to cite other practices, such as the sale of used products in thrift stores, organizing rides, sharing bicycles, etc. Another example of this economy, which is constantly in vogue, is Netflix.

Netflix "is an online streaming service that allows customers to watch a wide variety of award-winning series, movies and documentaries on thousands of devices connected to the internet" (NETFLIX, 2018).

The fact is that Netflix attracts a wide range of customers, who participate for a variety of reasons: "some like the convenience, some like the collection and others like the cost savings. Few consumers would say they use the service because it's 'greener', but, as with downloading music, it is" (BOTSMAN, 2011, p. 86).

So, whether in the case of car loans (which avoid maintenance costs, paying taxes, etc.), room rentals (which provide extra income on the one hand and contain expenses on the other), online movie rentals (which avoid the need to buy Digital Video Discs and travel to a physical location) or music streaming services (which avoid accumulating Compact Discs), the sharing economy is underway and, even if it's not the primary motivation, the green economy is stimulated.

The sharing economy, as a digression from hyper-consumerism, helps to reduce harmful impacts on nature and boosts the economy based on sharing and exchange.

é que um produto de propriedade individual, muitas vezes com uso limitado, é substituído por um serviço compartilhado que maximiza sua utilidade. Para os usuários, existem dois benefícios principais. Em primeiro lugar, eles não precisam pagar completamente pelo produto. Ele remove os encargos da propriedade, como manutenção, conserto e seguro, e nos permite aproveitar ao máximo os ativos que são efetivamente nossos. E, em segundo lugar, quando o nosso relacionamento com as coisas passa da propriedade para o uso, as opções para atender as nossas necessidades, seja para viagens, lazer, trabalho, alimentação ou filhos, mudam e aumentam (BOTSMAN, 2011, p. 61).

It is a sustainable form of trade. Therefore, regardless of "the specifics of the exchange, a redistribution market encourages the reuse and resale of old items rather than throwing them away, and also significantly reduces the waste and resources that accompany new production" (BOTSMAN, 2011, p. 62).

Furthermore, it is not only

bens tangíveis como carros, bicicletas e artigos usados que podem ser compartilhados, trocados e permutados. Pessoas com interesses semelhantes estão se reunindo para compartilhar e trocar ativos menos tangíveis, como tempo, espaço, habilidades e dinheiro, o que chamamos de estilos de vida colaborativos.

It is clear that improvements are needed in the activities related to the sharing economy, especially in terms of regulation, particularly with regard to civil liability.

However, despite the aspects that need to be adjusted, the sharing economy is still the transition that drives access over ownership, a foundation for green consumption.

Consequently, the collaborative economy raises social and environmental awareness in the capitalist system, especially by stimulating interpersonal relationships, reducing the use of natural resources, reducing waste and water consumption, which in turn leads to greater sustainability and acts as a revolution that can gradually make green and conscious consumption a regular practice.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

If consumer psychology, among many aspects, is concerned with buying behavior of the people, it can be seen that the sharing economy can change the conditions a consumer considers when purchasing a good or service.

It follows that the way in which consumers relate to products influences not only their personal lives, but also the community, especially in the new paradigm of sharing, which changes production patterns and, of course, consumption patterns.

Establishing a responsible and coherent consumer is an early step towards improving the quality of community life and, consequently, reducing the area of socio-environmental damage.

The realization that managing natural resources is essential for the Earth's equilibrium and that the greater the consumption, the more waste will inevitably be produced, strengthens the idea of a consumer-citizen.

Actors in the transformation, consumers can act in favor of "green". Green consumption, the sum of political environmentalism, the environmentalization of the business sector and the fear of the environmental impacts of the profuse pace of life, makes consumers think of the product as a good that must have quality and an adequate price, but which also needs to be in tune with caring for a healthy and balanced environment.

In this respect, environmental awareness and education are important for internalizing the responsibility to consume in the spirit of sustainability. Innovation in production processes and current technological connectivity at an unprecedented pace make the sharing economy a paradigm of revolution, coupled with social maturation towards a sustainable archetype that polishes existing models.

To conclude, it is worth highlighting the need to regulate sharing economy practices, as problems are not uncommon, not least because the practice is generally based on trust, which can be broken. Thus, cases, which are usually brought before the Judiciary, cannot be left perpetually without regulatory support.

Having said that, it is worth pointing out that, in general, convenience, comfort and cost savings are more important to consumers than "greener" environmental awareness when choosing a product.

However, the sharing economy, even intrinsically, promotes the reduction of environmental effects, especially negative ones. The desirable thing is that consumers gradually become aware that their choices have an impact on the environment, especially because of the sharing economy.

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