

Introduction

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It was on one of those heavy-loaded workdays, when you have all too many things to do but can't help but sit down and talk—or in this case dream—of research to come. It was back then, when Professor Pirjo Laaksonen shared her dream about someday immersing herself in a study of the seven deadly sins in consumption.

We immediately shared her excitement. At that time, none of us was able to begin the project; however, as a seed is sown, it is inclined to start to grow, and if it is nourished, it may become a flower. The book you now hold in your hands is the flower that has seen the light of day at last. We want to hand this bloom to Professor Pirjo Laaksonen to celebrate the innovativeness, intelligence and eagerness that we have all witnessed throughout her career.

THE STRUCTURE AND AIM OF THE BOOK

The idea for this book originates from the urge to explore the moral aspects of consumption in a versatile and multiparadigmatic manner within one book. Therefore, the focal premise of this book is one of the world's best-known moral compasses—the seven deadly sins. Although it is acknowledged that the roots of the deadly sins lie in Christianity, in which the seven deadly sins are seen to lead to eternal damnation, other religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, also recognize them (Seuntjens et al. 2014; Tickle 2004). In this manner, this book joins the stream of consumer research focusing on the intersections between religions, spirituality, and consumption (for example Arvidsson 2014; Belk et al. 1989; Izberk-Bilgin 2012; McAlexander et al. 2014; Veer and Shankar 2011).

The overall aim of the current book is to examine how the seven deadly sins appear in the contemporary consumption society. The

book's stance understands the sins as social, historical, cultural, and political constructs, relying on the underlying assumptions of cultural consumer research (Arnould and Thompson 2005). To do this, it gathers previous work on the seven deadly sins and their related constructs from a variety of disciplines, including consumer research, psychology, sociology, economics, theology, and philosophy. In doing so, the book illustrates how the sins can be characterized as multisided, and even paradoxical, when related to present-day consumption phenomena.¹

Also known as “capital vices” (Timpe and Boyd 2014), the seven deadly sins have been categorized in various ways. This book brings them all together in one book and encompasses seven chapters: one per sin. Each chapter considers the origins of the seven deadly sins, reviews the relevant constructs, and provides insights into how the sin appears in certain consumption-related phenomena. The most commonly accepted list of the sins comprises pride, greed, lust, gluttony, envy, wrath, and sloth (Belk 1983; Caywood and Langrehr 1990), and that is the one used in the structure of this book. Accordingly, the book proceeds as follows.

Chapter 1, by Hanna Leipämaa-Leskinen, Henna Syrjälä, and Pirjo Laaksonen, studies consumer narratives to discover how the sin of *pride* emerges in the lives of Finnish nonvoluntary simplifiers (poor consumers) and voluntary simplifiers (people who voluntarily seek to consume less for ideological reasons). The chapter finds that in addition to prior conceptualizations of pride as either negative (excessive) or positive (authentic), in these scarce consumption conditions a third facet of pride, “silenced pride,” appears.

By using narratives, the authors of Chapter 2, Minna-Maarit Jaskari, Päivi Borisov, and Henna Syrjälä, construct a multilevel understanding on how *greed* appears in marketing students' consumption. The authors state that although greed can be manifested as both positive and negative, it never appears as solely positive. Also, although it emerges at various levels of culture, as a sin, greed is always attached to an individual.

Chapter 3, by Jenniina Sihvonen, Linda Lisa Maria Turunen, and Carmen Rodríguez Santos, focuses on *lust* in the light of sexual desire, and analyses how it is attached to beauty sector magazine advertisements for consumers. The chapter reveals that there are product category-specific differences between the advertisements,

which indicates that the sexual type of lust is presented as a sin in some, but not all, sectors of the beauty industry.

In Chapter 4, Lotta Alhonnoro and Anu Norrgrann explore the role of the multifactor retail system in fueling *gluttony*, with regard to bakery products in the context of grocery retailing. Drawing on multimethod data entries, the authors identify three themes of gluttony: allure, abundance, and apposition. The chapter concludes that a product that is not alluring or is not in apposition to others becomes a “rotten apple” in the abundance of the grocery store, and is eventually discarded.

Chapter 5, by Katarina Hellén, Maria Sääksjärvi, and Hannele Kauppinen-Räisänen, examines the relationship between *envy* and different narcissistic components by using a quantitative approach. The findings imply that narcissistic traits are associated with both positive, benign envy and negative, malicious envy. Thus, different aspects of the multifaceted concept of narcissism drive benign and malicious envious reactions on the part of consumers.

In Chapter 6, Catharina von Koskull, Petra Berg, and Johanna Gummerus study *wrath* in the area of consumers’ collective opposition to wind power by employing rhetoric analysis. The chapter advances knowledge on how wrath, as a moral emotion of injustice, is conveyed in public. Wrath is expressed through three rhetorical strategies—morality, evidence, and victimization—suggesting that it plays an important role in influencing and mobilizing consumer resistance.

Chapter 7, by Ari Huuhka and Harri Luomala, unifies the existing research on *sloth* by offering a novel reciprocal interaction conceptualization of sloth in consumption. This is further exemplified through an illustrative case example of convenience food consumption. Although sloth is regarded as a social construct, the chapter argues that when sloth emerges as a sin, it concerns an individual’s awareness of the negative consequences of her behavior.

Seeking to build a novel theoretical and empirical understanding of how the seven deadly sins emerge from the viewpoint of consumer research, several of the chapters analyze empirical consumption phenomena situated in Finland. Therefore, they should be interpreted as culture-specific descriptions of the emergence of these sins in these given social frames. Finland is a modern welfare society, but due to its short history as an independent nation, the prevailing cultural ideals and norms still reflect the fundamental values of agrarian

culture (Heinonen and Autio 2013). This paradox between modernity and traditionality offers an appealing composition to look at how Finnish ideals and the seven deadly sins interrelate and conflict. The chapters illustrate how the Finnish ideal of being a modest, hardworking, and frugal consumer may clash with materialistic values and greedy behaviors, and how the morality of the sins is tied to social reference groups.

Based on the individual chapters, this introductory section elaborates on what can be gained through investigating these sins separately and together. Consequently, the introduction sets out a novel conceptual illustration of the seven deadly sins in consumption. To this end, it proceeds as follows. First, it discusses whether the sins are always bad, or whether anything positive can come from their emergence, meanings, or consequences. It then considers the ways in which each of the chapters contributes to our current understandings of the seven deadly sins, highlighting the various types of theoretical contribution they make to existing knowledge on the seven deadly sins in the field of consumer studies, and gathers these contributions together into a conceptual illustration called the “triadic reciprocal conceptualization of the seven deadly sins in consumption.” The illustration shows how the sins consist of three elements (personal, behavioral, and environmental) that take place at three levels (micro, mezzo, and macro/supra) in such a way that all the elements and levels are in a constant reciprocal interaction with each other. We conclude by pondering whether positive transformations may be encouraged in consumer society through an understanding of the seven deadly sins and their underlying mechanisms in consumption. The book provides a novel way of approaching contemporary consumer society, which, although stemming from “dark” notions of sinfulness, ends with a hopeful tone of positive transformation.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE SINFUL

We start this consideration of the individual chapters by examining how the sins’ “sinfulness” emerges. Are sins always simply bad? In general, looking through the lens of consumer research, the seven deadly sins appear as a twofold metaphor. On the one hand, consumption, by its very nature, is often regarded as something bad, emanating from false emotions such as vanity, self-indulgence,

and greed (see Belk 1983). This ever-unfulfilled desire for novel consumption objects, encouraged by marketing actions, creates over-consumption and various forms of harm for the entire ecosystem. On the other hand, the positive aspects of consumption illustrate that consumption experiences appear as playful and fun, brands are used to create social communities, and consumption objects help individuals to express their identities (see for example Baumeister et al. 2013; Belk et al. 2003; Carù and Cova 2003).

As noted in the chapter on sloth in particular, the sins can be conceptually attached to values (Caywood and Langrehr 1990), as values and moral norms are closely linked (Schwartz 1968). One of this book's conclusions is that whether the individual sins in consumption are regarded as good or bad, or both, or something else, seems to vary depending on the sin in question. To illustrate, the authors of the chapter on lust point out that lust, in the mundane lives of consumers, can be both good and bad. It can be an essential driver of human behavior, but it can also lure one to harmful actions, such as impulse purchasing and uncontrollable consumption. However, as a sin, lust encompasses sexual appeals (in advertising) that are considered "sinful" and essentially bad. This means that in some fashion product categories (makeup, skincare, hair products) the use of sexuality for advertising appeal is perceived as sinful, and is avoided by companies. However, in some other fashion product categories (perfumes, for example) lust is not seen as a sin, and consequently companies use lust-related appeals in their advertising. Similarly, the authors of the chapter on gluttony imply that, as a sin, gluttony is bad and needs to be restricted.

In the case of greed, the chapter's authors end with the argument that although greed appears to be a double-edged sword, with both good and bad implications for consumption, consumers, social interaction, and society as a whole, it can never be simply good. The very definition of greed is a dissatisfaction with never having enough (Seuntjens et al. 2014). Thus, despite any positive indications, greed may emerge in consumption-related phenomena only as partly good and partly bad or as totally bad. Similarly, sloth, or laziness, appears not to be purely good or bad. Defined by Frank (2001) as doing nothing or doing something that does not have positive consequences, sloth has traditionally been understood as bad and immoral (Caywood and Langrehr 1990). In elaborating on the conceptual background of sloth and its related concepts, the authors of the

chapter argue that the morality of slothful consumption should be evaluated in relation to the consequences of laziness. They further propose that slothful consumption may be deliberate or involuntary and unintentional. Thus, in order for it to become sinful behavior, the individual must be aware of the negative consequences of their slothful actions.

In their investigation of the relationship between narcissism and the sin of envy, the authors of the chapter conclude that “although envy is commonly associated with negative consequences, we document that narcissism can have an impact on both negative and also more positive forms of envy.” Indeed, they emphasize that there are two forms of envy—malicious and benign—referring to harmful and positive ways of feeling envious. While malicious envy relates to feelings of frustration and hostility toward the person envied, benign envy involves not only frustration but also admiration, and boosts motivation to work harder in order to reach the same level as the envied person or a personally relevant life goal (Van de Ven et al. 2011). Similarly, there can be both good and bad forms of wrath. The authors of the chapter highlight that when wrath is *righteous* it is not bad. On the contrary, it may even appear to be a duty, and according to the Holy Bible one *must* “hate evil.”

The chapter on pride takes a slightly different stance on the goodness or badness of the sin in question. In their theoretical discussion, the authors consider prior literature which acknowledges the negative aspect of pride—excessive pride—and the positive aspect, or authentic pride. However, by exploring pride in two unorthodox living conditions of scarcity—voluntary and nonvoluntary—the authors are able to highlight a third facet: silenced pride. This facet of pride does not appear to be good or bad, but more closely showcases how experiences and expressions relating to pride are always a matter of negotiation within surrounding social and cultural frames. Thus, while expressions of pride may be allowed for some consumers, pride may be silenced in other, often marginalized, consumer groups.

Taken together, when something good is acknowledged to stem from the seven deadly sins, it is most often in terms of a driving force for human behavior. Lust is perceived to boost positively individual behaviors and greed even to make economies to flourish. Similarly, wrath may act as a mobilizing force at the collective level. Indeed, wrath “reflects a collective, partially other-directed need to shield the community and its members from wrongdoings” which, in the

case of the wind power plans discussed in the chapter, evoked such strong opposition that the plans were eventually discarded. On the other hand, when sins are seen as bad, it is because they relate to self-interest, self-focus, and narcissism. This came up in the cases of pride, greed, envy, gluttony, and lust. Sloth and gluttony are further connected to individuals' poor self-control, which encourages selfish behaviors or misbehaviors, such as neglecting one's duties or overindulging oneself.

When examining the sins and their definitions in a crossdisciplinary fashion, it is intriguing to discover that consumer research, in particular, approaches them in a positive manner. The authors of the chapter on greed conclude that the evolutionary, economics, and consumer research perspectives acknowledge the power of greed as a driving force in the economy that can lead to better wellbeing of individuals, society, and the ecosystem. Similarly, pride is seen largely as negative, except in consumer studies and psychological research, which recognize authentic pride and pride's positive implications for a variety of responsible consumer actions and emotions. Consequently, it can be claimed that "sinfulness" of consumption is not something that actualizes only in relation to the "dark" sides of consumption, such as criminal actions, compulsive consumption behaviors, or situations in which consumer wellbeing is threatened (Belk 1985; Mick et al. 2012). On the contrary, consumers' mundane lives include a variety of subtle aspects of the seven deadly sins, as elaborated further in the following section.

THEORETICAL BUILDING BLOCKS PROVIDED BY THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

The chapters of this book approach sins within the realms of multifarious consumption-related phenomena, which enables theory building in a variety of manners. These multisided consumption phenomena range from advertising (lust) to bakery products (gluttony) and wind power parks (wrath). Some of the chapters view consumption from the angle of its "sinfulness" within certain contexts of consumption or groups of consumers, such as within conditions of scarce consumption (pride) or in marketing students' everyday consumption (greed). Other chapters leave the consumption-related phenomena to play a more minor role and choose to focus on theoretical

development, such as using convenience-seeking consumption as an illustration of conceptualization (sloth) or vacation experience as an empirical entry point to explore the relationships between theoretical constructs (envy).

Consequently, the chapters differ in terms of how they contribute to our present understanding on the seven deadly sins in consumption. In particular, we want to stress the comprehensive conceptualization of the sin of sloth. The authors of this chapter gather existing knowledge on sloth and its related concepts to illuminate them through a “model of triadic reciprocal interaction” approach to consumer behavior, where personal, behavioral, and environmental elements are incorporated (see also Laaksonen 1994; Rajaniemi 1992; Rajaniemi and Laaksonen 1989). In this way, the chapter is capable of highlighting how personal, behavioral, and environmental elements contribute to the emergence of sloth as a sin.

The chapter on *pride* showcases the pivotal importance of social and cultural surroundings in understanding the morality of pride. After investigation of consumers living in conditions of either voluntary or nonvoluntary-based material scarcity, the findings show that when different social and economic classes of consumer society are explored, pride is not only good or bad, but may also be silenced and repressed within these frames. Thereby, the chapter contributes to the existing theoretical understanding of pride by addressing the social mechanisms that either encourage or hinder expressions of pride.

The chapters on *gluttony* and *lust* contribute to theory building by illuminating the sins within particular consumption-related phenomena. In the case of *lust*, the “sinful” aspects of consumer culture are highly evident. The authors of the chapter on *lust* approach the sin by exploring how sexual desire appears in advertisements, and find that *lust* has become a cultural commodity that is essential in creating desire in consumer marketing. Similarly, the authors of the chapter on *gluttony* look beyond the sin as a personal trait that leads to excess in eating or drinking, or greedy or excessive indulgence (Merriam-Webster 2017). Instead, they explore how grocery stores operate in the retail system in fueling (over)consumption that eventually generates great amounts of food waste. The authors conclude that “a gluttonous grocery retailer contributes both to individual gluttony, by tempting customers into lavish eating, and to gluttony in itself, by building displays of enticing products in an amplitude that exceeds the amount consumed.”

The chapter on greed builds on an extensive reading of prior knowledge on greed from various scientific disciplines. As a result, the chapter presents seven different disciplinary perspectives on greed. The chapter contributes to existing theorizations by bringing these discussions into play at various levels of culture, and showcasing how greed is connected to everyday consumption activities. The authors of this chapter agree with the authors of the chapter on sloth by concluding that although greed emerges at various levels of culture, as a sin greed is always attached to an individual. The individual aspect is also highlighted in the chapter on envy, which contributes to understanding of the sin by showing how narcissistic personality traits are attached to two types of envy—malign and benign—and by evidencing that consumers' envious behavior can even lead to better ends.

Although many of the sins discussed can be regarded as individual emotions, experiences, or choices, they are most commonly mirrored within social interaction. The emotion of envy, for example, appears in relation to someone that is envied. On the other hand, the chapter on wrath particularly contributes to our present understanding of sins by highlighting how feelings of wrath may emerge as a consequence of misdeeds against others. Feelings of wrath may arise without an individual experiencing the original misdeed, so wrath does not always relate to self-interest (Evans 2017).

TRIADIC RECIPROCAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS IN CONSUMPTION

Grounded on the theoretical building blocks provided by the individual chapters and discussed above, we now put forward a comprehensive conceptualization of the seven deadly sins in consumption. In so doing, we apply the triadic reciprocal interaction approach to consumer behavior originally presented by Rajaniemi and Laaksonen (1989) (see also Laaksonen 1994; Rajaniemi 1992). We build especially on the chapter on sloth, in which the conceptual understanding of sloth was elaborated through this triadic model. To further illustrate how the sins appear at different levels of culture, we explicate their existence with the help of cultural levels (that is, micro, mezzo, and macro/supra levels) as discussed by Algesheimer and Gurău

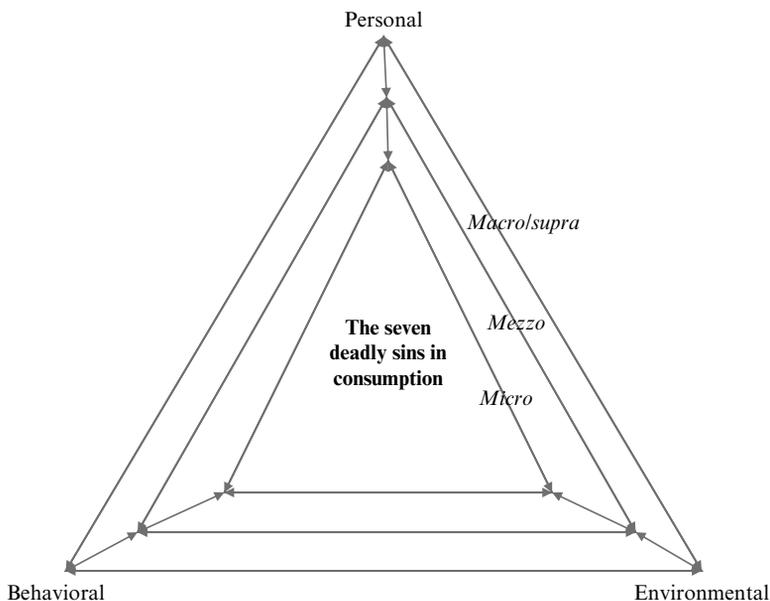


Figure 0.1 Triadic reciprocal conceptualization of the seven deadly sins in consumption (adapted from Rajaniemi and Laaksonen 1989, p.20)

(2008) and exemplified in the chapter on greed. By taking these theorizations together we are able to follow the triadic conceptualization that regards personal, behavioral, and environmental elements as taking place along the three levels (Rajaniemi and Laaksonen 1989). The conceptualization further assumes that reciprocal interaction takes place in between the elements and in between the levels. Thus, in order to attain a more complete understanding of how the seven deadly sins emerge in consumption, we elaborate the content of the elements—personal, behavioral, and environmental—as they appear in the interaction between and within three levels of culture. The conceptualization is illustrated in Figure 0.1.

Drawing from Bandura’s (1978) classic model, Rajaniemi and Laaksonen (1989, p. 8) state that the personal element “refers to the cognitive and other internal events that can affect perceptions and actions.” In the current book, we look beyond the original, cognitively oriented view of consumers, and incorporate more pluralistic

and socially influenced understandings on consuming units. Thus, at the micro level several chapters highlight that despite social and cultural influencers, the core of the sin in question is attached to the individual consumer and her emotions. For instance, envy and pride are characterized as emotions or feelings experienced by individuals. Furthermore, several chapters emphasize that whether to undertake the act of sinful consumption or not is eventually a question of individual choice. This is particularly clear in the chapter on greed, which states that greed may appear at various levels of culture, but never without the connection to the micro level and to the individual.

However, as highlighted in the chapter on greed, consumers' lived experiences at the micro level influence and are influenced by phenomena in larger-level contexts (Algesheimer and Gurău 2008; Askegaard and Linnet 2011). Thus, the personal element has interconnections to the wider levels of culture as well. The mezzo level refers to the interlinkages consumers have with surrounding social groups, for instance family, friends, and colleagues. In relation to the personal element, this means that the emotions aroused by the sins are tied to those close by. For instance, the feeling of envy means that someone else or her possessions are envied, or that of lust means a person or her possessions are desired. Thus, social comparison plays a key role in the understanding of the seven deadly sins' contents in consumption situations. At the macro/supra level, cultural negotiations on the emergence of the sins arise. This refers to the idea that societal ideals and norms and those who put them forward—opinion leaders and world-famous celebrities, for instance—have implications for the occurrence of sinful emotions. Comparison points to one's own consumption standards are not constructed only in relation to those close by, but also in relation to globally inspired needs, wants, and desires. These sorts of excessive consumption desires are seen as key evocators for sinful emotions of greed, lust, and envy.

As the authors of the chapter on sloth point out, any behavior's becoming sinful rests on an individual's awareness of its negative consequences. Indeed, in regard to the behavioral element of the seven deadly sins in consumption, we focus on the consequences of the behaviors. At the micro level this refers to actions that generate either harmful or beneficial consequences for the consumer herself. For instance, certain slothful behaviors, such as taking a break at work, may help individuals to relax and create something innovative. On the other hand, the ever unfulfilled desire for new consumption

objects that may emerge as a result of the sins of greed, lust, or envy may induce negative consequences, such as health problems, for oneself. At the mezzo level, the effects of being always greedy for more do not have consequences only for oneself, but also for others close by. An example is overworking to get ever more things and neglecting family and friends as a result. Sometimes the consequences of a behavior may be benevolent, such as in the case of righteous wrath, which, in the form of consumer activism, may prevent something harmful happening. In a similar spirit, the findings on silenced pride showcase how some of the consequences of consumers' actions, such as switching off lights or restricting unnecessary consumption, were good for the environment and the whole globe. Thus, consumption activity related to the seven deadly sins at the macro/supra level can also have positive implications.

The environmental element refers to all those elements in the surrounding contexts that guide and (re)mould consumers' experiences and actions in a given moment. At the micro level, it is about the inner influencers that lead certain consuming activities to occur; for instance, gluttony may emerge due to consumers' emotions, such as in the case of rewarding oneself with a chocolate bar for a job well done. At the mezzo level, the surrounding social and physical environment may encourage or restrict consumers' actions. For instance, pride in scarce conditions appeared as an emotion that was not allowed for all consumers. In contrast, the chapter on gluttony emphasizes the roles of multiple actors in the retail environment that boosts bakery products' transformation from "taste to waste," and thereby illustrates how present-day consumption-oriented societies spur on sins such as gluttony. Indeed, at the macro/supra level, cultural contexts play a role in determining which "sinful" actions are acceptable and which are not. For instance, some degree of supposedly sinful behavior seems to be generally accepted in Western societies, such as feeling just pride, benign envy, or sufficient greed to pursue one's life goals. On the other hand, a sin such as gluttony appears to be largely forbidden in societies that place high value on young and slim body types.

What is important to note in the triadic reciprocal model is the idea that all the elements and all the levels are in interaction with each other (Rajaniemi and Laaksonen 1989). Firstly, interconnections appear in-between three elements: personal, behavioral, and environmental. The personal element shows in the emotions related to/

aroused by the sins, and these emotions in turn are interconnected to the consuming actions (behavioral element) taken within and having consequences for the given social and physical environments (environmental element). While it is important to acknowledge the sins and their desired and undesired consequences for individuals, society, and nature, stress is often placed on the ways in which consumers may be seen as empowered actors who actively reshape the meanings, purposes, and end states of consumption. However, the three levels of culture are also inevitably interconnected, as interpretations of the acts of sinful consumption are never only individual experiences or empowered actions, but are always tied to and constructed within the nexus of cultural, social, political, and ideological frames of reference.

CONCLUSION: HOW CAN WE HARNESS SINFUL CONSUMPTION TO SUPPORT POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION?

So far, we have focused on the seven deadly sins and their emergence in consumption situations and in consumer society. Next, we ponder how the understandings generated in this book may be harnessed to critically identify and evaluate the flaws in our contemporary consumer society, and whether we can transform those, moving them in a more positive and righteous direction. By so doing, we discuss the moral aspects of consumption with regard to consumer wellbeing in particular (Mick et al. 2012). As we highlighted previously in this introductory chapter, from the viewpoint of consumer studies, the seven deadly sins are not regarded as inevitably bad—by which we mean they are not bad as such, but rather the actual consequences and the intended purpose behind them can make them immoral and bad. It is our view that through acknowledging these sins' emergence in consumption situations and practices, their meanings for consumers, and their conceivable effects and consequences, it may be plausible to find potential for positive transformation even from the sinful consumption.

To begin with, the chapters on pride, gluttony, and wrath provide understandings of macrosocial concerns related to consumption, such as poverty, health, and sustainability (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2012). Firstly, the findings of the chapter on pride show

that social inequality has blossomed even in Finland, one of the Nordic welfare societies, as the poor have not been allowed to express feelings of pride. Expressions of pride from the voluntary simplifiers were also silenced if these were different from the mainstream. This addresses the pivotal importance of examining various kinds of consumer groups and social classes in order to get a comprehensive view of the social mechanisms that allow and/or restrict such human rights as free expression of emotions. For marketers and policy makers, this stresses the responsibility for equal treatment of all consumers, for instance in terms of new product development and communication strategies.

Secondly, gluttony appears as a sin that has connections to both individual-level problems and global-level challenges connected with the topical questions of materialism, overconsumption, and sustainability (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2012). The authors of the chapter consider that gluttony, as such, is in need of transformation. The chapter highlights how different human and nonhuman actors in the retail context may induce unnecessary consumption by fueling food waste. The chapter concludes that by acknowledging the agency and power relations of different actors in this repetitious network, consumer researchers have the opportunity to discover ways to transform the “sinful” practices. In this process, the power relations of global and national-level food chains, the marketing practices that take place in grocery stores, and the marketing operations themselves must be critically evaluated.

Similarly, the chapter on wrath deals with issues of macrosocial concern such as sustainability and consumer health and safety (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2012). The wind power park case discussed in the chapter shows how the values of sustainability and local community may conflict. Although wind power parks appear to be a favorable solution for diminishing greenhouse gas emissions, local consumers disagreed on their construction in their own local spheres. The chapter showcases, in a very concrete way, that when joining together in oppositional consumer collectivities, and through something as powerful as wrath, it is possible to move living conditions at the regional level in the hoped-for direction. In terms of transformative power, the case is a particularly apt example of consumer empowerment that marketers and policy makers should not leave without attention.

On the other hand, the chapters on greed and envy raise the

possibility that—when excessive—consumers’ own actions may be harmful to the consumer themselves, to other people, and to the environment. These sins, and their examination, provide insight with regard to materialism (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2012), which is seen as one of the mechanisms that fuel these sins. For instance, the social pressures caused by the wish to stick with the rest of society, or even to elevate oneself above others, appear to be a motivating force behind these sins. This in turn may cause consumers to desperately focus on materialistic values and their manifestation in consumption. For marketers, this creates challenges: They must be careful not to overgenerate greedy or envious feelings in marketing communications, as this can lead to compulsive consumption and even addictive behaviors. Something similar is emphasized in the chapter on lust, which focuses precisely on advertising and its moral aspects. The chapters in this book provide understanding as to why and how consumers want a greater and greater number of possessions, within the prevailing cultural frames. In particular, such marketing materials should be evaluated in terms of vulnerable consumer groups, such as underage or disadvantaged consumers.

Finally, the chapter on sloth takes convenience food consumption as an empirical example to illustrate how the sin of sloth may drive consumers to make consumption choices that can be bad for themselves and for their social surroundings. The chapter further showcases that excessive eating of convenience food may cause antisocial eating habits among families, associated with the values of nonconformity, insecurity, and nontradition (Schwartz 2012). This is something that food companies should acknowledge in their planning and implementation of marketing actions. Apart from the convenience food context, an understanding of the elements that create the sinful experience of sloth—meaning that the consumer is too lazy and apathetic to care about her own and the collective wellbeing—offer marketers both opportunities and responsibility to develop products and services that help consumers solve their time management problems. Besides offering ways to ease mundane consumption practices, such as eating, cooking, cleaning, exercising, and so on, those products and services could provide stimulating and inspiring benefits to the consumers.

In conclusion, although the current book looks at consumption from a very—even the most—“dark” viewpoint, the overall message of the book is not dark. Instead, we aim to highlight the potential

transformation in the wellbeing of both consumers and society, involving emotional, social, economic, physical, spiritual, environmental, and political dimensions (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2012; Mick et al. 2012). This transformation can be achieved through an indepth understanding derived by analyzing interconnected elements within interconnected levels of culture on the emergence of the sins. Consequently, *The Seven Deadly Sins in Consumption* provides a handbook for an academic audience studying consumers and consumption as well as marketing and public policy practitioners looking for a comprehensive and multifarious study of interlinkages of morality and consumption.

NOTE

1. Our use of the word “sinful” relates to common accusations regarding consumption as a negative thing that must be reduced. The authors’ intention is not to cast any such accusation on any individual consumer.

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