What do we mean by sustainability marketing?

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Abstract

Sustainability in marketing has gained some traction over the years, yet we still remain uncertain about exactly what 'sustainability marketing' means. Utilising the Scopus database, a discourse analysis was conducted on nearly 200 published journal articles. The analysis categorises multiple sustainability views and outlines three conceptualisations of sustainability marketing: Auxiliary Sustainability Marketing (which focusses on the production of sustainable products), Reformative Sustainability Marketing (which extends the auxiliary approach through the promotion of sustainable lifestyles and behavioural changes), and Transformative Sustainability Marketing (which further extends the auxiliary and reformative approaches through the need for transformation of current institutions and norms, and critical reflection). This paper then discusses how these three conceptualisations might be used by scholars and practitioners to interpret and implement sustainability marketing going forward.

Keywords: Sustainability marketing, sustainable marketing, green marketing, sustainability, discourse analysis

Summary statement of contribution

McDonagh and Prothero (2014) implored future research to engage with the question 'what is sustainability marketing'. While more studies on sustainability marketing have emerged, they have not discussed or addressed in-depth what sustainability marketing means, as has been previously attempted (e.g., Belz, 2005; Gordon et al., 2011; Lim, 2015). This paper contributes

to the debate about what it means to be sustainable in marketing, how to achieve it, and by whom.

What do we mean by sustainability marketing?

Introduction

Sustainability has entered the vernacular of many disciplines and marketing is no exception. However, what is meant by sustainability, both within and outside marketing, is still contested (Connelly, 2007; Davidson, 2014; Hopwood, Mellor, & O'Brien, 2005; Lim, 2016; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). At the forefront of this debate exists the contradictory nature of sustainability and marketing; questioning whether marketing, as it is currently defined, can actually be sustainable when it is based on an unrealistic model of continuous consumption despite ecological limits to growth (Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort, & Hillier, 2008; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Sandberg & Polsa, 2015). Marketing is also seen as the antithesis to sustainability (Jones et al., 2008; Lim, 2016; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). However, there is potential in marketing's ability to influence sustainable lifestyles (Peattie & Peattie, 2009) and produce sustainable products (Charter, Peattie, Ottman, & Polonsky, 2002; Peattie, 2001). The discussion about the relationship between marketing and the environment has been ongoing since the 1960s with the release of books like Rachel Carson's Silent Spring and the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth (Peattie, 2001).

The relationship between marketing and sustainability seems to be non-contentious for marketers. However, for those in macromarketing, critical marketing, and those outside the marketing discipline, the issues of (un)sustainability in marketing raise critical questions about what it means to be sustainable and how this can be achieved in marketing (Alvesson, 1994; Prothero, McDonagh, & Dobscha, 2010; Varey, 2010). Many ignore the issue that

overconsumption is still a problem and that replacing products with green ones does not address the issue of limited resources (Varey, 2011). In other words, the answer to sustainable consumption is not more consumption (Peattie & Crane, 2005). So, while a cradle-to-cradle approach (McDonough & Braungart, 2002) is certainly needed, this approach needs to be taken in conjunction with consumption reduction and the appreciation of life beyond material possessions (Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd, Koenig-Lewis, & Zhao, 2015; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Varey, 2010). Indeed, Prothero et al. (2010) discussed the 'green commodity' discourse which has taken hold, getting 'people to think about consuming less rather than just differently' (p. 155).

Similar, yet vastly different concepts of ecological and green marketing fall short of truly addressing the complex needs of sustainability. Around the 1970s, ecological marketing began to take shape (Peattie, 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). This stream of marketing was concerned with industries with clear environmental hazards and focused on purely environmental issues like pollution, oil spills and the ecological impacts of products such as synthetic pesticides (Peattie, 2001; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). However, there were also businesses like The Body Shop in this time period, which ingrained environmental and social values in their mission and culture, responding to entrepreneurial vision rather than consumer demand (Peattie, 2001; Peattie & Crane, 2005). Green marketing emerged later in the 1980s with increasing demand from the so-called 'green consumer', leading to new markets and competitive advantages (Peattie, 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). However, green marketing is seen to be involved with a product orientation, criticised for over exaggerating environmental claims and neglecting individual consumer behaviour (i.e. rebound effects) (Gordon et al., 2011).

As a consequence of the abundance of green marketing claims, their lack of claim credibility and the perceived lower performance of green products, consumer scepticism was high (Crane, 2000; Peattie & Crane, 2005). In addition, the attitude–behaviour gap featured prominently in green buying (Peattie, 2001). The difference between green and ecological marketing is that the former conforms to consumer pressure, while the latter is based on some sort of moral dimension (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). However, both these concepts overestimate the demand, willingness and ability of the consumer to purchase environmentally friendly products (as they are usually charged at a premium), and for the producer to create such goods (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Extending ecological and green marketing, sustainability marketing has been offered by some to redefine the scale of marketing (Gordon et al., 2011; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996), and 'towards radical changes in the way we live, produce, market and consume' (Peattie, 2001, p. 144).

Consequently, sustainability marketing is the product of the evolution of the sustainability agenda in marketing over the last 30 years. The first introduction of sustainability marketing by Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) was followed by many different definitions of sustainability (and sustainable) marketing, which ranged from environmental (Fuller, 1999; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995) to holistic conceptions (e.g. Belz, 2005; Belz & Peattie, 2009; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996), and differed between European and North American perspectives (Murphy, 2005). For example, Fuller (1999, p. 4) offered sustainable marketing as the process of planning, implementing and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: (1) customer needs are met; (2) organisational goals are attained; and (3) the process is compatible with eco-systems.

Several scholars see the merging of relationship, social, green and ethical marketing combining to create a new concept of 'sustainable marketing', specifically going beyond a commercial and product orientation to a broad societal view on its impact and built on long-term relationships (Belz & Peattie, 2010; Gordon et al., 2011). Therefore, this broad, macro, relational view treats socioecological problems at the start of the marketing process instead of as externalities, reconfigures the marketing mix and focuses on the transformational potential of marketing on creating favourable institutional change for sustainable consumption and production (Belz & Peattie, 2010). Considering this trajectory from environmental to green to sustainability marketing, which previous scholars delineate from each other (Belz & Peattie, 2010; Gordon et al., 2011; Peattie, 2001), but where debate still exits about exactly how they differ, we choose to focus on sustainability marketing as it can be seen as the latest reflection of environmental and social concern in the marketing discipline (Belz & Peattie, 2009; Peattie, 2001).

Recent attempts at conceptualising sustainability and sustainable marketing have included the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (Belz & Peattie, 2009; Martin & Schouten, 2012). However, confusion exists between the role (what is marketing), place (micro and/or macro) and objective (what is marketing for) of sustainability marketing (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014), as well as its more implementable solutions (i.e. restricted to the marketing mix, or beyond?).

Consequently, while there continues to be increased interest in sustainability, green and ethical marketing (McEachern & Carrigan, 2012), there is still a need for further clarification on what it means to be sustainable in marketing (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). Consequently, an overview of how sustainability is articulated in the sustainability marketing literature provides a

means to understand how marketers view sustainable development and marketing's part in it. This study analyses how the sustainability marketing construct has been conceptualised in the marketing literature and finds three key views or perspectives.

Using discourse analysis, this paper categorises multiple sustainability views and provides an understanding of the different conceptualisations that exist of sustainability marketing. Specifically, we expand on the conceptualisations of why and how to participate in sustainability marketing, and related to this, the key assumptions present about consumers, businesses and the environment about their roles, responsibilities and limitations. By doing so, we hope to take stock of the current views of the marketing academy in relation to sustainability, and subsequently, provide future research and marketing professionals with clearer conceptualisations and suggestions for sustainability marketing's implementation. Building on Lim's (2017) conceptual work on sustainable consumption, this article makes a major contribution by offering the conceptual boundaries of sustainability marketing and providing a critical evaluation of the three theoretical perspectives found in the literature. We conclude by offering theoretical, managerial and policy implications for each of the three conceptualisations.

Discourses of sustainability

The Brundtland Commission provides the most widely used definition for sustainable development 'as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland, 1987, p. 43). Sustainable development is normally portrayed to include three dimensions: economic (the ability for enterprises and activities to be sustained long term), social (an equal distribution of benefits and a reduction in poverty) and environmental (conserving natural resources). While sustainability

and sustainable development are sometimes used interchangeably (Hugé, Waas, Dahdouh-Guebas, Koedam, & Block, 2013), sustainable development is conceptualised here as the process towards achieving sustainability (Sidiropoulos, 2014).

The debate surrounding sustainability allows a variety of interpretations and discourses to emerge, and these views tend to differ on the emphasis they place on environmental, social and economic aspects of society, and how society can achieve sustainable development (Connelly, 2007; Davidson, 2014; Hopwood et al., 2005). Consequently, sustainability worldviews and frameworks have been created to identify the differing sustainability views, beliefs and opinions. Common frameworks include weak and strong sustainability (Neumayer, 1999), anthropocentric and ecocentric views or epistemology (Thompson & Barton, 1994), and Hopwood et al.'s (2005) mapping approach.

Neumayer (1999) introduced the concept of weak and strong sustainability in economic theory. Weak sustainability is the substitutability paradigm wherein natural capital is 'substitutable in the production or consumption of goods and as a direct provider of utility' (p.1); therefore, it does not matter if natural resources are not available for future generations so long as other resources such as roads, ports and machinery 'are built up in compensation' (p.1). Strong sustainability is less clearly defined than weak sustainability, but there is a general belief that natural capital should be preserved for future generations and that natural capital is non-substitutable (Neumayer, 1999). While the dimensions of weak and strong sustainability are the most notable typology, they have been criticised for their lack of diversity in the sustainability debate (Davidson, 2014).

The expression of environmental concern can also differ in terms of personal motives (Thompson & Barton, 1994). Anthropocentric and ecocentric views or epistemology classify

individuals according to why they value nature. An anthropocentric individual values nature because it maintains human life, while ecocentric individuals value nature because it has an intrinsic value and therefore deserves protection in its own right (Thompson & Barton, 1994). Borland and Lindgreen (2013) conceptualise the anthropocentric epistemology as embracing human exemption from the constraints of nature and relate this view to the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP). Conversely, the ecocentric epistemology believes in the need for responsibility and stewardship towards nature and views the anthropocentric epistemology (or the DSP) as the root cause of ecological problems; this links the ecocentric epistemology to the New Environmental Paradigm (Borland & Lindgreen, 2013; Dunlap, 2008). This critical reflection of the DSP is also examined in the transform view of Hopwood et al.'s (2005) framework.

Hopwood et al. (2005) maps three differing views (status quo, reform and transform) of sustainability. The status quo view sees sustainable development as possible within existing structures or arrangements. There is strong support for free markets, but some forms of government intervention are tolerated. Proponents of this perspective hold a weak view of sustainability and see natural capital as substitutable with human capital. The reform view perceives the root causes of unsustainability as being the imbalance of information and knowledge, and views changes in economic and political structures as necessary but without fundamental transformation. They acknowledge that large shifts need to occur in policy and lifestyles, and therefore support market reform, but within existing social and economic structures; a view held by most academics and non-governmental organisations. Lastly, those who think a transformative approach is necessary believe our current relationships with people and the environment, and economic and existing power structures, are the root causes of unsustainability and that a radical transformation is required. This group tends to view inequity

as a key source of environmental and social problems. In addition, they usually view the current capitalism model as the exploitation of nature and people, and see this as the leading cause of environmental and social problems.

Discourses help perpetuate power and hegemony, and as such, sustainable development discursive struggles highlight the continued negotiation of what it means to be sustainable, how to achieve it and by whom, and whose voices are heard most in regards to this (Springett, 2003; Tregidga, Milne, & Kearins, 2015). Academic research, whether it acknowledges it or not, contributes to this discursive struggle. Consequently, research must reflect on how sustainability concepts are used in marketing academia to truly understand how we define sustainability within the marketing context.

Sustainability marketing

Sustainability marketing is still overwhelmingly understudied (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014; Purani, Sahadev, & Kumar, 2014). In fact, Purani et al. (2014) found that only 2% of articles in 10 of the most highly ranked marketing journals were devoted to sustainability. However, there have been several reviews of the sustainability marketing field, or more specifically, sustainability research within the marketing literature as what one includes under this umbrella is broad (Chabowski, Mena, & Gonzalez-Padron, 2011; Kilbourne & Beckmann, 1998; Kumar, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2013; Leonidou & Leonidou, 2011; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014) Sustainability review papers have focused on categorising findings using reviews as well as co-citation and bibliographic analysis. The reviews have shown that while sustainability topics are gaining traction, most are managerial in their focus (Kilbourne & Beckmann, 1998) and a vast variety of topics are addressed (i.e. regulation, consumer and organisational practices)

(McDonagh & Prothero, 2014), dominated by mostly American and European perspectives (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2011).

Even after 20 years of research, McDonagh and Prothero (2014) implore future research to engage with the question 'what is sustainability marketing'. The fact that many sustainability marketing definitions exist (Andreea, 2015) demonstrates the still contested nature of the concept. This divergence is most likely a reflection of sustainability's own complex and debated definition (Hopwood et al., 2005; Sidiropoulos, 2014). Most articles have focused on the consumer market; however, some have also examined the business-to-business market (e.g. Sharma, Iyer, Mehrotra, & Krishnan, 2010). However, attempts to conceptualise and theorise sustainability still remain problematic. For example, recent attempts by Lim (2016) encapsulate sustainability marketing as including economic, environmental, social, ethical and technological aspects to sustainability; however, this conceptualisation continues to remain inadequate to define the notion, boundaries and practical implications of sustainability marketing. Further, few articles aim to theorise the concept of sustainability marketing (e.g. Belz, 2005; Gordon et al., 2011; Peattie, 2001; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995); instead, most articles in the sustainability field use it as the context and thus rarely discuss in depth the conceptualisation and implications of sustainability marketing.

There also remains confusion about the interchangeable nature of sustainability, sustainable and green marketing. Some have argued that sustainability and sustainable marketing are two different concepts (e.g. Belz, 2005; Kumar et al., 2013), while others have used them interchangeably. The same can be seen for green marketing being used interchangeably with sustainability and sustainable marketing (e.g. Abzari, Shad, Sharbiyani, & Morad, 2013; Garg, 2015).

This study offers a fresh perspective and new insights into the sustainability marketing field by utilising academic research to understand current conceptualisations of sustainability marketing, and by using a different methodology than previous sustainability marketing reviews. Specifically, we utilise discourse analysis to accentuate impact areas of sustainability marketing to advance our knowledge in this thriving space. We offer key conceptualisations of sustainability marketing, articulating the underlying objective, assumptions, and practical and theoretical implications. This research also addresses the variety and sometimes vague theorisations offered by previous research (e.g. Lim, 2016; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996), and aims to give clear and practical conceptualisations, as well as implications, about sustainability marketing for both marketing academics and practitioners.

Methodology

Our aim was to understand the discourses of sustainability marketing. A detailed meta-analysis was not the aim of this research, nor did we seek to replicate the previously mentioned studies. Therefore, the analysis aim was not to classify or categorise articles, as this has been done by numerous studies (e.g. Kumar et al., 2013). Instead, we wished to classify or categorise sustainability marketing views. Consequently, this study uses discourse analysis.

Discourse is embedded in social and cultural practices, and as such, discourse is shaped by the world and shapes the world (Paltridge, 2012). Discourse is ‘a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities’ (Hajer, 1995, p. 44). Consequently, discourse analysis considers how the use of language presents different views of the world (Paltridge, 2012). Discourse-based analysis provides an approach for reflecting on

marketing thought, especially ‘amongst countervailing discourses’ on sustainable consumption, the environment and justice, for example (Fitchett & Caruana, 2015, p. 2). Discourse analysis is especially helpful in understanding the interpretation of sustainability and sustainable development (Hugé et al., 2013). Further, discourse analysis allows a reflection and identification of the wider political and economic assumptions in marketing thought (Fitchett & Caruana, 2015).

The Scopus database was searched using the terms ‘sustainability marketing’ OR ‘sustainable marketing’ with a separate search for ‘green marketing’ in the title, abstract and keywords. Scopus is the only database which allows rankings by citations and thus was used to rank the literature based upon total citations. However, we acknowledge that by using Scopus some journals are excluded and thus some well-cited articles might have been excluded. In addition, by excluding monographs and edited books some more critical insights might have been excluded. Nevertheless, by taking such an approach, we were able to focus our analysis on those papers which have made the greatest impact on sustainability marketing discourse to date. Sustainability and sustainable marketing were combined into one Scopus search (‘sustainability marketing’ OR ‘sustainable marketing’) as a lack of articles existed using these phrases. In total, the search revealed 89 papers which had citations for sustainability/sustainable marketing and 393 papers with citations were found for green marketing. The database searches occurred on 18 February 2018, with the articles searched not limited to any time period.

The 100 most cited papers from the sustainability/sustainable marketing and green marketing searches were analysed. The citations for sustainability/sustainable marketing ranged from 132 to 1, while green marketing ranged from 738 to 31 citations and covered approximately 80% of all citations. Only four articles overlapped the two lists, thus another four papers (up to

104) on the green marketing search list were included in the analysis. This helped narrow the focus of search, while still providing a large number of articles to be analysed. Due to the lack of 100 articles for sustainability/sustainable marketing, the reference lists of the 89 articles were consulted to reveal any notable exclusions from the Scopus search. Focusing only on articles which heavily discussed sustainability/sustainable marketing, another eight sources were included (Belz, 2005, 2006; Belz & Peattie, 2010; Charter et al., 2002; Kotler, 2011; Martin & Schouten, 2014; Murphy, 2005; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). While the focus of the search was primarily on journal articles in the English language, an exception was made for two non-journal papers (Belz, 2005; Charter et al., 2002), both of which were frequently cited in the articles identified by the original search. 166 articles remained after the deletion of 31 papers which merely referenced sustainability, sustainable or green marketing, but did not discuss it. Please see the appendix for the full list of references used in the analysis.

Our analysis is considered to be on the level of a Grand Discourse approach. Foucauldian long range discourse studies can involve a Grand Discourse approach, where ‘an assembly of discourse, ordered, and presented as an integrated frame’ or in other words, aggregated patterns of discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000, p. 1133), which are taken to reflect social reality (in this case sustainability marketing research). This type of approach seeks dominant language or universal, standardised discourse, such as in the concept of immigration (Lim & Moufahim, 2011). The analysis examines the relationships between words, their frequency and their semantic associations (Lim & Moufahim, 2011). Since text is the ‘material manifestation of a discourse’ (Chalaby, 1996, p. 688), it is analysed for ‘meanings’ and inferences which are related to and drawn from the wider social context (Lim & Moufahim, 2011). Overall, the text is

analysed thematically to understand dominant sustainability and marketing discourse, and ultimately to conceptualise a Grand discourse of sustainability marketing.

Firstly, the definitions of sustainability, sustainable and green marketing were found using the search function in each text. Next, other sentences were chosen for analysis as they related to the concept of sustainability, marketing and/or sustainability/sustainable/green marketing; Hopwood et al.'s (2005) framework aided in the selection of the text. While other sustainability frameworks have been created, as discussed previously, Hopwood et al.'s (2005) framework is the most frequently cited and comprehensive typology concentrating on a wider and more specific variety of environmental, social (inequality, inequity) and economic (economic models, responsibility) aspects of sustainability. For example, Neumayer's (1999) weak and strong sustainability focuses only on the economic aspect of sustainability, while the anthropocentric and ecocentric views relate mainly to the environmental dimension (Thompson & Barton, 1994),

The first part of the analysis included identifying sentences that touched on sustainability issues as discussed in Hopwood et al.'s (2005) framework (e.g. views on growth, the role of government, business and the individual, and ideas for sustainable solutions). We also extended the analysis to other content related to sustainability as this was required to understand why and how businesses are or should be engaging in sustainability marketing. This included (a) consumer, business and/or government responsibility for sustainability; (b) why businesses engage in sustainability (e.g. morals, profit and/or competitive advantage); and (c) how sustainability marketing is implemented (e.g. green products and promotion of sustainable lifestyles). In the process of coding, there were variations in the length and number of sentences

within the papers; this is understandable, as some papers focused heavily on sustainability marketing, while for others it was a secondary topic in the article.

The extended analysis provided a very similar classification to Hopwood et al.'s (2005) framework, and thus, comparable terms were used. Three conceptualisations were identified, one which discussed minor or adjustments changes to business/marketing activities and responsibilities (auxiliary), another which reformed some key premises to business/marketing practices (reformative), and the last which argued for the transformation of institutions and business/marketing practices (transformative).

Findings: the three conceptualisations of sustainability marketing

The decision was made to use sustainability marketing, sustainable marketing and green marketing under one term – sustainability marketing. This was due to the terms sustainable and sustainability being indistinguishable from each other in the texts, contrary to Belz's (2005) observation that the terms are different. While green marketing is still used in terminology, many scholars view sustainability marketing as encompassing a greater holistic construct (i.e. Gordon et al., 2011; McEachern & Carrigan, 2012; Peattie, 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). The discourse analysis revealed differences in the conceptualisation of how to enact or practice sustainability marketing, and more importantly, why and how marketers and companies should practice sustainability marketing.

Auxiliary Sustainability Marketing

The Auxiliary Sustainability Marketing (ASM) perspective includes integrating sustainability throughout the whole marketing mix, focusing on environmental, social and economic

dimensions of production and consumption. ASM encapsulates the majority of sustainability marketing perspectives as it focuses on change within existing structures or arrangements (i.e. free markets, government intervention and business models). The motto for this perspective might be ‘Doing what we do, better’; better in this case is an incorporation of the ecological and social impacts of production and to some extent consumption.

Firstly, focusing on the product, sustainable properties can be divided into three attributes: production conditions (how the product was made, e.g. child labour, harsh working conditions, CO2 emissions of production, water use); product characteristics and performance (what the product contains and what it does, e.g. CO2 emissions of use, chemicals); and exposures and risks (exposing people to risks through product consumption, e.g. non-toxic paint) (Iles, 2008). Sustainable products reuse materials and are recyclable, and in the best case, products are designed as cradle-to-cradle (Peattie, 2001). Planned obsolesce must be non-existent (Achrol & Kotler, 2012; Polonsky, 2011), instead replaced by products which can be easily repairable (Charter et al., 2002) and upgradable (Polonsky, 2011). Packaging must also be addressed (e.g. safety, recyclable and biodegradable) and minimised (e.g. single-portion sizes) (Charter et al., 2002; Fuller & Ottman, 2004; Kotler, 2011; Murphy, 2005). As a consequence of sustainable product production, many acknowledge the need for trade-offs regarding price and performance (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013; Kammerer, 2009; Michaud & Llerena, 2011).

Within this discourse, both the socioecological product life cycle and/or ecological product life cycle can be taken into account. The socioecological product life cycle includes examining who produces the product and the impact of production on humans and non-humans, such as eliminating child labour, harsh working conditions and cruelty towards animals, and implementing living wage and other employee benefits (e.g. flexible working hours) (Charter et

al., 2002; Ingenbleek, Meulenberg, & Van Trijp, 2015; Nkamnebe, 2011; Strong, 1996). Conversely, the ecological product life cycle takes into account the environmental impact of the product during production and consumption, and in disposal (Lähtinen, Vivanco, & Toppinen, 2014; Lampe & Gazda, 1995; Prakash, 2002; Zeriti, Robson, Spyropoulou, & Leonidou, 2014), which is usually achieved through life cycle assessment (Belz, 2006).

Earlier green marketing research focused purely on the product (Langerak, Peelen, & van der Veen, 1998), but marketing's responsibility is now extended to distribution, pricing and promotion (Chamorro & Bañegil, 2006; Jain & Kaur, 2004). Distribution includes disposal of the product, thus issues such as the use of recyclable materials (pollution prevention) and disposal/collection projects (resource recovery) become part of the marketer's role; these 'resource loops', recovering and reusing materials is essential to the sustainable product system (Charter et al., 2002; Crane, 2000; Fuller & Ottman, 2004; Murphy, 2005; Prakash, 2002). The resource loops for recovering materials from consumers will need to be easily accessible to customers (Charter et al., 2002). In addition, products, where possible, should be made locally to reduce transportation emissions and provide work to local communities (Charter et al., 2002; Kotler, 2011).

Reducing carbon emissions is essential in ASM distribution. A reduction in storage requirements and the size of products (e.g. flat packs) can reduce the need for transportation (Charter et al., 2002). Reducing transportation effects can include looking at the location of the company itself, finding closer suppliers and using other forms of transport that produce less carbon emissions (Charter et al., 2002). In addition, pressure may be put on existing suppliers to adopt sustainable practices or suppliers may be switched in an effort to work with sustainable partners (Iles, 2008). As such, the working conditions of suppliers and their waste management

practices should be audited (Charter et al., 2002; Kirchoff, Koch, & Satinover Nichols, 2011; Zhu, Dou, & Sarkis, 2010).

Product price now incorporates environmental and social costs, and addresses and communicates the total cost of the product (Peattie, 2001; Polonsky, 2011; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Incorporating the real environmental and social costs is no easy task as production and consumption are heavily subsidised by the environment (Peattie, 1999, 2001) and when taken into account, are inevitably charged to the consumer. Consequently, there is a strong role for government to legislate in the full cost accounting area (Charter et al., 2002; Kotler, 2011; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Additionally, the job of marketers is to make customers aware of the product lifetime costs, taking into account durability, repairability, water/energy use, etc. (Belz & Peattie, 2010; Kaenzig & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Polonsky, 2011).

Mixed research and opinions exist about the charging of price premiums for green products and remains largely up for debate (Michaud & Llerena, 2011). Some scholars believe that price premiums can be charged and consumers are willing to pay (Chen, 2010; Hamzaoui Essoussi & Linton, 2010), while other research demonstrates that (most) consumers are unwilling to pay for environmental dimensions (Kammerer, 2009; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Rex & Baumann, 2007). Similarly, some scholars also believe that sustainable products must compete with non-sustainable products, and thus require similar availability and pricing (Fuller & Ottman, 2004; McDaniel & Rylander, 1993), while others see the benefit of green products as being able to charge a premium price and thus increasing profit for the company (Langerak et al., 1998).

Other green pricing strategies include philanthropy and targeting populations with lower incomes. Donations and other charitable giving can also be incorporated into pricing, usually

emphasising the percentage of earnings which go to charity (i.e. cause-related marketing) (Charter et al., 2002). In regards to the social aspects of pricing, scholars have also advocated for shifting focus to the bottom of the pyramid (Achrol & Kotler, 2012; Hunt, 2011; Kirchgeorg & Winn, 2006; Murphy, 2005).

Promotion in ASM focuses on two key elements: the materials used in promotion (how to promote) and the messages promoted (what is promoted). Firstly, advertising and other marketing activities are conducted through sustainable means (e.g. the Internet, recyclable paper) (Kotler, 2011; Murphy, 2005). Secondly, promotions are focused on communicating the firms and products sustainability initiatives (Mostafa, 2006) and charitable deeds (Jones et al., 2008). Such promotional efforts usually focus on issues related to consumption rather than production (Leonidou, Leonidou, Palihawadana, & Hultman, 2011).

The aim of ASM is to provide a 'green' or 'sustainable' image for the firm (or brand) (Ko, Hwang, & Kim, 2013; Lampe & Gazda, 1995; Pujari, Wright, & Peattie, 2003), so first mover advantage is critical (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993). The green image is hoped to improve company or brand reputation and customer loyalty (Phau & Ong, 2007). Providing credible and transparent information is targeted towards addressing consumer cynicism about green products and their claims (Chen & Chang, 2013; Vlosky, Ozanne, & Fontenot, 1999). As such, eco-labelling or certifications may be adopted to provide understandable and credible information to customers (Borin, Cerf, & Krishnan, 2011; Mendleson & Polonsky, 1995; Mostafa, 2006; Murphy, 2005; Nair & Menon, 2008). However, education and awareness campaigns may need to be run by governments for consumer education on green labels (Zorić & Hrovatin, 2012). The ultimate assumption is that any environmental information provided will be useful to (green) consumers and will be used in their decision-making (Rex & Baumann, 2007).

The reasons behind implementing ASM are focused on creating a competitive advantage, reducing costs, differentiation, gaining/sustaining a good reputation and pre-empting regulation (Calu, Negrei, Calu, & Avram, 2015; Nkamnebe, 2011; Rountree & Koernig, 2015; Zeriti et al., 2014). Such monetary and reputational successes are usually through offering new value propositions to customers (Patala et al., 2016) and maintaining a good relationship with stakeholders (Biloslavo & Trnavčevič, 2009). Extracting value from the green consumer is the main priority, which is why concern about profits still supersedes the impact of marketing on the natural or social environment (Nair & Menon, 2008; Polonsky, 2011). In this case, green consumption and materialism are compatible (Strizhakova & Coulter, 2013).

Traditionally, ASM segments and targets the market according to attitudes towards sustainability (Akehurst, Afonso, & Martins Gonçalves, 2012; Kumar, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2016; Tinnish & Mangal, 2012). Specifically, earlier studies focused on describing the 'green' consumer (Shrum, McCarty, & Lowrey, 1995), but more recent studies also rely on demographic and other characteristics to identify and thus segment the green consumer. Positioning strategies are created after evaluating the green or responsible consumer segments (Akehurst et al., 2012; Ingenbleek et al., 2015). Overall, ASM relies on consumers sustainable attitudes; without these 'green consumers', businesses will not implement sustainable marketing activities (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Peattie & Crane, 2005). In other words, it's mostly a demand-pull strategy for green products (Chen, 2001).

The implementation of ASM can happen in a variety of ways from pre-emption of regulation to objectives based on values and ethics. Overall, the literature describes the ability for firms to be reactionary (react after the implementation of regulation or increased consumer (negative) pressure) (Chen, 2001; Dief & Font, 2010; Leonidou et al., 2011; Peattie & Crane,

2005); precautionary (a reaction, pre-emption, before regulation is implemented, trying to circumvent or influence the introduction of regulation) (Prakash, 2002); proactive (changing company culture, vision or entering a new product niche) (Crane, 2000; Leonidou et al., 2011; Peattie, 1999); or visionary (core sustainable philosophy in the company from its inception) (Chamorro & Bañegil, 2006).

Reformative Sustainability Marketing

Reformative Sustainability Marketing (RSM) extends the aspirations of ASM and acknowledges that current consumption levels are unsustainable, usually reflecting on either inequity between developed and developing nations or the Earths' limited resources (Achrol & Kotler, 2012). For this reason, RSM is seen as being responsible for promoting sustainable lifestyles (Martin & Schouten, 2014; Scott, Martin, & Schouten, 2014) and to demarket certain harmful or undesirable products/services (Achrol & Kotler, 2012; Bridges & Wilhelm, 2008; Kotler, 2011; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). Thus, RSM changes current modes of 'doing' business and marketing.

Marketing is acknowledged to promote consumption, and as it stands, is the antithesis to sustainability (Ferdous, 2010; Martin & Schouten, 2014; Prothero et al., 2010; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). In the same vein, limits to growth are also acknowledged (Kotler, 2011). Thus, RSM involves not only promoting the sustainability of the firm's products and services but also sustainable lifestyles (Gordon et al., 2011; Martin & Schouten, 2014). Conversely, others believe it is the role of government and non-governmental organisations to educate and promote sustainable behaviours (Jain & Kaur, 2004). Similarly, government should enforce regulations to improve environmental and industry standards (Chen, 2001).

Consumers are strongly recognised as leaders for change, and thus, consumer demand is seen as a reason to engage in sustainable activities (Belz & Schmidt-Riediger, 2010; Rakic & Rakic, 2015; Rettie, Burchell, & Riley, 2012). RSM assumes that the problem of unsustainable consumption lies in a lack of information and knowledge by the consumer (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Kaenzig & Wüstenhagen, 2010; Rakic & Rakic, 2015). In this regard, identity (Dermody et al., 2015), peer pressure and social norms are seen as playing a role in consumption, in both symbolic consumption (Lee, 2008; Oliver & Lee, 2010) and the influence of peers (Lee, 2010), especially in younger consumers and in higher-involvement purchases (i.e. cars).

A move from individual ownership is also promulgated (e.g. Charter et al., 2002; Murphy, 2005; Polonsky, 2011), and thus a focus on satisfying needs through (long-term) leasing (Agrawal, Ferguson, Toktay, & Thomas, 2012), and (short-term) renting, sharing and collaborative consumption (Peattie, 2001; Peattie & Crane, 2005). Delivering satisfaction without ownership can bring about a reduction in the production of goods and its impact on the environment (Polonsky, 2011). Moreover, RSM focusses on real needs, rather than 'frivolous' wants (Peattie, 2001). Marketers must change their mindset and ask themselves, does this 'satisfy a genuine human need?' (Charter et al., 2002).

Marketing is now seen to take into account the long term (Belz, 2005; Kirchgeorg & Winn, 2006; Peattie, 2001; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Sustainability marketing philosophy guides the behaviour, strategy and processes of an entire organisation, understanding its place in society and its obligations to current and future generations (Chamorro & Bañegil, 2006; Peattie, 1999; Peattie & Crane, 2005). Thus, sustainability marketing becomes embedded in organisational culture and values (Biloslavo & Trnavčevič, 2009; Leonidou, Leonidou, Fotiadis, & Zeriti, 2013), and 'internal green marketing' (Chamorro & Bañegil, 2006, p. 14) may be used

to initiate culture change towards integrating sustainability principles into decision-making and activities.

Lastly, there is a greater involvement with stakeholders, and a wider variety of stakeholders are consulted (internal, such as employees and customers, and external, such as local communities) (Charter et al., 2002; Prakash, 2002; Sun, Kim, & Kim, 2014). Such stakeholder interactions are made difficult as they are nebulous (Rivera-Camino, 2007).

Transformative Sustainability Marketing

Transformative Sustainability Marketing (TSM) aims to change institutions that inhibit a transition to a sustainable society. Most importantly, TSM values continuity over profit (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). This form of marketing understands the barriers that consumers face with sustainable consumption; such as our persuasive consumption ideology, institutional barriers and social norms (Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). Thus, TSM views responsibility as lying with both firms and consumers (Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). Indeed, sustainability marketing cannot rely on sustainable production practices alone; it also needs positive collective citizen action, 'despite the many criticisms of consumption and consumer society… it is still recognized that consumption is central to modern day society.… Thus, any changes to the DSP, by default, have to have consumer culture, at the core' (Prothero et al., 2010, p. 154).

There is a questioning attitude in regards to business philosophy. Specifically, ecosystems are seen 'as an up-front consideration, not an after-the-fact adjustment or add-on' (Fuller & Ottman, 2004, p. 1231). Social entrepreneurship and fostering fair subsistence marketplaces is at the heart of some of the new philosophies and business models proposed

(Facca-Miess & Santos, 2014). For example, micro-level subsistence marketplaces emphasise social or environmental rather than economic sustainability, and collaboration with governmental initiatives, social enterprises and other local business efforts is essential (Facca-Miess & Santos, 2014).

Marketing and its basis on neoclassical economics and roots in capitalism, in the DSP, are seen as key perpetrators of social, economic and environmental problems. Consequently, TSM acknowledges the weaknesses of the current economic system and challenges us to question our preconceived notions of the 'good' of capitalism and neo-liberal economics, and its associated assumptions and ideology (Dermody et al., 2015; Mitchell & Saren, 2008; Polonsky, 2011; Prothero et al., 2010). In addition, planetary boundaries are acknowledged and the current way of viewing people and nature (as anthropocentric) is seen as a key issue in our battle with sustainability (Martin & Schouten, 2014; McDonagh & Prothero, 2014; Mitchell & Saren, 2008). Consequently, there is a need for a change in the marketing paradigm (Achrol & Kotler, 2012; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012), and to question how marketing can be sustainable since marketing is currently 'stimulating and facilitating the current levels of consumption which are environmentally unsustainable' (Peattie, 1999, p. 133). Overall, TSM seeks to provide a critical lens onto current marketing practices, consumption ideology/culture and the institutions that inhibit a move to a sustainable society (Belz, 2005; Gordon et al., 2011).

Belz (2005) and Gordon et al. (2011) argue that sustainability marketing is ineffective without institutional change. In fact, current institutional design actively encourages unsustainable consumption. Gordon et al. (2011) describe the need to combine green, social and critical marketing, wherein without the combination of the three, they are powerless by themselves, which resonates strongly with the principles of TSM. As such, Gordon et al. (2011)

encourage marketers to see sustainability marketing as including a critical marketing dimension, wherein marketers can challenge the dominant positivist managerialist epistemology in marketing, particularly in research methods, and stimulate advocacy, regulation and policy change for sustainable consumption. TSM is also specifically mentioned by Belz (2006), suggesting a need for companies to engage with institutional change.

According to Belz (2006), TSM is a type of 'mega marketing' and attempts to change social and political institutions to favour sustainable consumption. These institutions can be both formal (laws, regulations) (Belz, 2005; Gordon et al., 2011) and informal (social norms) (Gordon et al., 2011; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). As such, companies can change these formal institutions through lobbying and a proactive stance on regulation (Belz & Peattie, 2010; Rakic & Rakic, 2015; van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996), such as 'public support of companies for an ecological tax reform, voluntary agreements of socio-ecological industry standards, development of sustainability labels in co-operation with non-governmental organizations' (Belz, 2006, pp. 142–143). In addition, informal norms can be changed through social marketing campaigns that address social norms; such campaigns could denormalise undesirable behaviours and products, and normalise desirable behaviours and products (Gordon et al., 2011; Rettie et al., 2012).

Discussion

Since sustainability marketing's introduction in the 1980s, numerous definitions have been offered (e.g. Belz, 2005; Gordon et al., 2011; Martin & Schouten, 2012; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995). Marketing has direct implications on product development and the promotion of consumption, both of which have major implications on social and environmental conditions, arguably much more so than other business areas (Assadourian, 2010; Gorge, Herbert, Özçağlar-

Toulouse, & Robert, 2015). Marketing is also deeply embedded in the DSP, which has been linked to unsustainability (Mittelstaedt, Shultz, Kilbourne, & Peterson, 2014), and specifically, unsustainable products and overconsumption (Assadourian, 2010; Gorge et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important to understand how researchers have conceptualised sustainability and marketing's role in it.

The conceptualisation of sustainability marketing in the literature shows clear differences in sustainability views and the role of marketing in contributing to sustainable development. To progress our understanding of what might be meant by sustainability marketing, we offered three conceptualisations that are present in the literature which can help future researchers to identify which concept they adhere to and guide companies on how they can integrate sustainability within their marketing activities. As such, despite the previous efforts of scholars, we suggest there is not just one conceptualisation of sustainability marketing. Instead, this paper categorises three perspectives that have guided researchers understanding of sustainability marketing. This has implications on the theoretical, managerial and policy implications of sustainability marketing for marketing academics and practitioners.

Theoretical implications

ASM extends the traditional green marketing literature to encapsulate both environmental and social issues into product design, promotional strategies, distribution and pricing models (Gordon et al., 2011; McEachern & Carrigan, 2012). This type of sustainability marketing offers practical and strategic opportunities for organisations to change their product offerings. Most importantly, it takes into account the full environmental and social cost of a product, and seeks to eliminate waste during production and consumption. ASM ideals are associated with 'extended

producers' liability, life-cycle analysis, material use and resource flows, and eco-efficiency' (Prakash, 2002, p. 286). ASM is seen as a 'win-win' for the firm (Peattie & Crane, 2005), adhering to the triple-bottom line principle and having social and/or environmental goals while gaining more customers, usually by tapping into niche (green) markets and improved corporate image, and overall, reducing operating cots (Sun, Garrett, & Kim, 2016).

However, ASM, while benefiting from a 'win-win' scenario with competitive advantage and superior social and ecological performance, delivers no 'real change in marketing thinking or substantive progress towards more sustainable consumption and production' (Belz & Peattie, 2010, p. 9). Furthermore, the question remains whether sustainable products will merely be added as new product extensions (Chen, 2001) or whether sustainable products replace existing product lines; if it's the former, no real improvements have been made. Lastly, ASM will also need to take a consumption and production system perspective, as the sustainability of a product is determined by how it is consumed as well as how it is produced.

ASM captures a large proportion of academic conceptualisations, and while it extends the current environmental and green marketing stream, it remains the dominant research stream. As such, Kilbourne and Beckmann's (1998) observation that most environmental marketing research fails to address the issues of values and institutions in limiting or inhibiting the 'greening' of marketing still seems to be true 20 years on. Although most authors refer to marketing as being the cause of environmental degradation and unsustainable consumption, this issue did not extend to questioning the ideology of consumption and growth, which plays a role in subverting both consumer and producer (un)sustainable behaviours (Dermody et al., 2015; Kilbourne, 1998; Varey, 2011). While research has moved towards an ASM perspective rather than a green marketing focus, like Kilbourne and Beckmann (1998), we conclude that research in

this area remains largely managerialist and subsumes issues which have been around for years (e.g. corporate social responsibility, segmenting the green market, green marketing for competitive advantage). Moreover, Jones et al. (2008, p. 126) may have been prophetic when stating that ASM is 'a little more than a thinly veiled and cynical ploy to attract socially and environmentally conscious consumers while "sweeping" pressing environmental and social concerns "under the carpet"'. Many scholars still see the greening of marketing to be dependent on increasing consumer concern and environmental regulation (e.g. Chen, 2010); there is never a mention of the depleting resources of our planet, and the human and environmental necessity of addressing unsustainable consumption.

By not addressing the institutional environment, in terms of both regulation for full cost accounting, culture and social norms, ASM still relies on the 'green' consumer to demand change (Wymer & Polonsky, 2015). Consumers are seen as both the saviour and inhibitor of green products; unsustainable products are still offered because this is what companies see consumers demanding (Peattie & Crane, 2005), but yet, we also rely on 'green' consumers to demand sustainable products. The question remains of what happens if there is no, or not enough, sustainable consumers? Considering the attitude–behaviour gap and the premium prices charged for sustainable products, the so-called sustainable consumer may be elusive (van Dam & Apeldoorn, 1996). Moreover, McDonagh and Prothero (2014, p. 1199) suggest that if sustainability marketing 'is to be a micro, managerialist focused domain, then this does not tackle the more fundamental issue of how can we effectively address marketing's relationship with the natural environment'. As such, ASM fails to address the unsustainable consumption patterns of affluent industrialised countries, especially its effects on the environment and society.

RSM provides a means for organisations to help contribute to sustainable consumption. The RSM perspective acknowledges the limits to growth (Achrol & Kotler, 2012), as there are limits to natural resources and nature as a sink for waste (Kilbourne, 1998). This marketing perspective takes responsibility for consumer and societal welfare, and helps guide consumers to better choices (Peattie & Crane, 2005). This may include finding 'alternative ways of delivering want satisfaction without consumers owning the assets' (Polonsky, 2011, p. 1317), such as in collaborative consumption and the rise of the sharing economy. RSM also shifts the purpose of marketing and business, questioning whether needs are being met (Charter et al., 2002; Peattie, 2001) or whether new products are being made with only incremental modifications (Polonsky, 2011).

Additionally, RSM admits its role in current unsustainable consumption patterns and seeks to change consumer behaviour towards sustainable consumption. Thus, a key task for organisations is to reduce consumption and change consumer behaviour, as well as attitudes and beliefs, towards a sustainable lifestyle. The literature makes a distinction between the social marketing employed by social marketers (i.e. in NGOs, government agencies) and by corporations. The latter is usually referred to as 'corporate social marketing', which has recently gained more research attention (e.g. Polonsky, 2017; Truong & Hall, 2017).

Social marketing has successfully promoted individual behaviour change in a number of areas, such as smoking, alcohol consumption and healthy eating (Carins & Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Gordon, McDermott, Stead, & Angus, 2006; Stead, Gordon, Angus, & McDermott, 2007). More research is needed into how consumers link overconsumption to environmental and social effects, as research has suggested that few people link these two concepts together (Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2012). Further, RSM may also go beyond utilising power to influence supply

chain partners as suggested in ASM, and may include more social marketing techniques and informal communications towards suppliers to take up sustainable practices and employees to make sustainable decisions. In some ways, RSM may reflect Fisk's (1998) recommendation that green marketing should aim for the universal adoption of sustainable technologies (ASM) and discard the goal of hyperconsumption.

In traditional social marketing, individual behaviour change is possible as individuals are assumed to have the ability to make informed decisions regarding their own behaviour (Hoek & Jones, 2011). However, more recent work in social marketing also understands that individuals are inhibited by enabling conditions, circumstances, institutions and norms which prevent successful behaviour change (Kemper & Ballantine, 2017). Indeed, going beyond mere information campaigns and policy interventions (McDonald, Oates, Alevizou, Young, & Hwang, 2012; Polonsky, Vocino, Grau, Garma, & Ferdous, 2012), addressing social norms and constraints are a potential means to encouraging more sustainable behaviours (Cherrier, Szuba, & Özçağlar-Toulouse, 2012; McDonald, Oates, Thyne, Timmis, & Carlile, 2015). While RSM straddles the line between adhering to the DSP and acknowledging its flaws (i.e. new business objectives), TSM frames sustainable marketing solutions outside the DSP and tries to challenge the DSP (Kilbourne, 1998).

The TSM perspective goes beyond what has been promulgated by mainstream green and sustainability marketing towards a new agenda for marketing by extending its reach. TSM acknowledges that it is only through an examination of what keeps society and consumption unsustainable that we can understand the ways to transition to a sustainable society. TSM takes an institutional theory perspective, suggesting that organisational policies and practices reflect external pressures for legitimacy (Lampe & Gazda, 1995; Prakash, 2002). This shift in marketing

conceptualisation represents a move from the micro to the macro, and to issues in the DSP which constrains the behaviour of marketers, consumers, regulators and other key marketing stakeholders (Dermody et al., 2015; Kilbourne, 1998; Kilbourne, McDonagh, & Prothero, 2013).

TSM may provide the opportunity for paradigm change and deep learning through the examination of worldviews and exposing the weaknesses in the DSP (Kilbourne, 1998). There are philosophical, conceptual and political tensions when integrating and addressing sustainability in marketing and business theory (Dermody et al., 2015; Kilbourne, 1998). As such, it is through a self-reflexive or critical approach that marketing can reflect: (a) what is sustainability and its related issues; (b) what happens when sustainability is integrated within marketing (or better yet, marketing within sustainability); and (c) how are marketers and organisations are implicated in sustainability issues and how can they make a positive contribution (McDonagh, 1998).

Previous research has implored a more critical perspective in management and marketing studies, and in this vein, TSM asks the same (Alvesson, 1994; Dholakia, 2012). It is through active participation in political and public processes that organisations can lend support to efforts to change institutional barriers towards sustainability. However, further research is needed on what market mechanisms and changes in institutions will aid in changing production and curbing consumption (i.e. carbon tax) (Polonsky, 2011).

Managerial implications

At its core, ASM implies that sustainability is built into the organisational culture, its mission and decision-making. As a consequence, all organisational and marketing activities must support sustainability (Polonsky & Rosenberger, 2001). As such, the best practice would be for a total

replacement of the (unsustainable) product line rather than just new product extensions. However, the danger of ASM is that it becomes focused on a product orientation.

When implementing ASM, both consumption and production processes and systems must be taken into account. Durability and the life of products must be a priority and planned obsolesce a thing of the past. At a minimum, reverse logistics can be implemented to feed waste and unwanted products back to the firm; however, minimising waste is a better strategic priority (Polonsky, 2011; Polonsky & Rosenberger, 2001). Specifically, organisations can prolong product lifecycles and reuse product materials (Charter, 1992; Prakash, 2002). Better yet, organisations should adopt a closed-loop circular system; this is based on the cradle-to-cradle approach and biomimicry. Cradle-to-cradle design uses biological nutrients for living systems which can be returned to the natural environment after use, and technical nutrients, usually synthetic or mineral material, which can remain in a closed-loop system of manufacture, recovery and reuse (Braungart, McDonough, & Bollinger, 2007). However, ASM remains firmly in a product orientation, possibly neglecting the need for consumer demand and institutional support for sustainable products (i.e. regulations which support full cost accounting).

In addition, organisations must reflect on alternative avenues to address consumer needs (RSM). New business models based on services (e.g. Charter et al., 2002; Murphy, 2005), through renting, sharing and collaborative consumption are needed. These new business models have the ability to address societal problems such as pollution and hyperconsumption (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2016). Other business models which prioritise solving social and environmental issues, such as those employed by social enterprises, reflects on the ability for organisations to satisfy a genuine human need (Charter et al., 2002), and at its core, have a prosocial value and mission (Dart, 2004). In such prosocial business models, including B-Corps

for example, a wider variety of stakeholders must also be consulted (internal, such as employees and customers, and external, such as local communities) (Charter et al., 2002; Sun et al., 2014).

Belz (2005) suggests that TSM is a type of marketing that can be led by sustainability pioneers and leaders. Pursuing TSM can then either change institutions to set positive incentives for the development and use of sustainable products, or set negative incentives for conventional products (Belz, 2005; Prakash, 2002). For example, upstream social marketing may be employed by organisations to influence the structural environment (e.g. research funding, taxes, subsides), especially through targeting policy makers (Kennedy, Kemper, & Parsons, 2018). Influencing formal institutions, such as taxation or industry standards, would allow companies to compete at the same level by all incurring externalised costs; this may result in first-mover advantages if companies adopt regulation standards earlier and manage to reduce costs, or create new processes or market niche(s) (Prakash, 2002). However, TSM must not become 'another form of lobbying enforcing corporate and business interests' (Belz, 2005, p. 21). TSM should go beyond corporate interests and have respect for humanity, including non-humans, and the environment. In this respect, TSM engages with several sub-disciplines of marketing, such as humanistic, positive, macromarketing and critical marketing.

Public policy implications

All three sustainability marketing perspectives shed light on possible policy implications. Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995) and Fisk (1998) discuss governments need to both incentivise new sustainable production and technologies (i.e. subsidies, research funding), as well as punish and regulate unsustainable production (e.g. taxation). As such, policy must support niche-innovations and markets (sustainable products), and demarket and regulate dominant regime innovations and

markets (unsustainable products). Specifically, all three sustainability marketing perspectives can learn from Sheth and Parvatiyar (1995), who discussed the role of government in sustainable marketing through regulation (i.e. performance standards), reforms (i.e. education programmes, new institutional practices or governing bodies), promotion (i.e. taxes and subsidies) and participation (i.e. procurement, research and scientific development, and international agreements). Most importantly, a regulatory framework that advocates for full-cost accounting is needed. Political will as well as public support must be garnered for new and radical interventions; this may be done through media advocacy, for example (Kemper & Ballantine, 2017).

Limitations and future research directions

McDonagh and Prothero (2014) implored future research to engage with the question 'what is sustainability marketing'. While more studies on sustainability marketing have emerged over the past two decades, these have not produced a clear picture of how the sustainability marketing field conceptualises the role and responsibility of marketing, consumers, business and government. This paper has contributed to the debate about what it means to be sustainable in marketing, how to achieve it, and by whom (Springett, 2003; Tregidga et al., 2015). However, the limitations of our study must be taken into account.

The compilation of articles published in the sustainability field demonstrates a heavy concentration of product and consumer marketing orientations. While some articles do appear from industrial marketing in our analysis, the low number reflects the lower proportion of research published on business-to-business, supply chain and industrial marketing research. This may be more of an indication of the dominance of product and consumer perspectives in the

marketing literature than of reality. Sustainability issues in certain service industries such as tourism, or in buyer–seller relationships down supply chains are clearly important, but may be under-represented in the mainstream marketing literature and more explored in adjacent fields or specialist (and therefore less widely cited) journals. In addition, our search terms may have omitted valuable contributions that use labels relating to environmental or ethical marketing. However, reoccurring themes present in the included papers touch upon numerous areas of ethical marketing, for example worker rights and the negative externalities of consumption. Furthermore, by limiting the number of articles to the most cited, we might have omitted more recent pieces in the sustainability marketing field.

While discourse analysis offers unique insight into academic discourse, the analysis is based on interpretation and is thus subjective. While some might view our approach as superficial or oversimplified, our analysis of the literature reflects the current state of sustainability research in marketing. Future research might consider utilising other text-based analyses, such as content analysis and expanding the key terms and number of articles analysed.

We acknowledge that a wealth of literature exists on sustainable, green, environmental and ethical marketing. Thus, we are trying to encapsulate a complex and multifaceted topic. Future research would benefit from a more thorough search of the literature including responsible and ethical marketing, and perhaps the methodology used here can provide a template for discourse studies on sustainable, ethical and responsible consumption. In the same vein, similar contentious concepts such as consumer–citizen divide and consumer sovereignty (Fitchett & Caruana, 2015; Sandberg & Polsa, 2015) should be reflected upon through discourse-based analysis to understand the power dynamics and various conceptualisations at play. Finally,

research on the views and opinions of sustainability marketing by consumers, and even how it's implemented by marketing professionals, warrants further attention.

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