

SOCIAL MARKETING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

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I INTRODUCTION

Difficulties in achieving long-term environmental behavior changes have led to the application of a great variety of approaches. One of the most recent ones is social marketing. The use of this approach has witnessed mixed results, but the noticeable increase in its application for environmental problem solving calls for an assessment of its development. This study presents an analysis of such development in both the theory and the practice.

II RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In what ways, to what extent and to what effect is social marketing currently perceived as a means to achieving pro-environmental behavior change in both theory and practice?

- (a)** How are scholars of pro-environmental behavior change incorporating social marketing in their research, analysis and theories?
- (b)** How are practitioners using social marketing in programs/campaigns to achieve proenvironmental behaviors?
- (c)** What are the relationships, connections and disconnections between the perceptions of academics and those of practitioners with respect to the use of social marketing as a tool for pro-environmental behavior change?

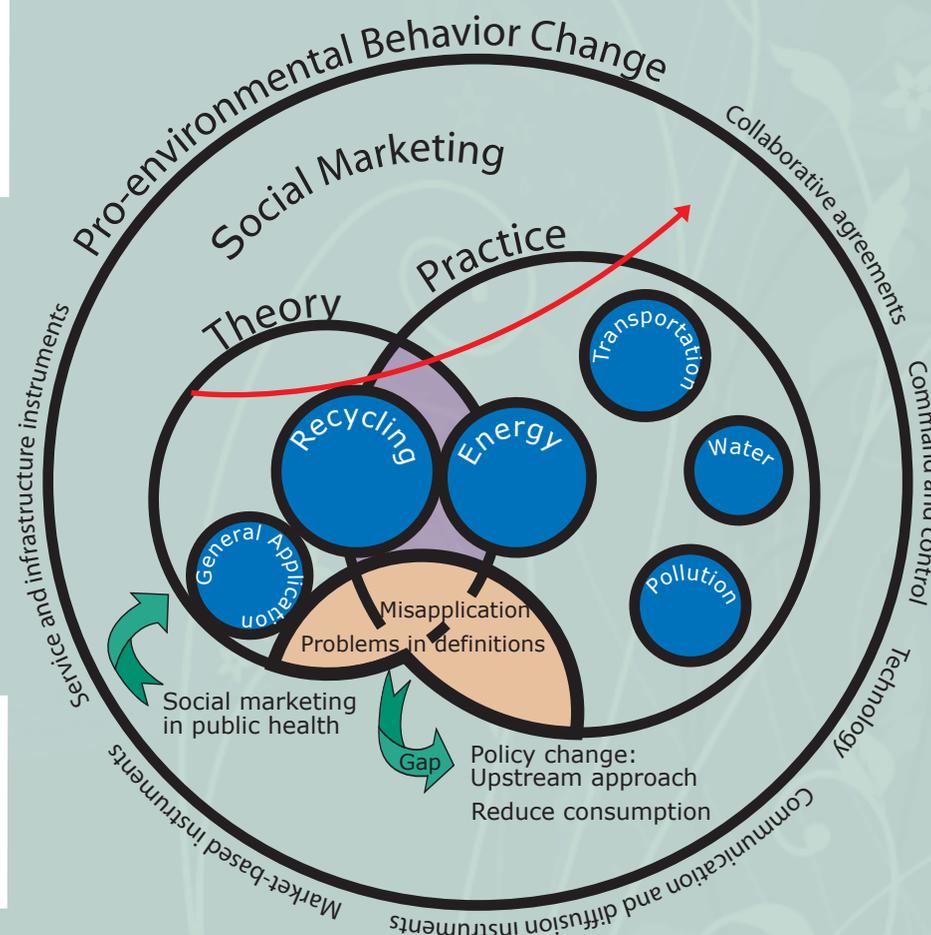
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III METHODS

Literature Analysis - 62 academic articles with an explicit focus on social marketing and its application to environmental issues were analyzed. Publication trends were identified and a content analysis was conducted. Coding categories include the conceptual frame of the article (theoretical, case study, review, test of variables), the area of focus (energy, transportation, recycling, etc), and type of journal (social science, science, marketing).

Case Studies Analysis - Descriptive information of 148 social marketing programs/campaigns was coded. Coding categories include the area of intervention, and the type of organization responsible of the program (Non-Profit, State Government, Local Government, etc.) Additionally, a sample of 15 cases was used to conduct an in-depth qualitative analysis based on Alan Andreasen's social marketing benchmarks (2002).



IV RESULTS

- (a)** There is an increasing trend in the application and study of social marketing.
- (b)** There are problems in definitions and misapplication of the tools.
- (c)** Academics and practitioners influence each others work.
- (d)** There is a heavy focus on issues addressing symptoms instead of root problems.
- (e)** Social marketing is mostly applied for energy conservation; academics focus mostly on recycling.
- (f)** The study found limited but promising evidence of long-term behavior change.

V CONCLUSIONS

- (a)** Practitioners are applying social marketing with limited theoretical background.
- (b)** Future research should concentrate on upstream application.
- (c)** There is limited publication of research and application in developing countries.
- (d)** There is limited and inadequate publication of social marketing case studies.
- (e)** Lessons from other fields should be considered further.
- (f)** Social marketing for the environment is still in the adolescence stage.

REFERENCES

- Andreasen, A. R. (2002). Marketing Social Marketing in the Social Change Marketplace. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 21(1), 3-13.