Preface

In this present turbulent and dizzily changing global business arena and marketing practice, there is a growing concern for ethics and social responsibility issues. Within this thematic campus “consumerism” is considered as the most salient concept. If we look back into the history of consumerism, it can be observed that the concept was gradually evolving from the social welfare bill initiated by the late US President John F. Kennedy which is popularly known as the “Consumer Bills of Rights”. This social welfare bill has given rise to the consumerist activism/movement and was further enhanced by Ralph Nader in his book “Unsafe at any speed” (Unsafe at any speed, n. d.). In this wave, this movement has been gradually transferred into an academic concept in business and marketing named “Consumerism”, and the marketing philosophy increasingly embraces the societal marketing concept. Consequently, the modern era of marketing reflects customer centricity and consumer welfare. Though, initially considered as a fad it has become increasingly important to use this concept especially in corporate/business promotional campaigns to build trust and confidence among the organization’s clients/consumers and stakeholders to guarantee a long term, enduring and loyal relationship. From observing the growth of the body of literature, numerous studies are found from a standalone perspective. However, despite its growing importance it is difficult to find a comprehensive research reference book on consumerism covering all the major issues that will serve as an urgently required firsthand knowledge to marketing academics, students and practitioners. Conclusively, this book intends to cover this gap and portray a more complete picture of the concept. Catering for the ongoing globalization process, this mainly research based book has a strong international orientation representing about 37 chapter authors from around 11 different countries like Austria, Bangladesh, Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Turkey, USA and UK.

Summarizing, the contributions in this book provide a useful body of literature on Consumerism drawing a kind of literature map on the evolution, diverse perspectives of the concept and on Consumerism related multidisciplinary concepts. Certain detrimental and phenomena of Consumerism, such as extensive materialism reflected in compulsive buying, anti-consumptions attitudes mirrored by social movements or consumer boycotts or cyber crimes are addressed in this book and call for regulatory answers and improved consumer protection and mental well being. On the other hand, the book provides a number of contributions regarding Consumerism as a strategic cornerstone and motor of corporate performance, growth and innovation. Regarding the latter, innovation is considered as a source of competitive advantage for any organization. For this reason, this book commits a separate section on consumerism as a source for innovation and product development which contains interesting and innovative studies on consumerism ranging from the perspectives of the role of the university for the creation of such innovation, the role of open innovation in web-based platform particularly for ethically and socially responsible new products.

The concepts available to explain, cure and utilize those phenomena draw from a multidisciplinary knowledge pool provided by this book: customer relationships, branding, green marketing, corporate social responsibility, ethics and, innovatively, cyber ethics, sustainability (economics), socio-psychological...
consumer motivation, identity and culture, viable systems perspective, institutional and neo-institutional theories as well as structuration theories. Furthermore, one contribution reviewed the previous foci of marketing education in this research field and projects a future scenario. In addition, a number of possible future research agendas and practical implications are outlined.

In addition, the book illuminates the different dimensions of Consumerism in a variety of contexts: various industries, such as airline, tourism, food sector, fashion and the popular but still under researched football sector; established and transitional economic settings. The book concisely summarizes up to date knowledge based on secondary and primary data on these concepts and dimensions epitomizing the increasing importance of consequent customer orientation and consumer welfare to develop sustainable competitive advantage. The reader becomes familiarized with the specific factors of this concept from both an academic (in terms of pure conceptual and empirical perspectives) as well as a practical standpoint.

**Target Audience**

The book can be seen as a nexus between research and practice with a strong international orientation. As a result, the book is expected to serve as a high level reference to the University library, researchers and research students. Since the topic of the book covers the most important consumerism dimensions, it will also help to prepare an upper-level course supplement in the marketing discipline like consumer behavior, marketing management, strategic marketing or international/global marketing. Finally, the book reveals these consumerism concepts from a managerial/application standpoint and, thus, it will be a useful resource and reference to the marketing practitioners, for example, in the area of Customer Care, Consumer Advisory Cell, Customer Complaints, Innovation, Strategic Marketing and Marketing Communications.

**Objectives/Purpose of this Book**

This book contains innovative contributions on consumerism dimensions from both an academic point of view as well as practical/application perspective. Hence, it will serve as a comprehensive guide and reference to both academics and practitioners since it will broaden their understanding of the role of these different cutting edge consumerism concepts and studies as learning tools for the academics, marketing students and marketing practitioners.

The book contains 23 chapters critically engaging the reader with mainstream consumerism concepts under 5 different sections.

The structure of the book has been designed to achieve the overall objectives of the book as to provide deeper conceptual understanding of Consumerism as well as revealing different conceptual/ theoretical frameworks, its critical success factors along with, partially, extensive empirical studies on both, micro and macro issues.
Rationale of the Sequence of the Chapters within the Different Sections

Section 1, ‘Conceptual Evolution and Philosophical Underpinnings,’ begins with a contribution by Ioanna Papasolomou (Chapter 1) representing a fundamental chapter and orientation for the reader by discussing dimensions associated to consumerism and defining the term. The overarching aim of the contribution is to provide an insight into the evolution and growth of consumerism. The discussion focuses on exploring the relationship between marketing and consumerism by shedding light onto compulsive buying, consumer attitudes and concerns on micro consumerism issues, sustainable consumption, sustainable marketing and CSR. It raises concerns related to the impact of the global economic crisis on consumerism by using Cyprus as a setting based on the author’s observations and experience and outlines implications for practitioners and the future research agenda.

Crystallizing the central importance of CSR for Consumerism, the next chapter 2 by Pinelopi Athanasopoulos is a comprehensive conceptual analysis of dimensions of this currently particular popular concept. The author provides a deep conceptual insight into CSR in terms of definitions and analytical models as well as its relation to consumerism, antecedents, consequences and socially responsible business and marketing performances and communication. Suggestions to further develop the research stream are provided.

The third chapter of this section, by George S. Spais, presents the results of a comprehensive empirical study on the development of consumerism in marketing education. The author examines the coverage of the consumerism theme in marketing courses in the last decade and projects the shape of these set of courses into the future by having conducted an extensive review of 141 online course descriptions in 88 universities and colleges. The data were analyzed using High Content Analysis, single linkage clustering, multiple linear regression analyses and trend analysis. As a result, the terms “Marketing”, “business”, “ethics” and “social responsibility” were covered by all courses’ descriptions. The results were interpreted based on the assumptions of Mezirow’s critical reflection and provide useful recommendations for marketing educators.

The last chapter (Chapter 4) of Section 1, by Georgia Sakka and Iliada Spyrou, intensively discusses the relation between consumerism and cyber ethics. The main purpose of Sakka’s and Spyrou’s contribution is to illustrate how confrontation and prevention tools, including security education and research, are instrumental to sustainably overcoming consumerism and social cybercrime. The authors analyse the role of cyber ethics and other related issues such as electronic commerce (e-commerce), and customers’ protection, privacy, anonymity, psychological and mental well-being. It juxtaposits consumerism cybercrimes, such as consumer fraud, online deceptive advertisements, financial fraud and social cybercrimes such as pornography, racism, xenophobia, bullying, sexting, cyber hate and cyber staking. In addition, it emphasizes new cyber crimes that are related to the recently developed social networks. The chapter correlates a literature review with existing practices of the Cyprus Safer Internet Center operating in Cyprus - CyberEthics.

Section 2, ‘Macro and Interdisciplinary Issues on Consumerism,’ starts with a conceptual chapter on green marketing strategy by A F Wazir Ahmad and Mohammad Fateh Ali Khan Panni (Chapter 5). The authors synthesize major dimensions of the green marketing strategy ranging from its evolution, consumer perceptions on the green marketing mix, the necessary synchronization of the green marketing strategy with consumer behavior perspectives to identifying the critical success factors of green marketing strategies and its impact on organizational performance.
Closely interlinked with the latter, the next contribution by Elif Yolbulan Okan and Neva Yalman (Chapter 6) centers on the anatomy of green marketing. The authors related to the perspective that environmental improvement and competitiveness is the new paradigm for the world economy. Based on a case approach from Turkey, Okan and Yalman discuss in detail conceptual constructs of green marketing and its different criticisms as well as provide factors for effectiveness of green marketing strategies such as green consumer segmentation and green marketing communication.

The next chapter by Peter Jones, Robin Bown, David Hillier & Daphne Comfort (Chapter 7) embraces a specific macro consumerism issue namely sustainability with its contested meanings. Reviewing the origins and development of data centers within the UK, Jones et al. refer to data centers as the unseen engines that power much of consumption. The authors provide a review of the sustainability agendas and achievements being publicly reported by some of the leading data centre operators within the UK and critically reflect on the sustainability of data centers.

The next chapter by Skaidrite Dzene, Aija Eglite and Gunta Grinberga-Zalite (Chapter 8) furnishes sustainable food consumption issues from the context of Latvian consumer behavior. The authors present aggregated scientific literature on various aspects of consumption emphasising sustainable consumption issues. The objective of the chapter is to characterize the factors affecting consumer behaviour in food consumption and identify the profiles of sustainable and unsustainable consumers in Latvia. The authors have conducted an analysis of business cycle effects on consumption as well as effects of state support to promote sustainable food consumption.

Indications for a new consumer/corporate/brand relationship paradigm are given by Gianpaolo Basile in the last chapter in this section (Chapter 9). He provides an exploratory conceptual underpinning to the readers in terms of the evolutionary preconditions and philosophical thoughts of fundamental consumerism related perspectives. The author proposes a variety of conceptual frameworks, based on an interdisciplinary relationship between the Viable Systems Perspective, Institutional and neo-Institutional Theory and Structuration Theory and the Consumer Behaviour Theory.

Due to the increasing salient importance of the identity concept for explaining consumer behavior, Section 3 is dedicated to ‘Implications of Identity on Marketing and Branding from Consumerist Perspectives’. The stage-setting conceptual Chapter 10 by Terry Smith illuminates the concepts of identity and branding from a consumerist perspective. The author explains in detail the constructs of identity and branding from the perspective of consumerism and social responsibility. In fact, this chapter attempts to present a critical examination of the dominant academic, political, cultural and ecological discourses which constitute and contribute to consumption and consumerism issues and their debates.

Next, Chapter 11 by Srikant Manchiraju is an empirical study focusing on a specific sustainability agenda in terms of sustainable fashion consumption from a consumer behavioral perspective. The present study has important theoretical implications with regard to the differentiated predicting capacity of attitude-behavior, value-behavior, or augmented attitude and value behavior consistency models. Managerial implications refer, for example, to segmentation and value based advertising and marketing campaigns.

After the discussion of basic conceptual constructs the next two Chapters 12 and 13 by Nikolaos Pappas and Mara Manente, Valeria Minghetti, Erica Mingotto and Francesco Casarin reported the results of extensive empirical studies on how to successfully apply identity related aspects for island destinations and responsible tourism. Pappa’s contribution portrays how consumer preferences ultimately lead to favorable images in destination branding among the European Consumers. Manente’s, Minghetti’s,
Mingotto’s and Casarin’s work focuses on the recent trend of ethical and responsible tourism. This chapter has been developed based on the notion that tourists are often suspicious towards companies who exhibit opaque and unknown certifications affecting perceptions of trust. Thus, this chapter proposes to creating a system to identify and recognize the best programs currently employed for reporting on and certifying travel and company responsibility which is suggested to especially applicable for SMEs.

From a culture theory perspective, the next chapter by Ben Tran (Chapter 14) relates to macro and micro behaviors of Hofstede’s cultural consumers. Tran specifically uses Hofstede’s model to explain differences of the concepts of self, personality and identity, which in turn explain variations in branding strategy and communications under the domain of the consumerism concept.

The first chapter of section 4 ‘Consumerism as a source for Innovation and Corporate Strategies’ by Enrico M. Mosconi, Michela Piccarozzi, and Cecilia Silvestri (Chapter 15) concentrates on a very specific perspective of innovation elaborating on an innovative approach regarding a University Spin-off start-up in an Italian setting. The main purpose of this paper is to highlight the link between spin-off planning, especially during the business plan preparation, and consumerism. As consumerism has become an integral element in innovation, the authors argue that universities attempt to follow the trend of consumerism and tailor their activities to the market demands: first of all, in teaching and in the mode of transfer of culture, and secondly, in the use of their knowledge as to the creation of innovative companies.

The next contributions (Chapters 16 and 17) by Barbara Aquilani and Tindara Abbate delineate the increasingly popular concept of open innovation (OI) by utilizing creative resources of customers. These chapters pay attention to open innovation platforms built and managed by firms to develop ethically and socially responsible new products. Derived from a literature review a framework was created to show the challenges organizations have to meet simultaneously when fine tuning external (i.e. consumerism) and internal (i.e. organizational) changes triggered by the shift of the innovation paradigm. Due to a very broad focus the first part of this sequel (Chapter 16) concentrates consumerism and OI approach, while the second one (Chapter 17) discusses OI platforms and organizational changes resulting in a conceptual framework. Concluding, four contributions distinguish this study: (i) the link between consumerism and OI; (ii) the focus on customers as a source of external innovation; (iii) the identification of alternative ways to access OI with customers and their features; (iv) the disclosure of a “hybrid” mode to develop OI through customers.

The next chapter (Chapter 18) by Peter Jones, David Hillier & Daphne Comfort focuses on corporate sustainability strategies using crowd sourcing. The authors garnish these particular strategies by the demonstration of three cameo case studies, thus, further enhancing understanding on sustainability. The material for the three cameo case studies is drawn from the reports Unilever, Sony and J. Sainsbury posted on the Internet about the crowd sourcing exercises they conducted to review their sustainability plans and strategies during 2010, 2011 and 2012. The findings reveal that the crowd sourcing exercises undertaken by the three companies attracted a wide range of constructive comments and produced a number of recommendations designed to develop new sustainability initiatives and to enhance their existing corporate sustainability strategies.

The next chapter of the section (Chapter 19) by Alessandro Ruggieri, Cecilia Silvestri & Michela Piccarozzi discusses the impact of consumerism on market analysis and business plan definition. The authors suggest a processual model based on market analysis to support promoters in the start-up phase of a business, to simplify the analysis of the level of profitability of the initiative and, in particular, to
manage the complex phenomena in the context of consumerism. This work has analyzed, through a qualitative study, the techniques of market analysis useful for drawing up a business plan which focuses on the consumer and the dynamics of consumerism. The goal is to emphasize the role the evolutionary dynamics of the consumer and his preferences play for the company’s planning towards market positioning and determining the business volume.

The next chapter of this section (Chapter 20) by Dursun Yener is a conceptual chapter on consumer boycotts and social movements. The author sheds light on the perspective of consumer boycotts as a possible threatening outcome of consumerism calling for preventive strategies. After having highlighted the basic types and forms of consumerist relationships between firm and customer, the author demonstrates a very specific mode of expression of consumerist activism and illustrates possibly detrimental effects of social media in terms of ‘shitstorming’ that may cause consumer boycotts.

The first chapter of section 5 ‘Consumerism Cases in Selected Industries’ (Chapter 21) represents an extensive empirical study by Marion Tenge on the social dimension of consumerism in an online environment against the setting of the airport industry. The chapter reports on the findings of a mixed-methods study which describes how major German airports profit from online consumerism, i.e. collaborative conversation with passengers, while focusing on the SSP Facebook. The second purpose of the chapter is to model and test the relationship between socio-psychological human need satisfaction of passengers and their engagement level on the corporate Facebook pages of airports.

The next chapter (Chapter 22) by Bernd Hallier elaborates on both, a pragmatic approach and an interdisciplinary holistic challenge. Based on the initial findings resulting from an EU supported project the author calls for the necessity to direct the individual maximum demands on economy, ecology and ethics towards an optimal equilibrium of a holistic global ‘house’. The chapter interlinks economics, ecology and ethics and shows how a concrete pragmatic project in an ecological/environmental context is going to contribute to this objective. Basically, the chapter could be considered as a catalyst for the classroom learning, strategic lessons for the practitioners as well as for the government.

The last chapter (Chapter 23) by Sandra Maria Correia Loureiro, Ana Regina Pires & Ricardo Cayolla investigates consumption, anti-consumption and consumption communities regarding the increasingly global social phenomenon of the relationship between football clubs and their fans. The purpose of this chapter is to explore these phenomena within the context of consumerism in the football (soccer) consumption field which currently has not yet been addressed in the body of knowledge. In addition, the contribution provides useful suggestions for further research and managerial implications.

The value of the Book can be summarized as follows:

1. Detailed conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of consumerism concepts.
2. An extensive review of conceptual and empirical studies in this area from new, dynamic innovative and international contexts and perspectives. These clarified their role, interrelationship, characteristics, and critical success factors to the readers and future researchers of the discipline.
3. A number of innovative insights on the emerging and new dimensions of this concept like implications of identity on marketing and branding from consumerist perspectives, consumerism in the cyber world (online consumerism) and cyber ethics or consumerism as a source for innovation and product development.
4. An extensive review of different multi disciplinary frameworks, models and constructs.
5. A detailed empirical analysis of the concept in terms of some new innovative dimensions like evolution of consumerism concepts in the marketing education, predicting behavioral intentions towards sustainable fashion consumption, innovative empirical evidences from the perspectives of identity and branding particularly from the hospitality marketing and tourism sectors, social dimension of consumerism in an online environment from an airport industry, consumerism and consumption issues for the football fans and their clubs.

6. Interesting insights from some cases on cyber ethics, consumer boycotts and sustainable food consumption.

7. Recommendations to guide practitioners to successfully implement the concept in practice.

8. Overall, a synthesis of ground-breaking consumerism concepts and their dimensions that will serve as a holistic reference to academics and practitioners.

REFERENCES