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Victoria W. Thoresen *Editors*

# Enabling Responsible Living

 Springer

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Editors

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Further information on PERL can be found here: <http://www.perlprojects.org>

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**Elīna Līce** writes her Ph.D. at the Department of Environmental Management, University of Latvia. Her main research interests are household sustainable consumption, alternative food networks, household food self-provisioning, and sustainable consumption governance. Her motto to enable responsible living is: “It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?” (Henry David Thoreau).

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**Ulf Schrader** is full Professor of Economic Education and Sustainable Consumption at Technische Universität Berlin (Germany). He studied business administration, economics, political science, and sociology. He did his Ph.D. in marketing and his post-doctoral degree (Habilitation) on social responsibility and

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**John Wilkinson** is an Associate Professor at the Federal Rural University, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). Since co-authoring “From Farming to Biotechnology” he has published widely on the transformations of the agrifood system. Since the 1990s, he has focused on the emergence of new quality markets from an economic sociology perspective, drawing particularly on social networks and convention theory perspectives, and more recently exploring the relation between social movements and markets. In 2007, he co-authored “Fair Trade: the Challenges of Transforming Globalization”. He is currently focusing on the way the values initially associated with quality niche markets are now informing the (re)construction of the major commodity markets.

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**Part I**  
**Introduction**

# Enabling Responsible Living

## An Introduction

Ulf Schrader, Vera Fricke, Declan Doyle and Victoria W. Thoresen

### 1 Background to this Book

This book is a compilation of the best papers presented at the 1st International Conference of The Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL). The Conference, held in March 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey, had the same title as the present book: “Enabling Responsible Living”. Thus, this book—like the related conference—claims to be programmatic for the newly established network PERL.

PERL brings together educators, researchers and practitioners from government, NGOs and business who are all interested in innovative ways to foster responsible—and that means for us above all: sustainable—living (see [www.perlprojects.org](http://www.perlprojects.org)). The network members come from more than 130 institutions in more than 50 countries all over the world. PERL has been established as an Erasmus Academic Network and gets additional support by UNEP and different national ministries. The network continues the work of its predecessor, the Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN), which was funded as an EU Thematic Network from 2003 to 2009. Hence, consumer issues and the question how to achieve

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sustainable consumption remain to be of high importance for PERL. The new name highlights that sustainable consumption needs to be embedded in a broader concept of responsible living. Chances and obstacles to consume sustainably are not to be determined by the individual but are related to conditions shaped by government, companies and other societal actors. However, the way how these institutions shape the conditions is influenced by decisions and behaviour of individuals within them. Therefore, with responsible living we take into account that the roles of the individual in the modern world are not restricted to the consumer and the citizen, but could also include roles like employee, parent, association member and many more.

According to these considerations, the articles in this book address the question how institutions and individuals can enable responsible living which, in line with the famous sustainability definition of the Brundtland Commission, allows need satisfaction today without damaging the ability of others—today or in the future—to satisfy their needs. This volume continues the tradition of CCN to publish the best conference papers in a special book. From 2004 until 2009 five volumes of the series “Consumer Citizenship: Promoting New Responses” were published by Hedmark University College, Norway. For this first best paper book of PERL we decided to co-operate with an established international publisher and to set up an extensive review process to guarantee high and consistent scientific quality. Still, and in line with the principles of PERL, the articles published in this book are of high practical relevance and not basic research.

For the conference, within a peer review process 76 out of 104 submitted proposals were selected for presentation. 37 of the presented papers were submitted for this book. These submissions were reviewed in a double blind review process by at least two reviewers each. Some papers went through up to three rounds of review. In the end, we accepted twelve papers for publication. These papers cover very well the broad scope of topics considered in the PERL network. The authors of the twelve papers come from nine countries from three different continents, which again reflects PERL’s internationality. Due to the long review process, the papers were written between the beginning of 2011 and the end of 2012.

## 2 Structure and Content

This book is structured in five parts. The introduction is followed by four parts that reflect the content and the relevance of topics which are important for PERL. Part II *Understanding Responsible Living* consists of articles which help to understand responsible (consumer) behaviour. Part III *Policies for Responsible Living* applies a macro perspective and asks for the effect of different policies on responsible living. Part IV *Education for Responsible Living* addresses a core topic for PERL and its predecessor CCN: the question, how schools and universities can foster responsible living. Finally, Part V *Corporate Responsibility for Responsible Living*

deals with corporations as an important factor for responsible living especially as providers of—more or less sustainable—consumer goods and jobs. While part II to IV consist of three papers each, part V has two groups of authors, which is consistent with PERL's emphasis on consumption, policy and education and—up to now—less on business. However, the articles show that these topics are all interconnected and that in practice it is often hardly possible to separate them.

In the introduction part the book starts with *Victoria W. Thoresen's* paper *I + I = 5*. She shows that big societal transformations are only achievable when different actors work together and create synergies not only through summing up but multiplying the energies of the combatants. Using the example of the abolition of slavery the analogies between slavery and unsustainable lifestyles become strikingly clear: Like slavery in the past, today's unsustainable lifestyles are seen by many as an economic necessity, a privilege, and the natural way of things. Nevertheless, the abolition of slavery has shown that those who profited from unacceptable practices are able to learn that what they did was wrong and that the transformation has been for the weal of everyone. Thoresen shows how PERL's different activities are fostering this transformation towards a sustainable society.

The first paper in part II is written by *Viola Muster*. In *The Misjudged Discipline: A Plea for Strengthening Home Economics* Muster shows that home economics provide many valuable approaches and concepts to better understand sustainable consumption and responsible living. Nevertheless, the discipline has earned only little attention in the international discourse on sustainable development. To change this, Muster recommends that the discipline should develop a higher standard of international research and exchange, intensify its communication and lobbying activities, and position itself as an important economic discipline, complementing economics and business administration.

While the first article of this part is focused on the interpretation of theory, the other two papers present the results of empirical consumer studies from different parts of the world. The first by *Jeanine Schreurs, Pim Martens and Gerjo Kok* is titled *How to promote Sustainable Living? Inspiring Experiences of Dutch Downshifters*. The authors provide empirical evidence from consumers who downshifted their level of consumption recently—either voluntarily or involuntarily. They show that both groups differ significantly among each other and in relation to non-downshifters with regards to consumption attitudes and practices. For voluntary downshifters positive downshifting experiences are much more important than negative experiences. For consumers who had to downshift involuntary (e.g. due to unemployment), negative experiences are much more important. However, even they have relevant positive experiences. The authors show, how voluntary downshifting—as an implementation of the sufficiency strategy towards sustainability—can be supported by policy and society.

*Livia Barbosa, Fátima Portilho, John Wilkinson and Veranise Dubeux* contribute an article on *Youth, Consumption and Citizenship: The Brazilian Case*. Based on theories of post-materialism, political consumption, and hypotheses of mistrust in relation to political institutions the authors have conducted a consumer survey in Brazil. The results show that the level of political consumption among

young Brazilians is still low in comparison with Europe or North America, but rising with age and the level of education. The authors conclude that political consumption is already relevant in Brazil today since the limited individual political consumption activities are successfully complemented by collective activism of NGOs.

The three papers in part III on policies for responsible living consist of one general approach and two regional case studies. First, *Arthur Lyon Dahl* presents *A Multi-Level Framework and Values-Based Indicators to Enable Responsible Living*. He gives an overview about factors determining responsible living on individual, local, national and international level. His main focus is the local level. Based on different case studies he shows how progress towards responsible living and sustainability can be achieved and measured with value-based indicators. Independent of the world region and the type of the analysed local communities, six values were identified to be crucial success factors: unity in diversity, trust/trustworthiness, justice, empowerment, integrity and respect for the environment.

The first regional case study is the article of *Jānis Brizga and Elīna Līce* with the title *Driving Forces, Environmental Pressures and Policy Instruments: Household Sustainable Consumption Assessment for Latvia*. Based on statistical data analysis and focus group interviews the authors present dominating consumption trends for Latvia, identify the main driving forces behind them and give policy recommendations. They show that consumption in Latvia tends to develop in the direction of the unsustainable situation in Western Europe and how modern policy instruments might stop this development and create a trend towards sustainability. Aspects like integrating externalities, cooperative involvement of different stakeholders and using multiple complementary policy instruments are of importance here.

*Robert James Didham* analyses in his contribution *Capacity for the Implementation of Education for Sustainable Consumption (ESC) in Northeast Asia* national policies for ESC of China, Japan and South Korea. By applying the four levers of change identified in UNDP's capacity development framework (institutional arrangements, leadership, knowledge, and accountability) Didham ranks Japan first, China second and Korea third. However, all three countries receive less than half of possible scores. Thus, based on identified shortcomings Didham provides recommendations how to improve the ESC policies. His focus is on the diverse roles of different political and societal actors (different levels of government, NGOs, corporations, media, academia) and how they could interact. His concepts go beyond the presented case studies and are generally applicable worldwide.

While Didham's article tackles education as a policy object, part IV focusses on more concrete examples of education for responsible living. The first article in this part is written by *Ilgın Gökler-Danışman and Özden Bademci* and deals with *Enabling Responsible Living by Increasing Social Awareness: Integrating Social Responsibility Projects into Undergraduate Curriculum*. Gökler-Danışman and Bademci analyse the participation of psychology students in social responsibility projects in the neighbourhood of their university near Istanbul in Turkey. They

show that this collaboration can be useful for both, the work of the NGOs involved and the personality development of the participating students. They conducted a qualitative study which provides evidence that this kind of project learning for responsible living is often more successful than typical classroom lessons.

After this example of how to integrate education about responsible living in university teaching, the second contribution of this part deals with a tool for education for sustainable development at schools. *Helen Maguire, Amanda Mc Cloat, Miriam O'Donoghue and Mella Cusack* present “*Images and Objects*”. *A Tool for Teaching Education for Sustainable Development and Responsible Living in Home Economics*. The core of “*Images and Objects*” is a brochure, developed by the Consumer Citizenship Network (CCN), with background information, instructions for teachers and a selection of photos related to sustainability issues. The tool is used worldwide within education for sustainable development (ESD). As an input for the revision of the brochure the authors conducted a study with teacher students in Ireland. The results show that—despite a positive overall evaluation—a specific adaptation to national curriculums and teaching requirements and an extension of elements which increase the active involvement of students (e.g. by making photos themselves instead of only discussing photos of others) could further improve the toolkit.

The findings of the already mentioned articles in this part reveal that ESD requires more than traditional textbook based teaching. This is confirmed by *Daniel Fischer's* contribution *Promoting Sustainable Consumption in Educational Settings*. Based on findings of public health research he distinguishes formal and informal learning for sustainable consumption and shows that the design of the learning environment (e.g. school buildings, canteen), which delivers occasions for informal learning, are as important for the competence development as formal classroom learning settings. Based on this he provides recommendations for promoting sustainable consumption in different educational settings (schools and universities).

The last part of the book focusses on companies and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Here, *Monika Eigenstetter and Silvia Zaharia* deal with the question *Is Engagement in CSR motivated by the defined Values of Entrepreneurs?* Based on the Schwartz value scale they confirm in a study on German small and medium sized enterprises that the owner-manager's engagement for the environment and employees is correlated with “universalism” and “benevolence”. In addition they found unexpected positive influences for “security” and “tradition” which might be related to the correlation of these values with religiousness. Finally, they could confirm positive relations of CSR and classical business goals like profit and customer satisfaction.

While Eigenstetter and Zaharia look at companies as providers of goods for responsible consumers *Ulf Schrader and Christoph Harrach* analyse companies as employers of potentially responsible consumers. In their paper *Empowering Responsible Consumers to be Sustainable Intrapreneurs* they show that the integration of private values, experiences, and ideas of responsible consumers in business processes can be positive for both, employers and employees.