Towards a service-dominant approach to social marketing

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**Abstract**

Over the last decade social marketing has moved away from traditional marketing management approaches towards service-oriented theory, integrating concepts from other disciplines, to account for the distinctive nature of social change and develop an ecological perspective. This paper extends prior literature by interrogating the applicability of service-dominant logic (SDL) to social marketing, with a particular emphasis on how a systems perspective can offer new ways to address challenges of social change. In so doing it examines how the social marketing benchmarks can be extended through applying (and adapting) the principles, concepts and theories of SDL. The paper provides critical reflection on the challenges of transferring service-dominant theory to social change contexts highlighting implications for practice and a future research agenda.

**Keywords**: social marketing, service-dominant benchmarks, networks, systems, social change, service-dominant logic, co-creation

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Introduction

Despite social marketing’s wide application and reasonable record of success (Stead et al., 2007a), there has been lively debate about its theoretical roots (Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014) and future development needed to improve its relevance to social change contexts (Dibb and Carrigan, 2013; Gordon, 2012; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Hastings, 2003; Peattie and Peattie, 2003; Wood, 2008). In a globalised and increasingly interconnected world, societies face an array of ‘wicked issues’ (Rittel and Webber, 1973); public health crises, climate change, food, water and energy security, etc. Challenges such as these require rich understanding of the physical, social, cultural and institutional contexts of behaviour (Owens and Driffill, 2008) and approaches to managing change need to tackle individual and structural issues, engaging various stakeholders to bring about locally relevant solutions (Domegan et al., 2013; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013; Lefebvre, 2012).

Social marketing was developed as a strategic approach to social change based on a model of marketing management (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971). Since the earliest application of social marketing, scholarship reflecting on its distinctive conditions – the intangible nature of the offering, the need for change at an individual and structural level, the multiple stakeholders and potential for conflict, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, the interactive and relational processes of change – has pushed for development of its key principles, concepts and theories (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Dibb, 2014; Domegan et al., 2013; Goldberg, 1995; Gordon et al., 2011; Hastings, 2003; Peattie and Peattie, 2003). Over the last decade, social marketing has migrated away from its marketing management roots towards a service mindset, which is seen as more consistent with the scope and nature of issues that it addresses and the processes required to make change (Lefebvre, 2007, 2012; Russell-Bennet, Wood and Previte, 2013). Of recent (Desai, 2009; Domegan et al., 2013; Zainuddin, Previte and Russell-Bennett, 2011), this movement has started to incorporate ideas from service-dominant logic (SDL) (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), particularly the idea of value co-creation as a concept that accommodates the active role of stakeholders (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). There is also acknowledgement that the incorporation of systems thinking into SDL, which recognises complex networks of value-creating relationships that are interactive, collaborative, embedded within social contexts and dynamic (Vargo, 2009; Lusch and Vargo, 2006; Vargo and Lusch, 2010), can help to address social issues for which the co-operation of various parties will be required to work towards solutions (Domegan et al., 2013). However, these ideas and their implications for social marketing have not yet been explored in detail.

In this paper, we review developments in social marketing and build on the argument that SDL’s concepts, frameworks and theories can help to improve understanding of complex issues and develop new ways to manage change. We extend previous literature by considering value creation from a ‘network of networks’ (Layton, 2011) or service ecosystem perspective (Vargo and Lusch, 2010) and discuss its potential to explain social change processes that span the micro, meso and macro levels of the environment. We do not propose that existing SDL literature is a panacea for social marketing theory; while it aspires to develop a theory about economy and society, its service-centric logic and the predominant application to business and organisational contexts mean that it currently lacks a sufficient critical lens and gives insufficient attention to ethical, political and citizenship issues that are vitally important when addressing social change (Domegan et al., 2013). In writing this article, we aim to contribute to debate on the application of SDL but hope that future dialogue and primary research will bring additional critical reflection to improve the adaptation of service thinking for the purpose of social marketing.

The article starts with a review of key criticisms and developments in social marketing, and examines the extent to which service thinking has already been incorporated. It then introduces SDL, and the systems perspective in particular, before moving on to discuss how these ideas can contribute to understanding of social issues and ways to promote change. We organise this discussion around a revised set of social marketing benchmarks, set out by Andreasen (1994; 2002) to capture its distinctive elements, to focus it upon the core principles of social marketing but also because the benchmarks have served as an important bridge into practice and work to extend the original benchmarks is much needed to transfer new knowledge and experience. Finally, we reflect on the challenges associated with applying SDL in social change contexts and identify research questions as a basis for future service dominant social marketing scholarship.

**Social marketing: critiques and developments**

At its inception, social marketing was grounded in the traditional managerial model of marketing (Andreasen, 2002; Arnold and Fisher, 1996; Bagozzi, 1975; Domegan et al, 2013; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 2002). Consistent with its roots in neo-classical economics, marketing management focused on transactional exchanges and emphasised strategic decision making on which market segments to target and how to best deploy the marketing mix to motivate and facilitate exchange (McCarthy, 1960; Kotler, 1967). The core principles of social marketing were set out in six benchmarks, which specify that it: (1) is customer oriented, (2) has a clear behaviour change focus, (3) incorporates an exchange analysis, (4) takes into account competition (both internal and external), (5) uses segmentation and targeting to select the intervention target group and (6) uses several elements of the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) not just communications (Andreasen (2002)[[1]](#endnote-1).

From the first suggestion that this managerial model could be applied to personal and societal welfare (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971) social marketing scholarship has benefitted from lively debates, from across the academic-practitioner divide and amongst a variety of disciplines, which has highlighted concerns and criticisms about its core principles and their applicability to social change. Below we review key critiques and recent developments in social marketing to provide an overview of the trajectory of social marketing and discuss further evolution of the field.

*Broadening the social marketing scope*

The traditional marketing management paradigm adopted by social marketing translated into a ’downstream’ approach (Andreasen 1995; Kotler and Lee, 2008) focused on changing the behaviour of people who are at risk through decisions at the individual level (Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Maio et al., 2007). It was associated with a neo-liberal approach that attributes responsibility for managing personal and social well-being to individuals (Crawshaw and Newlove, 2011; Crawshaw, 2012; Gould and Semaan, 2014; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013; Jones, Pykett and Whitehead, 2011). However, critics from fields of application such as health (Crawshaw, 2012; Wymer, 2011) and environmental protection (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Brennan and Parker, 2014; Kilbourne et al., 1997; Peattie and Crane, 2005; Peattie and Peattie, 2009) argued that the individual focus privileges a rational decision model, neglecting questions of agency and contextual factors, which are strongly determinant of individuals’ behaviour. Critical perspectives have also been instrumental in articulating the ‘complex, conflicted and increasingly interdependent world’ (Shultz 2007, p. 293) where social marketers operate. Critical social marketing scholarship highlights the need to understand the structures around individuals and the complex relationships between individual and environment (Gordon, Carrigan and Hastings, 2011; Gordon, 2011; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Spotswood and Tapp, 2013).

These contributions do not claim that individual behaviour change is unnecessary, rather they emphasise that understanding of individual behaviour needs to be taken in context and that behaviour change should be part of a broader social change agenda (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Dibb, 2014; Gordon, 2013; Hastings and Saren 2003; Stead, Arnott and Dempsey, 2013). Accordingly, there has been a reorientation towards ‘upstream’ and ‘midstream’[[2]](#endnote-2) social marketing that focuses on changing behavioural contexts by using combinations of structural measures, legislation, community approaches and education (Andreasen, 2012; Bryant et al., 2007; Gordon et al., 2011; McKenzie Mohr, 2000; Rothschild, 1999; Wymer, 2011). This reorientation positions broadening the scope of social marketing as a fundamental direction for the field’s development and has provided the impetus for social marketing scholarship to draw upon a range of theoretical traditions. To address the limitations of interventions focused on cognitive models (Lefebvre, 2000; Luca and Suggs, 2013; Truong, 2014) recent social change programmes have incorporated behavioural economics and socio-psychological theories which acknowledge social and other ‘irrational’, non-cognitive factors that influence behaviour (Ariely, 2010; Carvalho and Mazzon, 2013; Shove, 2010). Sociological perspectives are also being applied, for instance, Cherrier and Gurrieri (2014) draw on structuration theory (Giddens, 1984)[[3]](#endnote-3) to examine the roles of ‘institutions’ as part of the social system in normalising behaviours and creating culture. Gordon and Gurrieri (2014) draw on Actor Network Theory[[4]](#endnote-4) (Latour, 2005) to examine researcher, participant and other stakeholder reflexivity in the case of tobacco control. The unifying theme amongst these diverse developments is the growing agreement that social change programmes are complex, open systems where individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors influence change outcomes (Clark, 2013; Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2014; Domegan et al., 2013). This mirrors a similar argument made in commercial marketing where both micro and macro marketing perspectives are required for constructive engagement with society (Shultz, 2007).

*Reviewing social marketing core principles: exchange, marketing mix and segmentation*

Other key elements of the marketing management tradition found to be incongruent with social marketing are the (dyadic) exchange concept and organisation-led practice of target marketing via a 4Ps marketing mix. The intangible nature of social change offerings and their public realm (Buchanan et al.1994; Luck, 1969; Peattie and Peattie, 2003; Ryan, 2001; Walsh, 1994) mean that social marketing typically confronts contexts that involve generalised and complex exchanges (Baggozi, 1975; Webster, 1975). It engages a variety of actors with different perspectives and preferences (Domegan et al., 2013), often encounters conflict between societal well-being and the preferences of particular parties (Brenkert, 2002) (e.g. anti-smoking campaigns and upstream initiatives to limit access to tobacco and change social norms) and deals with market failures (Glenane-Antoniadis et al., 2003). The range of actors involved connects to the earlier discussion on the need to broaden the scope of social marketing and address social change via multiple interacting systems. The intangible nature of exchange, the challenges of developing a common understanding of problems and preferred solutions and for realising change across multiple groups, highlight the importance of acknowledging the active role of different parties, with attention to both their rights and responsibilities. Indeed, social marketing literature proposes a change of focus from exchange to interaction (Peattie and Peattie, 2003) or relationships (Hastings, 2003) and incorporation of new concepts such as engagement and partnerships (French and Blair-Stevens, 2007).

Further impetus for this development comes from criticisms of segmentation, targeting and the marketing mix. Segmentation is one of social marketing’s tools that is perhaps most valued by practitioners who recognise the benefits of customisation to target more ‘at risk’ groups downstream (Newton et al., 2013; Stead et al., 2007b) and stakeholder segments who may support the efforts to tackle social issues at the midstream and upstream levels (Gordon, 2013). However its application in combination with targeting via the 4Ps of marketing management has been criticised for cultivating a mindset which over-emphasises the role of organisations in determining what is of value and transmitting it via uni-directional messages (from social marketer to audience) to particular groups. This raises ethical and practical concerns about the opportunities for stakeholder engagement and the active involvement in developing locally and personally relevant solutions (Brenkert, 2002; Crawshaw, 2012; Domegan et al., 2013; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013). In response, there have been calls for more contemporary approaches to segmentation, moving from demographics towards ‘psychographic segmentation strategies’ (Zainuddin et al., 2011; Zainuddin, 2013) to improve the relevance of social marketing solutions. Others propose a more radical shift away from segment-based approaches towards those that favour ‘individuated interaction’ and relationships (Karpen et al., 2012), which is increasingly viable as technological innovations facilitate ever more data capture, the formation of networks and opportunities for interactivity (Lefebvre, 2007; Dibb, 2014).

The *marketing mix*, developed to facilitate dyadic exchanges involving tangible products, has presented various difficulties when applied to social change contexts (Bloom and Novelli, 1981; Gordon, 2012; Tapp and Spotswood, 2013). Peattie and Peattie (2003) and Wood (2008) highlight concerns about each of the 4 Ps, which are addressed in more detail in the benchmarks section of this article. The product concept has perhaps created greatest confusion given the intangibility of social marketing offerings and practitioners generally prefer alternative strategies (Beall et al., 2012; Gordon, 2012; Stead et al., 2007a). Indeed a recent global online survey conducted among social marketing professionals indicates that in practice, community based initiatives and engagement, peer groups and networks, digital influence and inter-organisational collaborations are the most successful tools in social marketing (Beall et al., 2012). Revisions to the social marketing mix have been proposed to add new concepts such as ‘circumstances’, ‘organisation and competition’ and ‘process’ to support action at the downstream and upstream level. (Gordon, 2012). Tapp and Spotswood (2013) propose an alternative framework to the marketing mix that accommodates strategies such as nudges, rewards and exchanges (motivation), service and support (capability) and relationships and community (opportunity). This is a more progressive model but its stand-point remains supplier-dominant and psychological approaches continue to be central to promoting behaviour change.

**Service thinking in social marketing**

These criticisms reflect the dissonance between the theoretical assumptions of the traditional model of social marketing and knowledge of the factors that contribute to social problems and processes for effecting change. Both academic and practitioner communities acknowledge that social marketing needs to update its theories and practical toolkit to tackle complex social issues (Lefebvre, 2012). There is support for the integration of new perspectives focusing on active and capable citizen, interactions and relationships, and networks (Desai, 2009; Gordon, 2012; Hastings, 2003; Peattie and Peattie, 2003; Wood, 2008). The ever greater prominence of service theory in social marketing scholarship evidences the acceptance that these principles and concepts are compatible with service thinking (Lefebvre, 2012; Lusch, 2013; Russell-Bennett et al., 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Early initiatives to introduce new marketing perspectives to social marketing focused on the intangibility of social marketing offerings and the role of interactions and relationships to facilitate change. Hastings (2003) built upon Morgan and Hunt’s (1994) model of partnerships, suggesting that social marketers need to cultivate relationships with customers, suppliers, employees and funders, while Peattie and Peattie (2003) advocated application of relationship marketing theory to promote the ongoing interactions that are needed for sustainable change.

Since then, there has been growing agreement that services marketing literature can be usefully applied to programmes that use ‘service’ as part of their ‘social product’ (e.g. health services such as mammography testing, breastfeeding support) and to facilitate transition from downstream to midstream action (Russell-Bennett et al., 2013). There is now growing interest in applying SDL to social marketing. Efforts to date have centred on applying the core concept of value (co-)creation, enabling scholars to revisit two critical issues in social marketing: the nature of value and the (active) role of stakeholders, particularly individuals (Desai, 2009; Lefebvre, 2012; Russell-Bennett et al., 2009; Zainuddin et al., 2011; Zainuddin et al., 2013; Zainuddin, 2013). Offering a more critical perspective, Domegan and colleagues (2013) highlight conceptual, ethical and practical barriers to adopting a value co-creation perspective in social marketing, particularly in connection with citizen participation, the expert-citizen dynamic, customer value and the experiential co-creation process.

As noted above, the application of relationship marketing supported efforts to move social marketing towards ‘upstream’ and ‘midstream’ action (Andreasen, 2002; Goldberg, 1995; Hastings, 2003). Scholars also drew on other disciplinary approaches from fields such as sociology and political science (Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2014; Glenane-Antoniadis et al., 2003; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Grier and Bryant, 2005; Lagarde et al., 2007; Spotswood and Tapp, 2013; Stead et al., 2007a; Wymer, 2011). As the debate on how to address individual and structural factors has matured, researchers have recognised the interconnectedness of actors within networks, that there are ‘networks of networks’ and that these are not static but dynamic and changing entities (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Brennan and Parker, 2014; French, 2011; Fry, 2014; Gordon, 2013; Russell-Bennett et al., 2013; Spotswood et al., 2012; Szmigin et al., 2011). Further, it is acknowledged that actors and networks are set within social systems and institutional and socio-cultural factors shape opportunities for change (Clark, 2013; Domegan et al., 2013). These recent contributions draw attention to the need to consider the multiple stakeholders and their perception of value in social change programmes (Dibb, 2014; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Lefebvre, 2012) and call for further theoretical and empirical work to understanding value creation as a network based process (Domegan et al., 2013) and beyond exchange thinking (Russell-Bennett et al., 2009). Hence recent literature proposes that systems thinking, which has led SDL researchers to conceptualise markets and marketing in terms of service ecosystems (Vargo and Lusch, 2011), can similarly help to develop understanding of actors and networks involved in complex social issues (Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2014; Dibb, 2014; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014). However, there has as yet been little attention to the implications of the network and systems view adopted by SDL for social marketing (Domegan et al., 2013; Lefebvre, 2012; Russell-Bennett et al., 2013).

This paper extends the above mentioned work by examining key SDL theoretical principles that support a network approach to social marketing theory and practice. Thus we answer the call for research on the implications of SDL as a ‘network of networks approach’ for social marketing to develop new frameworks that account for social marketing’s core features and to broaden its scope (Domegan et al., 2013).

Service-dominant logic: A systems perspective on marketing

Through the 1990 there were growing reservations about the validity of traditional marketing management frameworks, given widespread acknowledgement that enterprises operate within networks that are formed and sustained by opportunities to collaborate to create value and relationships (Day and Montgomery, 1999). In response, Vargo and Lusch (2004) proposed a service-oriented perspective for marketing, defining service as ‘the application of resources for the benefit of another’ (Vargo and Lusch, 2006, p. 283) and arguing that intangible resources, the co-creation of value and relationships should be central to an SDL ‘mindset’ (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; 2008). This early work drew on scholarship on service management (including work on services marketing, human resource management, operations and systems management), business-to-business and relationship marketing and the connectivity that emerged from developments in the on-line infrastructure (Gummesson, Lusch and Vargo 2010; Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006).

Since then, the most significant developments to SDL have come from incorporating systems thinking. SDL has evolved to recognise the complexity of marketing processes within the global networked world by reconsidering networks and systems as key concepts (Chandler and Vargo, 2011; Gummesson and Mele, 2010; Vargo, 2008; Vargo and Lusch, 2011; 2014). The foundations for this systemic view were provided by Maglio and Spohrer’s work on service systems and systemic innovation. Principally concerned with the structure and dynamic nature of service systems, Maglio and Spohrer (2008) draw on general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1976). They propose that a service system ‘involves as least two entities, one applying competence and another integrating the applied competences with other resources (value co-creation) and determining benefit’ (Maglio et al., 2009, p. 399). Various entities can be viewed as service system - individuals, families, peer groups, businesses, charities, government departments – it is the idea that they interact to co-create value that is central to the conceptualisation of service systems (Spohrer et al., 2008). Therefore, they define service systems as ‘a dynamic value co-creation configuration of resources, including people, organizations, shared information (language, laws, measures, methods), and technology, all connected internally and externally to other service systems by value propositions’ (Spohrer et al. 2008, p. 5). More recently, SDL scholarship has introduced the notion of service ecosystems, which account for networks at micro, meso and macro levels (Vargo and Lusch, 2011), with the aspiration of developing theory of markets as configurations of systems (Layton, 2011; Vargo, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2014). This work draws upon network theory (e.g., Granovetter, 1973) to understand connections within and across networks and the social processes at work to create dynamic structures. It also incorporates an institutional element, acknowledging that service systems are embedded within social systems or ‘institutional logics’ (Giddens, 1984), which shape actors resource integration and value co-creation when acting within the context of particular service systems (Edvardsson et al., 2011). The impact of social context is reflected in the definition of service eco-systems as ‘relatively self-contained, self-adjusting systems of resource-integrating actors connected by shared institutional logics and mutual value creation through service exchange’ (Vargo and Lusch, 2012, p. 7).

In the following sections we discuss the application of a service perspective to social marketing organised around the benchmarks to capture the revised conceptualisation in terms of social marketing’s core principles. The basic tenets of SDL have featured in a great many articles and, given space constraints, we do not rehearse them here. As we discuss each benchmarks however, we introduce relevant concepts as necessary. In addition we attend to criticisms that have been expressed about SDLs conceptual principles (Brown, 2007; Campbell, O’Driscoll and Saren, 2013; Grönroos, 2008; 2012; Wright and Russell, 2012), its applicability across contexts (Wright and Russell, 2012) and whether it can genuinely accommodate a customer centric perspective (Heinonen et al., 2010).

A service-dominant approach to social marketing?

The foregoing discussion argues that SDL can be usefully applied to complex social issues that require change. In brief, its multi-disciplinary concepts and frameworks have potential to identify the range of stakeholders in social issues, distinguish micro, meso and macro level actors, and understand value from various stakeholder perspectives. SDL also accommodates the intangibility of social offerings, the interactions and relational contexts and processes of value creation, affords perspectives on systems and service management to facilitate collaboration and relationships across networks both on and off-line, overcome barriers and address ethical issues such as imbalances of power. As noted, we do not see SDL literature is a panacea for social marketing theory and we are conscious not to repeat mistakes of the past by applying what is an essentially a commercial model to social marketing without sufficient adaptation. Considerable scholarship has asserted the distinctiveness of social marketing but also the need for it to be adapted (Peattie and Peattie, 2003), so we should seek to harness the potential strengths of the theoretical concepts and frames that SDL has introduced but remain vigilant of SDL’s biases and shortcomings when applied to social marketing.

*Benchmark 1: A network perspective on behaviour and structural change.*

The social marketing benchmarks specify the need for a clear behaviour change focus (Andreasen, 2002). The focus on individual behaviour and assumption of agency without addressing structural factors has been one of the most prominent criticisms within the literature (Wymer, 2011) and scholars advocate a service perspective to facilitate a shift to incorporate midstream and upstream action (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Dibb, 2014; Domegan et al., 2013; Russell-Bennett et al., 2013).

Ecological models of social change (McLeroy et al., 1988) distinguish the micro (individual knowledge, skills and motivation), meso (peer groups, family, community groups/organisations, service providers) and macro levels (wider community, government) at which change can be sought. Concepts of partnership and networks, which were inherent to relationship marketing, have been applied to examine the role of various actors and opportunities to develop relationships to motivate and facilitate change through collaboration (Hastings, 2003). SDL has the potential to further advance thinking about the role of various actors by its incorporation of systems thinking. Key distinctions of SDL from relationship marketing are that networks are not simply viewed as webs of multiple ties and relationships (Vargo and Lusch, 2010), rather it presents a more detailed depiction of structures by recognising that systems incorporate ‘networks of networks’ (Layton, 2011), espouses a dynamic view of systems (Spohrer et al., 2007) and acknowledges the social contextual factors – institutional logics (Giddens, 1984) – that shape norms and facilitate or constrain behaviour.

For social marketing, ‘moving upstream’ by applying SDL’s service ecosystem perspective allows exploitation of theories and frameworks that represent the structure of the complex social and economic systems relevant to social change. In addition, service systems concepts – value, co-creation, operand and operant resources, resource integration and relationships (which feature in the development of the other benchmarks) - afford an alternative lens for thinking about the nature of interactions, patterns of outcomes and evolution of (sub)systems. More specifically, an eco-systems perspective allows social marketing to map service systems and examine their nature including features such as the structures around individuals, the actors, the direct and indirect links between them (including links that create bridges to other networks) and patterns of interaction (i.e., number and frequency of contact with strong and weak ties) (Granovetter, 1973), which are crucial to understanding the relationships within networks and the capacity for and barriers to change within communities (Musso et al., 2006).

It focuses attention on how resources (both operand and operant) are distributed across systems, how different parties develop perceptions of their rights and responsibilities in relation to social change, and the nature of interactions including access to resources and resource integration practices. The resource concept and the process of resource integration can be linked with the concept of agency and capacity building (Whitelaw et al., 2010) shifting the discourse from individual choice to capability and structural barriers in social change contexts (Abel and Frohlich, 2012; Ruetten and Gelius, 2011). SDL views resources as embedded in contexts of larger networks (Chandler and Wieland, 2010). SDL highlights the distinction between operand (typically physical - raw materials, financial or physical products) and operant resources (typically human - skills and knowledge, organisational routines, cultures, competencies, and relational), and shifts attention to the latter with acknowledgement that knowledge and skills are fundamental to producing favourable experiences (Arnould et al., 2006; Baron and Harris, 2008; Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

On the basis of this understanding, social marketers can evaluate alternative ways to adapt the value propositions to different systems and levels within service eco-systems (e.g., individual, family, community, policymakers) and address requirements to realise value through collaboration across networks. This may, for instance, involve building cross functional teams, developing partnership forums, providing customised support, cultivating new practices – e.g., using new modes of communication, adopting alternative conversation roles and styles – to facilitate interaction or creating opportunities for knowledge sharing, learning and dialogue (Ballantyne et al., 2011). Conceptualising value creation as a network process provides the tools to better understand processes of collaborative governance, which are often required in social change context (Domegan et al., 2013).

SDL frameworks encourage social marketing to attend to ways in which systems evolve, for example, how relationships and roles change during social change programmes (e.g., health professionals who take on a health promotion role, community members who participate in disseminating programme messages), with a view to identifying mechanisms for innovation and change that can be applied to pursue an improved pattern of outcomes. Comparison across systems, for example, different community-based initiatives to reduce carbon footprint, potentially bring to light structural factors (e.g., hierarchical vs. flat governance structures, performance incentives vs. penalties, access to information) and agentic actions (e.g., ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ who challenge current practice or perhaps less heroic, ‘under the radar’ change agents who develop everyday practices to muddle through their interactions with multiple actors and types of institutions and the anomalies they encounter) that prove to be critical in advancing or inhibiting social change.

Challenging structural factors requires a long term approach and building capacity for supporting change over time. Awareness of the depth and duration of action will be necessary in many settings to change the mindset that social change can be achieved via short term initiatives that are often underfunded. Changing structures might mean challenging traditions (e.g. dietary norms that pose tremendous risk to public health), racial or gender stereotypes (e.g. promoting non-discrimination) and working against governmental agenda (e.g. subsidies for cultivating Tobacco). Research will be needed to explore the dynamics of networks and structures which influence behaviour and social change. Examining local networks through critical lens would provide additional insight into the interplay between operand and operant resources in a social change context. Such research is needed to understand how resources become activated in the process of change and identify structural constraints to action. Understanding how institutional logics mediate creation of meanings and how actors make sense of, resist or contribute to these processes is also important. Further research could also engage with consumer-citizen behaviour and their contribution to social marketing processes.

*Benchmark 2: value creation in context.*

The concept of exchange is core to social marketing (Kotler and Levy, 1969; Kotler and Lee, 2008) but the classical exchange view, which holds that value is embedded in the goods and subsequently transferred to customers (Echeverri and Skålén, 2011), is difficult to apply in social marketing (Andreasen, 2012). By contrast the service perspective adopts a phenomenological view (Gummerus, 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2010), which considers value to emanate from experiences of interactions (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) and the pursuit of life goals and social roles (Arnould et al., 2006). As such, it is subjective (Echeverri and Skålén, 2011; Grönroos, 2012) and determined by the personal judgement of the beneficiary (Holbrook, 2006). This does not mean, however, that it assumes a purely egoistic and self-interested character. SDL asserts that value creation always involves an actor (it cannot be bestowed on her by another) (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). It draws on Network Theory (Archpru Akaka et al., 2012; Ballantyne et al., 2011; Frow et al., 2014; Gummesson, 2008; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2012; Vargo and Lusch 2008) to conceptualise value creation as a dynamic process in which customers, suppliers and other stakeholders interact to share and integrate resources. This perspective moves the focus from transactions and exchange to understanding the whole process from production to consumption whilst adopting a macro view on actors and institutions forming value networks (Vargo and Lusch, 2012). This network perspective highlights that value is not created only through dyadic interactions but can unfold over time through interactions within multiple networks of resources (Chandler and Wieland, 2010).

The introduction of a service eco-system perspective extended the scope of value co-creation, highlighting that the actions and interactions of actors influence and are influenced by the systems in which they are situated and their social environments and structures. Vargo and Lusch (2011) developed the notion of value-in-context to reflect the embeddedness of resource integration practices (Archpru Akaka and Chandler 2011; Chandler and Vargo, 2011) and structuration processes (Giddens, 1984) that shape and reproduce service interactions and systems. Understanding what motivates or inhibits people to engage with social change and social marketing offerings has previously centred upon social-psychology models such as MAO ‘motivation-ability-opportunity’ (Tapp and Spotswood, 2013). In contrast, value-in-context brings attention to the combination of psychological and sociological processes at work in structuration (norms and expectations, agency), the reciprocal influence between actors’ practices and contextual constraints and the dynamic character of social structures. This theoretical perspective also facilitates a critical perspective on the role of various institutions and particular practices in normalising behaviour and developing cultures (Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2014). It provides new frameworks for analysing how different actors and their interactions within networks contribute to social issues and, by extension, alternative toolkits for intervention.

The subjective view of value is more compatible with actors’ experiences of social change for which intangible facets are predominant. This said, it requires careful consideration to allow for issues inherent to social change, for instance, that the change process can bring both negative as well as positive experiences and social marketers often needed to respond to negative elements (e.g., motivating and supporting individuals who commit to give up smoking). The network perspective on value is particularly fitting for social marketing contexts (e.g., staying smokefree; educating children about healthy eating) in which value emanates from many different actions and interaction with a range of other actors over time (e.g., an individual might read leaflets, use a simulation on a website, talk to friends, change purchase and consumption habits). Value propositions can be initiated by any of the actors of the network (Ballantyne et al, 2011). This non-hierarchical conceptualisation of interactions and relationships departs from traditional social marketing that attributes a central role to social marketers (Peattie and Peattie, 2003). The longer term view of SDL accommodates the circumstances of behaviour change, in which value deficits in the short term need to be accepted in anticipation of other value gains in the long term. Adopting a value creation perspective also allows for more actor reflexivity (Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2014; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014) on how value is defined from different perspectives (i.e. customer, social marketer, funder, service provider staff, community and society more broadly) and how value propositions are negotiated in a social change context.

This emphasis on subjective value raises the issue of how far one can go in following customers’ wants and desires as often the setting of social marketing priorities requires social value judgements (Raftopoulou and Hogg, 2010). Social marketers are facing the challenge to define value from a society perspective not necessarily a customer perspective. The SD view that value is subjective and created in context has implications for construing value propositions that are not ‘provider defined.’ This view on value creation reinforces the significance of collaborative approaches that facilitate real citizen participation to actively identify their problems and co-develop solutions. Frameworks that attend to a multiplicity of views are sorely needed to move away from the ‘paternalistic’ model of expert driven programmes. Awareness of networks and systems is useful to encourage a stakeholder orientation as social marketers seek constructive engagement with social problems and solutions through more democratised processes (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Ind and Coates, 2013; Lefebvre, 2012; Shultz, 2007). The process of reaching a shared view of social value aspires to meet criteria of transparency, accountability, and participation (Brenkert, 2002; Clark and Weale, 2012). As Campbell and colleagues (2013) note, value-in-context also assumes a notion of ‘affective’ value - that there is a shared view of value within a certain network. However, converging upon a share understanding of value that serves a broad social purpose will undoubtedly be difficult when parties have conflicting views (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Domegan et al., 2013) and requires commitment to skilfully moderated dialogue (Habermas, 1996). As with other principles of SDL, the concept ‘value-in-context’ needs further exploration in empirical contexts to better understand how the variety of views and value perceptions are navigated.

*Benchmark 3: Facilitate participation through customer orientation and engagement*

In the traditional social marketing model, customer orientation involves the use of market research to gain an understanding of the values, needs and everyday lives of target audiences to be able to design and pre-test interventions (Andreasen, 1995) and, indeed, this is recognised to be superior to relying only upon professionals’ views (Lefebvre and Flora, 1988). However, the managerialist tradition attributes an essentially passive role to customers and encourages social marketers to target individuals with carefully crafted messages via one-way communications (Brenkert, 2002; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013).

The distinction of a service-dominant view of customer orientation stems from the value co-creation concept, which conceives all actors to be resource integrators and to have an active role in creating value (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Following criticism that SDL perpetuated an organisation centric view (Heinonen et al., 2010) there have been calls to privilege the customer perspective in order to understand how value emerges for consumers and consider organisations to serve a facilitating roles (Payne et al., 2008; Peñaloza and Venkatesh, 2006; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). However, this reflects marketplace goals, whereas social marketing will need to draw upon scholarship on citizen engagement/participation (Cooper et al., 2006) and dialogue (Deetz and Simpson, 2004), from various disciplines to evaluate roles and relationships in different social change contexts and to develop normative approaches. Nonetheless, the principle of co-creation has deep implications for the role of customers (and other actors) in social marketing programmes as social change contexts require active individuals who need to take action around behaviour.

The value-in-context conceptualisation is centred on the duality principle of the interplay between agency and structure (Vargo and Lusch, 2012). Thus, SDL rejects determinism and points towards the ingenuity of actors engaged within their own networks. This view would provide a more balanced approach to social change processes that acknowledges the influence of structures as both constraints and enablers on human action (Vargo and Lusch, 2012). Applying this perspective to social change would mean moving from a ‘top-down’ to a ‘bottom-up’ approach, and seeking to engage customers as active participants in all phases of social change from defining the problem to formulating, enabling, enacting and evaluating change strategies. Interactions between organisation and customers, but also broader networks of actors, throughout the process can facilitate joint value creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) and afford opportunities to learn (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000) especially from those customers who are active, empowered and networked (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Acknowledging the importance of interaction in the field of social change can contribute to more context sensitive programmes, creating the space for public dialogue, reflexivity and debate which is critical for social change (Buchanan, Reddy and Hossain, 1994; Domegan et al., 2013; Gordon and Gurrieri, 2014; Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013).

Developing opportunities for interaction, across multiple channels, is a primary requirement for a service-dominant approach to customer orientation. New communication technologies provide various options to facilitate interactions, especially for harnessing or building networks around social issues, although conventional channels remain important. Interaction also requires a change of mind-set within organisations about the nature of customer relationships (Karpen et al., 2012), and new skills to deal with the emotional nature of interactions and the diversity of views that emerge and need to be managed in more dialogical communications (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006).

The active role of the citizens in co-creation and the facilitation processes in social change programmes are primary themes for future research. There is a need for research that incorporates critical (Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013), cultural (Spotswood and Tapp, 2013) and social practice perspectives (Hargreaves, 2011). Ethnographic research can also help to observe practices and interactions within systems and, in particular, the dynamics between organisations responsible for developing programmes and network actors. Such research would provide a better understanding of the ‘lived experience’ (Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Govan, 2013) of actors in social marketing programmes. The role of technologies and media to facilitate interaction amongst actors also demands attention, for instance, to investigate the role of technologies in engaging individuals who belong to communities of interest (Robinson and Robertson, 2010) in co-creating social marketing offerings (e.g., developing online support groups, supporting learning).

*Benchmark 4 –competition and collaboration within value networks*

Competition for social marketing programmes was initially viewed in commercial terms, reflecting the assumption of a sovereign consumer, and existing or preferred behaviours of target groups were conceived to be the ‘opponents’ of social change (Kotler and Lee, 2008). There have been various efforts to more clearly define the competition to social marketing, for instance, Andreasen (1995) categorises competition into different types that distinguish between individuals desires (e.g., for indulgent foods) and alternative solutions or service providers that serve similar goals of social and personal wellbeing (e.g., weight loss groups and gyms to increase health and fitness), which still reflects the idea of an agentic individual. Alternatively, Peattie and Peattie (2003) identified sources of conflict in social marketers’ ‘battle of ideas’. They place much greater emphasis on environmental factors pointing to commercial marketers, discouragement from an individual’s social circles, alongside apathy and physical and social barriers that inhibit change. Hastings et al. (2000) similarly cautions against an over-emphasis on individuals’ behaviour when it is shaped by their contexts.

Taking the systems perspective of SDL, competition for social change is conceived in terms of actors within networks. The above discussion of service ecosystem structures (Benchmark 1) and social systems/institutional logics that facilitate and inhibit behaviour (Benchmark 2), which were applied to ‘moving upstream’ and broadening the scope of social marketing to actors across different levels of the ecosystem, can be similarly applied to analyse and confront competition.

The imperatives of achieving change stress the need to challenge existing social systems and structures that support current behaviours at micro (e.g., developing an app for tracking fats and sugars in meals), meso (e.g., implementing healthy schools initiatives within communities) and macro levels (e.g., policy and legal interventions such as banning smoking in public places and limiting children exposure to advertising) as well as (re)shape networks and contexts to promote awareness and acceptance of alternative behaviours (e.g., food trial in a community café, special offers on fruit and vegetable from a local supermarket), be supportive during adoption (e.g., dietary advice and recipe sharing within communities) and provide reinforcement to sustain change.

Critical social marketing (Cherrier and Gurrieri, 2014; Gordon, Carrigan and Hastings, 2011) is already applying sociological perspectives to evaluate the impact that commercial marketing has in shaping the environment to favour certain behaviours. However, a considerable programme of research will be required to evaluate network structures and dynamics that work against and in favour of social change, to analyse the ideologies and norms of various actors that shape behaviours and examine opportunities for agentic interactions that might lead to behaviours conducive to social change and collaborative action.

While challenging competing forces is necessary to address internal and external barriers to change, adopting a collaborative stakeholder approach is essential for sustainable change. Relationships with network actors are fundamental to extending access to resources (e.g., other organisations), removing barriers to action (e.g., peer and family resistance) and building capacity for further support (e.g., integrated services). SDL’s emphasis on understanding *all* actors as resource integrators operating within dynamic value networks seems to support a participatory framework which challenges the top-down marketing management approach. The principle of reciprocal value propositions (Ballantyne et al., 2011) and multi-actor value creation assumes that social marketers should aim to initiate value proposition that resonate with stakeholders’ agendas. This orientation goes beyond a stakeholder approach considered vital to achieve sustainable change (Hastings, 2003) in emphasising the fluidity of roles and arguing for a model of value creation in which all actors have the opportunity to create value (Ballantyne et al., 2011). This orientation is particularly useful to social change programmes which imply dynamic and open processes and require active engagement of a plethora of actors to sustain action at different levels. Of course, this is not easy in practice, for instance, it is widely reported that collaboration with public and voluntary sector organisations is inhibited by resource constraints, conflicting priorities and various institutional factors (Bovaird, 2007; Barnes et al., 2007; Russell-Bennett et al., 2013). However, understanding the nature and structure of existing networks in communities and the priorities, resources, power imbalances and practices of different actors can help to create a viable foundation of collaboration. There is typically considerable diversity across potential collaborators, for instance, social change programmes often require collaboration with stakeholders from the commercial sector (e.g., food companies, the alcohol industry), which typically introduces conflicting views and priorities (Brennan and Binney, 2008; Dibb, 2014; Polonsky, Carlson and Fry, 2003) but differences of opinion can similarly arise from within a community or even family. Hence, dialogue, reflexivity and a degree of flexibility on the part of all actors is needed as they make and receive value propositions to and from others within systems, as they interact to realise value. To sustain change, communication needs to be maintained as value propositions and relationships change over time. Given the ethical and citizenship principles of social marketing, as well as legitimacy concerns, it is important to set out governance responsibilities and processes to ensure fair treatment of different stakeholders and transparency. SDL places learning and dialogue as central processes in developing knowledge, sensing and reacting to the collaborative networks (Lusch et al., 2010). Good communication is also needed to avoid the risk of value co-destruction (Echeverri and Skålén, 2011), which may arise if goals are not clearly expressed and collaborators adapt value offerings based on their own assumptions.

Value networks and stakeholder participation indicate a rich area for further research in social marketing. An underpinning theory of SDL, Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005) can provide useful insight for identifying value network actors and their interests in order to create offerings that match their agenda and support collaborative practices. As suggested elsewhere (Sweeney, 2007), a service view on value creation requires a reconfiguration of roles and relationships among network actors to create value. A key area for investigation should engage with role allocation in a social marketing network and the type of practices that facilitate actor engagement in social change programmes. Collaborative governance can be challenged by changes to the policy and actor priorities which can impact value networks. A fruitful area for research is examining the mechanisms needed to manage the changes to value networks.

*Benchmark 5:* *segmentation is driven by a relational customised approach*

Segmentation and targeting practices in social marketing are challenged by the need to address the increasing inequalities and involve citizens in the process of change. The SDL literature posits that segmentation and targeting are concepts grounded in a traditional view of mass marketing (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) where consumers are seen as recipients of value delivered by the firm (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). The SDL view that consumers are active agents and not simply ‘targets’ (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006; Karpen et al., 2012) underpins the shift towards one-to-one approaches and customised experiences informed by the type of value sought by actors (Zainuddin et al., 2011), their resource integration processes, their contexts (Karpen et al., 2012) and their engagement levels with the offering. This view resonates well with social change contexts which require citizen active engagement with the social marketing offering. To develop these individualised insights, interaction and learning from dialogue become important processes, while service design and new technologies are particularly important areas to explore in order to implement customisation and one-to-one approaches (Bolton and Saxena-Iyer, 2009; Lefebvre, 2012). In the context of social change it is important to recognise that while there is good potential to reach educated and young populations through new media and information technologies (Lefebvre, 2007; Robinson and Robertson, 2010), more vulnerable individuals may not have the necessary access to, ability or inclination to use these technologies and prefer instead more traditional or alternative channels for interaction.

The SDL systems view acknowledges that value creation is embedded in networks of relationships, including the network of the customer (Vargo, 2009). Social networks (family, friends) are an important resource in the process of value creation (Arnould et al., 2006; Vargo and Lusch, 2011). Having one actor within the network being a champion at promoting the programme may contribute the spread of the message and the ‘normalising of the behaviour’ (Scott, 2000) in dyadic (e.g. family) or larger networks. Yet, skills development and capacity building is required to enable individuals to be effective in the role of educating and persuading others.

Within SDL customers are considered to be networked, empowered and willing to participate (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). In a social change context, integrating resources to co-create may pose difficulties due to the diversity of population and the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts of the actors (Bovaird, 2007). One of the key issues in social marketing programmes is developing capacity for change, particularly of vulnerable and hard to reach populations. Often, social change programmes deal with consumers who face a severe lack of resources (financial, skills, knowledge and motivation) (Crawshaw, 2012; Scammon et al., 2011; Stead et al., 2007b). In deprived communities, it may be that individuals are isolated, lacking family support or that their existing network acts as a counterweight to the desired change (Vassilev et al., 2011). To respond to inequalities, there is a particular need to facilitate co-creation of customised offerings for disadvantaged communities (Stead et al., 2007b). Collaborating with community-based services becomes essential to facilitate individuated approaches to reach people. Examining the strength of ties between various actors in a community is important to understand the existing networks and their influence on behaviour. A network perspective (Granovetter, 1983; Scott, 2000) could provide the concept and methodology for deeper analysis of such factors. Future research is needed to better understand which strategies facilitate customer engagement in social marketing and how co-creation activities can be tailored to engage individuals at different levels of readiness for change. More research is also required to explore what social marketers can do to co-learn with other network actors and integrate that knowledge to co-develop customised solutions. Other research directions include exploring value based segmentation strategies (Zainuddin, 2013) which draw on a phenomenological perspective to provide critical insight into motivational factors and facilitate customised plans for action.

*Benchmark 6: A service driven framework.*

The marketing mix is a core tenet of traditional social marketing, drawn from the classic goods-dominant marketing framework (Kotler and Lee, 2008). Its linear process and ‘firm focus’ were challenged by the complex dynamics and the multitude of actors in social change programmes (Peattie and Peattie, 2003; Gordon, 2012; Tapp and Spotswood, 2013). Acknowledging the ways in which social marketing differs from commercial applications, scholars have suggested that a new vocabulary is needed in place of the traditional 4Ps. Peattie and Peattie (2003) propose that social propositions and the cost of involvement should replace product and price, accessibility is more relevant than distribution and social communication more appropriate than promotion. This terminology reflects the intangibility of social change and recognises that interactive processes enable value to be realised.

On these points it is resonant with principles of SDL, in which value propositions (that evolve through interactive communications and reflect resources that each party is willing and able to deploy) create the motivation for exchange and co-creation involves interactions (the opportunities for which must be accessible) and experiences from which they derive value (Vargo and Lusch, 2006). In addition, the service eco-systems perspective brings to the fore the scope for these interactions to take place across networks.

As noted earlier, social marketers have already developed a range of new tools to engage micro, meso and macro level actors in social propositions (Beall et al., 2012). The virtue of applying SDL is that it consolidates a set of processes that are consistent with its core principles as a framework to guide strategy development. Change management programmes that adopt an SDL perspective will espouse collaborative approaches to value creation, especially if they are to accommodate action at downstream, midstream and upstream levels (Gordon, 2012; Peattie and Peattie, 2003). A service oriented framework for social change is citizen-centred seeking to integrate different types of value, operating in a collaborative and dialogical mode, creating opportunities for actor encounters throughout the social change process, and facilitating resource integration and the creation of value. Social marketing realities are complex and every social change programme requires a specific mix of strategies. We propose a few principles grounded in SDL for guiding such strategies. It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe such strategies in detail.

Core elements of SDL theory that are central to interaction relate to resource integration and facilitation. SDL considers customers, firms and other network actors to be integrators of their operant (skills, knowledge, competences, values, and ideologies) and operand resources for value creation (Baron and Harris, 2008). Resources are assessed depending on the social context where they operate.

In commercial settings a key role for suppliers is to provide customers with the necessary resources to facilitate their value creation processes (Grönroos, 2008). Value propositions for social change, advanced to and from actors across networks, need to take into account the resources of various parties. While social marketers are not central to all interactions, they do need to consider the facilitation of access to and integration of relevant resources and how that can be achieved through their own effort and their collaborators. In a social change context, collaboration is vitally important to support actors in gaining the knowledge, skills and motivation required to be able to take action for change. A facilitator role requires learning capabilities to adapt to the changing value networks. It also involves a resource integrator role as a facilitator collates resources from the network to reshape the offering. For example integrating knowledge and experience from consumers and other collaborators may result in new offerings (e.g. a service initially designed for stopping smoking could be transformed in a holistic well-being service). The role of the organisation in creating the context for co-creation in social marketing and the resources to support knowledge, skills and motivation building (Grönroos, 2012) require further attention. The role of social marketing organisations in supporting learning processes of their customers and collaborators and facilitating access to available resources needs to be investigated in different empirical contexts.

Recent critiques of SDL (Campbell, O’Driscoll and Saren, 2013; Brown, 2007; Wright and Russell, 2012) challenge the hierarchal relationship between resource types and call for recognising the role of operand resources in the marketplace. Indeed, social change contexts in which individuals’ action is inhibited by lack of operand resources (e.g. finance, adequate housing) illustrate that it is the interplay between operant and operand resources rather than the superiority of one resource to another that needs to be better understood (Piacentini, Hibbert and Hogg, 2014). A research priority is to understand the process of resource integration and the type of resources required in creating value in a social marketing context.

The discussion of the service-dominant benchmarks highlights the core role of interaction in supporting a service orientation. Maintaining interaction with the customers and collaborators throughout the development and implementation of social change programmes is required in order to create offerings that respond to real needs. However, as was found with traditional social marketing (Grier and Bryant, 2005; Bloom and Novelli, 1981) organisational issues often stand in the way of applying new management processes. An interactional capability requires capacity and skills across various touch points with the organisation, integration of the offering within existing services to maintain support and built in feedback mechanisms. These resources are often in short supply in non-profit organisations. Further, continuous interaction can be problematic in social change contexts due to limited access to individuals and the short life span of social/behaviour change programmes.

Conclusions

Over the last decade social marketing has migrated away from traditional marketing management approaches towards service-oriented theory, while seeking to integrate concepts from other disciplines that address its socio-political role. This paper extends prior literature by interrogating the applicability of SDL to social marketing, with a particular emphasis on how the systems perspective can respond to the challenges of social change. Through this discussion we work towards a revised set of benchmarks for social marketing, as follows, to consolidate key principles of a service and network based approach: (1) a network perspective on behaviour and structural change, (2) value creation in context, (3) facilitating participation through customer orientation and engagement, (4) competition and collaboration within value networks (5) segmentation through a relational customised approach and (6) service driven framework.

The foregoing section extends the discussion of the applicability of SDL to social marketing contexts with the intention of stimulating further debate and research. The psychological and behavioural theories that have dominated social marketing need to be complemented by context-oriented theories to better understand and address the interplay between context and individual. The concepts, frameworks and theories upon which SDL has been built provide a basis for broadening social marketing research (as well as its practical focus), though we urge that this be pursued by incorporating rather than downplaying understanding of its non-commercial domain, by integrating relevant work from other disciplines and with a careful eye to the framing inherent to service logic (Campbell et al., 2013).

Notes

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1. Additional benchmarks such as ‘theory’ and ‘audience insight’ have been proposed to more comprehensively delineate the social marketing approach (French and Blair-Stevens, 2007). We focus on Andreasen’s benchmarks as they have been more widely used (Stead et al., 2007; Truong, 2014) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Upstream defines initiatives at the policy and legislation level whereas midstream defines initiatives at the community (meso) level. However, the literature often uses the term upstream to refer to initiatives that address contextual factors of behavior which may involve collaborations at the community (meso) level. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Giddens’ structuration theory draws on the principle that institutions are created by actions but at the same time, once created these institutions can constrain action (Giddens, 1984). As such, individual practices are enabled and constrained by institutional orders (Barley and Tolbert, 1997; Giddens, 1984). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Actor Network Theory - describes how human and non-human actors from different structures that share an interest form temporary and dynamic networks (Latour, 2005). These networks create assemblages of relationships specific to an action or an event and becomes ‘actants’ (Latour, 2005). Actor Network Theory provides a framework for explaining how actors with aligned interests in a certain problem support cooperative, inclusive and innovative solutions to a problem (Latour 2005). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)