

## **Social Change, Social Marketing and Social Representations**

MTG 9

### **Introduction**

Kotler and Zaltman introduced the term social marketing in 1971. Since then much has been written about the subject and the concept has now become an established tool used by agents of change. One of the first definitions of social marketing was that it is the design and implementation of a program "to influence the acceptability of social ideas" (Kotler & Zaltman, 1973, p. 56). The concept has been put into practice and used extensively to change public behaviour and promote social change. Literature reports the effective use of social marketing to promote among many other issues, environmental awareness (e.g. Maibach, 1993), sustainable behavior (e.g. McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999), health improvement (e.g. Gordon, McDermott, Stead, & Angus, 2006), reduction in alcohol consumption (e.g. Rothschild, 2006), condom use and reproductive health (e.g. Van Rossem & Meekers, 2007) and breastfeeding (e.g. Lomas, 2009). Although social marketing borrows concepts from advertising, the task which has to be achieved by social marketers is more difficult. Change agents are targeting society with the aim of bringing about a widespread change in behavior. Such changes, like using seat belts, separating rubbish and reducing the amount of alcohol and food consumed is often not a change that a person would necessarily enjoy. As opposed to advertising, social marketers must not only know one particular group very well but must know society very well. In this context the theory of social representations, as will be argued in this chapter, can provide the change agents with a theoretical framework which can help them understand the complex interplay of beliefs and values within a society and how these influence their behaviour.

In spite of the successes which the social marketing model has achieved, it has some limitations which, if addressed could increase its effectiveness. Most of the literature on social marketing considers the change of public opinion and the

change of attitudes as governed by the same processes. In this chapter I will argue that this assumption may be incorrect and that the kind of social change which social marketing is expected to bring about cannot be equated with a sum of individual attitude changes. Social change does not only involve a change in the privately held attitudes of individuals but it also involves a change in societal beliefs and public opinion (Gaskell and Frazer, 1990). Himmelweit (1990) reiterates that public opinion differs from privately held opinion in that “attitudes derive from society and are reworked by individuals as part and parcel of their own experiences and as a function of their correspondence with existing social representations” (p 41). In the same vein, Farr (1990, 1993) explains, how, for example, Herzlich’s study on health and illness sheds light on why campaigns designed to increase the fluoride levels in local water supplies had failed when this issue was put to the vote at a community level. On one hand, scientists claimed that an excess of fluoride was bad for health. On the other hand, the campaigners were proposing an increase in the fluoride level of water as a measure to reduce the incidence of dental caries. The public could not understand why one should add a “bad” chemical to water which was considered “pure” and “natural” and therefore they voted against the initiative. Farr (1993) concludes that health professionals ought to have taken into account people’s conceptions of health and illness before devising campaigns.

It is therefore essential that before applying social marketing principles, change agents should study and understand how the public makes sense of the proposed change on two levels: (i) on an individual level, that is how the proposed change will influence the private lives of individuals and (ii) on a societal level, that is how this will challenge or fit in with the social representations which the public has of proposed change. For example, as will be explained in more detail below, the promotion of donating organs after one’s death has implications on two levels, public opinion and personal attitudes. If public opinion is against organ donation, the attitudes of potential donors are influenced negatively and the next-of-kin of potential donors may refuse to give permission for the organs of the family member to be donated. On the other hand if public opinion is in favour of organ donation but individuals do not have positive attitudes towards donating organs, they will not carry a donor card and will not discuss it with

next-of-kin. I shall use the organ donation campaign held in Malta to illustrate some of the arguments put forward in this chapter.

The theories in the area of changing public opinion have important implications for the theoretical underpinnings of social marketing. Much of the literature on campaign research, including that of social marketing, is very much influenced by the research on attitudes. Farr (1996) points out that the study of attitude and attitude change has developed in two different directions following trends established by two different models of social psychology, the European, which is more sociological in nature, and the American, which is more psychological (pg. 9). These different approaches resulted in different definitions of attitude. Some perceive attitudes to be shared constructs while others see attitudes as being idiosyncratic and individualistic. The theory behind social marketing is very much influenced by the psychological literature on attitudes and attitude change and hence sees attitudes as individual tendencies. I argue that social marketing may become more effective if it incorporates the sociological trend in attitude research. In the next section I will discuss the implications of adopting a more social approach towards social marketing by suggesting the use of social representations theory as the theoretical framework within which to design social marketing campaigns. The theory of social representations explains the nature of public opinion and widespread beliefs, the functions they serve and also the processes of how they work (Moscovici, 1984). It provides a framework for the model of social change which Kotler and Roberto put forward in 1989 when they described the Social Marketing Model in detail.

## **Understanding the social marketing environment: the role of social representations**

Kotler and Roberto (1989) argued that the first step in any plan for social change should be the understanding of the social marketing environment. In the framework of the theory of social representations this means that any plan for social change should start by discovering the social representations which the various target groups within society have of the issue being promoted. This is where the change agents have to start. Social representations should be the point

of departure. Often, social marketers use surveys to get to know public opinion. However surveys only give a partial picture. This would be a quantitative snapshot without necessarily going in depth to understand the interplay of more complex issues which often come out in more qualitative research. To understand the social marketing environment requires more than survey research.

Himmelweit (1990) argues that the study of a social phenomenon requires a multilevel approach at the macro as well as at the micro level. If one is to understand and change behaviour on a societal scale one needs to draw on a diversity of sources and gain knowledge from different sources such as experts on the subject, epidemiological statistics, trend analysis, comparative analysis about the uptake of new ideas and practices by professionals, but most of all public opinion (p. 27). Himmelweit postulates that public opinion, in the context of understanding and bringing about change, becomes similar to Moscovici's social representations which enter and influence the mind of each individual but are not thought out by them. Instead they are re-thought, re-cited and re-presented (p. 80). Since social marketing involves changing public opinion and the behavior of a large group of people, the theory of social representations presents an ideal framework. This point of view advocated here is not merely a slight shift in emphasis. Rather, it has impact on every step of the social marketing process: the type of formative research, the segmentation of the target audience, the encoding of the campaign messages and the way feedback is obtained and evaluated.

Below we shall suggest four developments to the social marketing model based on social representations theory. These propositions address the social dimension of social marketing which can make social campaigns more effective. The modifications to the social marketing model have been put in practice in an organ donation campaign which was carried out and documented in Malta between 1996 and 2000 and shall be discussed briefly. A more detailed description of this campaign and its short-term and long-term effects is given in Lauri (2008). Other campaigns have been carried out using the proposed developments with success but the reports cannot be accessed.

**(i) Social Representations should be at the foundation of planned social change**

Kotler and Roberto (1989) claim that success in marketing social ideas or practices, “requires being able to predict how the target adopters will behave. Prediction, in turn, requires knowing the processes that guide and determine the behaviour of target adopters” (p. 91). In order to understand these processes, Kotler and Roberto propose two major tasks: the analysis of the social marketing environment, and researching the target adopter population. The former involves the study of the macro-social factors that could have an effect on the behaviour of target adopters such as political decisions, laws, and physical and economic conditions of the country. The latter, on the other hand, involves the study of attitudes and behavioural styles of the target adopters. The model put forward by Kotler and Roberto considers these two tasks as the foundations on which the social marketers can design the social marketing strategies and plan the marketing mix.

The study of macro-social factors in Kotler’s model is carried out by the experts. This analysis could yield very different results from how the target adopters themselves perceive these same macro-social factors. In Kotler’s model the analysis of the political, religious, legal, economic, demographic and sociocultural environment is carried out by professionals consulted by the change agents. This is what Moscovici (1984) calls the reified universe. However there is another side of the coin. These macro-social elements must also be analysed from the point of view of the target-adopters, that is, how target-adopters view the political situation of the country, how *they* understand the teachings of the Church, how *they* look upon laws and the legal system of the country, how *they* experience culture and traditions of their country. Moscovici calls this the consensual universe. He also points out that while sciences are the means by which we understand the reified universe, social representations are the way we understand the consensual (Moscovici, 1984, p. 22).

Moscovici argues that to understand how ordinary people create and use meanings to make sense of their world, social scientists must understand the consensual universe. When Kotler and Roberto (1989) advocate the analysis of the social marketing environment, they are advocating the analysis and understanding of the reified universe, the social marketing environment as studied and understood by experts and how experts believe these processes are influencing the target audience. However, the understanding of the consensual universe, the way the target adopters make sense of the macro-social aspects of the environment in which they live, is equally important. This analysis could yield a totally different picture from that which is obtained by an analysis of statistics and legislative trends and records. The study of the reified universe is an analysis of data as perceived by experts in the field while the study of the consensual universe is an analysis of the environment as perceived by the target adopters. The latter is separate and different from the former and is equally essential in order to predict as accurately as possible the future behaviour of the target adopters. Ignoring this crucial part of the total picture can result in a less effective campaign.

An example of this important distinction was encountered in the organ donation campaign carried out in Malta. Malta is a small island in the Mediterranean with a population of 440,000 people. The main religion is Roman Catholic and the two official languages are Maltese and English. During the pre-campaign research carried out with both the experts and the public, one major finding was that there was a mistaken perception by the public that the Church, as an institution, was against organ donation and that the Catholic religion condemned organ donation because it was desecrating the human body. The teachings of the Church in fact promoted organ donation. Had only the opinion of the religious experts been sought, the researchers would have been told that the Catholic Church supports organ donation and they would perhaps not have become aware of the misconception held by the public. Since the Church in Malta is a very influential social structure, as part of the campaign the change agents asked the bishops to issue a pastoral letter which was read in every parish explaining that the teachings of the Church not only did not condemn organ donation but that in fact it was considered a noble act.

## **(2) The methodology employed during formative research should be social in nature**

One of the major innovations which made the concept of social marketing different from other earlier forms of promoting a product or idea was the use of consumer research to understand the attitudes and behaviours of target groups and the social marketing environment. When Kotler and Zaltman (1973) first proposed the model of social marketing, they highlighted the importance of research as the basis for all major decisions. Research was proposed at every stage of the social marketing process.

Kotler and Roberto (1989) suggested various methods to collect data, however they considered the survey as being one of the major tools. They proposed that in implementing marketing research techniques, the following questions have to be answered: Who should be surveyed? How many should be surveyed? How should the respondents be selected? How should their responses be gathered? How should their responses be interpreted? (p. 73). Such an approach to consumer research is a result of an individualist orientation to understanding and implementing social change. Survey research methods, while being highly efficient in collecting a large volume of data which can be analysed quantitatively and at a relatively low cost in time and effort, often neglects the social context and the dynamics of public opinion. To understand public opinion, surveys must be accompanied by other research tools. The scope of public opinion goes beyond the results of systematic questioning of a representative sample. Jaspars and Fraser (1984) suggest that understanding attitudes through surveys, ignores the socially-shared aspects of beliefs. They argue that within a population, people might hold different attitudes about a particular issue or subject, yet they might share the same social representations of the topic or issue on which they are holding the attitude. Traditional attitude research, which concentrates upon finding differences between subjects, sometimes ignores such socially-shared aspects. Some researchers, like for example Doise, Clemence and Loreni-Cioldi (1992), have used surveys to study social representations, however a much better understanding can be achieved if we go beyond the manifest responses which the participants provide in many

attitude surveys and “concern ourselves with the representations which are implicit in these responses” (Jaspars & Fraser, 1984, p. 122).

Similarly, Billig (1993) argues that fixed instruments of measurement, such as the questionnaire, cannot tap social representations, which are themselves fluid phenomena. Public opinion research is very often a descriptive snapshot. It is not enough for researchers to know the percentage of people favouring this or that position but they must also seek to understand how social representations are created and how they are transformed through usage. Billig postulates that such transformations of meanings, and the way they are transformed, cannot be captured in the thick netting of the standard opinion questionnaire. He argues that “to use the pollster’s measuring devices to understand these meanings would be like trying to entrap the morning mist in an elephant net” (Billig, 1993, p. 44).

Farr (1993) argues that “we need the theory of social representations to account for the dynamics of the change in public opinion and why the distribution of opinion takes the particular form it does” (p. 35). He points out that one of the great virtues of the theory of social representation is that it does not privilege a particular method of research. Researchers using social representations as the framework for their research, have used various methodologies to collect and analyse data: surveys, participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, drawings, media analysis and even experimental studies. However because social representations are constructed through the process of interaction and communication with other people, and because these interactions and conversations are themselves shaped by people’s social representations, the tools used to uncover these social representations must be social in nature. Farr, Trutkowski, and Holzl (1996) argue that attitude theory and opinion polling are based upon a strong individualistic notion of the person and advocate the use of discussion groups in the study of social representations and public opinion, thus restoring the social context in which individuals form opinions and express attitudes. “The shaping of public opinion is a genuinely innovative and social process i.e. it is a public matter rather than a private affair. The method of investigation should reflect the theory” (p. 23).



The theory of social representations, as proposed by Moscovici, gives importance to the information that circulates in society concerning the object of study. This is why he suggests listening to people in various settings, in pubs and cafes, in academic institutions and work places, in churches and village halls, in other places where people meet and talk in an informal atmosphere about the issues which are of importance to them.

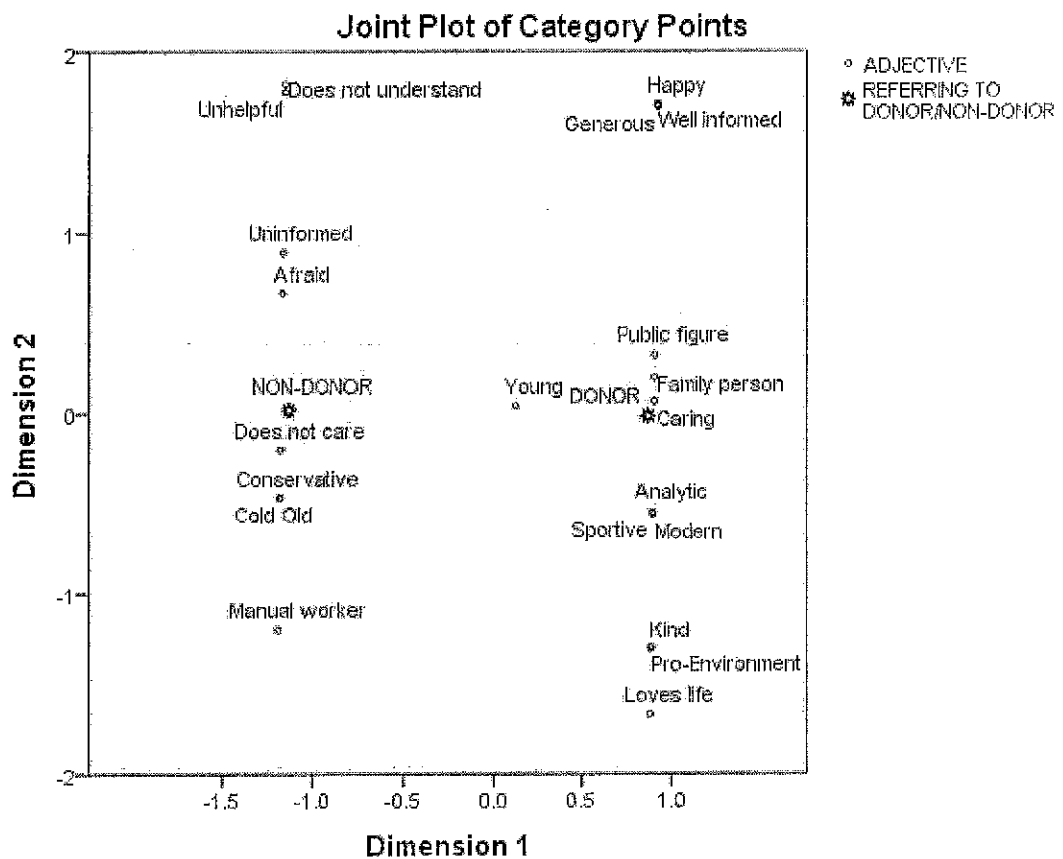
This line of thinking is reflected in the arguments put forward by Farr et al. (1996) when they claim that focus groups are the ideal tools to study social representations because there is an equivalence between Moscovici's conception of "the thinking society" and the discussion group. They propose that the discussion group is the thinking society in miniature. When people talk in a group they generate as well as transmit opinions. This reflects the proposition put forward by Lahlou (2001) who argues that social representations theory is especially relevant for describing and understanding important issues because it takes into account the feedback loop between social constructionism and individual thought and practice (p. 162). An important tenet of the theory employed to justify the focus group as a principal method of investigation in social science is that the researcher may have no prior knowledge of how the participants will represent the object of study. In a focus group it is possible to explore "local knowledge and understandings" more successfully than for example in the one-to-one interview or questionnaire. Discussions involve an exchange of ideas and images enabling the researcher to see things through the eyes of the participants. Social representations theory considers images as rich sources of data. They reveal perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. A second important advantage of focus groups, from the point of view of an investigation of social representations, is the context in which this exercise takes place. Since it is carried out in a group setting and at the end of a long discussion, the explanations participant voice on particular issues are influenced by both 'personal' and 'group' beliefs aired during the focus groups. Whether the discussion is among a group of friends having a drink in the pub, a group of people have a conversation at work or a discussion in a focus group, people are

influenced by each other in their understanding of issues and concepts and in the production of knowledge.

The debate on the social nature of research has direct implications for social marketing research. As discussed above, in social marketing, the research tool most often used to assess attitudes, behaviours and needs is the survey. It is here being suggested that a more accurate representation of social reality can be obtained if social marketers study social representations as well as attitudes. This can be done by complementing the survey with such techniques as organised focus group discussions, informal conversations, interviews, and mass media analysis. Such an approach would take into consideration not only the occurrence and frequency of particular beliefs but also how these change, develop and influence social change.

In the case of the social marketing campaign carried out in Malta to increase the number of organ donors, the formative research included focus groups together with a survey of the attitudes towards organ donation of a random sample of 400 people as well as interviews with donor families, recipients and hospital staff. During the focus groups, photos were used to help elicit the social representations participants had of donors and non-donors by asking them to choose from a pool of photographs present in front of them, one photo which to them represented somebody who would donate and another photo which represented somebody who would not donate his or her organs. They were also asked to explain why they had chosen those photos and their answers were analysed. The adjectives used to describe organ donors and non-donors were then subjected to correspondence analysis and a 2-dimensional solution was extracted. Figure 1 shows the adjectives used by participants to describe donors and non-donors before the campaign plotted against these two dimensions. The first, and stronger, dimension clearly differentiated between adjectives describing donors and non-donors. The second dimension was more complex to interpret. For adjectives describing non-donors it seemed to discriminate between those who are old or conservative in nature on one hand, and those who are uninformed, unhelpful or do not understand the plight of others on the other. For adjectives describing donors, this second dimension seems to

discriminate between those who are modern, pro-environment, and active in public life on one hand and those who are in general happy, generous and well-informed on the other. In Lauri and Lauri (2005) a third dimension was extracted to understand better how these adjectives were explained along this dimension and how the adjectives used in focus groups held after the campaign changed from those used before the campaign.



**Figure 1. Adjectives used to describe donors and non-donors.**

The same text was also analysed using thematic analysis. Comparing these two analyses yielded important information in that the researchers became aware of the metaphors used to describe organ donation (Lauri, 2009). These findings together with the analysis of the data collected through the survey and the interviews gave a reasonably similar picture of public opinion regarding organ donation – a basis on which to design the campaign. These findings brought to light the social representations the participants had of organ donation. Some of

the metaphors used by participants to describe organ donation were 'giving a gift', 'giving charity', 'giving a new life', 'recycling of body parts' and 'an insurance policy' amongst others. While finding that there was good support for organ donation, it became clear that participants lacked knowledge and that they had misconceptions. These were addressed in the campaign by choosing messages which used the same words and metaphors as the ones used by participants.

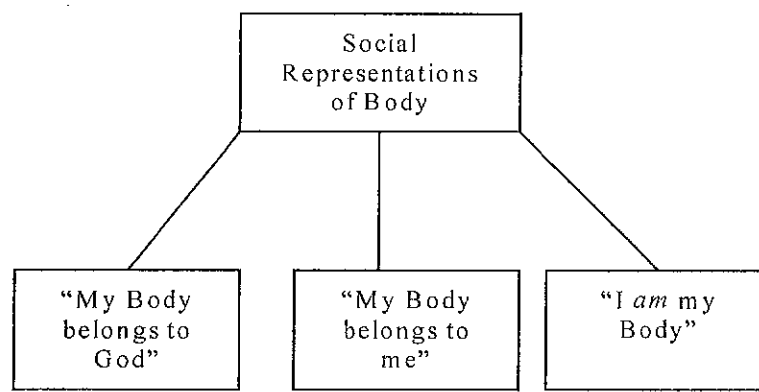
### **3: Target groups should be defined in terms of social representations**

Segmenting the target-adopter population into homogeneous groups is another phase of the social marketing process proposed by Kotler and Roberto (1989). Marketers employ various criteria for segmentation. These criteria include demographics, psychographics, values and lifestyles, geographic regions, product benefits and purchase situations.

Which variables should social marketers use in segmenting their market? Kotler and Roberto's (1989) answer to this question is that the "most appropriate segmentation variables are those that best capture differences in the behaviour of target adopters" ( p. 149). They explain that in some cases, the differences in behaviour are a function of demographics. In other cases, geographic or psychographic characteristics are the primary segmentation variables. I argue that the variable most suitable for segmenting the target audience is often the social representations which the target groups hold on the issue in question.

In such cases, segmenting the target adopter audience according to their social representations may be more relevant than segmenting them according to demographics, lifestyles or attitudes. Members of the same target group may have similar attitudes and different social representations or they may have different attitudes and the same social representations. Again an example is provided by the organ donation campaign held in Malta. As a result of thematic analysis of the focus group discussion, the researcher found that while the participants used different metaphors to describe organ donation, all of these

metaphors stemmed from the representations participants had of their body. Figure 2 shows the three representations. One group believed that one's body belonged to God or a higher being who created it. Another group believed that a person owned his or her body and therefore the person was responsible for it, had to take care of it and enjoy it. A third group of people had a monistic view of the human person and did not distinguish between their physical body and their spiritual and psychological self and their identity.



**Figure 2. Representations of the human body**

Segmentation was carried out according to these three representations and messages were targeted accordingly (Table 1). For the first group who saw their body as the 'temple of God', the main message was that the Church encouraged organ donation and considered it a noble act. For the second group who believed that individuals owned their body, the main message was that they should make their wishes clear about whether or not they wanted to donate their organs after their death. For the third group who believed that their body was not a possession but was the actual being of the person, the main message was that removing parts of the body after death does not destroy the dignity and identity of the person.

**Table 1: Campaign Messages for Groups with Different Social Representations of the Body**

| Social Representations of the body | Metaphors used to describe the body   | Metaphors used to describe organ donation  | Messages addressed to the target audience  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Body belongs to God                | Body is a sacred temple<br>Body is a gift from God<br>Body is a tool in God's hands | Doing one's duty<br>Giving life<br>Giving a gift<br>Giving charity<br>Butchering<br>Desecrating body<br>Playing God                | Organ donation is an altruistic and noble act supported by the teachings of the Church |
| I own my body                      | Body is a machine<br>Body is a treasured possession<br>Body is a commodity          | Recycling<br>A gift<br>Insurance policy  | Let your family know of your wishes; carry a donor card                                |
| I am my body                       | Body is whole<br>Body is unique<br>Body is eternal                                  | Destruction of person's identity<br>Destruction of person's immortality<br>Butchery<br>Desecration<br>Living on, in another person | Organ donation gives a new life to recipients  |

#### **(4) Change agents must use group strategies to effect change**

When planning social change, the problem of focusing on individual behaviour without giving due consideration to group behaviour was recognised in the 1950s by several researchers even in America. For example, Cartwright (1951) insisted that problems in understanding whether people changed their behaviour or resisted such change had their roots in taking the individual as "the unit of observation." Cartwright believed that it was difficult to change individuals in isolation because the pressure to conform makes it difficult for the individual to depart from the norm. Hence he believed that planned social change or, as he called it, "social management", should target groups rather than individuals.

Although Cartwright's work was carried out more than half a century ago, there are various other theories in social psychology that support his claim and that could explain why group strategies could be more effective in bringing about a change in attitudes than other strategies directed at individuals. Several studies carried out by researchers which formed part of the Research Centre for Group Dynamics in Michigan in the 1950's can throw light on the issue of social influence in groups.

This tradition of the 1950s which pre-dated notions of social marketing and stressed the importance of societal attitudes and behaviour in bringing about social change is best illustrated by the seminal study by Lewin and colleagues in a project to change the attitudes of the American people towards certain types of food. It is perhaps one of the very first studies about social marketing. Lewin (1958) as well as his colleagues used a number of methods to understand and change the behaviour of American people. One of his interventions to understand the target audience was to conduct a series of experiments with the aim of investigating the effectiveness of individual instruction versus group discussion in bringing about a change in attitudes and behaviour. These experiments were later repeated under more carefully controlled conditions by Pennington, Harary, and Bass (1958) who found that opinion change was greater when group discussion was allowed than when no discussion took place. Group decision making, they argued, was effective in causing opinion change. It was the opportunity to discuss one's beliefs and come to a decision which helped group members change their attitude and behaviour. The advantages of the group-decision method result primarily from the fact that group discussion facilitates decision-making and perception of consensus.

Lewin believed that it is very difficult to change individual conduct and attitudes that are rooted in groups by efforts which are directed at the individual. He claimed that "many social habits are anchored in the relation between the individuals and certain group standards. ...If the individual should try to diverge 'too much' from group standards, he would find himself in increasing difficulties. ...Most individuals, therefore stay pretty close to the groups they belong or wish to belong" (Lewin, 1958, p. 209). Planned social change which

is aimed at individuals and which uses individual change strategies is bound to be less effective than one based on group strategies. The classic studies by Cartwright and Lewin indicate that, in the 1940s and 1950s, social psychologists had a more collective notion of attitudes. It is perhaps pertinent to reconsider these studies in a new light and apply them to changing public opinion and to social marketing.

Campaigns very often emphasise the use of television, magazines and the Internet with the aim of reaching many people. However most of the time people use these media when they are alone. In such situations, the isolated individual is more likely to reject the message. Media campaigns based on the faulty assumptions of the magic bullet theory or the hypodermic needle model (Lasswell, 1948) may fail to bring about the desired effect. Therefore the campaign design should, as much as possible, include group strategies which encourage and facilitate group discussion and decision-making. This can be done by targeting groups through social media and interpersonal contact rather than through the traditional mass media. Talks, online chat groups, online social networks, discussions, participation in projects and other such initiatives help to encourage group members to take collective action, thus reducing the perceived risk of taking a particular decision on one's own.

The organ donation campaign in Malta aimed mainly at targeting groups as opposed to individuals. Meetings were held with groups of media personalities rather than individual journalists and anchor persons. Discussion among these opinion leaders as well as media owners helped to persuade them to help put organ donation on the public agenda. The new media were still in their infancy then and could not be used as much as one would today. Another group strategy was outreach work – going to schools and work places and holding discussion groups. Campaign volunteers with the right skills were given training on how to conduct group discussions. The main targets for these discussions were schools, work places and church groups. Various talks and discussions were held with post-secondary school children, university students, parent-teachers associations, NGOs, departments in the public sector, factory workers and parish church groups. These events normally involved an information giving

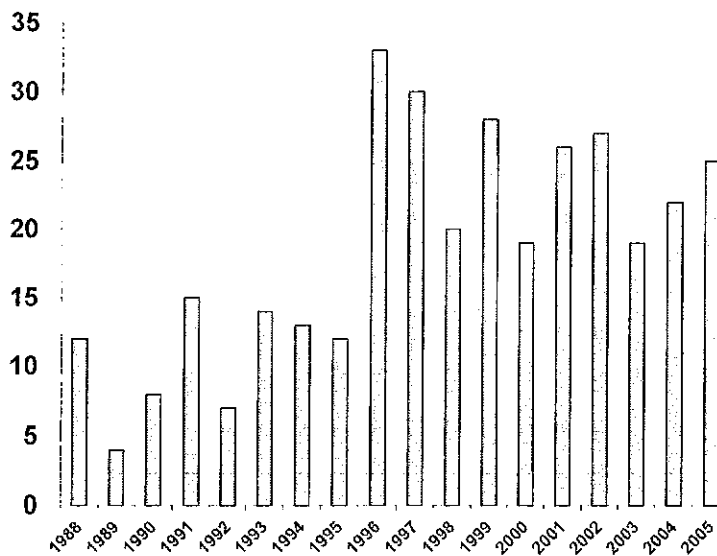


session followed by a discussion among participants. At the end of a talk and discussion, group members were encouraged to register for the organ donor card as a group initiative. Group techniques also included seminars by trained facilitators for specially targeted groups like family doctors and parish priests who were considered gate keepers as these could influence the families they came in contact with. There are indications that the messages worked. There were some changes in participants' perceptions of organ donation registered in the focus group discussions after the campaigns as seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Perceptions of Organ Donation After the Campaign**

|                        | <b>Organ donation perceived less of this after campaign</b>             | <b>Organ donation perceived more of this after campaign</b> |
|------------------------|---|---|
| My body belongs to God | Desecration and disrespect<br>Playing God<br>Butchery and disfigurement | Giving life<br>Doing God's wish<br>Doing one's duty         |
| My body belongs to me  | Giving a gift<br>Recycling  | Investment  |
| I am my body           | Disfigurement<br>Destruction of identity                                | Living on   |

This change in attitudes and social representations had tangible results. There was an increase in the number of organs donated in the years subsequent to the campaign as can be seen in the number of organ transplants registered after 1996.



**Figure 3. Number of organs transplanted from 1988 to 2005.**

*Source: A. Bugeja, Transplant Co-ordinator, Malta (2007, May, 12), personal communication.*

Figure 3 shows the number of organs transplanted in Malta in the years before the national campaign was launched and the years during and following the campaign. Some more organs were donated to an Italian hospital when the tissue typing indicated that there was no match for a Maltese person. The increase in the number of donations cannot be solely attributed to the campaign however it is reasonable to believe that the social marketing campaign was a major instigator of the increase in the donations of organs. Recent statistics show that rate of donations was sustained, thanks to NGOs like Lifecycle who strive to increase awareness about organ donation.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued how the theory of social representations can inform social marketing campaigns. I am suggesting that this theory brings

about a paradigm shift in communications campaign research. It provides the theoretical framework for both the design as well as the execution of a social marketing campaign. Understanding social representations surrounding the behavioural change being advocated in the formative research is important for the different stages that follow in the campaign. Using social data collecting tools such as focus groups together with surveys and interviews enables the change agent to understand the complexity of the issues involved. This would then enable the production of effective messages targeting specific groups holding specific social representations. Group strategies such as seminars followed by discussions and organising group initiatives increase the effectiveness of the social marketing campaigns.

In 1947, Hyman and Sheatsley published a paper with the title, "Some reasons why information campaigns fail" in the *Public Opinion Quarterly*. If a similar paper had to be written with the same title today, it would discuss how one major reason why campaigns fail is because the designers of the campaign either are not aware of the social representations of the issue being marketed by the campaign, or, that if they did they failed to address them adequately.

In this discussion I have attempted to contribute to the literature on social marketing by suggesting that the model should be understood within the theoretical background of social representations theory. Does this theory help us find out how to make campaigns work or why campaigns fail? I believe it does. To quote Kevin Roberts from Saatchi & Saatchi "if you want to understand how a lion hunts, don't go to the zoo. Go to the jungle." That is the place where one can learn more about lions, lionesses and cubs (Lefebvre, 2011). If we want to understand people and bring about a change in their behaviour we have to go into the field and seek to understand society through understanding social representations. It is only then, that one can strive to change them.

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