Segmentation and Targeting in Social Services

Addressing and Preventing the Issue of Creaming Effect: IPSE Matrix

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• Focus of our study is a dysfunctional form of segmentation in social services: creaming, that can lead to perpetuating and widening gaps in social inequalities.

• We propose a segmentation model (IPSE matrix) that could guide social services in designing socially just and more sustainable interventions.
Social services

• Work with the most **vulnerable, marginalized and socially excluded populations** in demanding life situations.

• **Function as intermediaries** between individual and the State in addressing social problems, like poverty, SGBV, child neglect, illicit drug abuse, mental distress, homelessness, children in conflict with law.

• **Strategic orientations for achieving behavioural change** are similar to the ones in social marketing: micro, mezzo and macro.
Challenges in social services

- Often focus on symptoms of the problems that get manifested on the level of individuals rather than to the core of the problems.

- Generalistic approach to segmentation „one size fits all“.

- Evidence shows that interventions frequently target those who at least need them and are the most easy to reach (Carter & Whitworth, 2015; Finn, 2011; Gallina, 2010; Koning & Heinrich, 2010; Van Berkel & Van der Aa, 2005; Abramovitz, 1999) (creaming).

- Reactive approach to social problems fails to interrogate the systematic structural and cultural aspects of health, social and economic impediments faced by communities (Schiavo, 2014) (critique!).
Searching for solutions... avoid creaming with segmentation

Paradox of social services:
- **client centred rhetoric & organisation centred mind-set** and practice;
- **Patronizing attitude** towards certain target groups/stakeholders.
- **Blaming culture** (e.g. people are ignorant).
Situational theory of publics

- Situational theory identifies which publics will “communicate actively, passively, or not at all […]” (Grunig, 2005).
- Considers different levels of awareness, attitudes, and behaviours of target groups. Involves four variables:
  a. Problem recognition
  b. Constraints recognition
  c. Level of involvement
  d. Referent criteria
Power/interest matrix

• Simple stakeholder mapping technique

• Answers two questions:
  • What are interests and underlying motivation of specific stakeholders (drivers)?
  • What are powers available to them, enabling realization of interest (enabling factors)?
Concept of social exclusion

Social exclusion is non-participation in key social activities such as consumption, production (employment), political engagement and social interactions (Hills, 2004; Alcock, 2008).
**KEEPING SATISFIED:**
- most demanding for participation (low level of interest, high level of power and influence, low level of social exclusion)
- we consider their needs and wants in social marketing interventions, we include them when appropriate

**MINIMAL EFFORT:**
- informing about progress, considering their needs and wants (low level of interest expressed)
- we strive to enhance their interest (low level of power and influence)

**KEY TARGET GROUPS:**
- actively engaged, strong interest, high level of power and influence and low level of social exclusion
- wish to engage (high interest) but there are number of disincentives present (low level of influence, high level of social exclusion)

**KEEPING INTEREST:**
- informing about progress, considering their needs and wants (low level of interest expressed)
- striving to move them towards "key target group" role (low level of power and influence, high level of social exclusion)
• Suggested matrix is **complementing existing segmentation methods** (e.g. demographics, socioographics, psychographic, life-styles, etc.) by raising awareness of all who develop interventions about the problem of creaming.

• Social services are addressing **complex and wicked social problems** (e.g. poverty, SGBV, child neglect, illicit drug abuse, mental distress, homelessness, children in conflict with law).

• The IPSE matrix could guide social services (and other **social marketing** practitioners) in **making strategic decisions** about how to develop and implement inclusive interventions simultaneously on micro, mezzo and macro level in order to avoid creaming effect.
Resources


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