

# Disrupting social marketing through a practice-oriented approach

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper aims to explore four disruptions that practice theory makes to traditional social marketing approaches to school physical activity (PA) intervention.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper draws on existing literature from sustainable consumption, sociology of health and illness and the authors' experiences working with primary schools in the UK to plan and execute social marketing approaches to PA, targeting interconnected social practices from which PA emerges or fails to emerge. The paper explores a practice-oriented theoretical framing, engaging with calls from interdisciplinary areas for PA interventions to shape the PA emerging from a school's everyday routines, rather than promote PA participation at an individual level.

**Findings** – The paper argues first that a practice perspective would focus on situation research rather than audience research, with practices rather than people as the focus. Second, the purpose of practice-oriented social marketing would be to achieve transitions in practices rather than behaviour change. Third, the

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planning and management approach of practice-oriented social marketing would account for unintended consequences and complex interconnections between practices. Finally, an evolved evaluation approach to practice-oriented social marketing would take a longer term approach to understand how cultural transitions are emerging.

**Originality/value** – This paper contributes to an important stream of critical social marketing scholarship that seeks to advance social marketing away from its individualist routes. It sets an agenda for further research that considers the ontological and practical possibilities for practice informed approach to social marketing.

**Keywords** Critical social marketing, Intervention, Practice theory, School physical activity, Physical activity, Practice theories

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

## Introduction

Social marketing remains an important approach for organising and implementing programmes of intervention seeking to shape the way people act, for the betterment of their own and societal health and well-being (Carins & Rundle-Thiele, 2014; Gordon, Zainuddin, & Magee, 2016). As a body of scholarship, different waves of social marketing contribution have emerged as the field evolved from the earliest implementation case studies. As case study knowledge grew, the definition, scope and domain of social marketing was explored and questioned (Andreasen, 1994, 2002, 2003; Grier & Bryant, 2005). These boundary-making papers have formed a solid basis for the calls for social marketing to innovate (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019) and to move beyond the rut of consumer-focussed (downstream) approaches (Lefebvre, 2012), for example, by moving upstream (Gordon, 2013), to take a systems approach (Flaherty, Domegan, Duane, Brychkov, & Anand, 2020), to focus on socio-cultural systems (Spotswood & Tapp, 2013; Spotswood, Wiltshire, Spear, Morey, & Harris, 2019) or to overcome barriers at different levels of influence (Fry, Previte, & Brennan, 2017; Wymer, 2011). These calls for innovation draw on a range of theories and have triggered the expansion of how social marketing is defined and understood, to work strategically at the interplay between public, private, community and policy change. For example, Duane and Domegan (2019) explore how the scope for social marketing partnerships has progressed, Kennedy and Parsons (2012) explore the effective use of macro social marketing and social engineering and Gurrieri, Gordon, Barraket, Joyce, and Green (2018) draw on activist models of social change to extend the influence of social marketing in social change management.

In parallel with work that extends, expands and evolves social marketing, the critical social marketing (CSM) paradigm has emerged (Gordon, 2011, 2018). CSM questions how the field contributes to society and social change management from ethical (Hastings, Stead, & Webb, 2004), critical (Gurrieri, Previte, & Brace-Govan, 2012) and political (Raftopoulou & Hogg, 2010) perspectives. CSM scholars also seek to respond to calls for the field to innovate (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019). It is in line with these dual critical and innovation goals that our paper seeks to reimagine the focus of social marketing away from the “consumers” of poor behaviours (Lefebvre, 2012) towards the socio-cultural architectures supporting the enactment of socially problematic behaviours. This paper considers the role of practice theory in shaping social marketing as a tool for “policy interventions into the conduct of everyday life” (Cass & Faulconbridge, 2016, p. 1) by exploring how a practice-orientation would disrupt a social marketing approach to school-based physical activity (PA) intervention. Future research is needed to consider the particular practices and practice elements that constrain or enable PA in country, regional and institution-specific contexts (Spotswood et al., 2019).

### Reimagining school-based physical activity intervention

Non-communicable disease remains a prominent cause of worldwide death, and country differences are monitored closely, particularly in relation to childhood obesity (WHO – World Health Organization, 2018). Schools have been identified as a key setting for promoting PA, given that children in many countries spend so much of their time at school (Wilk et al., 2018). PA remains a focus for social change given the prevalence of obesity and child physical inactivity. Social marketing has tended to deliver discrete, standardised, multi-component, short-term PA interventions in schools, with key measurable outcomes (Miller, Valbuena, Zerger, & Miltenberger, 2018). Components might include education elements in lessons (Blitstein et al., 2016), messages that “draw attention” to the campaign (Alaimo et al., 2015) and other targeted communications, for example, using celebrity endorsement (Vaughn, Bartlett, Luecking, Hennink-Kaminski, & Ward, 2019). Social marketing “products” might include teacher guides, pledge packs, reward schemes, parent information kits and sports equipment (Alaimo et al., 2015; Hennink-Kaminski, Ihekweazu, & Vaughn, 2018; Huhman et al., 2010; McManus et al., 2008), all designed to appeal to a target audience of children or teachers. The conceptual focus tends to be on fostering individual-level behaviour change (Lefebvre, 2011), which risks falling short of the systemic shift required when PA and education systems provide vital architectures that condition everyday school life (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). Furthermore, heavily marketed and targeted PA interventions have been criticised for failing to reach their potential or for stigmatising and responsabilising particular groups (Burrows & Wright, 2007; Carmona, Tornero-Quinones, & Sierra-Robles, 2015; Hennink-Kaminski et al., 2018).

Literature from outside social marketing calls for PA intervention approaches that focus on making PA more ingrained, normative and an unreflexive part of everyday life rather than the result of participation in discrete programmes or campaigns (Reis et al., 2016). Reis et al. (2016, p. 10) suggest policies should support “active living”, and particularly note that “ministries of education should adopt whole-of-school approaches for promoting PA amongst children and adolescents”. Collaborative “whole of school” approaches are designed to create supportive school environments for healthy behaviour (World Health Organisation, 1986). However, they have been widely criticised as failing to be systematically and sustainably operationalised (Adamowitsch, Gugglberger, & Dür, 2017) and as suffering from translational failings between policy and practice, resulting in a drift back to individualistic measures in schools (Lindegaard, Nordin, Jourdan, & Simovska, 2019).

Concurrent with the “active living” agenda, school PA “culture” has been identified as a goal for PA intervention (Rickwood, 2015). A strong school PA culture plays a powerful role in “forming normative behaviours and beliefs shared by the entire school community that conveys expectations, social values and messages of appropriateness in favour of school PA promotion” (Bowles, Chroinin, & Murtagh, 2019, p. 85). For example, studies have noted that PA feels prioritised when there is appropriate and appealing equipment available (Fitzgerald, Bunde-Birouste, & Webster, 2009; Rickwood, 2015), and when teachers encourage its usage this will influence a student’s decision to “use the equipment in a physically productive way” (Rickwood, 2013, p. 17). PA can also feel de-prioritised within the school, for example, teachers who do not value exercise breaks during lessons will be unsupportive of them and fail to implement them (Howie, Newman-Norlund, & Pate, 2014). The notion of PA “culture” suggests there are conventions about the regular and normative enactment of physically active pursuits that are conditioned by materials, spaces, understandings and everyday activities that happen in schools. Social marketing has rarely explored its role in shaping cultural conventions, tending to focus on psychological behavioural attributes that underpin individual decisions (Lefebvre, 2012; Moloney & Strengers, 2014). This paper contends that social marketing might

better support a positive school “PA culture” if it decentres individuals and brings school practices centre stage. Practice theory has the potential to conceptualise the way practices configure deeply entrenched everyday patterns of activity, including those that require or work against PA (Blue, Shove, Carmona, & Kelly, 2016; Maller, 2015).

Although theories of practice are diverse, they share an emphasis on “processes such as habituation, routine, practical consciousness, tacit knowledge, tradition and so forth” (Warde, 2005, p. 140). Practices might include everyday recognisable activities, such as showering, eating meals, going to work or watching television, that are quietly understood and have largely unspoken rules about how, when and with what and whom they are enacted. Thus, everyday life can have considerable inertia because people reproduce habituated, routine patterns of activity (Warde, 2005), which may or may not have health implications (Cohn, 2014).

Practices comprise a number of elements that come together in their performance; material objects, practical know-how and socially sanctioned objectives. These elements configure how practices are performed and make them identifiable (Southerton, 2013). Analysis of practice elements can help identify the reasons a problematic practice entity, such as sedentary play, has taken hold and help identify how the links between elements might be broken or changed. Thus, argues Paddock (2017), difficulties in achieving behaviour change “need not be theorised as a lack of individual will, but the result of a combination of social, cultural and material forces” (Paddock, 2017, p. 134).

Practices are understood as arrangements of elements, and configurations of practices that interconnect hang together as entities that organise everyday life. However, practices only become meaningful through repeat and loyal performance. Understanding how practices change or can be changed then relies on the understanding that arrangements of practices and their elements can be the source of change, but so too can the way practices are reproduced through performance. Evans, McMeekin, and Southerton (2012, p. 117) explain that change happens when there is “a shift in the ordering of practices as entities”, which can lead to “changes in the ways that practices are performed”. However, practices also shift each time they are enacted because they respond to changing local circumstances (Maller, 2015). The existence of adaptations and innovation within practices makes it possible to consider the role of social marketing in supporting social change.

The capacity for interventions to change or guide, transitions in practices has been hotly debated (Hargreaves, 2011). Some argue that “societal change cannot be engineered” (Southerton & Welch, 2016), others that “the chances of effective intervention are probably higher if such interventions are grounded in some general understandings of how practices change, but there are absolutely no guarantees of success” (Shove, 2015, p. 42). More optimistically, it has been argued that interventions are most likely to be effective if they focus on social practices (Maller, 2015) and how they interconnect (Blue et al., 2016) and when leverage points within practice configurations are clearly identified (Herington, Lant, Smart, Greig, & van de Fliert, 2017). However, practice theories have had relatively little to say about (Strengers & Maller, 2015) and find it hard to explain (Shove, 2015), how practice theory informed social change might work. Social marketing has the potential to help realise the conceptual promise.

This paper identifies four ways that practice theory can disrupt and innovate social marketing, and provide conceptual tools for practice theory informed social marketing in the context of school PA. Theoretical insights are drawn from the authors’ collective reflections on experiences working with two UK primary schools (Spotswood et al., 2019) where authors supported the schools to understand the practices from which PA emerged and where PA was prevented. One school was a small school of seven classes (approx. 30

children per class) in a small, fairly affluent rural town in the north of England with predominantly white British children and parents. The second school was a larger 14-class primary in a deprived area of a city in Southern England with more mixed ethnicities but also predominantly white British. They helped the schools understand the role of social marketing to support the collective conventions around PA that characterised their “school PA culture”; how it was felt to be prioritised, how it came to matter and how it was felt to connect or conflict with other school practices.

### **Practice theory informed disruptions and innovations for social marketing**

#### *Disruption 1: from audience to situation research*

The accepted view is that social marketing uses “audience research” (Andreasen, 2002) to understand the way the problem behaviour is enacted, and to understand the competitive context of the desired behaviour. The theoretical underpinning of this audience research forms a crucial foundation for the way interventions are then devised. For example, problematizing the behaviour as a matter of attitudes and values will lead to an individualist intervention with a behavioural lens (Dibb, 2014). This will struggle to account for socio-cultural factors that condition everyday life (Brace-Govan, 2010). Upstream social marketing (Gordon, 2013), social-ecological approaches and systems thinking (Brennan, Previte, & Fry, 2016) have advanced the way social marketers theorise problem behaviours, and have facilitated a focus on various environmental, political and institutional contexts. However, a practice theory lens offers a unique opportunity to understand how the collective happenings of everyday life hang together and avoids focussing either on wider determinants or on behavioural choices but rather on “the practitioner in relation to the site in which the practice happens” (Kemmis, 2019, p. 21). Introducing a practice lens suggests the need for situation research, rather than audience research, which opens up rather than locks down our view of how to intervene.

Practice-informed situation research in social marketing research would focus on how patterns of practice are locked in place, fostered and might be disrupted. Relevant practices are interrogated for the characteristics that shape how they come to recruit and matter to practitioners; the materials, competences and associated images that constitute them (Shove, Pantzar, & Watson, 2012). Furthermore, research would interrogate how practices intersect with other entangled practices. The configuration of practices and the entangled practice “nexus” shapes what becomes normal for people over time (Paddock, 2017). Health, then, is reconceptualised not as a matter of individual behaviour or deficit, but as the outcome of the shared and interconnected practices that shape everyday life (Cohn, 2014).

Following this, there are three key implications of practice-oriented research to underpin school PA social marketing. Firstly, a practice ontology recognises that PA can be the central purpose of a practice, such as an exercise class or it can be a demand of a practice that has a different central purpose, such as walking to school. Using insight into the multiple ways that PA might emerge from school practices can guide project goals focussed on increasing the PA demands of myriad practices, rather than increasing PA in any discrete instance. As such, the management of PA interventions requires the commitment of multiple stakeholders, beyond PE teachers, which informs the way interventions are managed.

Secondly, a practice approach would help unravel how the meanings associated with PA are entangled with materials and competences that come together in the moment of practice enactment. For example, poor or unavailable equipment for lunchtime games can mean the active games come not to matter. Similarly, an inaccessible or broken bike rack means cycling to school comes not to be expected. Images and meanings associated with different practices are held collectively, so reframing associations requires breaking the links with

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materials or other elements in the practice and encouraging repetition of a reframed activity until shared understandings are reconfigured.

Thirdly, practice-informed research will illuminate that a varied and complex mesh of interconnected practices shapes the way PA is configured across the school (Macrorie, Foulds, & Hargraves, 2015). These co-influence and are recursively entangled in their ongoing evolution, including those at some distance. Practices enacted or resisted in a school, such as whether children are permitted to use all areas of a playing field or how movement is managed in classrooms, will be conditioned by a practice architecture that includes practices and practitioners that extend beyond the school's sphere of influence (Kemmis, 2019; Schatzki, 2015). Upstream social marketing has already illuminated the importance of recognising policy as a target of intervention, but tends to focus on policymakers as individualised targets. A practice approach advances social marketing by recognising that policymaking is part of a wide system of interlocking practices that can make everyday routines very hard to shift (Meier, Warde, & Holmes, 2017). Practices that may be relevant when considering school PA could include somewhat distanced practices such as workplace practices, patterns of mobility and transport policies that shape how parents transport children to school (Spurling & McMeekin, 2015), as well as whether schools use outdoor space as playing fields or car parks and how family practices are able to provide food and clothing that are necessary for children to engage in physically active games at school. When school PA is seen through a practice lens, multiple intersecting practices from within and beyond the school are also likely to need intervention (Maller, 2015; Watson, 2012), and as such a wide range of stakeholders will be required to work collaboratively to achieve sustained change.

#### *Disruption 2: from behaviour change to practices as the sites of intervention*

A practice view takes the practices and bundles of practices that shape “how human lives hang together” (Schatzki, 2015, p. 19) as the sites of intervention. While traditional social marketing might focus on what people “do”, meaning that change is directed at changing conscious decisions about what people do, i.e. changing what is “done” (Spurling & McMeekin, 2015), practice-oriented intervention needs to consider how to intervene in the way “practices emerge, persist, shift and disappear” and in the way “connections between elements [...] are made, sustained or broken” (Shove et al., 2012, p. 14). Thus, practice-oriented intervention focusses on recrafting practices by changing elements, discouraging problematic practices by identifying substitutable practices and changing the balance of competition between them and changing how practices interlock with one another to reconfigure how they fit into everyday life (Spurling, McMeekin, Shove, Southerton, & Welch, 2013; Vihalem, Keller, & Kiisel, 2015). Thus, social marketing can shape school PA practices in a number of ways. To “recraft” practices, meanings associated with different activities, such as after school sports or walking to school, can be targeted using promotions to shape positive associations. Focussing on how materials, know-how and meanings (the elements of all practices) are circulated, interventions could involve the provision of and training with new equipment and opening up playgrounds for guided outdoor play. Notably, and in line with social marketing principles, multidimensional interventions, targeting all elements of practices, will be most effective and most likely to result in “a change in cultural meanings” (Spurling & McMeekin, 2015, p. 86). To “substitute” practices, undesired practices such as sedentary breaktimes can be discouraged by increasing the appeal of active play, for example, by introducing painted playground games or permanent goal posts or by training playground supervisors in facilitating active play. If active practices compete successfully for practitioner time, the more sedentary ones will diminish as the promoted substitutes expand (Meier et al., 2017). Finally, to reconfigure the connections between

practices, school start times might be shifted to interconnect more favourably with active transport by working parents.

Throughout practice-oriented social marketing, interventions can draw on established social marketing approaches such as branding, communication and fostering social interaction on and offline, creating value for potential practice recruits and rewarding practice loyalty. Particularly, social marketing will be able to offer ways to support the recruitment of practitioners to perform newly configured practices, demonstrating and reinforcing the value of their performance and encouraging and motivating repetition and loyalty, as well as encouraging their recruitment of others. Providing opportunities for interaction amongst practitioners to discuss practices is a key way of facilitating this inter-practitioner recruitment (Vihalem et al., 2015). Whatever social marketing tools and approaches are deployed, initial practice-oriented research will help highlight where the opportunities for intervention lie. Reshaping existing practice bundles is likely to be more successful than replacing them (Schatziki, 2015), and in so doing it is important to look for malleability and instability (Herington et al., 2017), for example, where practices are not reproduced faithfully but rather already involve a diversity of performance and niches of adaptation or resistance. Here, some components or bundles may be more or less malleable, and thus, vulnerable to intervention (Schatziki, 2015).

*Disruption 3: from total process planning to transition management*

Social marketing's "simple but robust" linear framework to support effective intervention planning (Ong & Blaire-Stevens, 2010) is helpful because it provides clear direction for what to do and how to do it (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019). However, a linear process cannot adequately account for the requirements of managing change amongst interconnected practices. Early stages of practice-oriented social marketing planning will be recognisable, involving:

[Gaining a] good understanding of the practices requiring change and their connections; identifying the range of interventions and approaches to help shift practice elements; recruiting all agencies and actors involved in shaping or influencing those elements; and then implementing a co-ordinated programme of change to disrupt, relocate, innovate, redirect or otherwise reorient bundles, complexes or even constellations of practice [...] however defined or imagined (Strengers & Maller, 2015, p. 74).

However, the "co-ordinated programme of change" will need to adapt to emergent, unexpected and unpredictable occurrences (Evans et al., 2012). Irrespective of intervention programmes, practices and practice bundles are constantly and dynamically evolving through their repeated performance, and it is in the context of this constant dynamic change that the shaping or steering activities of social marketing are enacted. In the context of an intervention, recrafted elements or substituted practices that are incorporated into the reproduction of practices might be knitted together in ways that cannot be anticipated (Evans et al., 2012). Thus, social marketing planning underpinned by practice thinking will require interventions to be viewed as "continuous and reflexive, historical and cumulative" (Strengers & Maller, 2015, p. 79). Social marketing planning will move beyond a linear process of cause and effect towards a sense that interventions happen within, and in the context of, the ongoing dynamics of practices (Shove et al., 2012).

Furthermore, it is important to recognise that practices of school leadership and indeed intervention management and governance are entangled with the practices where change is sought, not separate or "acting on" them (Gordon & Gurrieri, 2014; Schatziki, 2015). Strengers and Maller (2015) warn against researchers and programme deliverers thinking

they have agency outside the field of practice. For example, the practice arrangements of school leadership may leave little room to manoeuvre for those who wish to introduce changes (Hargreaves, 2011), and stakeholder motivation can support or hinder transformational change processes (Herington et al., 2017). Social marketing processes, such as planning meetings, involve local level interactions and relationships between stakeholders that will impact the way practices can be reframed or repositioned through practice theory (Herington et al., 2017). School PA might be viewed tacitly as the remit of the PE teaching team, and it can be difficult to permeate school boundaries and expand the conceptualisation of PA to incorporate practices across and beyond the school.

A practice approach recognises that no single agency can create change and that governance of practices is distributed amongst “innumerable would-be governors” (Schatziki, 2015, p. 26). However, the effectiveness of efforts to mobilise these governors will be enhanced by building coalitions and communities of leadership (Herington et al., 2017; Vihalem et al., 2015) to increase the likelihood and speed of the emergence of more physically active bundles of school practices. As such, school PA social marketing might include recruiting project champions from the start, working within existing leadership structures and working with a range of stakeholders to unravel the value of their own practices for the school’s PA culture. The way the intervention is valued cannot be pre-set by the social marketing programme but is co-produced and evolves through the actions and interactions that occur as programme practices interact with others in the school (Fry et al., 2017).

#### *Disruption 4: from measuring binary outcomes to ongoing evaluation and reflection*

Finally, a practice-orientation disrupts the way that social marketing programme evaluation is conceptualised. Practices are forever linked and networked, forming “an immense maze of interconnected practices and arrangements” (Schatziki, 2015, p. 16) that have emergent properties and a life of their own. Desired practices might not take off, and practices will change in unpredictable ways because of the “shifting relative location of a practice within broader systems of practice” (Watson, 2012, p. 491). Furthermore, when new or recrafted practices are encouraged through a social marketing programme, the way these are adopted by practitioners is:

[ . . . ] necessarily messy and complex, resulting in varied performances across time and space and an uneven trajectory or pathway of the practice entity that could converge or diverge in various helpful or unhelpful directions (Maller, 2015, p. 62).

Also, a practice-informed social marketing programme is likely to involve a wide range of practices in complex arrangements of practice bundles (Schatziki, 2015) often beyond the school boundaries, and draw on a wide range of associated stakeholders. This means school practice transition is implicated by practices over which the social marketing programme has no control. Schatziki (2015) emphasises that whatever success is enjoyed in shaping large bundles of practices will be unpredictable, and there are clear implications for such unpredictability and largeness in the way programmes are evaluated. Researchers and practitioners must therefore, evaluate effectiveness in different ways to capture the dynamic nature of practice transition (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2019).

For school PA social marketing, a practice-oriented evaluation would take a longer term view of school project success. To capture the process of cultural transition, longitudinal measures are needed beyond academic years or funding cycles (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). Evaluation will also need to incorporate a nuanced understanding of how PA is tacitly understood, anticipated and valued, as well as how it is embedded in the routines of



everyday school life. The emergent increases and changes in PA across a nexus of interrelated practices need to be incorporated in evaluation rather than outcome measures after a discrete period of time. Relatedly, evaluation would look for “subtle shifts in the elements of practice” (Hargreaves, 2011, p. 95). For example, the way that interactions within and around physically active practices might be significant and suggest changes in the way that practices are approached, understood and experienced. For school PA projects, evaluation would include both ongoing, formative evaluation to build programme integrity, and summative indicators, which measure effectiveness for different actors in different ways (Fry et al., 2017). Furthermore, what becomes accepted as a benchmark “success metric” needs to be negotiated and collectively agreed.

### Conclusion

This paper has illustrated that practice theory provides a framework for reimagining social marketing with disruptive and innovative implications for school PA intervention. Practice theory provides a way of understanding the way habituated collective conventions around PA in schools hang together and are reconstituted through repeat performances. This conceptual starting point illuminates the way social marketing might be reimagined to work towards transitioning school practices to achieve collective school cultural conventions that support active everyday living. This novel approach offers four disruptions to social marketing that provide opportunities for critical thinking about the purpose and possibilities of social marketing.

Firstly, the paper illuminates that “situation research” rather than “audience research” allows the patterns of activity that school actors (children and teachers) enact to be centre stage. Observable behaviours are the tip of the iceberg (Spurling et al., 2013), and research that illuminates the socio-cultural, spatial, temporal and material entanglements that shape and condition observable behaviours will create different pathways for analysis and different pathways for intervention, governance and change (Maller, 2015). From a CSM perspective, a welcome implication of this refocussing is that social marketing will avoid myopic responsabilising of individual actors and allow social marketing to engage with the way the material, spatial and socio-cultural contexts conditions everyday school life (Brace-Govan, 2010). From this perspective, social marketing might play a larger role in efforts to return to a whole school approach to establishing PA in the lives of children at school (Daly-Smith et al., 2020), where currently its value is overlooked.

Secondly, the paper illuminates that a focus on practices as the sites of intervention will advance our understanding of where footholds for practice change might be available (Herington et al., 2017). Practice-focussed intervention might require recrafting practices, substitution or breaking connections between practices and a range of social marketing and other techniques will likely be required to trigger and shape these transitions. Understanding the kind of relationships that exist amongst practices is of particular relevance for understanding institutional change (Schatzki, 2016). This reimagines social marketing’s understanding of downstream, midstream and upstream sections of society; that they are entangled as architectures that condition the enactment of daily life, rather than inhabiting separate systems or providing uni-directional flows of influence on citizens.

Our third disruption repositions social marketing management away from delivering discrete school PA behaviour change projects, reimagining it as facilitating and supporting a collaborative programme of learning that is ready to repeatedly adapt to manage ongoing dynamic transition. Social marketing has long emphasised the significance of building relationships with multiple stakeholders (Hastings, 2003) and is well-placed to facilitate the iterative methods required to manage practice transitions. However, given the dynamic characteristics of a practice transition approach, involving multiple stakeholders and with the

need for constant reflection, the predictability of intervention outcomes may always be out of reach (Shove & Walker, 2010). Thus, the paper highlights the need for an evolved approach to evaluation, involving a longer-term focus and recognising subtle shifts in understandings and interactions that might indicate practice transition (Hargreaves, 2011). From a CSM perspective, a key implication of this evolved approach is that the outcome measures of a social marketing programme of transition will require collaborative agreement rather than being based on top-down assumptions of objective value. For example, enjoyment of PA may be a more important goal than participation.

Despite the conceptual promise offered here, the limitations of a practice informed intervention approach are acknowledged. The complex and multiple sites of intervention that a practice framing might illuminate may be detrimental to programme design, and the difficulties of working with multiple stakeholders within and beyond the school are acknowledged (Schatzki, 2015). As Macrorie et al. (2015) remind us, the scale of change required may lie beyond that which is politically feasible. On the other hand, it may not be possible to gather the full insight necessary into the complex interconnections between practices that condition school PA, and it may not be possible to identify ways of using or mobilising insights about constellations of practice within an intervention approach (Shove, 2015). Furthermore, the pervasiveness and persistence of situating individuals at the heart of programme design may be difficult to overcome (Hargreaves, 2011; Strengers et al., 2015). Strengers et al. (2015) note that there can be blockages in the practices of institutional governance that make it impossible to reconfigure what it means to do social change, and they recognise that moving to a practice-informed approach will not always “work”. Nonetheless, the authors hope this paper will trigger a future research agenda exploring how social marketing can bring techniques and process to the conceptual promise offered by practice theory for the benefit of school PA and beyond.

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