

alcohol marketing: time for radical action

Gerard Hastings

Global Alcohol Policy Conference
Edinburgh
October 2015

sometimes we overlook the obvious

power

they have too much

we need more

marketing is as old as human society:
doing deals



marketing is as old as human society:
doing deals



marketing is as old as human society:
doing deals



“it is undeniable that alcohol advertising acts as an encouragement to consumption”

(European Court of Justice ruling – C152/78 (2002))

There is conclusive evidence of a small but consistent association of advertising with consumption at a population level. There is also evidence of small but consistent effects of advertising on consumption of alcohol by young people at an individual level.

(UK Gvt Review (2008))

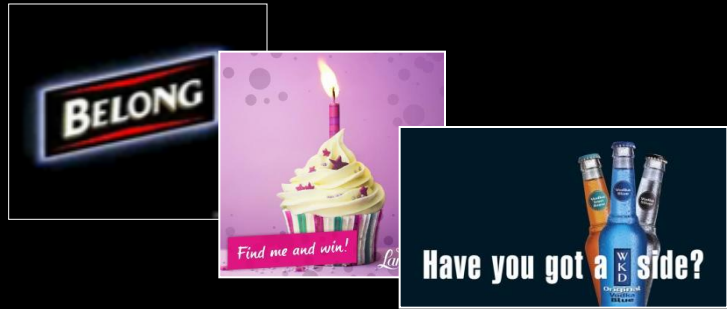
“alcohol advertising increases both the uptake of drinking and consumption in young people”

(Science Committee of the EU Commission Alcohol Forum 2009)

“Longitudinal studies consistently suggest that exposure to media and commercial communications on alcohol is associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start to drink alcohol, and with increased drinking amongst baseline drinkers.”

(Alcohol and Alcoholism 2009)

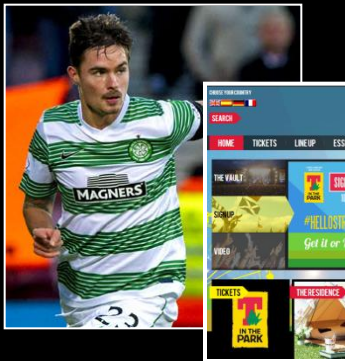
Case 1: conventional advertising



The power to capture emotions

The power normalise drinking

Case 2: sports



what have our leaders
done to defend our young
people from such
overweening power?

the rules
with youth
parents' (ASA)]

Case 3: digital marketing



The power to become my mate

The power to get me marketing

The power to create my realities

action on alcohol marketing

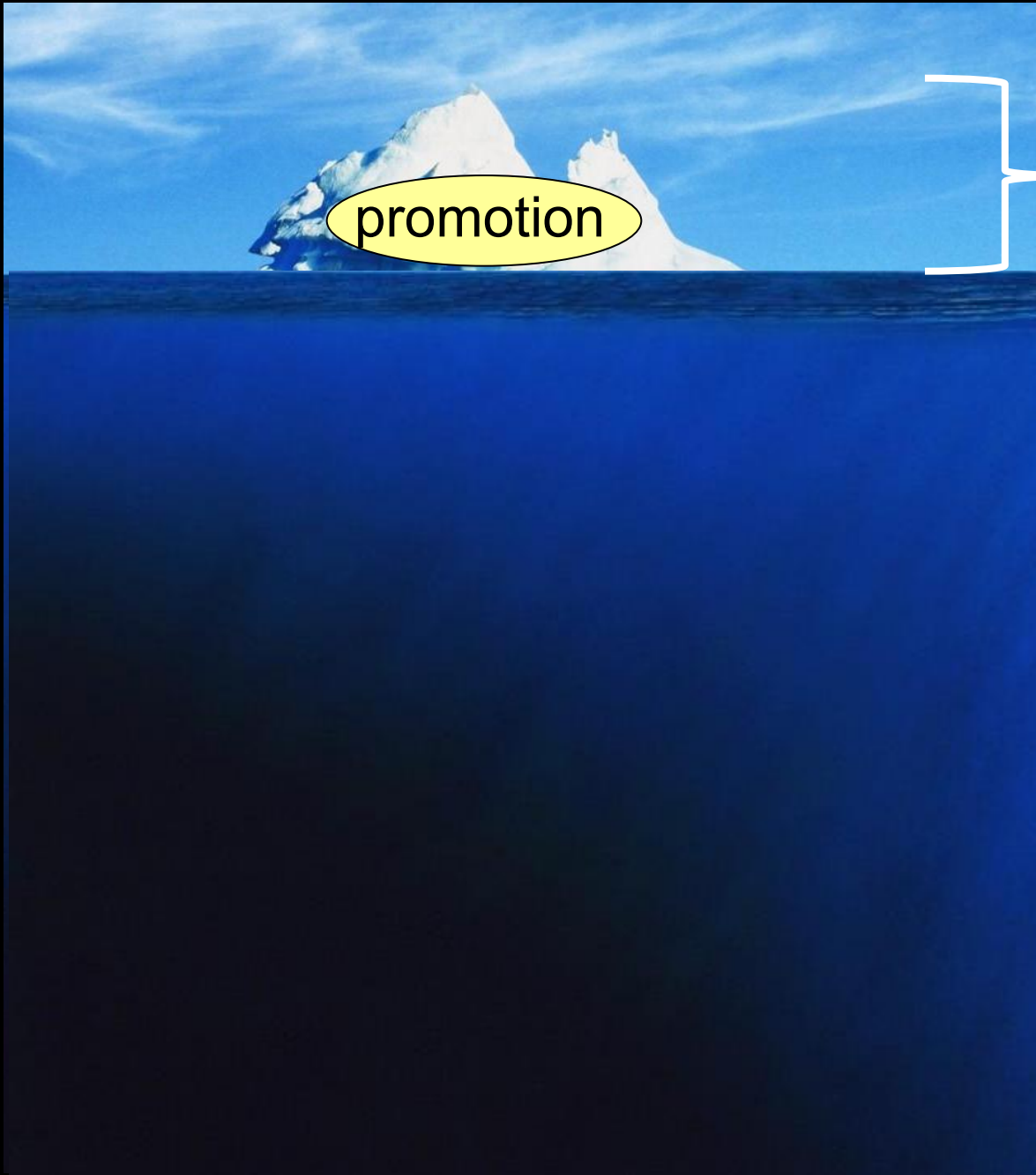
TC has shown us what does not work:

- content regulation (too easily evaded)
- partial restrictions (greater spend elsewhere)
- Voluntary measures

And what does work:

- Independent, statutory action to radically reduce exposure
 - Comprehensive ad bans
 - Loi Evin

We work in public health; we believe in the evidence base – this is the evidence base



promotion



the obvious target

The image features a large iceberg floating in the ocean. The top part of the iceberg, which is above the water line, is labeled 'promotion'. The bottom part, which is submerged, contains two boxes labeled 'BINGOs' and 'CSR'. To the right of the iceberg, there are three colored boxes: a yellow one at the top, a cyan one in the middle, and a green one at the bottom. White brackets connect these boxes to the corresponding parts of the iceberg. The background is a blue sky and ocean.

promotion

the obvious target

strategic

consumer marketing

remorseless

the fiduciary imperative ensures it is utterly focused on profits

stakeholder marketing

BINGOs

CSR

the marketing matrix

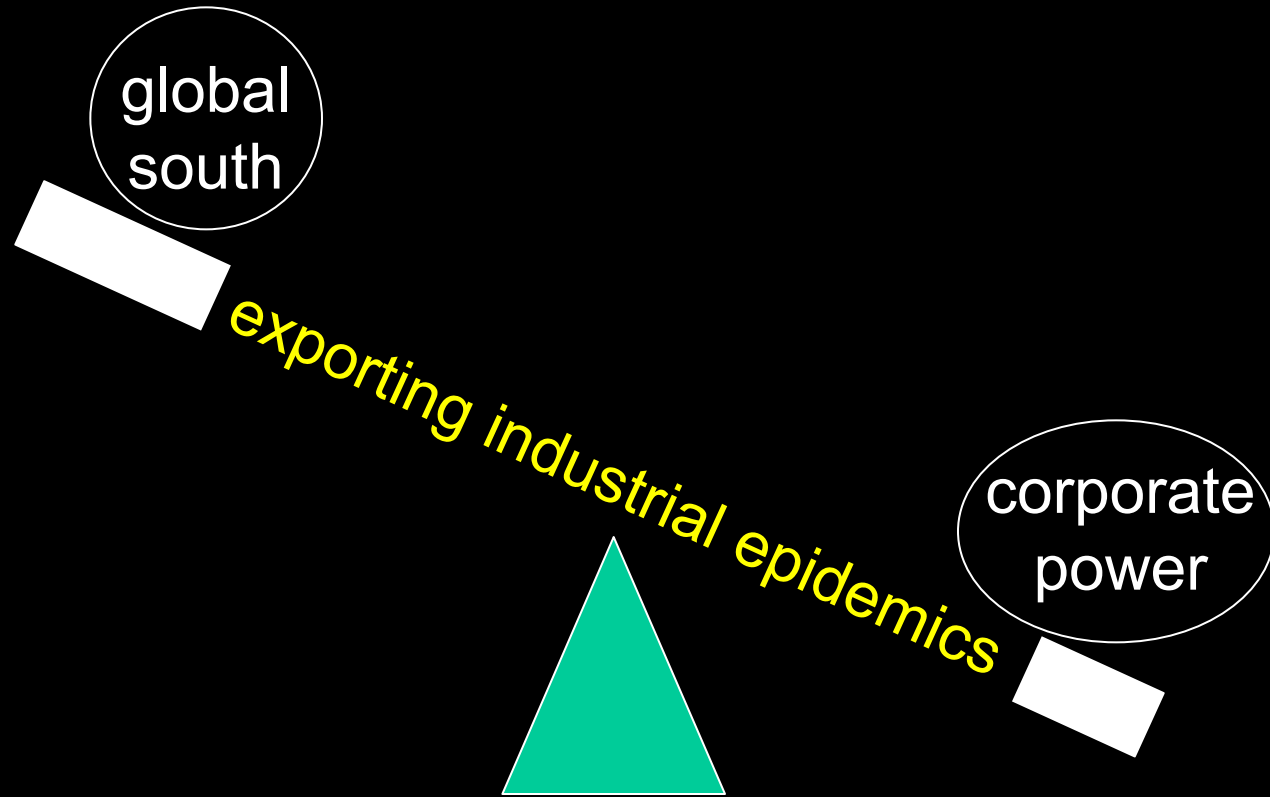


corporate power

This marketing muscle has given Big Alcohol global reach, and it is using it:

- *Carlsberg bets on Asian growth* (Telegraph)
- *Heineken boosted by emerging markets* (Wall St Jnl)
- *Ambev to launch bars across Brazil* (Financial Times)
- *Diageo India targets young and women* (WARC)
- *SABMiller opens fourth brewery in Nigeria*
(Marketing Watch)

corporate power



Commercial imperialism: 'second grab for Africa'

obvious

power

they have too much

we need more

There are three logical public health responses:

- a) Containment of the pathogen
(by regulation)
- b) Counteracting its spread
(eg by counter advertising)
- c) Critical capacity building in
the population
(eg with media literacy)

Key conditions:

- these are not alternatives, but mutually reinforcing pillars of a strategic response guided by clear targets and continuous monitoring
- each is a product of ongoing partnership working between citizens, public health professionals and civil society. Diageo's power has been a century in the making; the public health response has to be equally long term
- each can take many forms and needs to be deployed strategically.
- The next three slides discuss each in more detail.

Containment

- Yes we should control promotion, and the key requirement is to reduce exposure.
- Yes measures have to be comprehensive, taking in all forms of marcomms & the marketing mix
- But it needs to go much further. We have to think globally
- We have to respond to the threat from trade agreements - Jane Kelsey's three headed hydra*
- We need our own international treaty; one which prioritises people not profits. And we need it now.

Containment

A Framework Convention on Alcohol Control

International conventions exist to control narcotics, psychotropic substances, tobacco, and doping in sport. But when it comes to alcohol—the drug that causes 4% of global deaths and disability—nearly as much as tobacco (4.1%) and five times the burden of illicit drugs—no similar legally binding agreement has been sought.

In many cultures, alcohol has long been considered in a more salubrious, socially acceptable light than other drugs. This attitude might be because of the putative health benefits associated with moderate drinking. Or

perhaps because of the social acceptability of alcohol. In most societies, alcohol is more socially acceptable than tobacco. It is also more likely to be consumed in moderation.

Public-health advocates have also been lenient on the alcoholic beverage industry compared with big tobacco. These lax attitudes along with free trade and competition rules, which treat alcohol as any other commodity, have undermined effective alcohol control measures, such as increasing taxes or restricting the hours or days of sale. Instead, at country level, ineffective control

strategies (warning labels, education in schools) have been adopted. Internationally, resolutions on alcohol control exist but are non-binding and easily flouted.

For alcohol-control measures to be taken more seriously by governments, an international treaty modelled on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is needed. One of WHO's greatest achievements, the FCTC aims to counter the increase in tobacco consumption by making it a legal requirement for countries to introduce certain tobacco control strategies.

Public-health advocates in the United States and the American Public Health Association have been among those who have voiced their support for such a move.

From its initial inception, the FCTC took 10 years to become a reality. The road to an FCAC is likely to be similarly long. Next year's World Health Assembly provides a crucial opportunity for WHO and member states to make those first steps towards a global treaty to reduce alcohol-related harm. ■ *The Lancet* 2007

Asked WHO member states to call on WHO to begin developing the FCAC (Casswell 2009)

Counteraction

- Pro health counter-marketing has been shown to be effective. the Truth campaign in the US for example, significantly reduced teen smoking ⁽³⁾.
- There is a powerful story to tell about human rights as Amandine has stressed – the child's right to good health. This will resonate with parents.
- Counteraction can also involve direct attack on commercial marketing. In the 1980s BUGA UP ⁽⁵⁾ campaign was waged against tobacco advertising using irreverent graffiti. This type of guerrilla activity is alive and well in a digital world...



The vulnerability of
the brand

There is a massive
opportunity to
capitalise on
increasing public
cynicism about
corporate
malfeasance – from
dishonest bankers,
through tax evasion to
VW's dirty big secret

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 to explain the process of advertising and how to fight against it

But, as for containment and counteraction, should go further and explain the whole marketing mix ('marketing literacy')

More widely still, people need to be taught about the fiduciary imperative which requires corporations to put stockholder returns ahead of all other concerns



'military industrial complex'

(Dwight D Eisenhower1961)

*'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.'*

'only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry'

indigenous wisdom

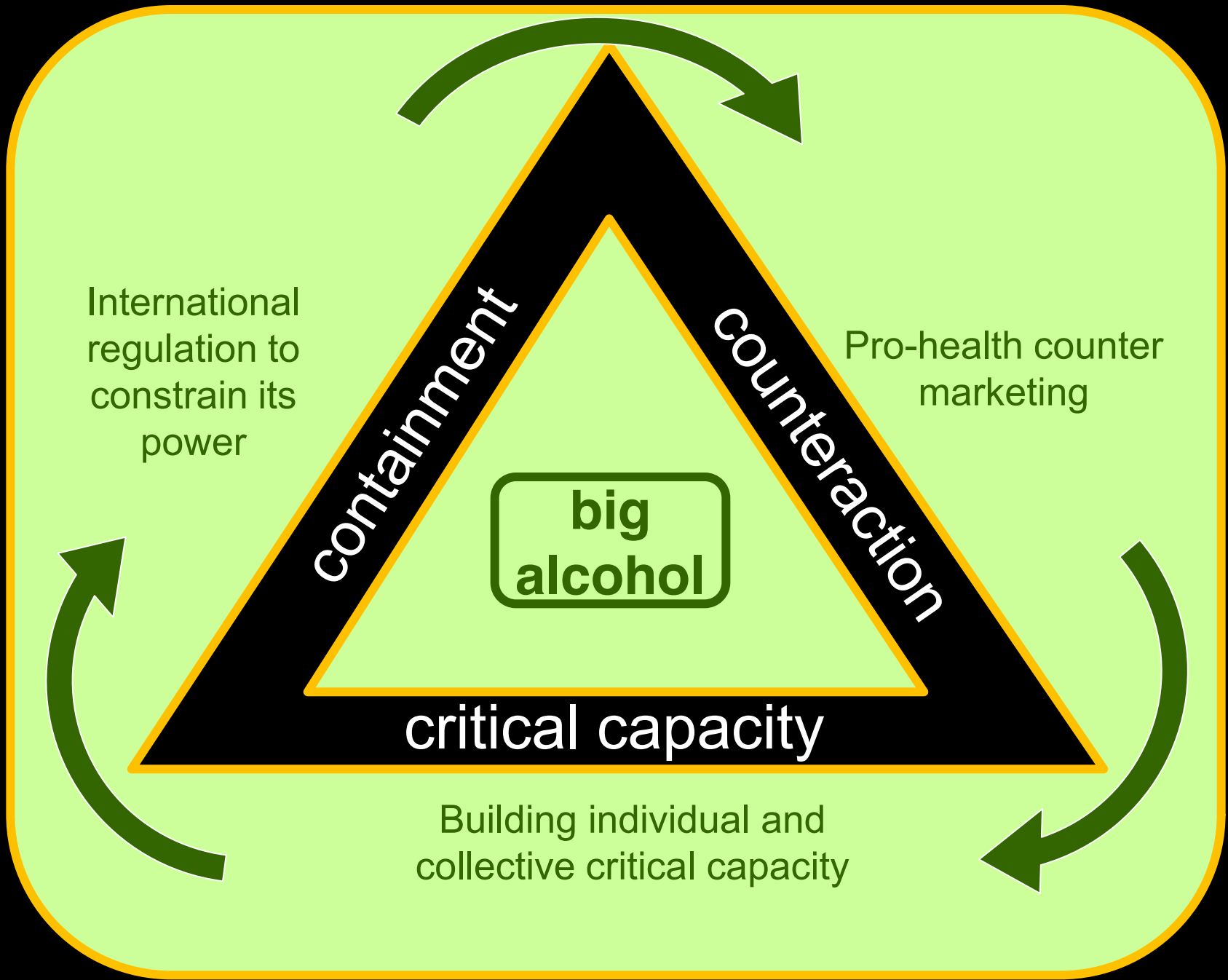
‘indigenous people – the people who still know the secrets of sustainable living – are not relics of the past, but the guides to our future.’

Arundhati Roy(2011)

The people who created the crisis in the first place will not be the ones that come up with a solution.

ibid

this thinking can be
summarised in a diagram ⁽⁷⁾



International regulation to constrain its power

containment

big alcohol

counteraction

Pro-health counter marketing

critical capacity

Building individual and collective critical capacity

conclusion

This is about power

They have too much

We need more

Containment, counteraction and popular critical engagement can provide it

- Evidence on our side
- Right on our side
- The people on our side

we will
overcome

it's obvious