power

profits before people

driving obesity

hope
Rise Like Lions After Slumber
A critical perspective on social marketing

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structure

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marketing is as old as human society: doing deals

me

mutually beneficial exchange

you
marketing is as old as human society: doing deals

me

shop-keeper

mutually beneficial exchange
marketing is as old as human society: doing deals

Coke’s $3b immense power

grooming manipulation harm

teen
corporate power

global south

exporting industrial epidemics

commercial imperialism
marketing is ubiquitous

‘the ‘aggregate marketing system’ in the US employs over 30 million people, servicing 285m customers who spent five trillion dollars a year. Just counting this money would take 150 millennia; longer than the whole period of human civilisation’

(Wilkie & Moore, 2002, Marketing’s Relationship to Society)

Ours is ‘a society that is, to an unusual degree, business-run, with huge expenditures on marketing: $1 trillion a year, one-sixth of the gross domestic product, much of it tax deductible, so people pay for the privilege of being subjected to manipulation of their attitudes and behaviour.

(Chomsky N (1999) Profits Over People)
marketing is ubiquitous and very powerful

‘Corporations that are turning over these huge profits can own everything: the media, the universities, the mines, the weapons industry, insurance hospitals, drug companies, non-governmental. They can buy judges, journalists, politicians, publishing houses, television stations, bookshops and even activists’

(Arunndhati Roy 2011)
Public Health

The holy trinity of tobacco, alcohol and UP food

The unholy trinity of marketing

The obvious truth that it has an effect
Public Health

The holy trinity of tobacco, alcohol and UP food

The unholy trinity of marketing

The obvious truth that it has an effect
Industrial Epidemics

‘The concept of an epidemic associated with the commercialization of a dangerous product ....diseases of consumers, workers and community residents caused by industrial promotion of consumable products .... In each instance, public health oriented policies run the risk of being opposed by industrial corporations in a health versus profit trade-off.’

(Jahiel and Babor 2007)
Profits and pandemics: prevention of harmful effects of tobacco, alcohol, and ultra-processed food and drink industries  (Moodie et al 2013 The Lancet)

Key messages

- Transnational corporations are major drivers of non-communicable disease epidemics and profit from increased consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and ultra-processed food and drink (so-called unhealthy commodities)
- Alcohol and ultra-processed food and drink industries use similar strategies to the tobacco industry to undermine effective public health policies and programmes
The World Health Organisation

‘chronic non-communicable diseases have overtaken infectious diseases as the leading cause of morbidity, disability, and mortality…

Efforts to prevent non-communicable diseases go against the business interests of powerful economic operators… it is not just Big Tobacco anymore. Public health must also contend with Big Food, Big Soda, and Big Alcohol. All of these industries fear regulation, and protect themselves by using the same tactics*. ’

Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General WHO, 10 June 2013

*aka marketing
The best things in life aren't things

spiritual harm

mental harm

individual physical harm

community harm

political harm

The revenues of Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil & Wal-Mart each exceed the combined GDP of the 110 poorest countries
...and of course planetary harm
every increasing
growth
every increasing
consumption

= marketing
gets us shopping;
stops us questioning

this is a catastrophe....
1. The power of marketing

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How marketing works

- mass media
- advertising
- billboards
- press
- television
How marketing works

mass media
advertising
press
billboards
other marketing communications
point of sale
internet
sponsorship
free samples
brand stretching
product placement
packaging

television
billboards
press
How marcomms work

subtle and difficult to detect

• An obvious and negotiable sales pitch to our explicit reasoning?

The rules

One of the most common concerns we hear about online ads is that the content of an ad was misleading, and sometimes that includes uncertainty as to whether the content you’ve seen online is advertising or not. The rules in this area state:

• Ads must be obviously identifiable as such
• Ads must not materially mislead or be likely to do so

Advertisers are allowed to make their ads appealing, including by making the content more similar to interesting editorial content, but advertisers must be cautious that, in seeking to make ads more inviting they do not camouflage their advertisements

• This is not the reality of advertising
Emotional appeals that make us feel good about the consumption process

Implicit messages of hint and association: sponsorship, celebrity endorsement, cartoon characters

The brand is vital

Digital and social media have greatly increased the reach and power of these implicit appeals
Advergames and social media

Crabs and Penguins: a game sponsored by Coke and McDonalds, which commercialises play. Children aren’t just potential targets, with social media they are potential marketers.
Facebook strikes Diageo advertising deal

‘Facebook has struck a multimillion-dollar advertising partnership with Diageo, owner of drinks brands including Smirnoff and Guinness, in the latest move by the social networking website to form closer ties with marketers…. 

Financial Times, 18 September 2011

Facebook are working with us to make sure that we are not only fan collecting but that they are actively engaged and driving advocacy for our brands. We are looking for increases in customer engagement and increases in sales and share…

Kathy Parker, Diageo’s Senior Vice-president Global Marketing
How marketing works

marcomms are only a part of the story.
How marketing works

consumer marketing

other marketing communications

mass media advertising

- television
- press
- billboards

- point of sale
- internet
- sponsorship
- free samples
- brand stretching
- product placement
- packaging

product design

price

place
Price promotions utterly confuse us.
A large supermarket has 40,000 lines

Marketing ‘helps’ us choose: mood music, positioning, soil sprinkled on potatoes..

Moving a product from side to main isle increases sales by 400%
why food processing is so destructive
Basic foods (eg milk)

Processing (eg into fruit yoghurt)

Processing usually involves adding salt, sugar & fat and maximising palatability

Higher profits

Higher sales & margins

Increased marketing spend

Added value

Generic sales, low margins, little marketing

(Often used as ‘loss leaders’ to support sales of higher margin processed foods)
The brand
Get them young

‘Children are important to marketers for three fundamental reasons:

1. They represent a large market in themselves because they have ‘by age 10 its game over’
   Epigeneticist, ECHO panel

2. They influence the selection of products and brands

3. They will grow up to be consumers of everything; hence marketers need to start building up their brand consciousness and loyalty as early as possible.’

Foxall and Goldsmith (1994) Consumer Psychology for Marketers p203
How marketing works

stakeholder marketing

mass media advertising

consumer marketing

other marketing communications

point of sale

internet

sponsorship

free samples

brand stretching

product placement

packaging

distribution

price

social marketing

media know-how

corporate affairs

product design

Comp analysis

corporate social responsibility

How marketing works
structure

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Back to Bukowski

Remember: no one forces us to shop at Wal-Mart
‘military industrial complex’
(Dwight D Eisenhower 1961)

‘unwarranted influence - economic, political, even spiritual’
‘felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government’, ‘we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved. So is the very structure of our society.’

‘alert and knowledgeable citizenry’
Critical capacity

Citizens need to be engaged in the process of change that will bring about healthier societies. This means they need to know more about the methods of big business. This includes media literacy campaigns which unpick advertising and how to guard against them.

But need to go further (‘marketing literacy’):
- Why does Coke prioritise ubiquitous distribution?
- How do pricing deals work?
- Why are processed foods inevitably unhealthy?

More widely still, people need to be taught about the fiduciary imperative.
Critical capacity

- Tell our own stories
- Be critical:
  
  Question the assumptions underpinning what we think to be true, to uncover what we can objectively state to be true. Be an alert and knowledgeable citizen.
Regulation

Containment
Marketing regulation in tobacco control shows that:

- the key requirement is to reduce exposure. Content regulation, with one exception*, produces ineffective and resource wasting codes of conduct

- measures have to be comprehensive, taking in all forms of marketing communication as well as other elements of the marketing mix (inc product design, packaging, distribution and pricing)

- commercial operators have to obey these rules, but otherwise must be excluded from the regulatory process

* the Loi Evin in France
Containment

We desperately need a framework convention on healthy diets.

An international treaty to protect health from the predations of the tobacco industry.

Comprehensive strategy.

Massively popular.
Civil Society

Counteraction

Pro health counter-marketing has been shown to be effective. The Truth campaign in the US for example, significantly reduced teen smoking (3). In the UK CRUK’s ‘smoke this’ demonstrates how digital channels can perform a similar task (4).
Civil Society

Counteraction

pro health counter-marketing has been shown to be effective. the Truth campaign in the US for example, significantly reduced teen smoking (3). in the UK CRUK’s ‘smoke this’ demonstrates how digital channels can perform a similar task (4)
Critical capacity, Containment and Counteraction – the 3 Cs – work in concert:
Building the critical capacity of the population so they can respond effectively to marketing. Includes media literacy, critical business training, self production, community co-ops etc

Regulation to constrain unhealthy marketing: the key concern is to reduce exposure

Pro-health counter marketing, including media efforts like Truth Campaign and CRUK’s ‘Smoke This’
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A healthy system

Call for change

• There is no need for violence or the manning of barricades
• We just have to withdraw our collaboration, and encourage others to do the same
• Remember Walmart has only grown so big because we shop there
A healthy system

Call for change

- Individual change: Increasing critical awareness: helping people to see the trap they are in
- Systemic change: regulation of the marketing system that pushes people back into passivity

Recognising that in a democracy these two are symbiotically connected – the best way (only way?) to get regulatory change is by popular demand
A healthy system

If corporate capitalism is demanding obedience, our task is not to say, ‘no, obey us instead’ it is to encourage people to think for themselves, be critical and not accept anything as a given

This reclaims the essence of our humanity:

• to overcome adversity, to find our own path.

• The quest for ‘self-transcendence’ (Aldous Huxley 1971) ‘to escape from the tormenting consciousness of being merely ourselves’
It is not easy

‘walker, there is no path – you must make your own’

But it is vital

This is how progress begins

This is how progress goes to scale

The Sardane
Keep your coins
I want change

Our job is to work with her to achieve it
Thank you for listening

Do you agree we have a problem?

What are your ideas about solutions?

What change will you cause?