Novel Perspectives on Transformative Service Research

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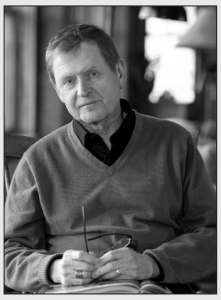

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The field of Transformative Service Research (TSR) has emerged over a decade ago with a range of seminal and call-to-action papers which have subsequently sparked and stimulated scholars' interest in academic work at the intersection of Transformative Consumer Research and Service Research. This special research paper is a perspective piece that sketches trajectories for Transformative Service Researchers drawing on the combined knowledge and work of established scholars in the field who take a future perspective by highlighting the prospective development of the domain. Introducing the 10-Collaborators (10C) Framework, the article outlines a roadmap by relating to the different actors at the micro, meso, macro, and meta levels of the service ecosystem. These collaborators can be affected by contexts that create perceived vulnerability but are also required to collaborate to ensure the wellbeing of the system itself and its actors. The paper delineates novel TSR approaches for each of the levels and its actors as well as for the conceptual, methodological, practice and policy domains, and outlines novel initiatives. It deducts future research paths and actions points for TSR scholars and practitioners.

1. Introduction

Over a decade has passed since several seminal papers at the intersection of Transformative Consumer Research and Service Research have been published (e.g., Anderson et al. 2011; 2013; Rosenbaum, Corus et al. 2011) and this has led to the inception of a new research domain. This new field of scholarly enquiry labelled Transformative Service Research (TSR) has since gained traction and established itself as an area of inquest into improving individuals', communities', nations' and the planet's wellbeing through service (Anderson et al. 2013).

TSR scholars have drawn on a range of concepts, constructs, and method(ologie)s from several service and non-service-related fields (e.g., Gioia et al. 2013; Meshram and Venkatraman 2022; Ng et al. 2022; Pratto et al. 1994), started collaborations across disciplines and commenced some global initiatives with the objective of bettering people and planet (e.g., Boenigk, Fisk et al. 2021; Fisk et al. 2020). While the present paper provides a short retrospective of extant TSR work, it aims to showcase novel perspectives for the expansion of the field by focusing on the ten collaborators at the different levels of the service ecosystem as well as by including novel theories, methodologies, policy and practice approaches, and initiatives. This is achieved by providing a special research paper that draws on the viewpoints and work of established TSR scholars from around the world who in mini teams have co-authored sections of this article.

The paper is structured as follows. It first provides an overview of the field of TSR by highlighting TSR characteristics and TSR challenges before explicating the conceptual 10-Collaborators (10C) Framework. The section also highlights the contribution of TSR to service-related wellbeing research and its connection to Transformative Consumer Research (TCR). The framework is discussed in the following sections by outlining characteristics and challenges of, and novel considerations for, the micro, meso, macro, and meta levels of the service ecosystem. The subsequent sections then elaborate on novel TSR approaches and implications across the conceptual, methodological, practical and policy domains, and outline novel initiatives, before future research endeavours and actions are sketched. The article finishes with a short conclusion.

2. Transformative Service Research (TSR)

By Jörg Finsterwalder

2.1. TSR Characteristics

Transformative Service Research (TSR) has emerged as a novel concept which focuses on the intersection of Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) and Service Research and the specific role that services can play in enhancing wellbeing (Anderson et al. 2013). At the Association for Consumer Research conference in 2005, in his presidential address David Glen Mick outlined the need for research to be more relevant and "solve real problems" (Mick 2006, p. 1) and thus stimulated the formation of the TCR movement (see Textbox 1 for a commentary).

Motivated by the TCR movement, a group of service researchers engaged in how services could contribute to solving challenges and improving wellbeing, and this led to the inception of the domain of TSR. While Rosenbaum et al. (2007, p. 45) already used the term "Transformative Service Research" in 2007, it was not until some work was published a few years later, including a call to action to conduct research on "improving well-being through

transformative service" (Ostrom et al. 2010, p. 5), two positioning papers (Anderson et al. 2011; Rosenbaum, Corus et al. 2011) as well as three research papers (Rosenbaum and Smallwood 2011; Rosenbaum, Sweeney et al. 2011; Rosenbaum and Wong 2012) that the field gained traction. With these and a further prominent publication in 2013 (Anderson et al. 2013), TSR started to attract the wider community of service scholars' attention. It has now been over a decade since the 2013 publication and the TSR domain can be considered a growing field of research with around 500 active scholars (SciVal, 2023). Conducting a brief analysis in Scopus from 2010 until the end of 2023, 315 peer reviewed TSR articles have been published or are available online in English speaking journals with a combined total of 200 publications alone for the years 2020 to 2023 (Scopus, 2024; search string "Transformative Service*" in title, abstract, keywords), indicating the proliferation and increasing significance of the field.

TSR is defined as "the integration of consumer and service research that centres on creating uplifting changes and improvements in the well-being of consumer actors: individuals (consumers and employees), communities and the ecosystem" (Anderson et al. 2011, p. 3). This definition implies that an individual's, a community's, a nation's, and the wider ecosystem's wellbeing are interconnected. While – as visible in the definition – TSR's delineation has originally focused on improving wellbeing, later re-conceptualisations acknowledge that suffering might have to be removed first before wellbeing can be bettered (Fisk et al. 2018). Such notion is also in line with more recent TSR thinking which comprehends wellbeing as co-created and depending on the balance between the challenges faced and the resources available (Chen et al. 2021). In summary, TSR's focus is on elevating life on the planet through service (Fisk et al. 2020). TSR literature has also begun to consider unintended consequences, spill-over effects, and trade-offs of transformative services (Blocker et al. 2021; Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser 2020a; Rosenbaum, Walters et al. 2022; Russell-Bennett et al. 2020; Sandberg et al. 2021).

TSR can be considered an open playing field for revisiting extant concepts and theories in service research and applying these to improve lives (Rosenbaum, Edwards, Ramírez et al. 2020). Additionally, integrating approaches and collaborating with researchers from other disciplines to enrich TSR's scholarly inquiry and practice has also been accentuated in the TSR movement (Boenigk, Fisk et al. 2021; Fisk et al. 2020).

TCR, TSR and Wellbeing Research

By David G. Mick

Mick's (2006) argument was that the consumer research field had for too long systematically underprioritised the realisation that people, societies, and the earth were facing complex crises of wellbeing (e.g., poverty, ecology degradations, addictions, obesity) as well as bona fide opportunities of wellbeing (e.g., exercise, healthy nutrition, hobbies, arts) via consumption behaviours and related trends that could be more pro-actively addressed by new consumer research. These opportunities to relieve suffering or promote flourishing were then, and still are now, highly evident and enormously varied across the world. Thus, Mick's (2006) address set the immediate future for TCR's principles and maturation. The first decade of TCR (see Davis et al. 2016) witnessed a multitude of activities, such as the establishment of a diverse TCR Advisory Committee, the launching of TCR conferences, or a TCR monograph (Mick et al. 2012). More recently, the organisation and activities have been refined, and new assessments and projections of TCR have been published (Davis and Pechmann 2020; Ozanne et al. 2017).

One of the most promising off-shoots of the TCR movement has been the related yet distinctly valuable evolution of other specific developments in marketing and consumer research within which there is a central focus on wellbeing. The most noteworthy of these is Transformative Service Research. Services are crucial to producers, providers, societies, and environments across the world. However, there is more to consider. This is because all services in one manner or another can maintain or improve wellbeing or fail to do so. Hence, it is not surprising but laudable, that more researchers are conceptualising services for the role and responsibilities they can play in addressing some of the most wicked problems and the most inspiring opportunities of wellbeing (e.g., Anderson et al. 2013; Ostrom et al. 2010; 2021).

Textbox 1: TCR and TSR

2.2. TSR Challenges

TSR can be applied to a broad range of service contexts where transformative services can make a difference and improve the planet's or people's wellbeing by addressing service-related challenges. These contexts range from service industries, such as the healthcare sector (Dodds et al. 2018), social services (Hepi et al. 2017), and financial services (Mende and Van Dorn 2015), to tourism services (Mulcahy et al. 2023), or gamification services (Tanouri et al. 2019), among others. TSR focuses on both the actors as well as the wider policy, cultural, technological, and economic environments these actors are embedded in (Anderson et al. 2013). Accordingly, it has been applied to a variety of actors at the individual (Corus and Saatcioglu 2015; Hepi et al. 2017), community (Dean and Indrianti 2020; Feng et al. 2019; Keränen and Olkkonen 2022), and societal levels (Rosenbaum and Wong 2012; Mahdzan et al. 2023; Ungaro et al. 2022). Equally, it has been utilised

to study a range of policy (Boenigk, Fisk et al. 2021; Black and Gallan 2015), cultural (Meshram and Venkatraman 2022; Islam et al. 2023), technological (Henkel et al. 2020; Tanouri et al. 2019), and economic environments (Reynoso et al. 2015), but also increasingly the natural environment and the preservation of resources and biodiversity (Field et al. 2021; Ungaro et al. 2022).

While TSR applies to the above mentioned contexts and actors, it has placed a particular focus on populations encountering challenges and experiencing vulnerability, such as people in disaster zones where service provision has been disrupted (Cheung et al. 2017), ageing populations who might not be comfortable with certain servicescapes (Rosenbaum et al. 2017), refugees having entered a host country but being unaware of how to use certain services (Boenigk, Fisk et al. 2021; Eslami et al. 2023; Finsterwalder et al. 2021; Subramanian et al. 2022), individuals at the base of the pyramid encountering poverty and requiring inexpensive services to cater to their needs (Fisk et al. 2016), members of the LGBTQIA+ community experiencing discrimination (Rosenbaum et al. 2021; Tsiotsou and Diehl 2022), ethnically marginalised groups not receiving the same level of service as other groups (Hepi et al. 2017), people with mental (Finsterwalder et al. 2017; Schuster et al. 2015) or physical health issues (Parkinson et al. 2020), individuals with disabilities (Awan et al. 2022; Dodds and Palakshappa, 2021; Dodds et al. 2023), all struggling to use mainstream services for reasons of their special requirements, or people with multiple of these characteristics (Corus and Saatcioglu 2015). Such contexts might lead to perceived vulnerability due to these actors experiencing harassment and discrimination (Rosenbaum, Edwards, Malla et al. 2020).

There has been discussion as to what is included in the denomination of an actor's perceived vulnerability (Kabadayi et al. 2023). Some conceptualisations define consumer vulnerability as "a state of powerlessness that arises from an imbalance in marketplace interactions or from the consumption of marketing messages and products" (Baker et al. 2005, p. 134; Riedel et al. 2022). However, the use of such terms labels people and populations AS vulnerable and assumes that consumer vulnerability is an inherent or individual trait. At times, even more explicit labels are utilised to demarcate some populations, such as "hard-to-reach" individuals (Hepi et al. 2017, p. 428), a term that stigmatises and places the onus and attributes of being "hard-to-reach" solely upon populations experiencing vulnerability. The question here might rather be whether it is in fact the service that is hard to reach and there exists a system problem with the transformative service provider not being engaging or inclusive enough. Hence, some researchers (Dodds et al. 2023) avoid such labelling altogether and understand vulnerability as experiential and context specific. Other literature shifts the focus and builds on a strength-based approach of human actors (Fisk et al. 2023; Russell-Bennett et al. 2023; Heatley 2016; Hepi et al. 2017). This has been echoed by other recent publications, such as by Davey et al. (2023) and Raciti et al. (2022, p. 1140) who classify the above-mentioned stigmatisation as "a deficit approach [that] only focuses on what needs repairing" rather than isolating the problem from the human actor so that they can contribute to its solution. Such notion is also mirrored by recent TSR work (Chen et al. 2021, p. 387) that centres on augmenting a human actor's resources to overcome challenges by drawing on a "focal actor's (…) psychological ownership over [their] wellbeing" and "responsibilising" (Anderson et al. 2016) them to take over tasks in the co-creation of their own and others' wellbeing. As stated above, in addition to a focus on individual (Hepi et al. 2017), community (Rosenbaum et al. 2021) or national vulnerability and wellbeing (Dean and Indrianti 2020), more recent calls highlight TSR work that focuses on the vulnerability of the natural environment, how it can be better protected and capitalised on in a more sustainable manner (Field et al. 2021).

2.3. Novel TSR Considerations – The 10C Framework

Since its inception, TSR has gained momentum and continuously developed in the areas of *conceptual*, *methodological*, and *policy and practice approaches.* TSR scholars have outlined relevant *implications,* commenced *initiatives*, and pursued a range of *research avenues*. To build on these and fast forward into the future, this paper focuses on these different areas of TSR related work to further propel the TSR domain. This is done by employing the notion of a service ecosystem and its system levels (Field et al. 2021). Four system levels are distinguished here: the micro, the meso, the macro, and the meta levels of the service ecosystem (Field et al. 2021), bound together by the *Ten-Collaborators* (10C) *Framework* introduced here.

This framework denotes the collaborators at each of the service ecosystem's wellbeing levels (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser 2020) that might experience vulnerabilities but also must cooperate to enable, maintain, or re-establish a healthy service ecosystem. The *micro level* centres on the individual ***c**onsumer and/or **c**o-worker* and their wellbeing. The next level, the *meso level* encapsulates agglomerations of individuals organised in ***c**ommunities* and / or *(non-) **c**ommercial organisations* and their wellbeing. At the next higher *macro level*, ***c**ivilisation*, ***c**entral government, **c**ivil society organisations,* as well as *inter-**c**ontinental*, i.e., *international* and *inter-government organisations* and their wellbeing are located. The highest wellbeing level, the *meta level*, encompasses the *environmental **c**onditions* and ***c**ontext* which must be present for all animate life forms

to exist at the other levels. Here, environmental conditions and context are regarded as actors or collaborators equal to human actors. Such view removes the dichotomy caused by an anthropocentric worldview which regards humankind being separate from nature. This is different from a biocentric view adopted here which regards all life deserving equal consideration (Mang and Reed 2020).

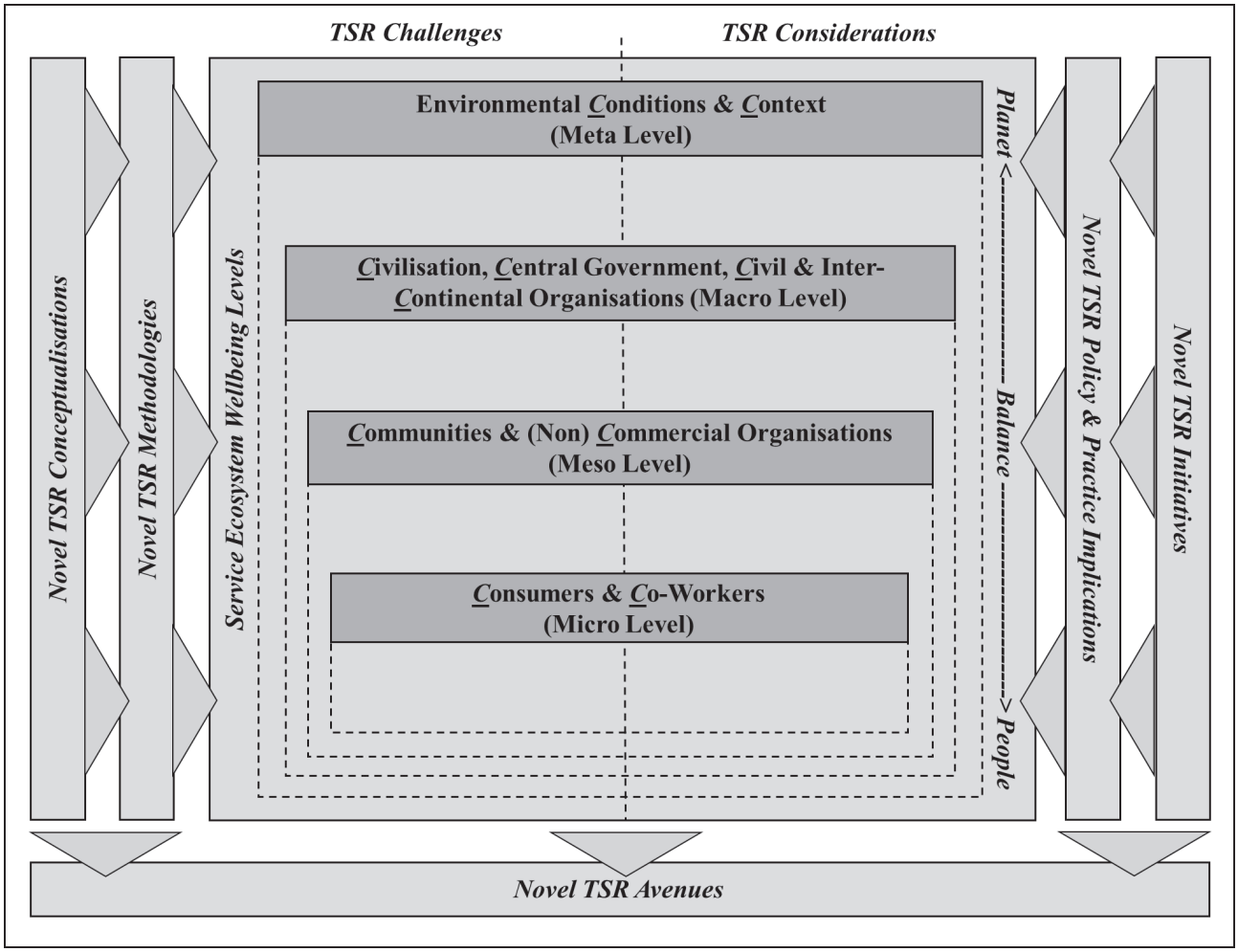

Fig. 1: The "10-Collaborators" Service Ecosystem Framework

For each of the elements of the 10C Framework, the subsequent sections outline the *characteristics* of each of the elements, current *challenges* encountered, as well as novel *considerations* for the TSR domain. Before concluding, the paper outlines research questions and action points for each of the elements in the novel TSR avenues section.

3. Novel TSR Perspectives at the Micro Level: Consumers and Co-Workers

By Martin Mende and Mark S. Rosenbaum

3.1. Characteristics of the Micro Level

A micro-level analysis focuses on understanding behaviours, decisions, and interactions that transpire among individual citizens, i.e., *consumers* and *co-workers* or small groups thereof within service settings. From a TSR perspective, a micro-level analysis encourages service systems to be designed so that "all customers have the ability to receive the same level of value that is inherent in a marketplace exchange" (Fisk et al. 2018, p. 851). This statement emphasises the fact that service consumers are all capable of receiving value. However, they may be blocked from using this capability through marketplace barriers, many of which have been exacerbated by the global pandemic's onslaught. Indeed, in response many service organisations are making goods and services more accessible and inclusive (Edwards et

al. 2018). As a result, service organisations, particularly retailers, are becoming more socially responsible to their customers by emphasising sustainability, ethical sourcing, corporate citizenship, and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (Bolton 2019).

3.2. Challenges at the Micro Level

Although TSR scholars have begun to investigate commonly encountered vulnerabilities at the micro level (Mende and Van Doorn 2015; Mende et al. 2017; 2020; 2023; Rosenbaum et al. 2017), several new situational variables have emerged since the global pandemic. This is illustrated by an increased refugee crisis (Boenigk, Fisk et al., 2021) and the rise of digitised technologies (Rosenbaum, Russell-Bennett et al. 2022), which frequently create marketplace contexts of vulnerability in commercial, non-profit, physical, or virtual service settings. Table 1 provides TSR scholars with insights into seven modern and understudied contexts that frequently exacerbate service consumer and service (co-)worker vulnerabilities in consumption settings: digital, economic, educational, environmental, psychological, political and security, or social isolation vulnerabilities.

Tab. 1: Contemporary vulnerabilities that can impact consumers and co-workers in service settings.

Digital vulnerability: It stems from the 'digital divide', i.e., the gap between people with access to modern information and communications technology and those without:

- Consumers need access to affordable internet (digital) services.
- Consumers may not be able to easily access internet (digital) services including those provided by governmental, medical, educational, and social/entertainment providers.
- Consumers may be susceptible to data privacy infringements, computer viruses, phishing attacks, outdated software, payment card scheming and malware, due to a lack of understanding and costs associated with commonplace cybersecurity tools.

Economic vulnerability: This derives from income inequality, or the unequal distribution of income, wealth, and opportunities across different groups in society:

- Consumers need access to affordable consumer services, including budget-friendly options and resale markets.
- Citizens in urban areas experience food insecurity and limited consumer goods options (e.g., pharmaceutical drugs) due to retail store closures. In these "food deserts" and "retail deserts" affordable consumer goods and services are not easily accessible.
- Consumers may experience financial stress due to economic vulnerability which can have adverse effects on psychological and physical health.
- Economic vulnerability can result in potential difficulties paying rent or mortgages, leading to potential evictions or foreclosures, which impacts banking and financial services.
- Consumers may struggle to save for emergencies or retirement, impacting their long-term financial security.

Educational vulnerability: This refers to the "achievement gap," or a significant difference in academic outcomes or educational attainment between diverse groups of students:

- Underserved students may require affordable and easy access to online learning platforms, tutoring services, and other educational resources.
- Workforce development and upskilling options often require that service employees have knowledge, and access, to online learning platforms.
- Low-income service employees may fall behind in an increasing skills-based employment market.
- Service providers may not design services that facilitate consumers acquiring new skills.

Environmental vulnerability: It impacts service co-workers and customers in outdoor settings and at greater risk of negative health consequences associated with extreme heat or air pollution:

- Service employees working in outdoor retailing areas, especially in developing and least-developed nations, will increasingly experience health issues due to the climate.
- Climate change, which mounts outdoor air pollutants and heat exhaustion, will gradually impact elderly consumers and young children, and encourage them to engage in indoor service exchanges (e.g., e-commerce vs physical store shopping; alternative means of youth education and play).
- Consumers progressively focus on health and wellness services, such as wearable health technologies, specialty diets, and fitness memberships, which may exacerbate given environmental health challenges.

Psychological vulnerability: Some consumers may experience feelings of anxiety, fear, and apprehension due to the risk they perceive for some type of harm:

- Consumers, especially post-pandemic, are reporting increased levels of anxiety and depression, which has led to higher demand for mental health services, including mobile therapy applications and online counselling services.
- Consumers seek services, both in the physical and virtual domains, that help with stress reduction and mindfulness, such as mobile meditation applications and yoga classes.

Political and security vulnerability: This arises due to consumers experiencing the consequences of political upheaval, which often impacts their feelings of security and safety:

- Increased refugee and migrant populations have prompted support through organisations, charities, and businesses offering job training and housing solutions.
- Educational institutions are reeling from student reaction to recent events in the Middle East, resulting in students and faculty experiencing racism and discrimination.
- Many consumers (e.g., LGBTQIA+) are gradually more aware of human rights issues and support service businesses that prioritise ethical practices and social responsibility.

Social isolation vulnerability: It exists due to reduced, limited or no access to an engaged social network or a close attachment bond:

- Consumers, including older and elderly citizens, are looking to combat social isolation, resulting in a surging demand for social networking applications, virtual events, and online communities.
- Older consumers are particularly susceptible to social isolation due to factors, such as mobility issues, limited social connections, or living alone, leading to increased vulnerability to scams, abuse, and neglect. The need for senior care and living options is profound.
- Domestic violence, as well as physical and sexual violence, against women skyrocketed during COVID-19 and post-pandemic rates are still higher than pre pandemic. This rise in domestic violence has spurred support for organisations and services that provide help to victims and survivors.

Researchers must also understand the interconnectivity among the seven types of perceived vulnerabilities that often simultaneously impact consumers and co-workers. For example, older-aged and elderly consumers are likely to enter service settings with concurrent perceived vulnerabilities, including physical disabilities, social isolation, and digital vulnerability (Table 1; Rosenbaum, Walters et al. 2022). Moreover, economic vulnerability among service (co-)workers causes many to experience environmental issues.

3.3. Considerations for the Micro Level

This discussion suggests that, at the micro level, TSR scholars must consider consumers and co-workers who experience concurrent vulnerabilities, and that managers must create interventions to help curb such vulnerabilities. To illustrate a theoretical understanding of the issue, we draw on Luna's (2009; 2019) theory of "layered vulnerability" (Mende et al. 2023). Luna (2009; 2019) argues that there are different vulnerabilities resulting from distinct, though potentially overlapping layers of vulnerability; some of them may emerge due to a person's social circumstances (e.g., income) or reflect relations between persons and their situational circumstances or contexts (e.g., isolation, language). Luna posits that these different layers of vulnerability may be contextually acquired, or removed, one by one.

That is, consumers or (co-)workers may experience cascades of potential vulnerabilities in differing contexts, such as in physical versus online service settings. The idea of layered vulnerability provides more flexibility to the TSR concept of vulnerability, which is often investigated as a singular concept that impacts consumers, and to a lesser extent, employees, and makes it a contextual and relational one. Indeed, perceived vulnerability is not a permanent state that persists continuously throughout a person's existence or as a characteristic that permanently applies to certain citizenry or employment status (Fisk et al. 2023; Baker et. al. 2005; Luna 2009; 2019).

It is put forward that, at the micro level, perceived vulnerability is a situational concept that limits a consumer's ability to realise the maximum value potential that is available during a marketplace exchange (Fisk et al. 2018). Additionally, from the perspective of a service employee, situational vulnerabilities, particularly among workers in the "Global South," frequently result in low social status, marginalisation, limited opportunities for self-expression, and economic constraints, such as limited job availability and low wages (Subramony and Rosenbaum 2024). Equally, like the issues at the micro level described here, the meso level can also impact wellbeing.

4. Novel TSR Perspectives at the Meso Level: Communities and (Non-) Commercial Organisations

By Janet R. McColl-Kennedy and Rebekah Russell-Bennett

4.1. Characteristics of the Meso Level

The meso level of the service ecosystem appears to be the least applied or researched level (Luca et al. 2016; Russell-Bennett et al. 2013) and is situated between the macro level and the micro level (Hardyman et al. 2015; Kennedy et al. 2011; Mirabito and Berry 2015). At the meso level of the service ecosystem, two types of actors have traditionally been identified; *enactors* (directly involved in or responsible for the focal behaviour), such as government departments, and *influencers* (indirectly affecting the focal behaviour through persuasion and opinion-leadership), such as family members (Russell-Bennett et al. 2013) or (members of) *communities*. There is also a third type of actor, *commercial or non-commercial service organisations* that do not have direct responsibility for a focal behaviour, but which can be involved as they have direct interactions with the focal actor, such as banks for women experiencing triggers of homelessness (Russell-Bennett et al. 2021).

4.2. Challenges at the Meso Level

Key challenges for TSR at the meso level are tensions between the three types of actors within and across sys-

tem levels and with other systems (cf. McColl-Kennedy et al. 2020), for instance, commercial vs government vs non-profit vs communities (Gallan et al. 2019).

When the service interaction is complex, there is increased likelihood of conflicting goals (Alkire et al. 2023) creating a need for TSR interventions and initiatives (see also section nine below). The places for intervention in complex systems are called "leverage points" (Meadows 1999). The key challenge for meso level TSR interventions and initiatives is aligning mindsets and goals across the service ecosystem, fair distribution of power, and enacting rules of the system. Service thinking practices can assist in achieving this (Alkire et al. 2023). Ecosystem orchestrators (Breidbach et al. 2016), also known as "keystone actors" (Frow et al. 2019), can be viewed as the second type (enactors) or third type (service organisations that do not have direct responsibility for a focal behaviour). They play an important role as they provide transformation mechanisms that can help move the organisation toward its goals. Orchestrators improve the coordination of resource integration practices, such as facilitating actor involvement, learning, enabling information flow among actors (Frow et al. 2019), and increasing efficiencies in resource utilisation (Breidbach et al. 2016). Individuals do not exist in a vacuum. Individuals are members of service ecosystems and live within networks, engaging with a range of different institutions.

4.3. Considerations for the Meso Level

TSR examples, drawn from *healthcare* and *housing*, serve to illustrate the criticality of the meso level for facilitating transformation at the micro level. Healthcare and housing are two fundamental requirements of quality of life and wellbeing as noted in the United Nations' (2024) Sustainability Development Goals and Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs.

For a *healthcare context* Gallan et al. (2019) demonstrate how individual patient relationships can be leveraged to expand a patient's service ecosystem with additional resources from the first type of actors (enactors) that connect patients (focal actors) with one another (intra-alignment), and in turn, these connections enable community wellbeing (inter-alignment). Further, Gallan et al. (2019) illustrate that additional resources outside the individual's control are needed for the patient's wellbeing, including a neighbourhood community centre, as well as support groups and support from family and friends (influencers).

A novel TSR solution in the *housing context* is the Women's Butterfly Project which aims to empower mature women (micro level) to maintain secure housing (Russell-Bennett et al. 2021). This strengths-based (Raciti et al. 2022) preventative solution involves the third type of actor – service organisations – not typically engaged in housing crisis solutions to transform lives at the micro level (Russell-Bennett et al. 2021). In a pilot project researchers worked with a bank and council library to support women experiencing a change of circumstance – loss of job, relationship, or income – as triggers of homelessness. The paradox is that the meso level actors most likely to have service interactions with the focal actors do not have the responsibility to address the wellbeing challenge.

Similarly, the next level up, i.e., the macro level exhibits its own degree of complexity relating to wellbeing.

5. Novel TSR Perspectives at the Macro Level: Civilisation, Central Government, Civil Society, and Inter-Continental Organisations

By Mark S. Rosenbaum, Jörg Finsterwalder, and Amy Ostrom

5.1. Characteristics of the Macro Level

The *macro* level is situated between the *meso* and the *meta* level and is the most aggregate level within the service ecosystem involving institutions and human actors. It contains boundary-spanning service networks, organisations, and institutions, and encompasses both national and international entities. Boundary-spanning *inter-continental organisations* include institutions, such as the United Nations. The macro level also comprises the societies within our *civilisation*, both at national (e.g., members with a common culture and way of living inhabiting a territory, holding a particular country's citizenship) and international level (e.g., a society spread across multiple countries, but individuals are citizens of the country they live in). *Civil society organisations* are institutions, such as non-government organisations (NGOs), community groups, charitable organisations, or indigenous organisations (Rainey et al. 2017). At a national level, institutions, such as *central government* provide administration and devise policies for lower-level service organisations at the *meso* level and for the citizens at the *micro* level and might engage with other governments to resolve issues at the *meta level*.

5.2. Challenges at the Macro Level

Due to the multitude of interlinked institutions and human actors (Field et al. 2021), particularly challenging is the *design and orchestration of large-scale and complex service ecosystems* that have transformative impact on societies (macro level) and the environmental conditions of planet earth (meta level) (Ostrom et al. 2021). A focus on the macro level is required for one of the recurring themes in this paper (Dodds et al. 2023; Field et al. 2021; Kabadayi et al., 2023; Mende et al. 2023; Raciti et al., 2022; Rosenbaum et al. 2017), and that is the one of disadvantaged *consumers* and *communities* in contexts that create perceived vulnerability. While, as outlined earlier, multiple forms of such contexts may exist for one individual or a community, more recently particular forms of "political and security vulnerabilities" have occurred, evoked by variations of verbal abuse or "bashing," such as social (media) bashing, gay bashing, or ethnic bashing (e.g., Eckeberger 2022; Gilman 2023). Service organisations must respond to such experienced vulnerabilities by providing support, protection, and safer environments for affected individuals.

Moreover, *technology platform services* are becoming more crucial to service interactions and thus require more attention (Field et al. 2021). Specifically, their misuse is of concern. For example, police have used fake identities on social media platforms, such as Grindr and posed as members of the LGBTQIA+ community to arrest male or transgender people who engage in same-sex activities, or to uncover "illegal" activities, including merely being homosexual (Rosenbaum et al. 2022). Additionally, artificial intelligence (AI) deepfakes have the potential to mislead the public in a way that polarises society, spurs international conflicts, influences the outcomes of elections, jeopardizes public safety, among other societal harms (Byman et al. 2023; Chesney and Citron 2019). While the use of disinformation in settings such as these is not new, advances in AI and the scale of spread that can occur makes them worthy of focused attention (Albahar and Almalki 2019; Byman et al. 2023). While potential negative effects from deepfakes are concerning, beneficial uses do exist (e.g., increasing inclusiveness by enabling government officials, politicians, and others to present their message in any language to connect with diverse populations; van der Sloot and Wagensveld 2022), necessitating the consideration of ethical guidelines for their use.

There are also matters arising at the macro level with a focus on the *environmental conditions* at the meta level. For example, in *commercial transport services* taxi companies (e.g., EkoCabs) and ride sharing providers (e.g., Uber Green) increasingly utilise electric vehicles (EVs) (GenLess 2021; Uber 2024) which are labelled a more sustainable solution compared to vehicles using fossil fuel (Tabuchi and Plumer 2023) and, in some countries, have been exempt from certain taxes. However, while EVs emit zero emissions they are not emission-free along their lifecycle, e.g., concerning the environmental cost of sourcing raw materials for, and manufacturing of, EV batteries (Gonçalves 2018) as well as their disposal. Due to EVs also being road users benefitting from the national and regional infrastructure created and posing a potential new risk due to battery fires (Bijoux 2023), some governments have reneged on existing tax benefits for EVs – owned both by transportation providers and private citizens – and these EVs now must "contribute to the costs of the transport system" (Waka Kotahi 2024).

5.3. Considerations for the Macro Level

TSR scholars are called to assist with addressing issues from a macro-level perspective which, as visible from the previous section, can have implications in two directions of the service ecosystem, i.e., downstream and upstream. Regarding *citizens' vulnerability contexts*, commercial and non-profit service organisations and governmental services agencies have failed to provide some citizens with fair access to a service, fair treatment during a service, and with fair opportunity to exit a service (Fisk et al. 2018), such as public transport opportunities for individuals with disabilities. These failings have resulted not only in stigmatised or marginalised consumers experiencing discrimination in service establishments, as in the public transport example, but in some cases, their deaths or imprisonment, such as "illegal" homosexuals being prosecuted according to some countries' laws (Rosenbaum et al. 2021).

Regarding *digital technology platforms*, particularly mobile applications that rely on web-based services, are commonly associated with personal and societal risk. The hazards connected with digital technologies are frequently caused by technical faults, a lack of governmental regulation and monitoring, monetisation pressures from organisations, cultural insensitivity, and a lack of user-centric design. Surprisingly, organisations and government agencies alike usually know and accept some dangers connected with digitisation because the commercial benefits of digital services outweigh the hazards (Rosenbaum et al. 2021; 2022). Unfortunately, despite its universal appeal, service inclusiveness may be little more than a dream, especially when organisations fail to fully consider how digital technologies affect customer experiences or when governments engage in the "digital disruption" of human rights. Also negatively affecting the fabric of society is both the ability of deepfakes to impact consumer beliefs and behaviours based on what is being depicted but also, even if not believed, the potential that they will serve to increase uncertainty and undermine

trust in the media, government officials, and other institutions (Vaccari and Chadwick 2020).

Regarding macro-level actors focusing on the *meta level*, in the case of the potential environmental impact of new technologies used to provide services, such as EVs used in transportation services, and the (re-)design of large-scale, complex service ecosystems for citizens, communities and a society (Field et al. 2021), government regulations might have to be redrafted. For example, critics of the above-mentioned vehicle tax for EVs point out that it must be fair but is not as the policy might "introduce huge inequities into how vehicles are taxed" as it "will see many petrol-fuelled cars paying less to use the roads than EVs" (Birnie, cited in Better NZ 2024). This has already led to owners of hybrid vehicles having their plugs removed to avoid double taxes (Gibson 2024). TSR scholars can assist with improving public and commercial transportation and other services by researching consumers', providers' and government's needs, requirements, and conflicting views to better determine the incentives for citizens and subsequent policies relevant for a more environmentally conscious choice and use of services affecting the *meta level* by working together with policymakers at the macro level.

6. Novel TSR Perspectives at the Meta Level: Environmental Conditions and Context

By Jörg Finsterwalder

6.1. Characteristics of the Meta Level

The meta level denotes the biosphere and encapsulates the anthropocentric spheres at the lower system levels. More encompassing TSR approaches take into consideration the importance of the wellbeing of the environment (Alkire et al. 2022; Anderson et al. 2013), in this paper demarcated by its own dedicated (meta) level here to give it more prominence. The link to the meta level is already resonating from the case of transportation services outlined above which, apart from considering human actors also relates to the environmental impact of services and the relevance of the environmental conditions for humankind's survival and wellbeing. The *environmental conditions* and *context*, i.e., all interacting living and non-living elements other than human beings which permit life to be sustained, are regarded as actors or collaborators in their own right in this article. TSR approaches which pay tribute the environment refer to sustainable service ecosystems (Büttgen et al. 2023; Field et al. 2021) and service ecosystem wellbeing or health (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser 2020b; Fisk and Alkire 2022). The latter is defined as "the interdependent state of private, public, and planetary wellbeing necessary for sustaining life" (Fisk and Alkire 2022, p. 194).

6.2. Challenges at the Meta Level

To ensure a balanced state that facilitates life, "challenges and resources within and across system levels [have to be equalised] to achieve system-level specific and overall service ecosystem equilibria and wellbeing" (Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser, 2020b, p. 1115) and the meta level plays an important role in achieving this.

Service researchers have identified themes relating to the planet's *environmental conditions* and *context* as important topics that require their input (Ostrom et al. 2021). This is in line with global initiatives, such as actioning the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2024; see also Russell-Bennett et al. 2024). Challenges for TSR scholars include the extension of their work to assist with crafting services to become more sustainable and regenerative. As global approaches require efforts on a different scale, novel approaches are needed which reach beyond national interests, protectionism and competition amongst states and countries.

6.3. Considerations for the Meta Level

The above-mentioned challenges can be addressed by novel approaches (see also section seven) and their application in initiatives (see also section nine). For example, Boenigk, Fisk et al. (2021) advocate for the creation of hospitable service ecosystems where people can thrive so that potential divides amongst people and nations can be surmounted by becoming more inclusive and integrative. Such notion is particularly relevant for the meta level serving all humanity and providing the resources to be fairly and equitably shared by humankind. Needless boundaries between nations and issues relating to resolving the trade-offs between United Nation's (2024) "prosperity" versus the "people" and "planet" dimensions at macro level must be overcome for this. Approaches where the natural environment is not only preserved but is in abundance again are needed and require the inclusion of TSR scholars to assist with finding solutions. It might be valuable to consider more relational approaches, such as advocated by indigenous peoples who have always had a strong connection to their ecosystem (Harmsworth and Awatere 2013; McGregor et al. 2020; Pierotti and Wildcat 2000). This is also represented

in latest efforts by legally giving the natural environment actor status, such as by granting rivers, land, or mountains personhood (Evans, 2024). It is also in line with viewing nature as contributing and providing services to humankind, such as freshwater provision or climate regulation, but also the reciprocal relationship of humans providing services to the environment, i.e., to maintain or enhance the environmental conditions (Comberti et al. 2015) and not making nature's services become more vulnerable.

Therefore, indigenous peoples should be given more prominence in finding solutions, simply because of their immersion in, and close connection to, the environmental conditions and context. For example, in a Māori context Wolfgramm et al. (2020) speak of values-driven transformation in indigenous relational economies of wellbeing. Such worldview encompasses the intra- and intergenerational connectedness of humankind and its embeddedness in the physical and nonphysical environment (Mead 2016; Wolfgramm et al. 2020). Anthropologist Annette Weiner (1980) points out that a space–time framework is needed which is designed around *regenerative cycles* that are culturally and symbolically demarcated. Weiner (1980, p. 71) explains that "any society must (…) regenerate certain elements [resources] (…) in order for the society to continue" (Weiner 1980, p. 71). By applying an indigenous lens to service ecosystems, some work speaks of regenerative service ecosystem wellbeing (Finsterwalder and Tombs 2021). There is much to (re-)learn to better (re-)connect people and planet, and indigenous peoples should be at the forefront of driving such transformation, with TSR scholars assisting. Such an approach as well as others, outlined in the next section, require a conscious shift to human actors participating *as nature* to co-evolve the entire living system of planet earth (Mang and Reed 2020).

7. Novel Conceptual TSR Approaches

By Jörg Finsterwalder and Sertan Kabadayi

7.1. Challenges

As outlined above, TSR focuses on "creating uplifting changes and improvements in the well-being of (…) actors" (Anderson et al., 2011, p. 3) and hence also has an inherent practical application focus in its definition. However, research-driven practical application necessitates the use of conceptual approaches or think tools which can act as roadmaps for TSR scholars and practitioners to address a particular service-related issue or Transformative Service Challenge (TSC) (cf. Subramanian et al. 2022). A TSC is defined as a context identified as posing a (potential) wellbeing issue to a consumer / co-worker, a community, (non-) commercial organisations, the civilization, or the environmental conditions and which may result in perceived vulnerability. Following a conceptual pathway permits the use of a theoretical lens best suited to the TSC and leads to the selection of the appropriate research methodology (see section eight below) to initiate closer examination. This then informs recommendations or the commencement of a Transformative Service Initiative (TSI, Boenigk, Kreimer et al. 2021; see section nine). Since TSCs can be manifold, TSR scholars might have to select from a range of conceptual approaches from within the service and marketing domains but also increasingly from other disciplines.

7.2. Considerations

The infusion of conceptual approaches from other disciplines by TSR scholars is also owed to the increasing complexity of market-related, societal, and environmental issues which cross domain boundaries and require novel thinking. For example, relating to the *micro level* and vulnerability contexts, such as outlined above and possibly occurring in multiple "layers" (Mende et al. 2023), Kabadayi et al. (2023) draw on Humanistic Management (Melé 2016) and devise a dignity–vulnerability framework for organisations at the *meso level* to enable them to move to a more inclusive, that is, a strength-based and dignity-recognised approach which views the focal human actor as a partner.

Similarly, Finsterwalder et al. (2021) apply a Conservation of Resources (COR) approach from Psychology (Hobfoll et al. 2018) and draw on Health Sciences' (Dodge et al. 2012) notion of wellbeing to study refugees in contexts that create vulnerability at the *micro level*. The authors also suggest a strength-based perspective which regards refugees as actors having resources to be drawn on.

Taking a *macro-level* perspective, other recent TSR work adopts a human rights perspective to study various systemic issues that create suffering and identify responsibilities of different actors at the micro, meso, and macro levels of service ecosystems to create wellbeing outcomes for all (Tsiotsou et al. 2024). This approach, using various conceptualisations of human rights from different disciplines, has wide ranging implications for governments and policymakers, service organisations, frontline employees, customers, and bystanders in service settings. For instance, putting the basic human right to health at the centre of healthcare service design and delivery will

ensure that all individuals regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity have fair access to such essential services to improve their wellbeing (Tsiotsou et al. 2024).

Focusing on the co-creative aspects of wellbeing and the systems individual actors at the *micro level* are embedded in, Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) from Psychology (Vygotsky 1978) and popularised by Engeström (2015) for the education and knowledge management domains, is employed in other TSR work (Finsterwalder et al. 2017). CHAT assists with explaining the relationship between human mind and human activity, i.e. the "doing" of co-creation (Foot 2014), historically mediated by artifacts and communities. CHAT captures actors' individual contexts as well as their cultural-historical – including indigenous – backgrounds (Hepi et al. 2017) and requirements when designing TSIs. CHAT has already been successfully applied to pest management at the *meso level* (Vänninen et al. 2015) and hence appears suitable to address other issues, such as at the *meta level*.

8. Novel TSR Methodologies

By Jörg Finsterwalder

8.1. Challenges

TSR contexts can pose challenges for both researchers and research participants alike. Research participants can be enmeshed in previously mentioned vulnerability contexts (Dodds and Hess 2021; Dodds et al. 2023; Hepi et al. 2017; Parkinson et al. 2020; Rosenbaum et al. 2021). Equally, researchers can be exposed to challenging contexts. This applies not only when interacting with the research participants, for example, when studying death or interacting with dying patients (Azzari and Baker 2020; Six 2020), but also where environmental conditions are volatile, for example, when entering an earthquake zone for research (Dodds et al. 2023). This necessitates that TSR scholars carefully devise the appropriate research methodology to guide their research process, and pay attention to dedicated methods, procedures, and protocols (Dodds et al. 2023) that focus on the wellbeing of all involved.

8.2. Considerations

Due to unique TSR contexts, designing more encompassing approaches involves building relationships with research participants and considering their needs (Dodds et al. 2023) before formulating the actual research methods. However, particularly community-based research initiatives have not featured strongly in past research endeavours (Hurley et al. 2018). Moreover, for certain ethnicities or groups, such as indigenous peoples, it is customary that there is a visible benefit to those researched (McFarlane and McFarlane 2019). While at times benefits for participants might eventuate, for example, the sharing of their experiences can be healing and transformative in itself (Azzari and Baker 2020; Dodds et al. 2018), not all TSR projects might show such immediate benefits.

The above-described contexts require research methodologies that are inclusive of the participants and create an envelope so that they can feel safe, unintimidated, protected, supported, and valued, but more so as being empowered members in the process (Dodds et al. 2023; Hurley et al. 2018; Raciti et al. 2022), which includes establishing an open atmosphere that can also stimulate novel creative and transformative solutions that benefit the participants.

TSR scholars have contributed to the domain with dedicated articles on research metho(dologie)s, such as by Azzari and Baker (2018), Dodds et al. (2018), and Dodds and Hess (2021). Latest work (Dodds et al. 2023) builds on these publications and aims at creating a novel and more encompassing research methodology framework that can be applied to a diverse range of TSR contexts. The framework relates to common areas of sampling, ethical and technical set-up, research protocol, and research techniques and processes (Dodds et al. 2023; Azzari and Baker 2020). For example, online interviews in qualitative research can be used for non-intrusive participation of people feeling shy. Equally, engaging with communities which have experienced disasters is vital prior to qualitative or quantitative data collection (Dodds et al. 2023). At its centre the framework focuses on the research context and the empowerment of the research participants but also the role of support persons, peers or interpreters as well as the role of the researcher. All these roles must provide a "protective buffer" by ensuring the wellbeing of the partakers through employing a strength-based approach (Dodds et al. 2023). Other TSR work centres on the power of co-designing solutions with participants for their communities, the importance of giving voice to the participants while managing the co-design process so that user-driven value propositions can be generated (Dietrich et al. 2017; Hurley et al. 2018). Future TSR work should more strongly consider going beyond co-creative processes that encompass relationship building, data collection and co-design, by continuing the collaboration until initiatives, such as those highlighted in the next section, have been implemented.

9. Novel TSR Initiatives

By Sertan Kabadayi and Canan Corus

9.1. Challenges

Undoubtedly, TSR scholars have done remarkable work in laying the foundations for service research to generate ideas that aid with advancing individual and collective wellbeing (Boenigk, Fisk et al. 2021; Kabadayi et al. 2023). Various goals and approaches as adopted by such TSR-oriented studies for groups experiencing vulnerabilities have been discussed in the literature (e.g., Fisk et al. 2018; 2020). However, most of these have been conceptual studies (e.g., Alkire et al. 2023; Tuzovic and Kabadayi 2021), while empirical work remains limited to a few exceptions (e.g., Boenigk, Kreimer et al. 2021; Eslami et al. 2023).

Additionally, while the growing TSR literature highlights the role of service organisations in co-creating wellbeing outcomes with multiple stakeholders at the different levels of service ecosystems (Fisk et al. 2020; Gallan et al. 2021), few studies provide specific guidelines or approaches for service organisations as to the processes through which these wellbeing outcomes can be achieved. Little insight is offered into the factors that can explain *how* and *why* the effectiveness of wellbeing co-creation efforts by service organisations in collaboration with other actors may vary in their outcomes (Rosenbaum, Russell-Bennett et al. 2022). Finally, it is noteworthy that the long-standing TSR aspirations of providing multidisciplinary approaches to complex pressing problems are yet to materialise (Alkire et al. 2020).

9.2. Considerations

Several recent advancements, such as Transformative Service Initiatives (TSIs) assist with addressing the abovementioned issues. TSIs are defined as activities by public, private, or nonprofit organisations aiming at helping people experiencing vulnerability to improve their wellbeing (Boenigk, Kreimer et al. 2021). For example, a three-step integration process of awareness, alignment, and access has been outlined to demonstrate the effectiveness of TSIs in the context of a refugee programme for access to higher education (Boenigk, Kreimer et al. 2021). Studies on the integration of market actors, such as retailers, into the design of TSIs for improved outcomes provide further understanding of the efforts by service organisations to enhance wellbeing (Eslami et al. 2021). This work also suggests that market based TSIs can have broader impact than just benefiting those individuals who experience vulnerability, as these TSIs provide additional benefits for service organisations themselves, such as being able to increase their variety and assortment and promotional offers, as well as improving the customer service level.

The dignity–vulnerability framework by Kabadayi et al. (2023) offers a way to understand how service organisations can design TSIs to increase their effectiveness while minimising negative unintended consequences. The proposed framework suggests that when organisations adopt a strength-based approach and promote human dignity, such TSIs create better wellbeing outcomes for all stakeholders involved (Kabadayi et al. 2023). The framework is an example of the recent efforts by TSR scholars to adopt a more multidisciplinary lens to address problems. Similarly, Boenigk, Fisk et al. (2021) offer a transformative refugee service experience framework that emerged from a collaboration between marketing, service management, public policy scholars and practitioners to improve refugees' lives in service ecosystems. Innovatively, Tang and Blocker (2022) use metaphorical analogues from molecular biology to study how social resilience can be facilitated in service communities, and thus expand the boundaries of TSR by incorporating other disciplines. TSR scholars should continue to identify academics from other relevant disciplines they can collaborate with to achieve TSR's central goals.

Finally, in addition to cultivating multidisciplinary collaborations in TSR, the necessity and benefits of building partnerships between different stakeholders like scholars, service organisations, and policymakers has been highlighted to design and effectively manage efforts to follow the guidelines offered in various TSR work (Boenigk, Fisk et al. 2021). TSR scholars are increasingly encouraged to create initiatives with organisations like Responsible Research for Business and Management (RRBM) and ServCollab (servcollab.org) to engage in research to co-create wellbeing outcomes for all. TSR scholars should actively seek to build initiatives with other organisations and stakeholders worldwide to enrich TSR's impact, and to inform policymaking and practice.

10. Novel TSR Policy and Practice Implications

By Laurel Anderson and Mario Giraldo

10.1. Challenges

Although there is a myriad of challenges regarding the practices and policies that incorporate TSR, this section focuses on one of four "gnarly" issues in TSR (Anderson and Ostrom 2018) which is foundational: who defines wellbeing. Indeed, it remains unclear who decides which view of wellbeing is adopted in policy and in practice and what difference this makes.

Many definitions of wellbeing exist – some have been outlined in the introduction above and put forward or adopted by TSR scholars (e.g., Anderson et al. 2013; Chen et al. 2021). Definitions vary greatly across the different policy and practice contexts. This is due to the fact that wellbeing conceptualisations are dictated by, for example, insurance companies (e.g., the number of treatments deemed needed to achieve wellbeing), political and legal processes (e.g., immigration and asylum standards), algorithms (e.g., which locations assessed need more policing to ensure wellbeing), expert services that require compliance (e.g., physicians can "fire" patients for non-compliance with physician orders) and services provided for "captive consumers" (e.g., welfare recipients who by definition have more limited choice in the services seen to improve their wellbeing; Rayburn, 2015). At the practice and policy levels, service ecosystem tensions, in addition to the ones outlined in the meso-level section above, emerge when market actors operate from different explicit definitions and tacit meanings of wellbeing and act to safeguard desired outcomes. These differences may impede the accomplishment or improvement of individual or societal wellbeing. The notion of contexts that create perceived vulnerability outlined in this paper is used to illustrate that in service ecosystems, tensions about what wellbeing encompasses may arise. These can occur between; a) a service provider and its customers (e.g., Bottom-of-Pyramid consumers' difficulties in the use of formal banking services thereby excluding them from opportunities; Sanchez-Barrios et al. 2015); b) between providers themselves (e.g., disagreements between street vendors over taking advantage of government programmes advocating more formalised street vendor practices; Giraldo et al. 2020); and c) between service users experiencing vulnerability themselves (e.g., consumers' disagreements about whether or not to buy from informal entrepreneurs; by accepting the entrepreneurs as legitimate providers the providers can offer services to the consumers conveniently and thus affect that part of their wellbeing positively; Del Giudice et al. 2023; Giraldo et al. 2020). Differences also exist within a service ecosystem (e.g., formal banking services fail to understand service entrepreneurs' everyday practices in the informal economy thus hindering their opportunities for fairer financing; Giraldo et al. 2020), and at an institutional level (e.g., government programmes for inclusion fail to comprehend informal entrepreneurs' service practices and therefore are – at least in part – exclusionary; Del Giudice et al. 2023).

10.2. Considerations

It remains unclear what the consequences of different definitions of wellbeing in policy and in practice are. These differences may impede the attainment or enhancement of wellbeing.

Customer centricity is an inherent cornerstone of TSR (Anderson et al. 2013) and has been adopted by many service providers and ecosystems to advance wellbeing. Correspondingly, earlier work by Shin and Johnson (1978, p. 478, emphasis added) defines wellbeing as a "quality of life according to [one's] *own chosen criteria*." However, this emphasis on an individual customer defining wellbeing, while in many ways beneficial, also raises several questions. These relate to the level of expertise needed to make wellbeing decisions, various groups of consumers with different values and definitions of wellbeing, the voices of other stakeholders (such as providers), and limitations in choice due to issues such as provider shortages, safety concerns or restrictive public policy.

Additionally, the question of the persistence of a wellbeing definition must be considered. Among many, we suggest two perspectives to ponder. An individual's understanding and definition of their own wellbeing tends to change over time and developmental stages (cf. Boehm 2018, OECD 2021). Likewise, new research in health, medicine, education, and other fields (cf. Alkire et al. 2020; Nguyen and Thuy 2016) may be an impetus for wellbeing definitions to change. But a change in the definition of wellbeing that then becomes a new norm and is implemented throughout a service ecosystem incurs costs in terms of time, training and the adoption of the new definition and its standards. The question then becomes when and how should service providers change their notion of wellbeing and ways of managing the change and different meanings. Beyond responding to customer needs or novel research, another vivid example of an impetus that may require modification of the definition

and way of managing a commonly used wellbeing definition is a change in the political party in power which then impacts regulations, public policy, and funding. Thus, a service provider is challenged if and when to adapt and implement a changed notion of wellbeing provided by a government, how soon this should take effect, and whether their own understanding of wellbeing is congruent with the officially sanctioned definition of wellbeing.

The gnarly issue of who defines wellbeing in service settings and how this definition is used is especially pertinent to today's service reality. Power differences and dominance as well as hidden tensions that operate at the different levels of the service ecosystem are rich ground for TSR scholars to develop insights for addressing this phenomenon in practice.

11. Novel TSR Avenues

Co-authored by all TSR Scholars

11.1. Challenges

The paper has outlined a range of challenges for TSR specialists across the different system levels from the micro to the meta level as well as for the areas of conceptual approaches, methodological advances, initiatives, and practice and policy. While novel considerations have already been outlined in the above-mentioned sections, there is a need to further TSR work in these areas.

11.2. Considerations

Therefore, TSR scholars and practitioners are called to pay particular attention to the following research avenues and points of action which are outlined for each of the elements of the 10C Framework.

Micro Level: Consumers and Co-Workers

- Vulnerability and service design are inextricably linked. How can the impact of many vulnerabilities coming into play be considered, also in terms of their severity, throughout a customer's journey in a consumption setting or at a customer–co-worker touchpoint?
- How can opportunities better be leveraged to understand the impact of the seven under-researched vulnerabilities – digital, economic, educational, environmental, psychological, political and security, or social isolation – on both consumers and co-workers in service organisations?
- How can theoretical and humanistic inquiries assist with understanding the impact of artificial intelligence on reducing consumers' and service (co-)workers' perceived vulnerabilities across service interaction touchpoints?

Meso Level: Communities and (Non-) Commercial Organisations

- How can the service ecosystem mechanisms of linking, bridging and bonding practices be better investigated?
- Which service practices can be identified that resolve tensions between actors at different levels of the service ecosystem, such as shared worldviews, compliance, adherence, and concordance practices, to enable transformation at the micro level?
- How can the strengths of meso-level service actors be leveraged to support transformation at the micro level?

Macro Level: Civilisation, Central Government, Civil Society, and Inter-Continental Organisations

- How can TSR scholars assist with micro, meso, and meta level collaborators being better considered, and, where applicable, responsibilised in wellbeing co-creation, and included in macro-level decisions and policymaking?
- How can policy frameworks be redrafted, and platform technology be made accessible to prevent various forms of discrimination, falsification and citizens be re-educated via novel TSIs?
- How can micro-level TSIs to reduce vulnerability of the environment and strengthen the planet's wellbeing be institutionalised at the meso and macro levels, and how can such grass roots initiatives be brought to a global scale?

Meta Level: Environmental Conditions and Context

- Which TSR projects focusing on educating citizens should be prioritised to reconnect human actors to the environmental conditions and context?
- How can TSR scholars assist service organisations with better connecting the anthropocentric with the biocentric spheres in their service approach to simultaneously improve people's and the planet's wellbeing?
- How can the role of indigenous peoples and their notion of stewardship of the earth be better utilised to inform TSR frameworks, initiatives, practice, and policy?

Novel Conceptual TSR Approaches

- What are the benefits and drawbacks of certain conceptual approaches applied in TSR?
- Which repository of conceptual approaches for TSR scholars can be created that future research endeavours can draw on?
- Which conceptual and theoretical domains are underexplored and could be used by TSR scholars?

Novel TSR Methodologies

- How can TSR scholars expand their methodological approaches to be more inclusive of the research participants, their needs and a focus on both process and outcome?
- How do methodological approaches have to change to incorporate more empirical research projects with a spotlight on impact?
- How do scholarly metrics have to change to incorporate and consider extended time and effort to conduct more encompassing research method(ologies) and implementation projects?

Novel TSR Initiatives

- How can more empirical and impactful TSI research be initiated, and which method(ologie)s are useful in analytically demonstrating the effectiveness of new TSIs?
- How can TSR scholars develop guidelines for service organisations to design and implement various TSIs to achieve intended outcomes for all relevant stakeholders?
- How can TSR scholars establish effective cross-disciplinary collaboration to realise novel TSIs and ideas in research that incorporate perspectives from other domains?

Novel TSR Policy and Practice Implications

- How do the market actors (e.g., service providers, consumers, co-workers) being studied define wellbeing according to the contextual/institutional reality they live in?
- What are the tensions and the static or shifting power dimensions regarding who is in charge of defining wellbeing?
- How are various definitions of wellbeing embedded in the actions and practices of individuals, organisations, and institutions, and what are the covert definitions of wellbeing?

12. Concluding Remarks

The present paper has drawn on the combined knowledge and experience of TSR scholars to further advance the field by infusing novel perspectives and drawing on the notion of the service ecosystem concept as an underlying roadmap to address wellbeing issues at the different system levels. The "10-Collaborators Framework" has been devised to focus on the actors that are located at each of the system levels, i.e., consumers and co-workers at the micro level; communities and (non-) commercial organisations at the meso level; civilisation, central government, civil and inter-continental organisations at the macro level; and environmental conditions and context at the meta level. These actors can encounter vulnerabilities but are also required to collaborate to prevent, mitigate or revert these, and to build on the collaborators' strengths, to enable wellbeing across all system levels. Subsequently, novel TSR concepts and methodologies, initiatives, policy and practice implications as well as future research avenues in TSR have been outlined.

The world faces big issues and wicked problems at the micro, meso, macro, and meta levels. TSR scholars and practitioners are called to invest more of their resources in assisting with resolving these challenges through service for the betterment of life on the planet. Equally, TSR specialists are asked to motivate other scholars as well as practitioners and policymakers to join the TSR movement.

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