



Australian Government
Department of Defence
Defence Science and
Technology Organisation



Looking through a Glass Onion: A mixed method formative research case

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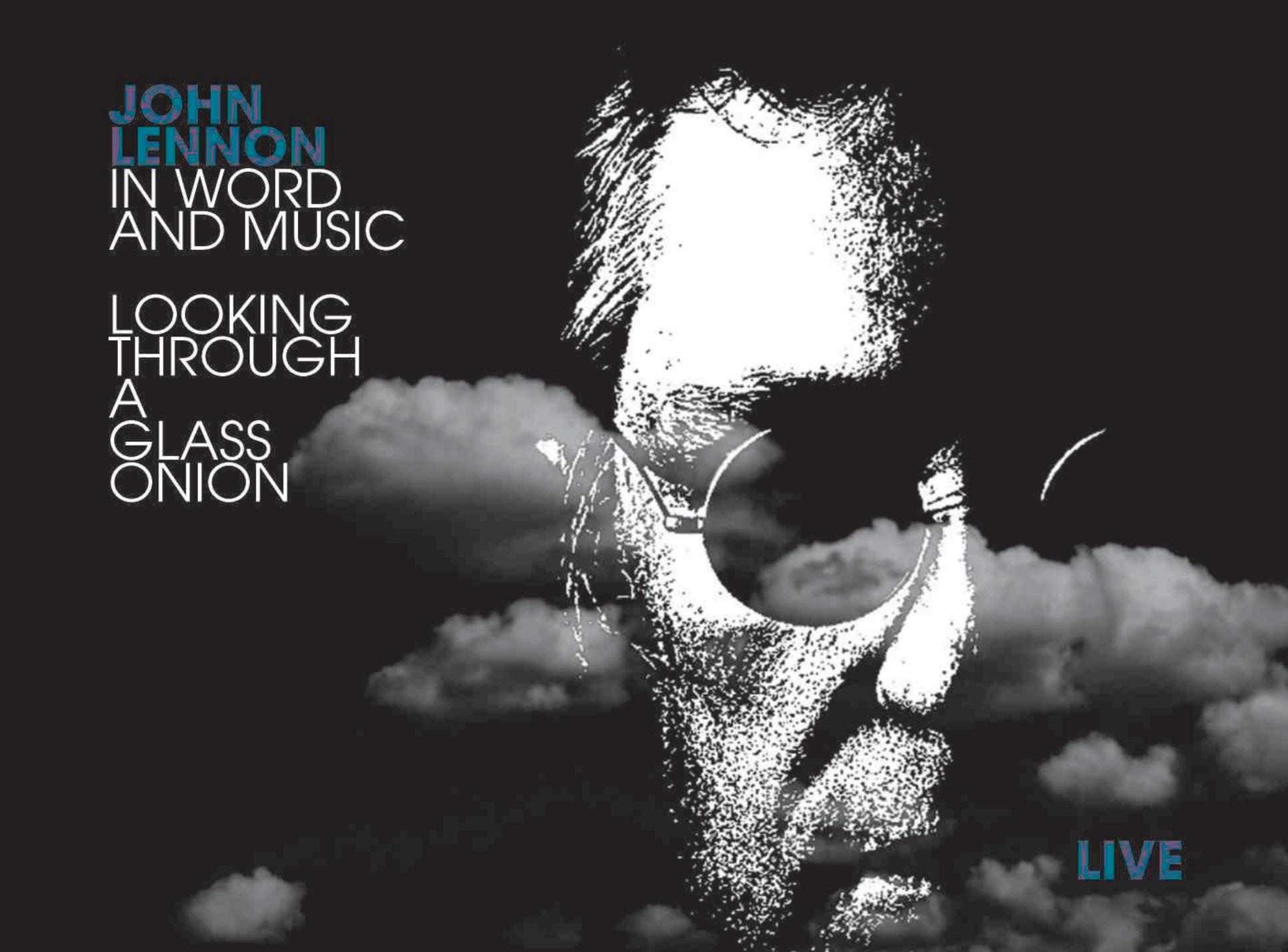
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Social Marketing @Griffith



DSTO

Science and Technology for Safeguarding Australia



**JOHN
LENNON**
IN WORD
AND MUSIC

LOOKING
THROUGH
A
GLASS
ONION

LIVE

The purpose of formative research

*'Well, here's another place you can go...to see
how the other half live'*

(Lennon and McCartney, 1968)

'Seeing the world through their eyes'

(Hastings, 2007)

'Placing yourself in their shoes'

(French, 2011)

The purpose of formative research

- An understanding of the consumer is considered fundamental to social marketing
- Gives the field a ‘competitive edge’
- Produces interventions/strategies/programs that have greater impact

Formative research methods – critiques/calls

- Avoid the *'tyranny of focus groups'* (Lefebvre, 2013)
- Reliance on focus groups or survey methods...
need to diversify (Rundle-Thiele et al., 2013)
- Researchers are encouraged to take
methodological risks (Brennan et al., 2011)
- Capture/report adaptations and explorations with
alternative methods (Fry, 2007)

Formative research methods



Social marketing: 51% Qualitative; 32% Quantitative; 13% Mixed

(Truong, 2014)

Mixed methods

- Research that combines alternative approaches within a single research project

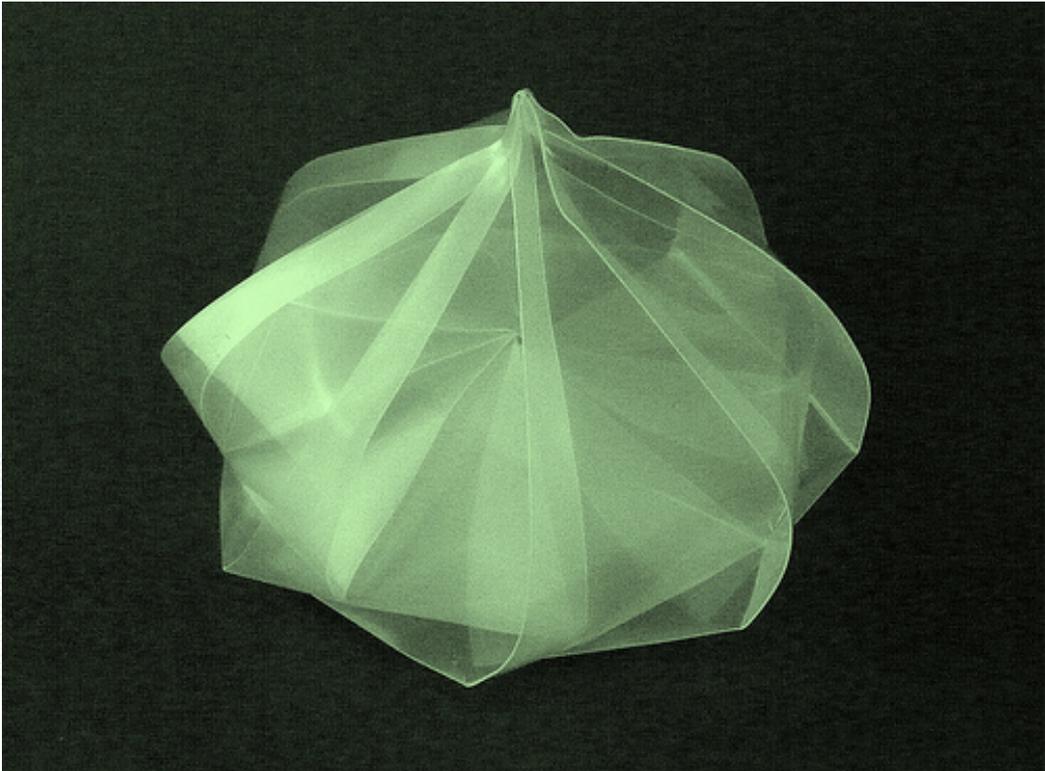
(Denscombe, 2010)

~~It can't be done ☹️~~

~~It can be done...~~

It SHOULD be done!

Looking through a Glass Onion



A mixed method formative research case

The Australian Defence Force (ADF)

- Need to be fit...need to be healthy

Optimal nutrition

- ✓ **Enhances** athletic performance and recovery

(Rodriguez, 2009)

- ✓ **Essential** for attaining and maintaining good health

(WHO, 2002)



The problem

Many military personnel exhibit poor dietary behaviour

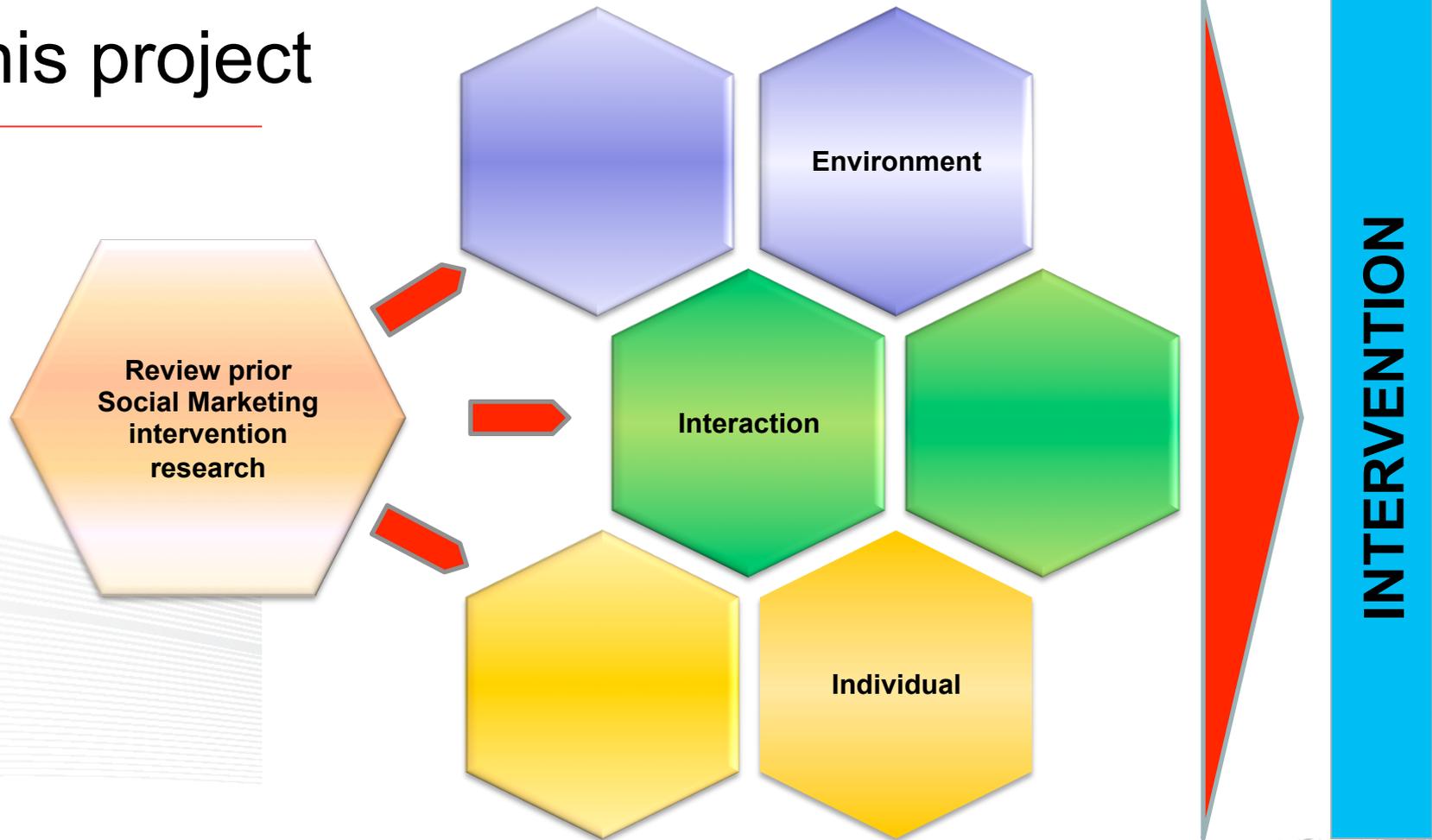
(Barlas, 2013, Forbes-Ewan 2008; Skiller, 2005)

Rates of overweight and obesity in military forces are similar to the general population

(Barlas, 2013, Sanderson, 2012, AIHW, 2010)



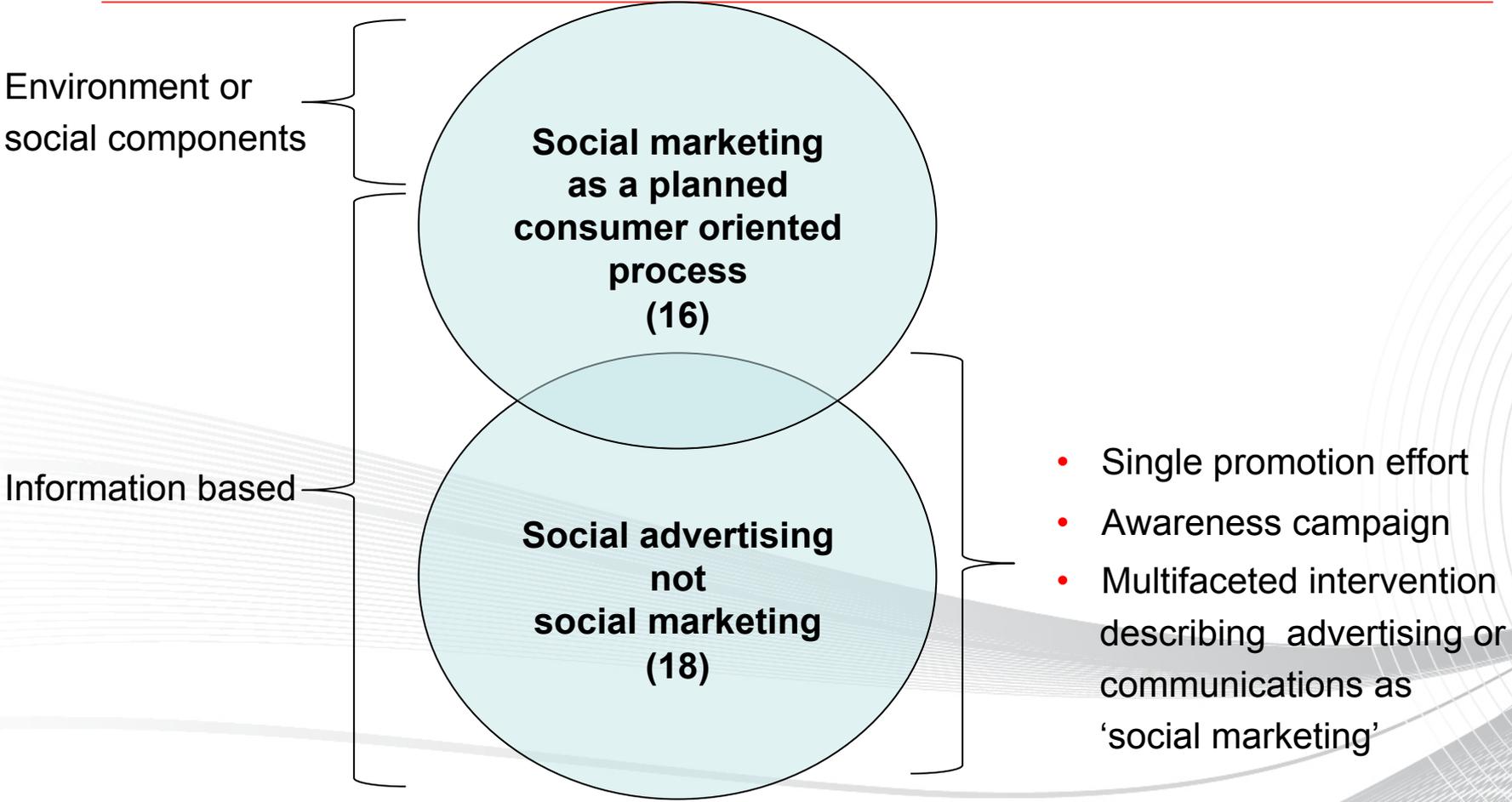
This project



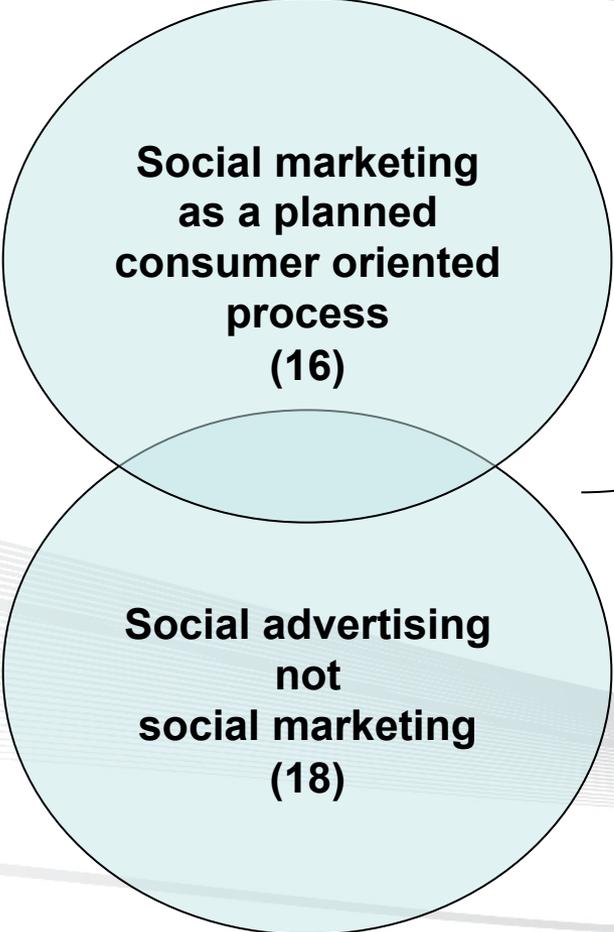
Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

- What can be learned from prior social marketing efforts in the nutrition domain?
- What has worked in the past and what hasn't?
- What may transfer to this context?

Findings (Carins, 2014)



Findings (Carins, 2014)

A Venn diagram consisting of two overlapping light blue circles. The top circle is labeled "Social marketing as a planned consumer oriented process (16)". The bottom circle is labeled "Social advertising not social marketing (18)". A bracket on the right side of the top circle points to a list of findings.

**Social marketing
as a planned
consumer oriented
process
(16)**

**Social advertising
not
social marketing
(18)**

- **Used more criteria**
- **More effective**
*(behaviour change was
observed more often in
these studies)*

Individual in-depth interviews

Provides a rich, detailed account of an topic

- Suitable when participant views not known (Braun and Clarke, 2006)
- Conscious influences/motivations explored

This study:

- 15 semi-structured in-depth interviews; thematic analysis
- Focus: Meaning of ‘healthy eating’ ; current practices; motivations to eat well; skills/abilities they employ; opportunities available; difficulties/frustrations

Findings

They know what to do...they are motivated

- Tap into performance oriented motivations

There is a perceived lack of opportunity

- Investigate the food environment
- Can modifications be made?

They have some ability...but find it hard work

- Can we make it easier?

Food environment audit

More objective assessment of the opportunities for healthful eating (Lytle, 2009)

- Direct measure, rather than individual perception

This study:

- Validated observational instruments
- 34 outlets assessed, (4 on base, others within 1-2 km)

Findings (Carins, 2014)

Congruence between perception and reality

- Total environment is not very supportive

Military dining facilities just above average

- Reasonable availability
- Supportive pricing

Findings (Carins, 2014)

Military dining facilities

- Low information provision
- No facilitators

Opportunities:

- Information for “the thinkers”,
- Facilitators for “the autopilots”

Observation of behaviour *in situ*

Witnesses behaviour first hand

- Not reliant on what people say they do, or think they do
(Denscombe, 2010)

This study:

- Observed 4 meals
- Captured aggregate food choice (630 diners)
- Captured individual food choice (168 plates)

Observation of behaviour *in situ*

Food classification

- Derived from dietary guidelines and health policy
- Green, Orange, Red (Most healthful > Least healthful)

Examined:

- Proportion presented (red, orange, green)
- Proportion selected (red, orange, green)
- Net selection (how individual selection differed from proportion presented - red, orange, green)

Findings

An average plate = 1 main, 3 - 4 sides

Proportions presented:

- Mains mostly red, sides mostly green

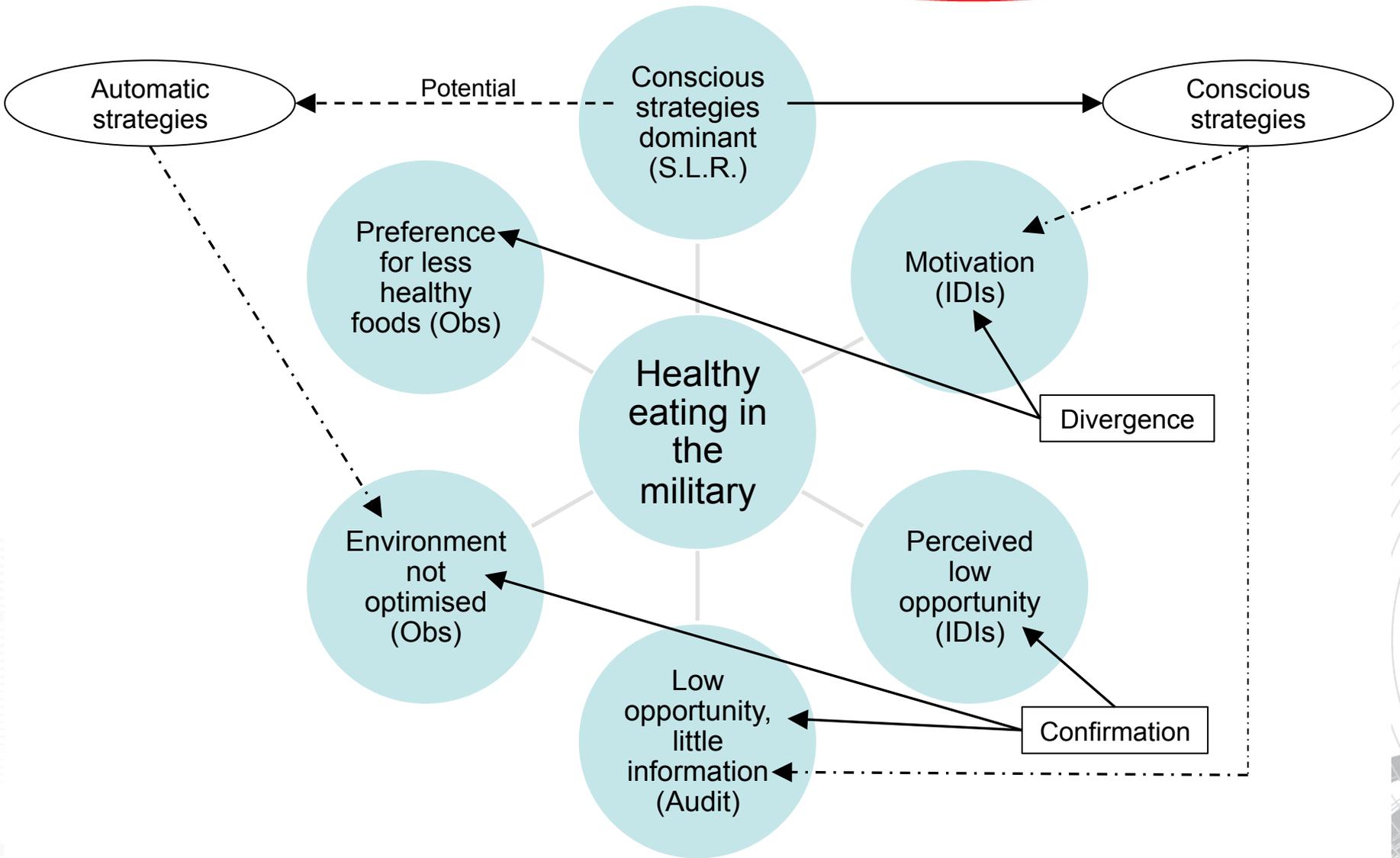
Diner selections:

- Mains – in line with proportions presented (mostly red)
- Sides – significantly more red and green than presented

➤ Apparent preference for the less healthful dishes

Bringing it all together

- The pursuit of complementary information
- The endeavour to create a fuller picture of the phenomena under investigation
- More than triangulation – closer to crystallisation



Looking through the Glass Onion

- Mixed methods in this project provided a broader understanding of the consumers
- Understanding is found in both the convergence and divergence of findings

A deepened, complex, understanding...we know more and doubt what we know... ingeniously, we know there is always more to know

(Richardson, 2000)



Looking through the Glass Onion

*Well, here's another place you can be ...
trying to make a dovetail joint...'*

(Lennon and McCartney, 1968)

- Pragmatic approach:
 - Fits methods to the context
 - Outcome oriented approach
 - Adopts a pluralistic and eclectic perspective
 - In a better position to effect behavioural change



*I got a bit lost here...
what did that have to do with
The Beatles?*

*What is the real meaning of
that song anyway?*

*Why was there no singing?
....or playing the track
backwards to find hidden
words...*



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