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Marketing practices and the reconfiguration of public action

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1). Introduction

Marketing practices have become increasingly important elements in the strategic imagination of public sector reform in the United Kingdom (UK) since the early 2000s. These methodologies are also increasingly deployed in the third sector, in the charity sector, and in campaigning by non-governmental organisations (NGO). The use of marketing practices in non-commercial settings has been given added impetus by the development of sophisticated customer relationship management (CRM) software systems, and by the rise of the field of social marketing. The principles of social marketing have become an influential medium for the application of data-driven marketing practices in the public sector and non-profit organisations (Kotler and Andreasen 1996; Pykett *et al* 2014). One aspect of the widespread use of data technologies to improve the efficiency of service delivery in non-commercial fields has been the adoption of segmentation methodologies sourced from commercial marketing. As one element of CRM practices, the use of segmentation methods is part a broader trend for organisations to make use of new digital informational technologies to generate strategically useful data and knowledge about their customers, clients and constituencies.

Segmentation practices are one element in a repertoire of data-rich, inductive methods that are increasingly put to use in the effort to govern social action ‘at a distance’, by configuring communication strategies and participatory programmes (see Whitehead *et al* 2011). These methodologies are deployed in relation to a wide variety of issues, from development communication to transport issues (e.g. Anable 2005), including the targeting of public health initiatives, the planning of climate change policies, and scoping the nature of communications markets (e.g. Hine *et al* 2014; Ofcom 2012).

Typically, a segmentation exercise involves the application of cluster analysis techniques to either pre-existing or commissioned survey data on attitudes, interests or opinions, with the aim of generating typologies of differentiated markets, audiences, or publics. Most segmentation systems used in the commercial sector and in non-commercial settings are ‘off the shelf’ packages, provided by commercial companies often specializing in particular fields, such as public health, financial services, or cultural policy. Amongst the leading providers of such systems are companies such as Accenture, TNS, and The Futures Company. Amongst the most widely used systems are the Tapestry segmentation provided by ESRI; and MOSAIC, provided by Experian.

Our analysis starts from the assumptions that the contemporary deployment of segmentation practices should be approached as one example of the ‘social life’ of social science methods (see Savage 2013). Our concern is with how best to critically analyse the rationalities that shape the widespread adoption of segmentation methodologies in the strategic practices of non-commercial organizations in the UK. We hold that more attention needs to be paid to the presumed benefits to organisations of adopting segmentation methodologies, as the key to further inquiry into how these methodologies are implicated in the reconfiguration of forms of public agency. Our preliminary analysis of non-commercial uses of segmentation methodologies therefore has two related aims. The first of is to track the shared and contested understandings of the strengths and limitations of segmentations across a number of non-commercial fields, including public policy, arts and culture management, and NGO campaigning. The second aim is to tease out some of the challenges that the public deployment of social science techniques such as segmentation methods

presents to existing models of critical analysis, and in so doing to identify the key issues that should shape further investigation of this rapidly evolving field.

The application of segmentation methods in non-commercial settings, including but not limited to the public sector, depends on the taken-for-granted normative assumption that market segmentation is a basic, necessary, and effective stage in developing successful marketing strategies (see Dibb and Simkin 2009). In commercial settings, the use of segmentation methods as part of CRM practices is inherently ‘discriminatory’, in the sense that it is one stage in an overall strategy of treating customers differently according to an analysis of their preferences and tastes (see Howard *et al* 2005). The discriminatory function of segmentation methods is used in commercial settings in the pursuit of competitive advantage.

For some commentators, this means that segmentation methods are necessarily at odds with the values of public life (e.g. Gandy 2001). The increasing use of segmentation methods, as well as other techniques associated with social marketing, in non-commercial settings is often interpreted as indicative of the widespread diffusion of ‘neoliberal’ approaches to policy and management. Our aim in tracking the proliferation of segmentation exercises is to identify an alternative framework for critical analysis to that provided by theories of ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘neoliberalization’. We follow a line of argument that questions the saliency of highly generalised, over-extended conceptualizations of neo-liberalism (e.g. Barnett 2010, Clarke 2008). Our approach rests on three related assumptions: first, that we should not presume in advance of further research what the effects of segmentation practices are on the fields of policy and action in which they are deployed; second, that these practices are

not best approached as merely legitimising straightforward shifts from collective, public values to private, individualistic values; and that the analysis of the deployment of marketing practices needs to be approached *practically*, that is, with an orientation to seeking to understand what changes the use of these methods are meant to bring about in specific fields of action.

We develop the argument in three steps. First, in the next section, **Diagnosing the proliferation of segmentation methods**, we outline an analytical approach that seeks to diagnose the problems to which the segmentation methods are thought to be a viable solution.

Second, in the section **Translating market segmentation**, we identify the varied public values shaping the deployment of market segmentation methods in behaviour change programmes, in cultural policy, and in campaigning communications. In tracking the proliferation of the use of segmentation in various non-commercial fields in the 2000s, we focus on the concepts of behaviour, identity and motivation used in different fields. These concepts are significant because they provide professionals with causal rationales of how particular fields of action actually work.

Third, in the concluding section, **Differentiating the public**, we outline an analytical frame for developing further research on how segmentation practices, once adopted and implemented, actually play out in practice. Our analysis indicates that not only is there no singular usage of segmentation methods, but also that there is no single continuum from public to private along which we can locate their significance. We conclude that further research needs to focus on how the practical deployment of

social science methodologies such as segmentation analysis contribute to the reconfiguration of the agency of professionals, experts, and different segments of ‘the public’.

2). Diagnosing the proliferation of segmentation methods

Questions of how to define the purposes of public sector organisations are acutely felt in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008, which in the UK has led to shrinking budgets across the public sector. The relationship between resource scarcity and increasing demand and heightened expectations is, however, a longer-standing dynamic of public sector transformations in the UK. Public sector management has been reconfigured towards being responsive to the needs, expectations and perceptions of different constituencies, understood in terms of hybrid figures such as the citizen-consumer or citizen-client.

The posited relationship between scarcity of resources and increasing demands – for provision of services, for accountability, for standards of service – is one factor behind the increasing use of segmentation methods in the public sector. It is assumed that segmenting ‘the public’ into sub-groups is a means to offering tailored services that both target those ‘most in need’ while also answering to the individualizing imperatives of personalisation agendas in the public sector. Furthermore, as third sector organisations, NGOs and charities become increasingly involved in public-facing activities, so too a similar set of imperatives appear to be driving the widespread adoption of segmentation practise in these sectors as well.

In critical social science there are long-standing concerns that the use of marketing techniques contributes to an individualist emphasis in public sector management. It is also argued that marketing strategies are not value free, in so far as they enact norms of market exchange and consumer rationality (e.g. Walsh 1991). There is a recurrent concern that sophisticated information and data-mining technologies about individual behaviours threaten to undermine public life by encouraging fragmented communications to discrete segments of 'the public' and by enhancing the surveillance capacity of state and commercial organisations (e.g. Ball et al 2010, Gandy 2001, Howard *et al* 2005).

These concerns have crystallised into a paradigm of critical analysis that focuses on the theme of neoliberalism and neoliberalization. It is important to distinguish between two distinct models of 'neoliberalization'. In the first, of broadly Marxist inspiration, neoliberalism is understood to be a dedicated project aimed at rolling back the state, and is associated with policies of privatization. In the second, inspired by readings of Michel Foucault, neoliberalism is understood to be a mode of 'governmentality', involving not so much the rolling back of the state as the extension of various forms of market-rule into realms of state action and public policy. These two streams of thought are often combined in critical social theory (see Barnett 2005). The combination of these strands of thought into a single narrative of 'neoliberalization' supports a framework of critical analysis that presumes in advance that the same strategic ambitions always underlie policy initiatives in the public sector. First, it is assumed that that these initiatives are always oriented to the production of individualised subjects of responsibility. And second, it is assumed that the subjects of initiatives are first and foremost members of the general population.

On these grounds, for example, the segmentation of publics for public services or cultural practices is seen as one aspect of the de-collectivisation of welfare (Crawshaw 2012), and social marketing more generally is seen as one element in a broader neoliberal mode of governing populations (e.g. Crawshaw 2013, Moor 2011).

In contrast to this settled model of critical analysis, the premise of our analysis here is that attention needs to be paid to the presumed benefits to organisations of adopting segmentation methodologies. Our assumption is that rather than simply being an automatic effect of neoliberalization, the proliferation of segmentation practices is likely to have been shaped by a range of perceived organisational problems and potential solutions. In turn, this attention to the rationalities shaping the adoption of segmentation practices interrupts any presumption that they are intended to or in practice actually succeed in constructing neoliberal subjects.

As already indicated, our analysis of the proliferation of segmentation therefore departs from overarching theories of hegemonic neoliberalization (see also Collier 2012, Weller and O'Neill 2014). Rather than thinking of segmentation as an example of either neoliberal ideology or neoliberal governmentality, we seek instead to diagnose the sorts of *problems* to which the adoption of segmentation methods is a response. We analyse the proliferation of segmentation methods as indicative of a widely shared problematization of the means and ends of public action (see Bacchi 2012, Mahony *et al* 2010). What characterises this mode of problematization is a set of perceived challenges of accountability, efficiency and legitimacy faced by a range of public and third sector organisations. Rather than being the instrument of a single governmental rationality, from this perspective the widespread adoption of

segmentation is associated with the organizational imperative to treat the participants in public life as subjects of varied needs. Furthermore, segmentation is used as part of strategies that also presume that those participants are also articulate subjects with a wide range of motivations and values, who are able to express opinions, grievances, and viewpoints. In short, we show below that segmentation methods are deployed as part of initiatives that seek to better engage with a range of subjects understood as distinct constituent parts of an inevitably differentiated public.

3). Translating market segmentation

In investigating the proliferation of non-commercial use of segmentation practices in the UK in the 2000s, we focus on three distinct non-commercial fields: public policy fields such as health and environment concerned with behaviour change; fields of arts and culture management; and fields of charitable and non-governmental campaigning. The rationalities shaping strategic engagement with publics differ across these three fields. We focus on these three fields in order to draw out the diverse public values that are at stake in the adoption of these types of marketing practices, values that include efficiency, accountability and legitimacy.

Despite the widespread use of segmentation methodologies in the strategic thinking of public as well as private organisations, the organisational dynamics of adopting and implementing segmentation practices remains under researched (see Dibb and Simkin 2009, and Barnett and Mahony 2011). Our aim here is to identify the rationalities shaping the proliferation of segmentation methods by tracking a documentary trail of research reports, presentations, and how-to-guides (see Freeman and Maybin 2011). Our analysis is based on a comprehensive review of publicly available materials on

segmentation practices undertaken in these non-commercial fields from 2005 onwards, including academic literatures, marketing literatures, and government and non-governmental publications; and of grey literature from government and non-governmental organizations and charities (see Barnett and Mahony 2011). The construction of this database was based primarily on desk-based research, including on-line searches, use of ISI web-based search resources, and review of materials available in the British Library.

Methodologically, our intention is not to read-off the presumed effects on organisational cultures or individual subjects of the implementation of specific segmentation practices from documentary evidence. Rather, we approach this documentary trail in order to ascertain the rationalities that shape the adoption of these methodologies in the first place. The documentary trail we analyse here is a trace of a network of practical discourse, that is, a network in which research reports and methodological guides circulate across professional fields as means of enabling new strategies to be developed and implemented. It is this practical orientation that we seek to disclose here, rather than presuming that this documentary field operates to justify or rationalize generalised processes of marketization or individualisation. Our argument is that this ‘descriptive’ style of analysis is crucial to any subsequent critical analysis of the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of specific segmentation practices or evaluation of the overall ‘effects’ of the proliferation of these methods in non-commercial settings. Analytically, our focus is therefore on diagnosing the range of problems to which segmentation is meant to provide an appropriate solution. On the basis of this analysis, we show that across these three fields, segmentation methods are deployed

in pursuit of a variety of imperatives, illustrating the different configurations of the means and ends of public action in these varied fields.

3.i). Segmentation and behaviour change

The use of segmentation methods in the public sector is intimately related to the growth of social marketing activities. This is well illustrated by the increasingly important role of segmentation as a tool of social marketing in the planning and management of public health initiatives in Western liberal democracies (Crawshaw 2013, Grier and Bryant 2005). The adoption of social marketing in public health policy is indicative of a broader move to develop segmentations that capture what ‘moves and motivates’ people by using psycho-graphic data of various sorts. For example, in 2006, the Department of Health initiated a major segmentation exercise of the population of England, *Healthy Foundations*. This has been used to inform policy around six public health priority areas: smoking, obesity, alcohol, sexual health, mental health, and substance abuse (Department of Health 2008). It is meant to enable cost-effective and tailored policies that are able to respond to the needs of the population as those needs have been expressed by the population (Department of Health 2008).

In the field of health policy, then, segmentation is used to differentiate segments of the public in order to better address their specific health concerns. The key aim is to identify factors that either inhibit (‘barriers’) or encourage (‘facilitates’) changes in ‘health-related behaviours’. This is an example of one guiding rationale behind the adoption of segmentation methods in non-commercial settings, which is this concern with identifying the potentials to move people. Segmentations are used to inform

interventions which aim to shift subjects from one behaviour, attitude, or value to another. The *Healthy Foundations* segmentation is one example of the adoption of segmentation methods to enhance the responsiveness of public service delivery to the differentiations of target populations. It is also an example of a shift in thinking about public health communication strategies, marked by a move beyond a narrow focus on informing people of the beneficial and detrimental health effects of certain behaviours. *Healthy Foundations* used a methodology based on dynamic, motivational variables that seek to identify the differential propensity of people to change their behaviour or adopt new practices. The same shift of emphasis is also evident in environmental policy fields. It is here that the use of segmentation methods as part of strategic interventions that seek to activate people's potential to change their own behaviour, attitudes or values is most advanced. Segmentation methods are used to help design behaviour change interventions, including initiatives on reducing car use, more responsible water usage, domestic energy management, recycling, and buying local food.

Government departments such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Department of Transport (DoT) pioneered the development of segmentations that use psychographic variables to better understand the motivational dynamics of behaviour change (e.g. Anable 2005, Anable *et al* 2006). DEFRA has developed a sophisticated segmentation model to inform public engagement activities in support of 'pro-environmental behaviours' (DEFRA 2008). The DEFRA segmentation is oriented towards the particular strategic objectives of this policy field, reflected in a conceptual focus on identifying 'barriers to change' (see Shove 2010). The DEFRA segmentation model divides the public into seven

clusters. These seven segments each share a distinct set of attitudes and beliefs towards the environment. The use of attitudinal variables reflects a move beyond the assumption that pro-environmental behaviour correlates with knowledge of environmental issues that has underwritten previous information-led campaigns. The DEFRA segmentation interprets the seven segments in terms of an analytical distinction between *willingness* and *ability* to change behaviour in pro-environmental directions. The seven segments are accordingly clustered into two broad groups: ‘low potential and unwilling’ segments (‘waste watchers’, ‘honestly disengaged’, ‘cautious participants’, and ‘stalled starters’); and ‘high ability and willing’ segments (‘positive greens’, ‘concerned consumers’, and ‘sideline supporters’).

The application of this interpretative frame to the ‘pro-environmental behaviours’ segmentation model has informed a particular package of interventions. The key feature of this strategy is the identification of some segments of the population as being more significant than others in driving the shift to pro-environmental behaviours. Not only do some segments have “relatively high ability to act”, but the willingness of segments “to act to be more environmentally friendly” is also shaped by different motivations and barriers (DEFRA 2008, 41). The DEFRA segmentation model informs a strategic reconceptualization of who can be motivated to live greener lifestyles, and how. It is used to assess which groups might be more willing and able to adopt certain behaviours, and which might be more reluctant or resistant. The segmentation model has been deployed as part of a differential strategy of communication and engagement, one in which certain segments of the population are understood to be ‘prime movers’ in adopting new behaviours. In this type of strategy, it is assumed that the goals of public action are settled and uncontroversial (i.e.

various ‘pro-environmental behaviours’); what is variable is the capacity of different segments of the population to act positively towards these goals.

Tracking the use of segmentation methods across health, environment, transport and other fields of public policy in the UK since the early 2000s reveals two key trends. First, the proliferation of segmentation includes conceptual and methodological debates around different approaches to segmentation. The emphasis on psychographic or motivational variables in segmentation models of public attitudes to climate change, healthy lifestyles, and travel choices is indicative of a growing concern to use segmentation to differentiate the inclinations of people to adjust their conduct. Second, segmentation is increasingly recommended not only as a route to more effective targeting of services, but as part of a conceptual shift towards more contextually sensitive models of behaviour change. In this shift, segmentation is used to inform public engagement strategies that also include deliberative or consultative activities.

We have seen that an emerging emphasis in the public sector is on the use of psychographic or motivational variables to develop segmentations of populations. These variables are understood to better capture the dynamism of what ‘moves and motivates’ people to change existing behaviours and to adopt new ones; to identify with particular causes; or to commit time and energy to particular causes. This emphasis can also be seen in the second field in which segmentation is increasingly used to secure public values, the burgeoning field of arts and culture management.

3.ii). Segmentation and public culture

There is a long-standing interest in using segmentation methods to inform marketing strategies for cultural institutions (e.g. DiMaggio *et al* 1978). Segmentation methods are used extensively in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors, including museums, libraries, and broadcasting (Dawson and Jensen 2011). In this field, institutions seek to address various public subjects, for example, as ‘patrons’, ‘visitors’, and ‘viewers’. Segmentation methods are used in this field of policy and public engagement to market effectively to existing audiences (i.e. to get people to re-attend or re-visit), and to look for new audiences. Arts-marketing therefore uses segmentation methods for the dual purpose of growing and finding audiences.

The further proliferation of market segmentation in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors has been encouraged by the adoption of CRM practices. As in other sectors, this is reflected in a shift away from using simple demographic variables, towards a focus on cultivating sustainable customer relationships with cultural audiences. Amongst professional arts marketing organisations in the UK such as the Arts Marketing Association, the use of CRM segmentation methods and psychographics has become increasingly prevalent. In this field, segmentation has become a basic feature of strategies that seek to increase visitor numbers, increase the use of existing cultural infrastructures such as libraries and museums, and grow audiences. It has also become an important asset in developing more inclusive audience strategies that are responsive to the needs and interests of culturally diverse audiences (e.g. BBC 2007). Segmentation is understood as a means to enable organisations to be more inclusive by better understanding diverse audience tastes and interests (e.g. Maitland 2006). And as in other fields, a key debate in this field is whether demographic variables,

such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, age or gender, are necessarily the best means of developing effective segmentations (e.g. Maitland 2005).

As segmentation methods have become increasingly important in the strategic planning of communications programmes in arts and culture management, so the selection of the variables used in segmentation exercises has become a focus of debate. This issue is illustrated by the Arts Council's initiatives on cultural diversity and audience development. Since the mid-2000s, the Arts Council has developed one of the most significant segmentations undertaken in this sector. It is characterised by the same shift towards using psychographic variables that has been evident in other fields. And it is based on the assumption that audiences are not only more diverse nowadays, but that identities are much less fixed than they once were (e.g. Larsen 2006). As with the case of the Department of Health's *Healthy Foundations* segmentation, the Arts Council segmentation is designed as a resource to be used by locally based managers and professionals. Using these classifications in combination with geographical data-analysis provides local level segmentations for different regions and areas of England.

The Arts Council's audience segmentation does not start with pre-existing socio-demographic segments, but adopts an 'arts-based' approach (Arts Council 2009). The assumption is that different segments are characterised by distinct patterns of engagement, attitudes and motivations towards the arts. The Arts Council's segmentation divides the population into thirteen segments. These thirteen segments are in turn aligned into three groupings according to their 'propensity to engage': the 'Highly Engaged' (urban arts eclectics; traditional culture vultures); 'Some

Engagement’ (fun, fashion and friends; mature explorers; dinner and a show; family and community focused; mid-life hobbyists; bedroom DJs; retired arts and crafts); and ‘Not Currently Engaged’ (time poor dreamers; a quiet pint with the match; older and home-bound; limited means, nothing fancy).

The use of segmentation in strategic planning and communications in fields of arts, culture and heritage management illustrates three issues about the variable public values enacted by this type of social science methodology. First, segmentation methods are deployed in this field in response to widely shared organisational commitments to the value of inclusion. The rationale for using segmentation is to inform more sensitive public engagement strategies that are attuned to cultural diversity and able to engage with socially excluded or under-served segments. For example, the National Trust has undertaken one of the most high profile audience segmentation exercises in this sector. The initial impulse for this exercise was the recognition that its audience was increasingly skewed towards particular, relatively elderly segments of the population. From 2006, the National Trust developed and implemented sophisticated customer segmentation in partnership with private sector market research consultants. The application of this segmentation involves a negotiation of the National Trust’s universal public remit to provide a service for the whole population with recognition of different levels of engagement (Irvine 2010).

Second, there is an identifiable shift in this sector towards the use of segmentation systems that focus on attitudes, motivations and values, rather than simple profiles based on socio-demographic variables of income, education, ethnicity, and so on (Todd and Lawson 2001). This is reflected in the proliferation of segmentations that

used distinct concepts of identity to characterise different segments. For example, the National Trust's segmentation is based on seven 'days out segments', defined by the motivation and mind-set of visitors: inner-directed; live life to the full; explorer family; out and about; young experience seekers; curious minds; kids first family; home and family. As with other examples, these segments are not simply differentiated, they are also aligned on a continuum according to the degree of propensity to engage with the National Trust's services – from the highly knowledgeable 'inner directed' and 'live life to the full' segments who are looking for challenging and stimulating days out; to the more risk adverse, mainstream 'home and family' and 'kids first family' segments at the other end of the scale.

Third, the most significant examples of segmentation exercises in the arts, culture and heritage sector have all been undertaken by national organisations (such as the BBC, the Arts Council, or the National Trust). They are, in turn, designed to be applied in practice by locally based actors. This helps us see that an important reason for the adoption of segmentation methods is to provoke changes in how organisations operate internally as well as how they engage externally with various publics. In the case of the National Trust, the segmentation exercise is credited with producing "a cultural shift" within the organisation by introducing and embedding "a new customer-focus" (Morris, Hargreaves, McIntyre 2013). In this and other cases, the subjects who are the targets of segmentation practices are not a widely dispersed general public. The strategic effect of these exercises is focussed on transforming the self-understandings of specific management and professional groups and the internal functioning of both public and private organisations.

We have seen that in both the public sector and in arts and culture marketing, segmentation methods are deployed as part of strategies that seek to change how people act and think. We have also seen that segmentation methods are articulated with various theories of action, depending on the precise relationship posited between professionals and experts on the one hand and the subjects of public engagement on the other. The increasing emphasis on identity, motivations and lifestyles in the use of segmentation methods reflects the growing influence of specific social psychology theories of personal identity. This influence is most clearly articulated in the so-called ‘values-modes’ segmentation approach, which we discuss in the next section.

3.iii). Segmentation and campaigning

While segmentation is often associated with behaviour change policies in the public sector, a critique of this type of approach is observable in other fields. The critique turns on the degree to which it is assumed that segmentations should be used to identify existing attitudes and values which are then the object of interventions; or whether segmentation methods should be used in programmes to changes these attitudes and values. These debates have been heightened by the emergence of a distinctive values-based approach to segmentation (see Rose 2011). The approach has been developed and pioneered by organisations involved in both cultural and campaigning strategy, and is based on the psychological theory of personal motivations developed by Abraham Maslow (see Maslow 1943). Maslow’s work is used to inform as model in which populations can be segmented according to unmet psychological needs that are assumed to drive behaviour. The values-modes approach categorizes people into twelve separate psychological groups. This understanding of what motivates people, drawing on a specific interpretation of psychological theory, is

then used to divide the population into three psychological motivational groups: *pioneers* (who have inner directed needs and seek an ethical basis for life); *prospectors* (who have outer directed needs, and seek psychological rewards in status, fashion, and recognition by others); and *settlers* (who have sustenance driven needs, and who are cautious, protective, and seek security). The use of Maslow's model in segmentation methods informs an understanding of the different reasons and stimuli to which people will respond in adopting the same behaviour. Since pioneers lead, prospectors follow, and settlers then follow them in adopting new behaviours, this approach ascribes different degrees of agency to different segments in the pursuit of any given public objective. In particular, 'prospectors' are identified as a key target group for any successful campaign.

The values-modes methodology informs a critical stance towards the use of segmentation in behaviour-change and social marketing initiatives developed by organisations such as DEFRA. Promoters of values-modes segmentation argue that these approaches start from the assumption that in order to get people to do something different it is best to understand what they already do. From this perspective, information does not drive behaviour; opinions and attitudes are shaped by behaviours rather than the other way round. On this view, it is necessary to start from an understanding of what actually motivates people's behaviour rather than either observations of their behaviour or self-reported explanations of behaviour (Rose *et al* 2007). In claiming to 'start with people, and the motivations that drive behaviours', this approach invests a considerable degree of authority in an *a priori* theory of deeply ingrained psychological needs. The basic assumption behind this approach is that

communications strategies should seek to align preferred behaviours with values, rather than seek to change these values.

The values-modes approach has been developed explicitly as a resource for campaigning organisations. Political parties, NGOs and multinational organizations have adopted this model of audience segmentation model. It is also increasingly used in public engagement campaigning around climate change, conservation and environmental issues (Rose *et al* 2005). For example, research undertaken on behalf of Natural England to inform its strategy for public engagement with undersea landscapes used the values modes approach (Rose *et al* 2008). This segmentation involved dividing the population into the three Maslowian needs groups, each containing four of the twelve values modes, of Inner Directed, Outer Directed and Security Driven. This model presumes that these groupings are reflective of deep, underlying beliefs and motivations. It found that the three segments exhibit pronounced underlying differences in their desire to protect nature. The key finding of this segmentation is that building support for marine conservation issues, requires more than information, which is likely to be inadequate or counter-productive. Rather, an ‘indirect experiential approach’ is recommended, one which engages positively with people’s interests and concerns.

In addition to its use in fields of campaigning, charity and non-profit sector marketing, the values-mode segmentation approach is also used by think tanks engaged with public policy issues. For example, research on the mainstreaming of low carbon behaviours by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) makes explicit the degree to which this approach emphasises a differential communication strategy

that accords primary responsibility in driving change to specific segments of the population. The values-modes approach is used to identify a segment of ‘Now People’, who correspond to the ‘prospectors’ segment, the key target group identified by theorists of the values-modes approach:

“Now People seek psychological rewards in status, fashion, success, and the esteem and recognition of others. They tend to have a high level of motivation to consume, and their prominent position within social circles makes them a driver of fashions and trends, meaning that they are a particularly powerful subsection of the population when it comes to determining consumption-related behaviours.” (Platt and Retallack 2009, 4).

The claim behind this use of segmentation methods is that climate change communications has not effectively engaged the values and concerns of this segment of Now People, thereby limiting the effectiveness of efforts to encourage the adoption of low carbon practices.

The emergence of the values-modes segmentation approach illustrates the assumptions about differential agency that shape the deployment of segmentation methodologies in various non-commercial settings. It has also provoked an explicit debate about the degree to which initiatives should seek to align with existing values or explicitly seek to transform them (see Welch 2012). The aim of seeking to change people’s values, not merely aligning communications strategies with them, is most clearly illustrated by the World Wide Fund for Nature’s (WWF) *Common Cause* report, which also uses values-based segmentation methods (WWF 2010). It starts

from the premise that information-led strategies misunderstand the dynamics of behaviour and action by ascribing too much authority to evidence and knowledge. It draws on social psychology research on the role of values in motivating concern for ‘bigger-than-self’ issues, as well as sociological theories of framing, and then translates these theories into effective communications strategies that aim to activate and strengthen ‘helpful values’.

Whereas the focus on ‘prospectors’ and ‘Now People’ by the IPPR aligns communications strategy with a particular set of values that are assumed to coincide with a particular set of people, the WWF report assumes that all audience segments will have all the values identified in psychological models. The challenge, on this understanding, is to activate certain values across all segments, rather than focus only on particular segments. From the perspective informing *Common Cause*, segmentation methods should be used to activate a shared set of values across a whole population, rather than to target certain groups with distinctive values as key agents of change.

Debates around the use of values-based segmentation methods, and specifically around the degree to which values themselves can or should be changed, make explicit the ways in which the use of segmentation in non-commercial settings is intimately connected to the differential ascription of agency. The division around which these debates turn is between a view in which of segmentation is best used to identify those segments of the population who are best placed to lead transformative initiatives, and a view in which segmentation should be used to help develop differentiated strategies to activate a set of values shared across the population. In

concluding, we argue that the configuration of fields of agency should be the core focus of further research focussed on the critical evaluation of the deployment of ‘dividing practices’ such as segmentation methods.

4). Differentiating the public

In pursuing our first aim of tracking the rationalities driving the proliferation of segmentation methods in non-commercial fields of action, we have reconstructed the adoption and proliferation of segmentation methods across a number of non-commercial fields in the UK, including public policy, arts and culture management, and NGO campaigning. Marketing technologies are used to aggregate individuals into segments in behaviour change and social marketing practices; they are used to identify and select marginalised or difficult to reach audience segments in cultural policy initiatives; and they are used to inform values-based communication strategies by a range of campaign initiatives. Across these differences, there is nonetheless a shared rationale underlying the strategic use of segmentation methodologies. First, across these varied fields, segmentation methods are used to generate relatively stable images of public attitudes and values. Second, these images are used to inform strategies that seek to either change these dispositions or to mobilise them in support of new behaviours.

The increasing emphasis on the use of motivational variables therefore illustrates how segmentations are explicitly adopted with the aim of ‘generating movement’: the intention is to change people’s attitudes, increase public support, alter behaviour, or overcome barriers and impediments (see Lezaun and Soneyrd 2007). Segmentations are used to identify the forms of inducement, encouragement, or persuasion different

people might be susceptible to when designing programmes seeking to change people's conduct, opinions, or increasingly, their values. The increasingly widespread use of segmentation methods is indicative of an approach to governing public issues that is concerned with aligning initiatives with the susceptibilities and propensities of differentiated populations.

We have seen that the deployment of segmentation methods in non-commercial settings involves a series of disputes. These include debates about the relevance of information-led strategies of behaviour change; debates about appropriate conceptualisations of action and their implications for the selection of segmentation variables; and debates about the relationship between changing people's behaviour and their values. The identification of the internally contested quality of segmentation practices links to the second of our aims, which is to identify the key issues which should orient further research into the use of marketing practices such as segmentation in non-commercial fields of action. Our analysis shows that segmentation methods are used differently across various fields of practice, and in relation to variable public values. The emergence of strategies which explicitly aim to differentiate the capacities of specific segments of the population to participate in or support public initiatives raises questions for how this process should be critically evaluated. Existing understandings of 'neoliberal hegemony' or 'neoliberal governmentality' posit straightforward trade-offs between private and public values, and individual and collective action. From these theoretical premises, the proliferation of segmentation methods would seem to indicate a basic contradiction between different values: on the one hand, the 'public' purposes of organisations in both the public sector and the third sector are defined by certain 'universal' obligations (to provide a uniform level of

service to all clients, for example; or obligations to be open and accessible to all); on the other hand, segmentation methods are sourced from private sector marketing, and embody and enact certain normative assumptions of market-based practices.

We have adopted an alternative, diagnostic approach to the proliferation of segmentation methods in non-commercial settings. We have sought to identify the *problems* to which these social science practices are thought to be an appropriate solution. The deployment of segmentation can certainly be interpreted as part of a ‘new governmentality’, in which the rationalities of populations are made known to governments, non-government agencies, and private actors so that they might better interact with those populations as citizens, volunteers, clients, consumers, customers, and so on (see Gleadle *et al* 2008). But this process needs to be seen as a response to widely shared perception of across diverse organisational fields, rather than simply a top-down imposition of models of privatization or market-rule.

Our analysis suggests that the increasing use of segmentation methods is indicative of the emergence of a broadly shared problematization of public action. The defining feature of this problematization is the idea that organisations are faced with the task of being responsive to differentiated publics while maintaining obligations of collective stake-holding or universal access. This balancing act is, in turn, shaped by a range of imperatives, all of which refer to one or more compelling public value which organisations are expected to enact: the efficient use of resources, legitimacy of activities, concerns with accountability, imperatives of inclusion. With respect to each of these values, the promise of segmentation methods is to allow organisations to differentiate publics more finely.

The analysis of the proliferation of segmentation methods presented here indicates that a recurring issue across various fields is the differentiation of capacities for agency amongst a diverse public. This finding suggests the point from which further critical investigation of the non-commercial use of marketing practices should proceed. The differentiation of public agency revealed by paying attention to the rationalities shaping the widespread deployment of segmentation methods in non-commercial settings requires a more nuanced evaluation than is allowed by existing models of neoliberalization. The proliferation of segmentation methods is not best interpreted as indicative of a straightforward shift from public values to private values, nor of a neoliberal individualisation of public-oriented organisations. Rather, it should be seen as one part of a process whereby the means and ends of public action are reconfigured: methods, techniques and theories from marketing and management fields are used as the means to help organisations to achieve a variety of public ends, ones defined in relation to imperatives such as diversity, differentiation, inclusion, value-for-money, and consultation.

We have seen that the deployment of segmentation methods is often associated with a differentiation of agency across a range of issues: for example, different segments of the population are identified as bearing particular responsibility for leading on sustainability issues, or for leading changes in attitudes towards climate change. It is around this issue that further inquiry should be focussed. Research on the deployment of social science methods as techniques of governance should be oriented to the analysis of how both the adoption and the implementation of segmentation practices

help to configure the distribution of agency between professionals, experts, and different ‘public’ subjects.

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