

Consumer-dominant social marketing: a definition and explication

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Abstract

Purpose – The emerging consumer-dominant logic of marketing captures consumers' active and primary role in a range of mainstream marketing processes such as branding, product development and sales. However, consumers' active role in driving pro-social behaviour change has not yet received close attention. The purpose of this paper is to introduce and explore consumer dominance in social marketing. The authors propose a definition of consumer-dominant social marketing (CDSM) and explicate five key elements which underpin the phenomenon.

Design/methodology/approach – This conceptual study offers an analysis informed by exemplars with significant representations of consumer-dominant pro-social behaviours and projects. The methodological approach is characterised as “envisioning conceptualisation”, which is explained in terms of [MacInnis' \(2011\)](#) framework for conceptual approaches in marketing.

Findings – As a phenomenon, CDSM operationalises the following elements: power, agency, resources, value and responsibility. The authors demonstrate how these elements are interconnected and define their meaning, significance and implications in the context of social marketing and pro-social behaviour change. The authors also identify this new form of social marketing as existing on a continuum depending on the level of involvement or dominance of the consumer and of social marketers; at one end of this continuum, exclusive CDSM is entirely consumer-driven and does not engage with businesses or organisations, while on the other end, inclusive CDSM encompasses partnership with external stakeholders to achieve pro-social behaviour change.

Research limitations/implications – The existence of inclusive and exclusive CDSM points towards an intricate power balance between consumers, mainstream social marketers and businesses. While this study identifies and explains this substantial distinction, it is an important task for future research to systematise the relationship and explore the optimal balance between consumer activism and involvement of formalised organisations such as charities and businesses in pro-social behaviour change projects.

Practical implications – The study provides social marketing professionals with an understanding of the benefits of harnessing consumer empowerment to enhance the impact of social marketing interventions.

Originality/value – The study makes a theoretical contribution by introducing, defining and explicating consumer dominance as a substantive area of social marketing.

Keywords Social marketing, Consumer dominance, Empowerment, Agency, Power, Value creation, Resource mobilisation and utilisation, Consumer empowerment, Pro-social behaviour change

Paper type Conceptual paper



Introduction

Consumer-dominant logic (CDL) is a perspective that attaches primacy to the agency of the consumer in any marketing process (Anker *et al.*, 2015; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015, 2018). However, while CDL has attracted increasing attention, there remains a need to advance theoretical understanding and empirical support for the concept (Dey *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, there has been little consideration of CDL in specific sub-disciplines of marketing, such as social marketing (French and Gordon, 2019). In commercial marketing, a key focus is on creating value for the firm and consumers through the production and delivery of goods and services. However, in social marketing, the primary focus is on creating value through promoting behaviour and social change.

Scholars have, therefore, identified that the significantly different context and focus of social marketing mean that commercial marketing concepts and ideas cannot always be directly transplanted across (Peattie and Peattie, 2003). While scholars have alluded to the possibilities (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2017), there remains a lack of consideration of CDL in social marketing and understanding of its implications for practice. This conceptual paper aims to introduce, define and explicate our concept that we term “consumer-dominant social marketing” (CDSM). In doing so, we seek to advance our conceptual understanding of CDL within the marketing literature and theorise how it may be configured and function in social marketing.

Our work builds upon existing discourse in the general marketing (Anker *et al.*, 2015) and services marketing (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015) literature that argues for a CDL for marketing. According to the CDL perspective, consumers are characterised as active and the primary creators of value, rather than passive receivers of provider-driven value propositions (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; Grönroos, 1996; Grönroos, 2006). In CDL, consumers take part in new product development, sharing and creating digital content and creating viral word-of-mouth communications (Fournier and Avery, 2011). CDL does not necessarily exclude the role of providers, marketers and other stakeholders. However, while these actors may still be involved in any marketing process and any resultant creation of value, a consumer-dominant perspective foregrounds the role of the consumer. Ultimately, it is the consumer who determines the rules of engagement (Anker *et al.*, 2015).

CDL also has implications for how we understand the idea of customer engagement. Customer engagement has traditionally been conceptualised as a reciprocal, mutually beneficial exchange relationship between consumers and brands or businesses, characterised by active interaction and value co-creation (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Vivek *et al.*, 2012). However, an emerging stream of work challenges this understanding and reconsiders the nature of the relationship between consumers and business: Bowden *et al.* (2017, p. 880) define customer engagement as the consumer’s “cognitive, emotional, and behavioural investments during or related to interactions with focal objects or agents”. This perspective de-emphasises the role of businesses and potentially paves the way for the exploration of independent, self-organising consumer-to-consumer relationships as a form of engagement geared towards value creation within wider business ecosystems.

Although it remains a nascent concept, studies on CDL have provided some empirical support for the phenomenon. In a study of Bangladeshi farmers and their use of mobile telephony, Dey *et al.* (2016) demonstrated how the bottom-of-the-pyramid consumers can co-create value with little direct support from marketers. Another study on consumer value creation through clothing reuse in Ecuador demonstrated how consumers created value independently from companies – finding that this behaviour was attenuated by income,

occupation, altruism, physical environment and whether people were from lower-income groups, students, were younger or were women (Cruz-Cárdenas *et al.*, 2019).

Yet, currently, there is a paucity of research that considers the possibilities of a CDL for social marketing (French and Gordon, 2019). For the purposes of this paper, we define social marketing as an approach that: “seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviours that benefit individuals and communities for the greater social good” (ISMA, ESMA, AASM, 2013). The absence of a CDL for social marketing expounds despite the often critical role that consumers and their agency play in bringing about behaviour and social change (French and Gordon, 2019). The idea of CDSM implies that consumers would possess the power to control the processes for initiating, sustaining and terminating pro-social behaviours embedded within a marketing ecosystem.

One example of the CDSM phenomenon is the @PublicLandHatesYou campaign. The campaign calls out social media influencers who engage in harmful behaviour that damages nature and wildlife in national parks and other public lands in their pursuit of photo opportunities that will give them the perfect snapshot to engage followers and, oftentimes, to attract sponsorship income (@Publiclandhatesyou, 2021). The account has 85.7k followers and is run singlehandedly by one individual. The associated website provides evidence of how the social media account’s the frank way of calling out anti-social behaviour has caused behavioural change, such as by convincing numerous social media influencers to remove images where they engage in actions that are harmful to nature and to post apologetic messages to their followers to raise awareness of the issue. This is consumer-driven pro-social behaviour change.

Ideas that foreground a more prominent role and agency of the consumer in social marketing have emerged in recent years. For example, French and Gordon (2015) have argued for a more citizen-centric social marketing approach that uses co-discovery, co-design, co-delivery, co-interpretation and representation and co-learning processes. In a study of bowel screening customers in Australia, Zainuddin *et al.* (2016) identified that consumers can create value for themselves, independent of service providers, to manage their health using home-testing screening kits. Similarly, in a study of online health communities, Stewart Loane and Webster (2017) found that group members have the ability to create value for themselves and each other by sharing their experiences and providing advice, support and other social-capital-building practices. Research by Kariippanon *et al.* (2020) considered how Indigenous communities themselves decided how to promote tobacco control in culturally appropriate ways that eschewed normatively and managed social marketing approaches to public health.

This existing research has hinted at the relevance of a CDL for social marketing. However, the extant literature does not explicitly identify and conceptualise this as CDSM. Given the complexity, long-term commitments and bundles of various behaviours and practices that consumers are required to engage with in any social marketing context, we argue that CDSM offers a valuable perspective. Therefore, in this paper, we introduce, define and explicate the concept of CDSM, identify its relevance for social marketing and other relevant cognate sub-disciplines and illustrate our ideas through real-life exemplars. We explain the use of our exemplars in the section “conceptual approach” immediately following this introduction.

While CDL foregrounds the role of the consumer, this does not mean that consumer dominance is necessarily a closed social system without connectivity to neighbouring social systems (Luhmann, 1995, 2006). Indeed, we argue that CDSM can often be characterised by shared power and agency whereby consumers and stakeholders (such as businesses and charities) join forces to create pro-social behaviour change. This aligns with the findings

from a study on touristic consumer-to-consumer value co-creation at festivals in the UK, which identified that although firms and marketers may not always directly influence the process, they are part of setting the landscape of the ecosystem that supports the creation of value (Rihova *et al.*, 2018). We argue that for a planned series of pro-social behaviours to be an instance of consumer dominance, it is necessarily the case that the action is instigated and controlled by consumers and that power and agency are shared by consumers with other stakeholders. To capture the subtle difference between pro-social behaviour changes carried out by consumers alone and pro-social behaviours instigated and controlled by consumers but carried out in collaboration with external stakeholders, in this article we also introduce the distinction between exclusive and inclusive consumer dominance, which represent two ends of a continuum that reflects the level of involvement or dominance of consumers and social marketers.

The remainder of our paper is structured as follows. Firstly, we explain our conceptual approach. We then review the extant literature on CDL in marketing before providing a definition for our new concept: CDSM. We then explicate what we argue are the key elements of CDSM: power, agency, resources, value and responsibility. We illustrate examples of CDL in practice using two real-life exemplars: Mum's Grapevine Groups and Meal Train. We then offer a concluding discussion of theoretical and practical implications, including suggestions for future research.

Conceptual approach

Conceptual approaches are methodologically distinctive by their cognitive modes of analysis and their conceptual goals. This section identifies our study's conceptual approach by articulating its intellectual contribution in relation to MacInnis' (2011) framework for conceptual articles in marketing and consumer research and MacInnis *et al.*'s (2020) more recent contributions to the understanding of ground-breaking research in marketing and consumer research. There are four major conceptual approaches: envisioning, explicating, relating and debating. Our article adopts an envisioning *and* explicating approach in which we aim to identify and define an emerging phenomenon – consumer dominance in social marketing – and explicate what we refer to as CDSM. In doing so, we seek to provide explanatory power for when consumers drive the behaviour and social change process in social marketing and conceptual clarity regarding how CDSM is constituted and related to other core concepts in social marketing and cognate research areas seeking to advance the consumers' well-being and broader societal and environmental goals through marketing methods.

Our conceptual analysis is informed by two “exemplars”. These are different from “examples” and “cases”. An example is a particular instance of a given phenomenon, which demonstrates the existence of that particular phenomenon. By contrast, exemplars are epitomes or highly characteristic examples of a certain type of phenomenon. An example may denote a certain phenomenon without being decidedly representative of it, whereas an exemplar is typical of the phenomenon. Exemplars should also be distinguished from “cases”, as used in case studies: case studies are narrative expositions of how an individual, a social group, an organisation and so on develop over time (Johansson, 2003; Gilham, 2000; Yin, 2009). Case studies can be full-scale empirical investigations, comprising both examples and exemplars. Exemplars are particularly conducive to informing conceptual studies as they offer a tangible context against which the theoretical constructs and their interrelations can be explained (Smith and Zarate, 1990). We draw on two exemplars, which are described in a separate section. The exemplars have been chosen because each of them is characteristic of the key elements of CDSM – power, agency, resources, value and responsibility. The two

exemplars were also chosen because they represent each end of a continuum of varying levels of involvement and dominance of consumers and social marketers – inclusive CDSM and exclusive CDSM.

Consumer dominance in marketing

Under the labels “consumer dominance” (Anker *et al.*, 2015) and “customer dominance” (Heinonen *et al.*, 2010a; Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015), marketing scholars have conceptually and empirically explored the ontology and impact of consumers as highly active agents who can both initiate value creation but also engage in value destruction. These labels refer to two different but related streams of research on the general concept of consumer dominance in marketing. While both streams of literature share the basic assumption that the empowerment of the individual end-user is disrupting the marketing system, they lead to different baseline assumptions about the nature of CDL. At the surface level, these differences are reflected in the choice of terminology: one camp focusses on *customer* dominance (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Heinonen *et al.*, 2010b, 2013), whereas the other focusses on *consumer* dominance (Anker *et al.*, 2015). Heinonen *et al.* (2010b, p. 534) define customer dominance as follows:

A CD [customer-dominant] marketing logic here refers to a view that positions the customer in the center, rather than the service, the service provider/producer or the interaction or the system. It is thus not a subset of an SD [service-dominant] logic but rather a different perspective. This approach differs from traditional notions of customer orientation by shifting the viewpoint: instead of focusing on what companies are doing to create services that customers will prefer, we suggest that the focus should be on what customers are doing with services and services to accomplish their own goals. The difference is subtle but important.

The customer-dominant perspective places individual empowerment in marketing as a logical extension of the service-dominant paradigm (Heinonen and Strandvik, 2015; Heinonen *et al.*, 2010b, 2013), whereby customers can be more or less active – or dominant – in the process of value co-creation. When the consumer is dominant within a service relationship, they will initiate and control value creation. To give one example, this is the case in health-care settings where the patient (customer) can take ownership of some part of their medical treatment plan. McColl-Kennedy *et al.* (2012) identify five different ways in which health-care customers are active in the value-creation process by taking steps to manage their conditions, such as seeking additional information, changing diets, reinforcing personal values like friendship and organising family, friends, doctors and support groups into “personal teams” that support their journey to recovery. This does not indicate a radical departure from the service-dominant paradigm but rather emphasises a shift in perspective whereby attention to the customer is intensified.

By contrast, Anker *et al.* (2015, p. 534) define consumer dominance as something more radical and clearly distinct from customer interactions with services:

Consumer dominance occurs when consumers interact with a corporate entity (e.g. a brand or product) independently from any relations with corporate agents and in ways that have the potential to impact significantly on corporations, for better or worse. (2015, p. 534)

The consumer-dominant perspective affords a substantial increase in individual empowerment and effectively calls for an entirely new paradigm of agency and value creation in marketing (Anker *et al.*, 2015). According to Anker *et al.* (2015), the product- and service-dominant paradigms cannot fully account for market phenomena where consumers are the driving force in value creation because of the existing theoretical frameworks – to varying degrees – view providers, brands and businesses as necessary intermediates in a

chain of value creation (Grönroos, 2011; Grönroos and Voima, 2013). Consumer dominance is a radical departure from the service-dominant paradigm because consumers interact with resources and entities in the marketing ecosystem to create value and influence brand perceptions, but without engaging with the provider side; that is, there is no provider facilitation. Consumers are neither passive receivers of value delivered through products nor value co-creators in service relationships: they have empowered consumers who can initiate, sustain and terminate the value-creation processes. Next, we consider the importance of CDL for social marketing and identify two different types of approaches to consumer dominance in social marketing, which we term exclusive and inclusive CDSM, respectively.

Consumer-dominant social marketing

Many of the social issues to which social marketing is applied are complex, multi-faceted and involve multiple stakeholders (Domegan *et al.*, 2016; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Parkinson *et al.*, 2016). Pro-social behaviour change also requires long-term commitments and action by consumers (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2017). Increasingly, the contemporary discourse in social marketing has focussed on how social structures and systems can be altered to support positive behaviour and social change outcomes (Domegan *et al.*, 2016; Kennedy, 2016). However, the role of the consumer remains an important focus. As such, social marketers have argued that a CDL for social marketing is needed – as it is ultimately the consumer who is the carrier of pro-social behaviour change (French and Gordon, 2019).

We define CDSM as follows:

Consumer-dominant social marketing refers to a phenomenon through which consumers mobilise themselves and/or other consumers in response to a social issue. They invest their human capital in a series of social-marketing-related activities [1] to create behaviour change for the greater good. CDSM is a process in which power, agency, resources, value and responsibility are core elements.

Our definition suggests that a degree of variability exists in terms of the extent of consumers' and other stakeholders' involvement and dominance in a social issue. We suggest that CDSM is best represented on a continuum based on the level of involvement or dominance of consumers and other stakeholders, including social marketers. We introduce the terms "inclusive CDSM" and "exclusive CDSM" to represent the two ends of this continuum. Inclusive CDSM is defined as follows:

Inclusive CDSM occurs where consumers initiate and direct actions aimed at creating pro-social behaviour change relating to a social issue context, which is shared with and structured by the provider.

According to inclusive CDSM, the consumer is situated in a shared context (e.g. health care), which is structured by the provider (e.g. national health services) and which is most likely to also include a sustained level of consumer–provider interaction. Autonomous consumer agency is, therefore, always already influenced and shaped by the assumptions, expectations, power relations and so on that exist in the shared context of the agency.

Exclusive CDSM is defined as follows:

Exclusive CDSM occurs where consumers initiate and direct actions aimed at creating pro-social behaviour change relating to a social issue context which is shared with other stakeholders but structured and managed by consumers.

We propose that CDSM can address some of the limitations of mainstream social marketing through leveraging consumers and their agency. Indeed, social marketing is often under-resourced; however, consumer power can be harnessed to overcome this limitation and

increase the scope and impact of social marketing. Social marketing is also often incumbent on social marketers and their organisations to identify issues, which can result in the funding of “trendier” social issues such as breast cancer over others such as period poverty (Anker, 2013). However, by putting consumers and their agency in the foreground of social marketing, consumers can decide to coalesce around and address social issues that may not be the focus of contemporary government strategy or fit within the immediate priorities of mainstream social marketers and policymakers.

This can result in a greater diversity of social issues being attended to and addressed and also increase the likelihood of maintaining the longevity of these change efforts. Indeed, in managed processes, sustaining change can be challenging when a social marketing programme ends (McDivitt, 2003). However, a consumer-driven process is more deeply embedded within the individuals who are intrinsically motivated to maintain pro-social behaviours. In this instance, there is less reliance on managers to drive the process and in contrast, when consumers drive and dominate the process, they become a key community asset and resource that can be leveraged by social marketing. However, a CDSM approach could be more chaotic and unpredictable in nature; therefore, facilitation in a systematic and productive manner may be challenging.

We also submit that efforts to engage with CDSM should take care not to individualise the responsibility of consumers for social issues. Indeed, for consumers who want to drive a consumer-driven process, a safe space is still needed where people can coalesce. Therefore, a supportive environment is needed through the necessary systems, structures and resources to create the right boundary conditions that are not part of more structured frameworks. To create safe spaces for consumers to coalesce at scale to engage in pro-social behaviours, there is a need to tap into existing resources such as technology and policy to support people and for CDSM to work.

Furthermore, we identify that our concept of CDSM may hold relevance for cognate sub-disciplines of marketing that share some focus with social marketing on consumer well-being. Transformative consumer research (TCR), for example, concerns research that contributes to the well-being of consumers, environments and societies across the globe (Mick *et al.*, 2012). We identify that research in TCR could be integrated with consumer-dominant approaches to behaviour and social change that foster well-being. Similarly, transformative service research (TSR), which focusses on improving consumer well-being through services (Ostrom *et al.*, 2010), could engage with consumer-dominant approaches to service systems, design and delivery to foster pro-social outcomes.

Key elements of consumer-dominant social marketing

In Figure 1, we illustrate our conceptual framework for CDSM. It begins with the subjective life experience of an individual citizen who is compelled to respond to a specific cause. The model illustrates two different routes to the ultimate goal of social marketing – behaviour and social change – manifesting as exclusive or inclusive CDSM. In exclusive CDSM, consumers can decide to create value themselves without engaging other stakeholders, such as businesses or charities, directly in the process, whereas in inclusive CDSM consumers may engage others in the change process while still adopting a dominant role. We posit that CDSM rests on five key elements: power, agency, resources, value and responsibility. We do not claim that this is an exhaustive conceptualisation but argue that these five elements are critical for CDSM to occur.

Consumers will catalyse existing resources in the marketing ecosystem (i.e. operand and operant resources provided by businesses) to mobilise other consumers to create behaviour change, but there is no joint agency with external stakeholders as consumers exclusively

chains – among many other (Andreasen, 1984). Yet, as Anderson (1987) explains, power has subsided from focus in the mainstream marketing literature; we find a similar pattern in social marketing in which “social power has been overlooked or misconstrued” (Brace-Govan, 2015, p. 113).

This is surprising given the complexity of the social problems that are often the focus of social marketing, its multi-stakeholder nature, contestation regarding what constitutes social good and how it should be achieved (French and Gordon, 2019; Gordon *et al.*, 2016; Szablewska and Kubacki, 2019). Scholars have drawn attention to the power dynamics and political nature associated with key questions in social marketing contexts, such as who decides what behaviours need to be changed, among which propriety groups and on what basis, what means are used to achieve change and whether and how there can be accountability for the actions of change-makers (Hastings *et al.*, 2000; Raftopoulou and Hogg Margaret, 2010).

We argue that power in social marketing should not be understood as a fixed entity or institution and that it is neither a structure nor agency. Rather, it is a relational and productive force that generates social outcomes, realities, domains of objects and rituals of truth (Foucault, 1980). Furthermore, while power in social marketing may be more concentrated in particular groups (e.g. the state, the media and the capitalist elite) and in particular contexts (e.g. human trafficking or refugees), it is still dispersed. It controls actions but still leaves people to have some level of free will. For example, while government social marketing programmes might encourage or even mandate citizens to recycle or eat more healthily, people still have the power to reject this and behave in their own chosen manner. Therefore, power is less a confrontation than a question of governance. Given that social marketing is focussed on governing people to do something – that is, to change or maintain their behaviours to be pro-social – power is clearly an important concept for this discipline. The question becomes: how is social marketing and the process of change it is supposed to promote governed?

In a sense, power can be understood as being the basis upon which humans already understand each other. Power can be deployed through, in and over various social entities, such as people, markets, politics, resources, space, thoughts, affects and emotions and bodies (Ahmed, 2004; Butler, 1993; Dovey, 2014; Foucault, 1980; Machiavelli, 1532 [1999]; Russell, 1938) and these various social entities are often featured in social marketing. For instance, social marketing programmes to promote energy conservation may feature people (e.g. community participants, researchers and building auditors), markets (e.g. energy regulators and retailers) and resources (e.g. appliances and home retrofits). Spaces and places (e.g. houses, rooms and roof spaces), cognitions (e.g. attention, memory and decision-making) and effects and emotions (e.g. billing anxiety and pride in making savings) may also feature. Bodies are also used to perform social marketing behaviours, for example, energy-use practices such as doing the laundry or even installing solar panels in a home. Therefore, the power that is held and transmitted in and through these various entities in social marketing is important to consider.

Yet, as Brace-Govan (2015) discusses, power can create conflicts with the orientation of social marketing to facilitate social “good”. As Machiavelli (1532 [1999]) argued, those who wish to maintain power should not always be good. So, while those funding, managing and delivering social marketing programmes might have good intentions of supporting positive social outcomes, this is not necessarily so. Important questions about how power exists and functions in social marketing may include: Who decides what is a social good? Who decides what behaviours should be changed and among whom? Who controls the process of change and how is this achieved (Spotswood *et al.*, 2012)? In traditional conceptualisations of social

marketing, the marketing manager has a greater balance of power and influence over these questions (Lee and Kotler, 2020). Social marketing normally adopts an agnostic approach to power that is also common in the mainstream marketing discipline (Dholakia, 2012). Yet, in her critique of social marketing, Brace-Govan (2015, p. 115) draws attention to how the “key overlooked dimension here is the unequal distribution of power in the social marketing process”.

While we support the call for greater attention to power more generally in social marketing, our specific focus here is on how CDSM deals with power. Arguably, in putting consumers at the heart of the behaviour-change process, CDSM represents a transference of power away from the social marketer and the institutions that they represent to the consumer. As our exemplars demonstrate, CDSM can enable the consumer to have greater power and influence over which social problems they wish to address, which priority groups to work with, what resources are made available and used to achieve change and how the change process is conducted. And, from a CDSM perspective, consumers in social marketing would have greater power over how people, markets, politics, resources, space, thoughts, effects and emotions and bodies are used to bring about change. However, that is not to say that CDSM represents a complete transfer of power to the consumer away from other stakeholders in the social marketing context.

Finally, we also need to be aware of potential limitations in how power may operate in CDSM. One concern is that promoting a CDSM approach in which power is supposed to be transferred to and be held by the consumer is just another way in which social marketing individually responsibilities citizens and encourages yet further rolling back of the state (Raftopoulou and Hogg Margaret, 2010). Another issue is that CDSM presupposes that consumers have the time, energy and ability to generate and use power effectively over a complex array of entities, resources and processes to bring about positive behaviour change. What happens in cases in which consumers do not want or are not capable of holding and using power to bring about the desired change? Does the state or some other entity still manage the process? We also need to be aware that while transferring power to consumers in social marketing may seem more democratic, there is always the risk that power could be abused by certain group members in such contexts, leading to conflict and exclusion.

Agency

Agency is a foundational concept across all sciences that study what people do and why they do it and can broadly be defined as the capacity of one or more actors to make decisions and carry out actions in a given context (Schlosser, 2019). Agency is thereby influenced, shaped by and responds to environmental and intersubjective factors that either enable or constrain decision-making or action. Agency and the understanding of what, how and why consumers do things is an important focus for gaining insights about consumer behaviour, as well as informing marketing strategy (Bagozzi, 2011). Such understanding is also critical for guiding social marketing approaches (French and Gordon, 2019). Agency is important to CDSM as this ascribes the capacity for consumers to act in a way that is conducive to fostering pro-social behaviour change. Therefore, for CDSM to function effectively, consumers would naturally be required to possess agency. Two dimensions of the agency are particularly important: motivation and *locus* of control.

The intense experience of a societal or environmental problem and the urge to take action is the natural inflection point for CDSM. It starts with an individual who is experiencing a social injustice, with someone who cannot accept that we are destroying the globe or with a

neighbour feeling the need to help local residents during periods of hardship. The subjective nature of the motivation and desire to act that drives an individual to start a social marketing project is a distinctive characteristic of a consumer-dominant agency. In traditional social marketing, by contrast, the recognition and experience of the societal problem are different: while those working as professional social marketers are arguably motivated by making a meaningful change to improve the greater good, this motivation is nevertheless filtered through a set of organisational objectives, strategies and constraints. The professional social marketer has to be motivated to address the social cause in a way that is aligned with the organisation that uses them. Moreover, professional social marketers may sometimes even find themselves in a situation where they have to promote a cause with which they do not fully sympathise or which they would have acted on differently had they been in charge of the operations.

Agency can be moderated by *locus* of control. A person is said to have an internal *locus* of control if they are capable of performing a certain action should they decide to do so (Phares, 1976). The internal *locus* thereby entails both volitional and operational control. By contrast, a person is subject to an external *locus* of control when, for example, the task demands of a situation impede their ability to act accordingly to their motivations and preferences or if they are under an external psychological influence, such as manipulation or subliminal advertising (Phares, 1976). At first glance, the main difference between mainstream social marketing and CDSM is that in the former the professional social marketer will be acting under a greater external *locus* of control as they have to align their actions with organisational priorities, whereas in the latter CDSM projects are characterised by an internal *locus* of control. This is true, but only for the onset of consumer-dominant activities.

One striking feature of the consumer-dominant agency is its dynamism: the *locus* of control changes within every single project, campaign or intervention. Initially, the individual consumer is being driven entirely by their own subjective motivation, but because the overarching purpose is to create societal or environmental change for the greater good, it is necessary to engage other consumers or stakeholders (e.g. charities, businesses, politicians and journalists) in the cause. Consumer-driven initiatives will, therefore, have to go through a transition period where the *locus* of control changes from internal to external as the agency transitions from individual to share to create pro-social impact at scale.

Resources

Resources refer to anything that can be used to help achieve an outcome, whether this is to facilitate pro-social behaviour change or to satisfy a consumer demand (Madhavaram and Hunt, 2008). Resources may include materials, knowledge, ideas, capacities and capabilities, money, support, etc. We submit that access to and the ability to deploy resources is a critical component of CDSM – as, without required resources, it would be difficult for consumers to control any behaviour-change process without recourse to social marketers or other actors. Operand resources are tangible assets that enable core business operations such as raw material for production, equipment and machinery. However, operant resources are intangible assets like knowledge, competencies, skills and social networks that enable a business to act on operand resources. The notion of resources plays a pivotal role in CDSM: recent technological developments – particularly innovations in social media and smartphone apps – have enabled large-scale consumer utilisation of resources, which previously was an area reserved for businesses only (Labrecque *et al.*, 2013; Wilson, 2018).

While product- and service-dominant social marketing use either operand or operant resources to achieve behaviour change (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2016), consumer dominance

introduces a new and broader conceptualisation of resources. However, individual consumers may not always have access to sufficient resources that they can mobilise to achieve desired behaviour change. This could restrict the potential for pro-social behaviour change (e.g. to support environmental sustainability) to occur at any level of meaningful scale. However, in instances of CDSM, when consumers may work together to pool their common resources, the potential for meaningful change may increase. Yet, there may still remain some instances in which consumers adopting a CDSM process may require access to additional resources. In these cases, there may still be a role for the social marketer to facilitate access to such resources.

To understand the potency of catalysation as a resource in CDSM, it is useful to look at three distinct dimensions: information-based power, demand-based power and crowd-based power (Labrecque *et al.*, 2013). Information-based power refers to the breakdown of the information asymmetry between consumers and marketers/firms that characterised the marketplace prior to the internet. Today, consumers have easy access to a very substantial pool of information, spanning scientific knowledge to journalism and consumer-created content. Moreover, Web 2.0, with its mass adoption of social media, has enabled free information sharing without any geographical boundaries, which has empowered consumers to use unprecedented access to information and content to level the playing field and influence both consumers and businesses to change behaviour. Demand-based power is the aggregated impact of consumers' consumption and purchase decisions. Social media and information-based power have enabled consumers to coordinate consumer behaviours across large sections of the market (e.g. targeting a certain retail chain or a specific brand) and, thereby, influence businesses or other consumers to change behaviour. Finally, crowd-based power is the ability of consumers to pool and structure resources. Digital peer-to-peer platforms, which are now commonplace, enable consumers to collect and share vast repositories of knowledge (e.g. Wikipedia), raise money for social projects via crowdfunding (e.g. Kickstarter) and engage in collaborative consumption and resource circulation, for example, by sharing operand resources, such as tools, equipment and children's toys (e.g. Toy Libraries) or operant resources, such as childcare (e.g. Care.com).

When the three consumer powers are combined, individual citizens are able to mobilise other consumers' operand and operant resources to participate in campaigns or events designed to create behaviour change for the common good. Our exemplars clearly demonstrate how this materialises in practice. The Meal Train solution, for example, uses an online platform (crowd-based power) to mobilise both operand (food) and operant (time, cooking and delivery) resources among local residents to solve a particular health-care need in the local community via a mobile app.

Value

To motivate consumers and other stakeholders to engage in pro-social behaviour-change processes, an important precursor for social good is the creation of value (French and Gordon, 2019). Therefore, we submit that value is a critical component of CDSM, as value creation is a core principle and concept in social marketing and for achieving behaviour and social change (Zainuddin and Gordon, 2020). Interactions between any type of agent in the marketplace must be mutually beneficial to be viable: the sustained existence of marketing as a social system is predicated on mutual interest and value creation. Both commercial and social marketing seeks to create consumer perceived value of a product, service or behaviour by promoting or enhancing its perceived positive functional, economic, emotional, social or societal dimensions (Sánchez-Fernández and Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007; Gordon, Dibb, *et al.*, 2018). In CDSM, we identify that value can be perceived across all of these dimensions.

Value creation can also be understood through different perspectives. The value-in-exchange perspective, which is largely adopted within commercial marketing, focusses on creating value through a *transactional exchange* of costs and benefits for a product or service (Bagozzi, 1975; Houston and Gassenheimer, 1987; Anderson *et al.*, 1999). Economic value can shape social marketing exchanges, for example, consumers consider the cost-benefit analysis in paying to join a gym to get fit and healthy. Social marketing also adopts the value-in-use perspective, in which the experiential value of services such as cancer screening influences pro-social outcomes (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, social marketers have introduced the concept of value-in-behaviour, which focusses on how consumer perceived value towards pro-social behaviours shapes motivation to act (Gordon, Dibb, *et al.*, 2018). We argue that in CDSM contexts, it is possible for various combinations of the value-in-exchange, value-in-use or value-in-behaviour perspectives to be adopted.

Our distinction between inclusive and exclusive CDSM points towards two contexts in which these various forms of value creation may occur: contexts that involve or do not involve social marketers and other stakeholders. Exclusive CDSM happens when consumers come together to advance pro-social aims without interacting with external stakeholders such as businesses or charities. This is characteristic of the Mum's Grapevine Groups exemplar. There is a *relational* nature to consumers' activities: they are motivated to engage in these pro-social behaviours because doing so is meaningful in and of itself. Value is, thus, closely connected to engaging with like-minded consumers in a physical or virtual community of shared values, priorities and ideas.

By contrast, inclusive CDSM occurs when consumers join forces with external stakeholders, such as businesses and charities, to advance social aims. This is seen in the Meal Train exemplar. The agents may indeed have shared interests, motivations and intentions, as is the case in exclusive CDSM, but there is a crucial difference clearly distinguishing inclusive CDSM: it is *not* relational engagement that motivates consumers and businesses to join forces but *transactional* interaction. Where consumers in exclusive CDSM come together because of a shared interest in a specific cause, consumers and businesses come together in inclusive CDSM because doing so is an efficient way to achieve their own objectives. Businesses seek to obtain a sustainable licence to operate in a global economy that places increasing emphasis on ethics and responsibility, whereas consumers are driven by an existential need to promote good causes and be part of communities of like-minded people (Dessart *et al.*, 2015; Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Value is created through the coordination of agency across different types of stakeholders who promote pro-social behaviours but for different reasons.

Responsibility

According to the logic of CDSM, consumers have an increased level of responsibility for controlling and actioning the pro-social behaviour-change process. This is in contrast to situations in which the social marketer would traditionally hold significant responsibility (Lee and Kotler, 2020). As we identified earlier, under CDSM, consumers hold power and have agency to achieve behaviour-change outcomes. With this power and agency comes the responsibility to manage the process in a way that is ethical, appropriate, efficacious and avoids negative unintended consequences. Traditionally, consumers have been seen as passive agents in marketing processes and, consequently, marketing organisations held ultimate responsibility for changing consumer behaviour.

However, with the introduction of Web 2.0 technologies, consumers have gradually become more and more active, for example, in terms of user-generated content, product customisation and user-driven product development and advancement of pro-social

behaviours (Labrecque *et al.*, 2013). This means that the notion of responsibility has changed fundamentally: where the onus was primarily on businesses in the past, consumer dominance introduces a new era of marketing ethics with individual consumers being increasingly accountable for what used to be business functions. The distinction between inclusive and exclusive CDSM also indicates a fundamental difference in terms of responsibility.

Exclusive CDSM is best thought of as a type of community agency whereby individual members of a virtual or physical community act to influence other members of the community to adopt a given pro-social behaviour. In regard to responsibility, this speaks to the ethical position known as communitarianism which holds that standards of morality should be found in the forms of life, customs and practices within particular communities (Bell, 2020).

Inclusive CDSM, on the other hand, unifies different types of agents that do not belong to the same social systems (or communities) in the pursuit of a common pro-social goal. Communitarianism cannot explain ethical responsibilities because the agents have to share responsibilities across communities with potentially different values, standards and expectations. What is at stake in inclusive CDSM and value co-creation is an implicit agreement between consumers and businesses or other stakeholders to temporarily put differences aside in the pursuit of a shared goal. This points towards the ethical position known as contractualism (or social contract) which emphasises moral principles that those involved in the action can agree on (Ashford and Mulgan, 2018; Scanlon, 2000). However, the main point we wish to make is that consumers have to be aware that with empowerment comes ethical responsibility for the potential impact on other consumers and stakeholders. We next illustrate our conceptualisation of CDSM through sharing real-life exemplars.

Exemplars of consumer-dominant social marketing

This section introduces two exemplars and shows how each of them is linked to the five key elements of CDSM. The exemplars demonstrate different ways in which consumers self-initiate and self-organise pro-social actions. The exemplars were chosen to give an understanding of both the power and limitations of consumer empowerment.

Mum's grapevine groups

The Mum's Grapevine Groups are closed online communities hosted on Facebook for pregnant women and mothers to connect with other women who are due or whose delivery dates are around the same time (i.e. Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter Baby Groups). Mum's Grapevine involves a variety of social-marketing-related activities (Andreasen, 2002; French and Blair-Stevens, 2006) used to influence the behaviour of pregnant women and mothers to benefit them not only as individuals but also as a community for the greater social good. For example, Mum's Grapevine has a clearly identified target segment of women whose children were born or are due around the same time and is consumer-oriented as it addresses the needs of women for information and support. It uses the social marketing intervention mix through membership to a community (product), for free (price), online (place) and offers support and information to members in exchange for their own resources that they contribute to the group (operant resource sharing), based on social support theory.

Facilitated by web and mobile technology, parents and parents-to-be are increasingly turning to online platforms for information and emotional support and as a means of socialisation (Hickey, 2019; Pretorius *et al.*, 2019; Regan and Brown, 2019; Strange *et al.*, 2018; Teaford *et al.*, 2019). Given that parents and parents-to-be are vulnerable to the stresses of parenthood and susceptible to postpartum depression, the social aims of online

communities like the Mum's Grapevine Groups are to positively influence well-being and reduce vulnerability.

This is achieved through the sharing of resources among community members, including informational and emotional resources, which creates value for members. Members possess agency in determining the nature and level of their engagement with the online community and have the power to shape others' parenting decisions and experiences through recommendations and the sharing of their own knowledge and experience, as well as personal stories. Members are also required to demonstrate responsibility in their participation with the group, such as by showing respect to other members, refraining from offering medical advice and not using the group to advertise or spam members. Participation in Mum's Grapevine allows members to regain power over their pregnancy and parenting experiences, as offline support services can be limited, fragmented and inconsistent (Regan and Brown, 2019). Mum's Grapevine is an example of exclusive consumer dominance, as group members are responsible for driving the narrative within the group discussions through their posts, questions and comments.

Meal train

Meal Train is a social calendar-based website that provides a crowdsourcing platform for helping vulnerable community members experience a significant life event by arranging one or more free meals delivered directly to the recipient's home (Meal Train, 2020). Meal Train involves a variety of social-marketing-related activities (Andreasen, 2002; French and Blair-Stevens, 2006) to influence the behaviour of citizens to volunteer to help, benefiting the volunteers themselves (through a sense of giving back to the community), recipients and the community for the greater social good. Meal Train has two clearly identified target segments: those who are experiencing vulnerability and those living in the same community with the willingness and capacity to help. It is consumer-oriented as it enables vulnerable community members to continue having their needs met and is also adaptive of volunteers' capacity to contribute by allowing them to determine the extent of their involvement.

Meal Train uses the social marketing intervention mix through the provision of a calendar (product), online (place), for free or at a nominal fee (price). Meal Train occasionally engages in promotions, such as through television news features and is based on social support theory. The website or mobile app is used to organise the preparation and delivery of one or more free meals to a recipient and invite other people to join the meal train. The social aims of Meal Train are to strengthen communities through enabling giving by connecting those in need with those who have the capacity to help. This is achieved through the crowdsourcing platform that enables those with resources – such as time, ability and commitment – to support those in need through food preparation and delivery.

Meal Train participants have agency in setting up a meal train for someone in need or deciding the extent of their involvement by determining the number of days they are able to cook and deliver a meal. As the meal train is facilitated through the use of a calendar, members have a responsibility for fulfilling a commitment to prepare and deliver the meals on the days that they have self-selected in the calendar. Meal Train provides power to its participants by allowing them a means to share their resources with others in their community, particularly those experiencing vulnerability through being affected by major life events (such as deployment, returning home from surgery or having a baby). Meal Train is an example of inclusive consumer dominance as group members work together through the use of the business platform's tools and resources.

Discussion

The purpose of this conceptual article was to introduce and explore consumer dominance in social marketing. We have now introduced, defined and explicated the concept of CDSM and discussed five key elements which underpin the phenomenon.

A key characteristic of CDSM is the intensity and subjectivity of the personal experience that motivates the individual consumer to invest their time and resources over a sustained period to address a societal issue. CDSM can occur independently from social marketers, describing exclusive CDSM. Conversely, CDSM can also occur in collaboration with social marketers, describing inclusive CDSM. The level of involvement of individual consumers and other stakeholders, such as social marketers, can vary across different social issue contexts and also across various stages of the lifespan of a social issue. As such, we posit that CDSM exists on a continuum that reflects a range of involvement levels of consumers and stakeholders within a pro-social project.

Theoretical implications

Prior social marketing literature has identified that consumers can and do play a proactive role in driving the behaviour-change process (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2016). Our conceptualisation of CDSM helps advance understanding of how consumers play an active role in driving pro-social behaviour change. We have also articulated how power, agency, value, resources and responsibility are critical elements in facilitating CDSM. We argue that for CDSM to occur, it is important that these elements are present and enabled within any given behaviour-change context. Furthermore, we argue that how power, agency, value, resources and responsibility are held and deployed by consumers in the CDSM context warrants attention. If consumers are to drive the behaviour-change process according to CDSM, it is important that these elements are used in an ethical, moral, appropriate and efficacious way that also avoids negative unintended consequences (Andreassen, 2001).

The conceptual contributions of the ideas presented in this article are not limited to the social marketing domain and offer relevance to any transformative context, such as cognate sub-disciplines of marketing, including TCR and TSR (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2019). Indeed, social marketing, TCR and TSR all share some common interests in enhancing consumers' lives and improving well-being. To achieve its goals, TCR involves partnering with a range of stakeholders, including individual consumers and the organisations that represent their interests. TSR focusses on improving consumer welfare through services, service providers and service systems (Ostrom *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, both TCR and TSR are compatible with CDSM, which can offer these disciplines a deeper understanding of how consumers initiate, control and interact with transformative research and services.

However, social marketing differs from TCR and TSR in that it involves not only a form of action research or service delivery but also encompasses intervention through the delivery of multi-faceted and multi-level social marketing programmes (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2014). TCR may not always be linked to intervention but primarily focusses on consumer well-being through a transformative research approach (Mick *et al.*, 2012). TSR also has a specific focus only on services (Russell-Bennett *et al.*, 2019) and not the full suite of intervention activities considered in social marketing that may include products, advocacy, policy change, promotional activities, community development, public infrastructure etc. (French and Gordon, 2019).

We also identify that our ideas on consumer dominance may hold some relevance to emerging conversations in the customer engagement literature that reconsider the dynamics between consumers and business (Bowden *et al.*, 2017). Our ideas on consumer dominance and the critical elements of power, agency, resources, value and responsibility, could help

inform understanding of independent, self-organising consumer-to-consumer relationships as a form of engagement.

Policy implications

Our findings also suggest some important implications for policy, practice and research. We argue that CDSM should be embedded within relevant policy discourse, language and policy documents relating to social change issues. Current policy and programmes addressing social marketing problems tend to accentuate the role of the social marketing organisations as controlling the change process (French and Gordon, 2020), with co-designed approaches now emerging in some contexts (Dietrich *et al.*, 2016). We argue that policymakers and social policies they develop should acknowledge that behaviour and social change, as well as consumers' propensity to engage in pro-social projects, is complex and may vary according to the circumstances. This means that different combinations of exclusive and inclusive CDSM and social marketer dominated approaches may be required to address different social issues and among different population segments. CDSM could be useful in communities where there is lower trust in government, hard-to-reach groups or a greater desire for control and agency to direct the behaviour-change process. One obvious example would be the adoption of a CDSM approach to address the low uptake of Covid-19 vaccination in some ethnic groups in major urban areas. However, care should be taken not to responsabilise the consumer and to still provide direct support for consumers for which a CDSM approach is not appropriate. Ascertaining the appropriate approach in each context can be informed by formative research and community engagement.

Therefore, CDSM holds the potential to shape public policy development and implementation. In public sector management, policy co-creation is an approach whereby the public sector shares with or empowers stakeholders with key responsibilities and activities, rather than treating them as passive receivers of social services at the end of the value chain (Osborne *et al.*, 2016; Babu *et al.*, 2020). Integrating CDSM within co-creative public sector management can enable citizens to work with stakeholders such as local government, charities, social enterprises and even commercial service providers to drive pro-social change for issues that resonate with their personal priorities and individual values.

Governments can harness the power of CDSM by involving pro-social citizen activists in the value chain. In our Mum's Grapevine Groups exemplar, new mothers and pregnant women self-organise to form social community groups where they provide emotional support and practical information about motherhood and caring for babies. By involving such groups in the public service value chain, governments could enhance access to and supply of, emotional resources to underpin mental health priorities and factual public health information to support public health priorities (e.g. advise on breastfeeding and helping mums be proud of it). A community group like Mum's Grapevine Groups could be directly coupled with centrally funded public health campaigns such as #NotSorryMums that use taxpayer money to highlight the health benefits of breastfeeding and make mothers more comfortable breastfeeding in public spaces (PHA, 2018). Our second exemplar, Meal Train, offers insight into another area ripe for public service co-creation: design, organisation and delivery of core public services. The citizen activists behind Meal Train have effectively designed a full-scale public service to meet an unserved need among vulnerable residents.

Practical implications

We identify that a key question concerns how can social marketers best integrate CDSM resources into the public service value chain? We propose that social marketers work with policymakers at all levels to build engagement platforms, virtual and physical, to involve

citizen activists in the formulation of policy aims and objectives and the design of local services that can be co-delivered by self-organising community groups (Dietrich *et al.*, 2016; Fuster Morell and Senabre Hidalgo, 2020). Moreover, social marketers should advocate for public service managers to trust self-organising citizen groups with the power and responsibility to lead the implementation of social change initiatives when appropriate. According to a CDSM perspective, the potential of citizen activism can only ever be fully realised if citizens remain central to the control and leadership of the initiatives which they have created, due to a strong sense of ownership.

However, we acknowledge that there are risks for social marketers and public managers in outsourcing power to citizen activists, as this could be perceived as diminishing institutional power and abrogating responsibility for solving social problems. Or it could also infer that organisations accept responsibility for the actions of empowered citizen activists in tackling social issues including when things go wrong. This may require a re-definition of the role and professional identity of mainstream social marketers. Traditionally, many social marketers think of themselves as social activists who create social change for the greater good (Wymer, 2010, 2011). Yet, to work to a CDSM perspective and enable dispersion of power to consumers, it is necessary to shift focus away from seeing oneself as a “change-maker” to being a “change-facilitator”. This does not, however, diminish the importance of professionally trained social marketers. Even though some consumers may possess significant power, agency, resources and responsibility to create value for themselves in bringing about pro-social behaviour change - their competency is not without limitations. Social marketers can often apply their behaviour change knowledge across significantly more topical areas than consumers. Moreover, many functional skills such as segmentation, media planning, strategy and advanced metrics to evidence and improve impact are still reserved for people with professional training and not possessed within consumers’ general competency. Finally, we identified earlier there are still likely to be social issues and population segments for which a CDSM approach is not appropriate and social marketers need to take a more active role.

Research implications

Given that the concept of CDSM is emergent, future research to help further conceptualise consumer dominance in social marketing and more broadly in the marketing discipline will be important. Future research examining CDSM in greater depth across a variety of social change contexts such as health, climate change and sustainability, racism and gender equality would be welcome. Considering that the nature of social change issues can vary greatly, depending on whether they relate to, for example, personal health causes such as cancer screening (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2016), altruistic causes such as blood donation (Polonsky *et al.*, 2015) or social betterment causes such as energy conservation (Gordon, Waitt, *et al.*, 2018) it may be that the operationalisation of the elements of CDSM would differ across contexts. Furthermore, conceptual and empirical research will be important to enhance understanding of the core elements of CDSM: power, agency, resources, value and responsibility.

For example, future research could explore how can social marketers respond pro-actively to the shifting power base that turns the consumer into a primary instigator of pro-social change. Work that considers how social change should be governed in an ecosystem where power is dispersed between different stakeholders such as the consumer, social marketer, business or government (Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014) and how power imbalances may be treated can also help to understand. The transfer of power to consumers in social marketing theoretically makes organised social change more democratic, but this also enhances the risk and potential severity of abuse of power. Therefore, future research could question whether it may be necessary to regulate CDSM to avoid abuse of power and exclusion of certain consumer groups.

Research could also explore agency in CDSM, particularly during shifts from exclusive to inclusive CDSM in which the *locus* of control may change from the individual consumer (internal agency) to stakeholder interaction (external agency). How can social marketing support the transition phase from individual to external agency? And how can consumers retain a sense of ownership and commitment when the *locus* of control is being externalised through partnering with mainstream social marketers and other external stakeholders?

We also identify that for the consumer in CDSM, with their power and agency comes responsibility. Therefore, future CDSM research could consider whether consumers have a moral responsibility to use their increased powerbase to engage in various pro-social behaviour-change projects. Furthermore, research might also consider whether CDSM risks inadvertently lead to the individualisation of responsibility of the consumer, which has been critiqued in the social marketing literature (French and Gordon, 2019) and would represent a further roll-back of government intervention in addressing social problems. Consumers in any given CDSM context may have considerable operand resources but limited operant resources. Therefore, research that examines access to resources and their control and distribution in CDSM and the associated impacts on power and agency, can help advance insight. Consumer access to operand resources through partnering with social marketers and other stakeholders in an inclusive CDSM context may help achieve greater social impact but also create tensions. Therefore, future research may also need to consider how social marketers can position themselves as facilitators who can amplify both operant and operand resources in CDSM.

Future inquiry may also examine motivations in terms of value in CDSM, particularly in inclusive CDSM contexts in which consumers, social marketers and other stakeholders join forces but co-create value for different reasons (Zainuddin and Gordon, 2020). Research could question how social marketers can best support self-organising consumer groups to co-create value with other stakeholders that serves everyone's interests. Work that also interrogates how, why and what is the best response to value destruction in CDSM contexts would also be useful. Finally, future research could also explore ideas on consumer dominance and the role of power, agency, resources, value and responsibility in cognate sub-disciplines such as TCR and TSR. Furthermore, our ideas on consumer dominance could also be relevant to future research in customer engagement that focusses on when consumers take on a more prominent or exclusive role in engagement.

Note

1. These social-marketing-related activities may include consumer orientation, focus on behaviour change, being theory-informed, insight-driven, incorporating an exchange, competition-focussed, adopting segmentation and using the social marketing intervention mix (Andreasen, 2002; French and Blair-Stevens, 2006).

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