

OSAP Prevention Monograph-6

**YOUTH AND DRUGS:
SOCIETY'S MIXED MESSAGES**

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Foreword

This volume, the sixth in a series of prevention monographs of the Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, examines past and present societal influences that have fostered the continued use of licit and illicit drugs by Americans from virtually every walk of life. The volume presents the analyses and viewpoints of prevention and communications experts on how "mixed messages" are often sent to American youth regarding acceptable use of alcohol and other drugs. It analyzes public and private sector policies, practices, and regulatory initiatives aimed at reducing and eliminating alcohol and other drug problems.

In so doing, this volume attempts to provide balance to the public health model of agent, host, and environment by targeting the environment. Most prevention strategies have been aimed at informing, educating, and inoculating the host or individual or reducing the availability of the agent or drug itself. Fewer have endeavored to modify the social environment and social norms. I believe that such efforts are one of the more promising areas for future prevention research and study. The information provided by this monograph may also lend itself to advancing opportunities for forming community partnerships, which I believe are essential for addressing such complex issues.

This monograph continues to illustrate our commitment to the informed discussion of these critical issues facing us today. We hope that the knowledge contained within will stimulate new ideas and further efforts to seek solutions in preventing the use of harmful drugs by all Americans.

*Elaine M. Johnson, Ph.D., Director
Office for Substance Abuse Prevention*

and we are still far from having achieved a clear consensus about the problem and how to address it.

This monograph was designed to open up new areas for discussion in alcohol and other drug prevention. The intended audience is broad; it consists of policymakers, professionals in the field, and informed lay citizens. Its purpose is to stimulate thinking about how we can look at ways to have an impact on both the vertical and horizontal communities in working toward the goal of achieving an even stronger consensus about how to deal with AOD problems. The book is a challenge to expand our vision of the problem and its context and thereby to begin to develop more creative and truly comprehensive solutions.

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Introduction

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For the first time in nearly 20 years, since the modern drug abuse epidemic began, new ideas about drug abuse prevention are being widely discussed. This book focuses on one of the most important: environmental approaches to prevention.

To understand the contribution of this book it is helpful to look back over the American experience with environmental approaches, focusing mainly on efforts to control the availability of alcohol and other drugs (AOD), throughout the 20th century. As the 19th century ended there was a rapidly growing reaction to the devastating use of both alcohol and relatively newer mind-altering chemicals, including cocaine and heroin. After the synthesis of heroin in 1898, it had been sold over the counter as a soothing syrup for crying babies. Cocaine had been, until 1903, an ingredient of Coca-Cola, then sold as a health product.

The leading forces in the antidrug movement of the early 20th century were religious organizations and a political reform movement known as populism. In rapid succession national laws were enacted to protect Americans from AODs. The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 forbade the use of certain drugs in patent medicines. The Harrison Narcotics Act of 1914 prohibited the use of narcotics except under strict medical control. The cycle of reform was completed with the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages in 1917.

Prohibition of alcohol was one of the least understood and most important episodes in American drug abuse history. Despite the clear evidence of reduced drinking and related problems that ensued, Prohibition came to be seen as a mistake that imposed moral values on the populace, reduced individual freedoms, and spawned organized crime. The repeal of Prohibition reflected a dramatic reversal in the country's political climate and the clear separation of alcohol from other drugs.

After repeal, drinking became fashionable and abstinence almost incomprehensible to all but religious fundamentalists and recovering alcoholics. During the next two decades, as the memory of Prohibition faded, there was no serious discussion of extending repeal to illegal drugs like heroin and cocaine. In 1937, to underscore this point, marijuana was added to the list of prohibited narcotics. When the country experienced a modest but frightening upsurge of heroin addiction in the early 1950s, the response was tougher law enforcement

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CHAPTER 3

Stories That Hurt: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs in the Mass Media

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In the major research this chapter summarizes, George Gerbner documents and quantifies the media environment Todd Gitlin described in Chapter 2 through a more theoretical approach. It is an environment pervaded by prodrug messages and economic influences that strongly favor the widespread purchase and use of legal drugs. It is also an environment, Gerbner points out, that has been difficult to regulate or control. Clearly, Gerbner concludes, the values of free enterprise and free speech are not always consistent with those of public health and AOD use prevention. Gerbner's synthesis of research on the interrelation of drugs and the mass media provides the touchstone for all the other chapters and offers insights into the behind-the-scenes conflicts underlying mass media messages about drugs.

Culture and Health

How well and how long Americans live are no longer questions of medicine or fate. Preventable illness and premature death are now end products of a complex manufacturing and marketing process.

Culturally supported habits of smoking, drinking, and other drug taking claim many more victims than any deficiency in medical care or delivery. Lifestyles sustained by mass media entertainment and advertising influence life expectancy much more than medical technology. Learned behavior patterns devastate many more lives than highly publicized chemical and physical risks. (The smoke from a single cigarette contains about 100 times more cyanide than did the two grapes from Chile that in the spring of 1989 triggered a panic and cost hundreds of millions of dollars in economic damage.)

The cultural-environmental front—stories we tell to millions—is the crucial new frontier in health promotion and disease prevention. This chapter is a report from that frontier.

Tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs touch people's lives in two ways. As substances they lend themselves to a broad range of uses and abuses. But as global industries they exert an even more pervasive influence. Through ownership, investment, and other controlling interests in many of the largest consumer industries, they command wide patronage of mass media.

The next section of this chapter surveys policies in the management and regulation of large systems of mass media images and messages about smoking, drinking, and drug taking. Subsequent sections discuss how media deal with each of these substances. The report concludes with a review of research about the depiction of these substances in advertising, entertainment, and news and the consequences of exposure to these messages.

This exploration is part of an emerging shift in public health policy. A growing awareness of threats from environmental, social, behavioral, and lifestyle factors, from chemical dependency to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), has led to a shift from mainly medical and epidemiological concerns to a broader concept of prevention. New targets of inquiry and action include pervasive systems of media messages and images supporting behavior patterns that hurt and kill thousands of Americans and devastate hundreds of families every day.

The broader policy concerns raise serious economic, legal, and political issues. There has been no comparable consideration of deeply rooted social and industrial practices since the legislative assault on what was then considered the most destructive drug: alcohol. Prohibition, the last gasp of the puritan ethic, was a largely moral and ultimately coercive attempt to assert values no longer salient to most Americans (see, e.g., Gusfield 1963). It showed that attempts to suppress behavior without also attending to its cultural roots drive production underground, finance criminal industries and fortunes, and push corruption deep into every community. The end of Prohibition marked the end of an era of illusions about laws and behavior.

The newly emerging trend draws on the authority of medical and social research. "We are not fighting sin. We are fighting disease," said a speaker for the American Medical Association (AMA) in proposing a cigarette advertising ban. A problem that must be confronted, however, is that such a disease is also an entrenched industry and a well-established social and cultural condition. Fighting drugs provokes powerful resistance and repressive politics. The end of the war on drugs may well be the end of another era of innocence about the stories we manufacture for all to grow on—the stories that heal and the stories that hurt.

Drugs in Society

Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs of various kinds have a long history of remedial and ceremonial functions. Improvements in production and marketing, and the cultural changes we associate with the industrial and media revolutions, swept away most of the traditional controls of scarcity, custom, and ritual. Except where coherent ideological and other cultural (usually religious) rules inhibit or forbid their uses, many palliative and addictive substances have become commodities marketed to serve individual desires and institutional and geopolitical interests.

Tobacco's toll is higher than that of all other addictive drugs combined. About 57 million Americans are hooked on cigarettes. A thousand die of smoking-related illnesses every day. Alcoholics number some 18 million. Some 13 percent of adults are addicted to alcohol and 6 percent to illicit drugs. More than 10 million abuse tranquilizers and other psychotherapeutic drugs. More than 1 million each are hooked on crack, heroin, and hallucinogens like LSD and PCP. "Ice" (smokable speed) is likely to replace crack as the 1990's "drug of the year." About 550 people die every day of alcohol-related accidents and diseases and about 20 a day of overdose and drug-related homicides. Alcohol and illegal drugs are about equally involved in more than half of serious crimes.

Public concern about drugs is a result of many factors. Media attention may rise when a practice has passed its peak or fall while the practice is rising (see, e.g., Heath 1985). The ability of some groups to dramatize an issue, the media's need to attract large audiences, opportunities to mobilize constituencies around hot topics, and the use of the mass media to achieve long-sought (and often only loosely related) political objectives all contribute to trends in media content and to public perceptions and actions.

Societies have three basic ways of dealing with risky and addictive substances endemic in a culture. The first is to prohibit their production and distribution. Foolproof in theory, prohibition is the most difficult to effect against powerful global industries catering to ubiquitous demands. The second is to impose controls on weaker links in the chain. Consumers are urged to abstain from or limit consumption, to "just say no." The third way is to cut demand by addressing its cultural-environmental supports, especially the mass media.

The growing emphasis on the third line of attack marks a new social diagnosis. It focuses on the daily cultivation of appeals and associations that render the use of chemical substances compelling and resistant to change. It also attempts to find the least corrupting and coercive direction toward change.

A Historic Juncture

The shift from the traditional focus on mainly medical to broader cultural public health concerns became evident in the 1970s. It resulted from a combination of factors. One was medical success in controlling many infectious diseases; another was the recognition of environmental and behavioral sources of many new threats to health.

An influential staff paper by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (Nightingale et al. 1978) and the 1979 Surgeon General's report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare 1979) signaled the shift. These reports focused on the far-reaching conclusion of many studies that failure to obtain adequate medical care is responsible for only some 10 percent of morbidity and mortality and that behavioral factors account for most of the rest.

Concern with mass media as a source of health-related messages was evident in the 1972 report of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior. Its update 10 years later (NIMH 1982) also included studies on health and consumer behavior.

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in the United States has shown a general decline since 1980. However, there has been a relative increase of drinking, smoking, and use of some drugs among groups of young people, women, and other minorities. The Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health (DHHS 1985) pointed out that socially conditioned and self-inflicted damage hits hardest those least likely to seek out health information but most exposed to television advertising and entertainment.

The concept of stories that hurt challenges the constitutional distinction between speech and action. Speech and the press, even if hurtful or offensive, receive considerable protection under the first amendment. That protection is not absolute, however. The courts have been defining and refining, sometimes inconsistently, the permissible limitations on commercial speech compared to other expressions, on cameras and microphones compared to the printed press, and on recklessly false or willfully and demonstrably harmful communications.

The increasingly centralized management of the mass media creates conditions different from those envisaged by the framers of the first amendment. Cultural industries have become virtual private governments empowered to manage and control what the Constitution forbids public government to control. This development makes it necessary to consider new ways of realizing both the principles of the first amendment and the interests of public health under changing cultural circumstances.

Managing the Message

Tobacco, alcohol, and other addictive substances lend themselves to a variety of appeals that have, or can be made to have, powerful attractions. Advertising and promotion carry that power into visions of life far beyond the immediate reality of the substances themselves.

This section looks at the ways in which American society tries to promote, manage, control, and regulate these visions. Subsequent sections show how the media deal with each of the substances.

Stories That Sell

"Dare to Be More," declares a tall, bold young woman in pin-striped pants and a man's hat as she pulls a long, brown More cigarette from its pack. She pulls it with her teeth, lips widely parted, holding the pack gingerly in one hand. Her other hand rests in her pants pocket as she leans casually against a giant green More cigarette pack with two long, brown cigarettes sticking out. Her sidelong glance gazes defiantly into the reader's eyes, ignoring the small pale print under her booted feet that reads: "Surgeon General's Warning: Smoking by Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, and Low Birth Weight."

On the other side of the same page of a typical newspaper supplement (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 23, 1986) is a two-page spread of a misty Christmas scene. Seven young people are sitting in a festive living room, glass in hand, roaring with laughter. Three open bottles are between them, and three as-yet-unopened bottles are behind them. "Follow your instincts," the copy urges. "This year do it right." The advice is repeated on the bottom of the ad in large type beside another four bottles: "This year do it right. Seagram's."

Ads are stories about values and how to attain them. They are stories that sell. Selling involves the cultivation of identities, of assumptions, and of a sense that one is in need, even worthy, of what is being sold. Market researchers report that people with high self-esteem are good prospects for products that can make them feel good about themselves (*Advertising Age*, April 13, 1987).

Advertising is also a form of business patronage. Businesses subsidize commercial media by paying them to carry their sales and institutional messages and perform other services, including providing the editorial and program context most conducive to sales and other institutional objectives.

The subsidy comes from money added to the price of advertised products and passed on to media operators for their service. The consumer has little or no representation in or control over the process and no choice but to pay the levy,

irrespective of using or liking the media service. Although this practice is sometimes challenged as a form of taxation without representation, citizens pay when they wash, not when they watch (or read) media. The money goes through the seller of soap to the producer of the soap opera or other media product via payment for advertising time and space. The system is shored up by legislation (increasingly under attack) that makes advertising a tax-exempt business expense and thus fully available for commercial media support.

Government Regulation

The attractions of hedonism have historically been reserved for adults of the upper classes. The spread of popular media to all classes and ages raises fears of moral, social, and physical degradation among their elders and presumably betters. Media-fed anxieties also create political opportunities for interested groups to press for long-standing objectives. The complex regulatory context in which advertising and marketing operate on the Federal, State, and local levels reflects the history of these opportunities and objectives.

Federal and State Agencies

Congress has given the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) general authority to regulate deceptive or unfair business practices. The responsibility is shared with the Department of the Treasury in regard to alcohol advertising and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the area of drug advertising. The U.S. Surgeon General and the DHHS services develop research and policy in public health and prevention.

The Federal Alcoholic Administration Act of 1935 gives the Department of the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) the specific responsibility for controlling false and misleading, as well as "obscene or indecent," statements in alcohol advertisements. BATF regulations demand disclosure of alcoholic content and quality in distilled spirits and prohibit "disparaging of a competitor's products." BATF regulations also control the use of athletes in ads.

BATF acts as a buffer between the industry and the public. When a proposed change in its advertising code evoked more than 10,000 letters asking for tighter restrictions, it expressed concern about beer advertising at sports and entertainment sites and the increasing number of brewery-sponsored activities on college campuses. But in 1986, instead of tightening the rules about drinking and sports, BATF relaxed them. Active athletes could be shown selling beer as long as they were not shown drinking it.

The affected industries usually respond positively to BATF concerns. For example, they agreed to abide by the wishes of college administrations regarding availability and promotion of beer on campuses. Also, the industries trust that

even if BATF loosens its rules, at least the networks will maintain the standards of advertising they need to fight off proposed bans on advertising (*Advertising Age*, Nov. 1, 1984).

State and local controls present a mixed picture. Tobacco sales to minors are prohibited in most States; use or possession is forbidden in 12. Smoking restrictions are in effect or proposed in at least half the States and more than 400 municipalities, including most large cities.

The affected industries resist extension of what they call State and local balkanization of controls. Practices differ even in States that set up their own liquor stores for beer, wine, and distilled spirits. For example, whereas the Pennsylvania system was set up to control the distribution of alcoholic beverages with a view to discouraging their use and consequently does not advertise, the New Hampshire system is run like a business. It spends more than \$300,000 a year on advertising and is the State's biggest money-maker. Despite charging higher prices and having 12 times the population of New Hampshire, the Pennsylvania system yields only 4 times the revenue of New Hampshire's. Although charges of corruption have been made in both States, only the Pennsylvania system faces the prospect of abolition under the State's sunset law that requires periodic reauthorization of agencies. Consumer groups, unions, and the Pennsylvania Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) oppose abolition as well as the alternative proposal to sell wine in grocery stores. Such a move would double the number of outlets and loosen the already strained enforcement of age and other controls.

Congress

The 21st amendment to the Constitution repealed Prohibition and left the decriminalized alcohol industry struggling under a patchwork of State regulations. Within 2 years Congress passed the Federal Alcoholic Administration Act. It remains virtually unchanged as the basic Federal statute under which the alcoholic beverage industry operates.

The act is intended to control unfair competition and regulate the production, labeling, and advertising of alcoholic beverages. The industry is happy with the law. It opposes changes, resists attempts at deregulation, and fears that tampering with the act will open a Pandora's box.

Consumer and other public demands represent a constant threat. The trade paper *Advertising Age* reported (Aug. 16, 1982) that in 4 years some 5,000 letters and 140 petitions were submitted to BATF objecting to images of athletes, youth, and success in alcohol ads and demanding the inclusion of information about risks or a total ban on alcohol advertising. The report added: "There are those who object to ads that show alcohol as socially acceptable. 'The industry loved that comment,' says one . . . specialist sarcastically" (p. M-26). A National Beer

Wholesalers Association representative said, "This law has never been amended, and the industry is very comfortable within its framework. Our concern is that if it is not enforced there could possibly be a return to the abuses that helped cause the Prohibition" (p. M-23).

Congress has also regulated the marketing of licit drugs and banned tobacco commercials from the air. New bills emerge in each session, submitted by legislators sympathetic to consumer issues. Typical bills include measures to require public service time for antidrug messages; require warnings on alcoholic advertising; ban beer and wine commercials; eliminate the tax deductibility of tobacco advertising; support State educational programs on drugs, smoking, and drinking; allow State attorneys general to sue national advertisers when Federal agencies fail to act; and limit cigarette ads to photos of the package that resemble tombstones (hence "tombstone advertising").

Vigorous industry and media opposition usually succeeds in delaying or diluting advertising control legislation. However, a law to include health warnings on alcoholic beverage containers went into effect in November 1989.

The Courts

Suing tobacco, alcohol, and drug companies for failure to provide sufficient warning about health hazards has been a long-standing and often fruitless practice. By 1985, however, changes in liability law and public attitudes had prompted a wave of lawsuits that made judicial history. That year the Boston-based Tobacco Product Liability Project was organized to help attorneys trade information about tobacco litigation.

The verdicts have been mixed. For example, federally mandated health warnings were held to protect the tobacco industry from claims that consumers were not adequately informed. Hosts were held liable for the alcohol-impaired driving accidents of their guests. A cigarette manufacturer was awarded \$5 million in damages in a libel suit against CBS and a television commentator who cited an FTC staff report but failed to include a company disclaimer. On the other hand, another tobacco company was held partially liable in the death of a heavy smoker for not having warned her of the known danger of smoking—in fact, claiming in advertisements that cigarettes were not harmful—in the 1950s.

Tobacco company "issue advertising" (paid expression of opinion without naming a brand) was held protected under the first amendment. However, in a precedent-setting decision (*Posadas de Puerto Rico v. Tourism Co.*) the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a ban on advertising that need not be deceptive but may have "serious harmful effects." That ruling seemed to have far-reaching implications for the advertising of addictive substances. But the FTC interpreted it as requiring convincing empirical evidence that advertising alone significantly

contributes to abuse. That is a hard, if not impossible, test, as I shall discuss when considering problems of research on communication effects.

Changing Policies

The activism of the 1960s and early 1970s strengthened the hand of the FTC. It led to the adoption of such measures as the ban on broadcast cigarette advertising, warnings on ads for tobacco products, drug disclosure and labeling requirements, and the elimination of most hard liquor commercials from the airwaves.

The citizen movement for consumer protection and media reform was driven by concerns about health, children's programming, violence on the air, and other issues around which large constituencies could be mobilized. But it did not survive the 1970s. Its momentum was blunted by a distracting and ultimately failed attempt to rewrite the Communications Act of 1934 and by a successful industry counterattack claiming, among other things, that new communication technologies are changing the structure of the industry anyway. (The demise of the reform movement has been analyzed by Pertschuk [1982], Rowland [1983], and others.) A House Communications Subcommittee draft report calling for an investigation of the television networks' structure and an FTC proposal to regulate television advertising directed at children were defeated. The FTC was ridiculed by broadcasters as wanting to become a "national nanny" and accused of an "industry-wide witchhunt." Congress eventually curtailed its power to control unfair advertising practices on a national industrywide basis.

The now-defiant Television Code of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), which had included the "family viewing" policy, was attacked in court, prompting NAB to abandon it. Code administration was left to the networks and stations. The FTC, which had earlier used its authority to require health warnings in cigarette ads, refused to use it for alcohol advertising, finding in 1985 "no reliable basis on which to conclude that alcohol advertising significantly affects alcohol abuse" (FTC, news release, April 16, 1985).

In 1986 FTC Chairman Daniel Oliver announced his plan "to do no harm' to the marketplace" (*Insight*, Dec. 8, 1986, p. 45). He came out against restrictions on cigarette advertising, sounding the new "information rationale" that such advertising contains information about tar, nicotine, and health hazards. "I think," he said, "it would be a mistake to deprive the consumer of his ability to acquire that useful information" (*Advertising Age*, Nov. 17, 1986). In addition to ignoring the fact that advertising depends on suppressing or subordinating unfavorable information, Oliver also abolished an independent source of information. He ordered the FTC to stop testing cigarettes—saving taxpayers, he declared, about \$200,000 a year (*New York Times*, April 26, 1987).

Consumer groups worry about weaker FTC policies and reduced caseloads. The National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators foresaw an "explosion in unsubstantiated and fraudulent advertising" (*Advertising Age*, Dec. 15, 1986, p. 82). Some industry voices warn that weakening the FTC also reduces its power to protect them against advertising control measures by other agencies. When Oliver urged even the National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus "to resist the temptation to overregulate," the advertising trade paper was moved to comment, "Now, the last thing the ad industry needs is for NAD to emulate the seemingly inactive FTC." It warned that, "dissatisfied with today's FTC, consumer activists are increasingly taking their complaints against national advertisers to a few receptive State attorneys general."

Industry Codes and Controls

Industry codes and controls develop in response to the threat or reality of official controls and against the background of industrial consolidation. The rising cost of advertising and the great advantages of added marketing muscle speed diversification and concentration of ownership in many industries. Tobacco, alcohol, and pharmaceutical conglomerates now own television stations and other media, popular soft drinks and food products, theme parks, and many other enterprises. They sponsor sports events, art exhibits, concerts, and youth magazines. Conglomerates like Philip Morris may acquire a beer giant like the Miller Brewing Co. or Coca-Cola may acquire The Wine Spectrum to further diversify and stabilize their markets and to extend them into newer areas. RJR Nabisco, one of the biggest conglomerates, spends more than \$200 million in national broadcast media alone and sponsors about 60 events a year.

Trade associations and media groups develop advertising codes to balance competing demands of their client companies and to protect themselves from consumer pressure and outside regulation. Advertisers also depend on broadcasting network censors for dealing with consumer and competitor challenges.

NAD is another forum for complaints. If NAD fails to resolve a controversy, appeal can be made to the advertising industry's National Advertising Review Board (NARB). Many of the claims seem trivial, at least by outside standards.

In 1986, for example, of the 107 challenges resolved nearly half were by competitors. One of the more contentious appealed to NARB was the objection to the claim of a cigarette company that selling 25 cigarettes instead of the standard 20 in a pack constitutes a "free" offer of 5 cigarettes per pack. After extensive hearings and deliberations, the panel urged that the language be changed from "free" to "without extra charge." The advertiser accepted the verdict under protest.

Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Trade Codes

The Tobacco Institute, a trade association of U.S. cigarette manufacturers, established a cigarette advertising code in 1964 in a futile attempt to forestall the broadcast ban—and abandoned it in 1970 shortly before the congressional ban went into effect.

Industry representatives assert that they are observing principles of the code and that "no product advertising is held up to, or required to meet, more exacting and rigorous standards." They declare that cigarette marketers have limited the distribution of free samples, withdrawn members' advertising from college and university publications, discouraged the use of youth appeals or models under 25, agreed to the FTC's requirement of rotating warnings and disclosure of tar and nicotine information, and, faced with antismoking commercials on the airways, accepted legislation banning all tobacco advertising on radio and television (Kornegay 1986).

There was little indication, however, that the conclusions of a 1981 FTC report were no longer valid. The report found that, aside from accepting the inevitable, the short-lived code had had "little if any practical effect" (FTC 1981, p. 5-13). It did not affect the main themes of cigarette advertising, it failed to reflect voluntarily the findings of medical research, and it failed to discourage young people from starting to smoke. Promoting smoking as an "adult custom"—one that (the report pointed out) many young people wish to emulate—"does not qualify as discouragement" (p. 5-15).

Faced with the threat of legislation and litigation, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) approved its Code of Good Practice in 1983, which keeps its members from advertising alcoholic beverages on radio and television, in comics or religious or youth publications, on movie screens, and "in any manner directed or primarily intended to appeal to persons below the legal drinking age." DISCUS also "joined with government and civic groups in efforts to encourage moderate and responsible use."

The 1984 Brewing Industry Advertising Guidelines similarly discourage appeals to minors or to religious, scientific, or educational claims; the condoning of drunk driving, drunkenness in general, on-camera drinking, or "improperly" disparaging comparisons to competing beers; or association with illegal or disreputable circumstances. "Taverns or other places portrayed in beer advertisements should always be depicted as well-kept and respectable places," the code declares.

The Wine Institute's Code of Advertising Standards, adopted in 1978 by this trade association of California wine growers, stresses that "when subscribers to the code use wine advertising which visually depicts a scene or setting where wine is to be served, such advertising shall include foods. . . ." Excessive

drinking, loss of control, feats of daring, underage models or appeals, medicinal values, the use of athletes, and demeaning portrayals of any group are to be avoided. Attuned to the more mature sensibilities of their markets, winemakers urge depictions of "wholesome persons enjoying their lives and illustrating the role of wine in a mature life style." However, 40 percent of all wine sold in the United States is made by nonmember firms who are not bound even by these mild strictures.

In general, both the tobacco and the alcoholic beverage codes are voluntary in their application to trade association members, whose membership is also voluntary. They react to competitive complaints, or they are aimed at preventing the reality or threat of legal constraints. Although tobacco industry representatives complain of the administrative nightmare and complexities and burden of rotating warnings and claim that, with the possible exception of drugs, no lawful product is subject to more severe restrictions than tobacco products, the voluntary codes reflect mostly the experience of sound business practice. Only DISCUS discloses how the code review procedure handles complaints: the findings of a code review board of industry members "shall be communicated promptly to the responsible advertiser and in appropriate circumstances to all members of the Board of Directors of DISCUS."

More specific and less cozy is the code of the Proprietary Association, an organization of the nonprescription, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines industry. The Voluntary Codes and Guidelines of the OTC Medicines Industry is a comprehensive document dealing with packaging, labeling, disclosure of ingredients, and other aspects of merchandising as well as with advertising. First adopted in 1934 and revised and strengthened many times, this code reflects legislation as well as industry practice guiding the marketing of non-prescription drugs. In provisions resembling the tobacco and alcohol codes, it warns against appeals to youth, excessive and unsubstantiated claims, derogatory comparisons, on-camera ingestion of drugs, and the use of contests and prizes to stimulate unnecessary purchases. Going beyond these general provisions, the code also urges advertisers to comply with existing legislation, direct consumer attention to warnings and instructions on the label, represent accurately the findings of studies, and avoid testimonials by health professionals and others who are not bona fide users of the product.

Focusing more directly on cultural and behavioral factors, the code states: "Advertising of a proprietary medicine should avoid representations by word or picture which, in reasonable construction, are commonly associated with the 'drug culture' or which imply a casual attitude toward the use of drugs." Also: "A proprietary medicine should not be advertised in a manner which depicts consumers continually relying on medicines as simplistic solutions to emotional or mood problems." And: "Advertising of a calmative, sedative, or stimulant proprietary medicine should refer to the temporary nature of the relief provided

and should recommend the product for occasional use." The complaint procedure provides for appeal to NARB. It also notes that the resolution of complaints, as with all industry codes, is based on "past experience in evaluating advertising acceptability."

With the exception of appeals associated with drug-related complaints, industry code enforcement is sporadic, voluntary, and private. Firms that do not wish to comply may leave the association—and they often do. Neither compliance records nor studies of compliance nor even complaints are made public.

Violations of the spirit, if not the letter, of provisions of the code are evident to the casual observer. Complaints by business competitors are most likely to get a hearing. Marketing and promotional strategies that go beyond advertising (sponsoring sports teams and events, youth festivals, celebrity appearances, interviews, or contests) are exempt. Furthermore, messages embedded in entertainment and news even more frequently than in advertising may promote the same forbidden themes in more credible and less vulnerable ways.

Media Codes

Media codes of advertising and dramatic content reflect extensive experience with public, competitive, and legislative pressures. First developed in response to official censorship of movies and comics, they were elaborated and used by the licensed (and hence presumably vulnerable) industries of radio and television. When these industries became fully entrenched as private businesses, they were able to weaken the regulatory mechanisms that allowed some public representation in the conduct of business over the public airwaves. Eventually the codes were challenged in court and abandoned. Competitive pressures further eroded the standards developed over the first half-century of broadcasting, but some broadcasters claim that their principles are still being observed.

The now defunct NAB Television Code forbade the advertising of distilled spirits. The NAB code permitted the advertising of beer and wine "when presented in the best of good taste and discretion" and not consumed on camera. It cautioned against commercials that "convey the impression of, or appear to promote, excessive consumption of beer or wine" or "encourage use of these products by young people" or involve hazardous activities, athletic ability, sexual attractiveness, or mind alteration.

Network guidelines use similar language. The NBC Television Program Code adds, for example, that the use of alcoholic beverages "should not be portrayed as being necessary to maintain social status, obtain personal achievement, relieve stress, or solve personal problems." With respect to the more difficult problem of dramatic portrayals, the ABC guidelines urge avoidance of "glamorization" and suggest the occasional refusal of an alcoholic beverage.

Network advertising guidelines deal at length with OTC drugs. They urge factual presentations following label information, avoiding claims of mind alteration or non-habit-forming qualities, taking the medicine on camera, or overstating effects beyond symptomatic relief when clinically unsubstantiated.

The NBC code says that "narcotic addiction shall not be presented except as a destructive habit. The use of illegal drugs or the abuse of legal drugs shall not be encouraged or shown as socially acceptable." The code discourages claims of cures and the "indiscriminate use of such words as 'safe,' 'without risk,' [or] 'harmless' " when advertising medical products.

Other constraints on commercials include the fear of offending or interfering with sales by being too negative or downbeat. Paradoxically, these proscriptions affect antidrug public service messages more than drug or alcohol commercials (which are naturally upbeat). Conspicuous examples were a Brooke Shields appearance designed to discourage teenage smoking and a "smoking fetus" commercial targeted at pregnant mothers. Public service announcements "have to advocate the positive side of the issue; this did not," said an NBC executive (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 18, 1985, p. 6-A).

Glimpses of how codes are administered have been offered by network executives when congressional committees have inquired into broadcasting policy and content. According to one such testimony, CBS censors reviewed a total of 873 television commercials for beer and wine in 1 year and rejected 20 percent. Among those rejected were a commercial showing two young couples on motorcycles equipped with six-packs and another using the line, "Don't sip—big swallows will empty your schooner sooner." (Alcoholism and Narcotics Subcommittee 1976, p. 202.)

On dramatic programs, network code administrators "are constantly alert to the kind of casual, gratuitous drinking that tends at times to be used as a quick and easy dramatic device." Among the examples offered in congressional testimony was this note to a producer: "Page 14. Phyllis' second speech. 'I think you need a drink.' Please rework this remark with special attention to the underscored word ['need']. We would like to avoid encouraging stress drinking" (Alcoholism and Narcotics Subcommittee 1976, pp. 20-22). The networks may once have been more vigilant than they are now. With the dismantling of the code administration in the late 1980s and layoffs of staff, the responsibility for program standards, if any, became dispersed and diluted.

The old Motion Picture Production Code advised that "the use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterization, will not be shown." It also proscribed the portrayal of illegal drug use in detail or "in such a way as to stimulate curiosity." A number of powerful antidrug films such as "The Lost Weekend" and "The Man with the Golden Arm" hastened the demise of the code and its replacement in 1968 with the voluntary Classification

and Ratings Administration of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA).

Alcohol and drug usage "has been an important element considered by members of the rating board," said MPAA President Jack Valenti (1985), but it was not codified until 1986. At that time the film Classification and Ratings Administration began to apply no less a rating than PG-13 ("Parents strongly cautioned: some material may be inappropriate for children under 13") to any film that shows any use of drugs. However, it rejected demands for a new "SA" (substance abuse) rating to warn parents about features that "rationalize or glamorize the use of drugs," despite a study that found "at least 60 major features in which the use of illegal drugs was portrayed in a 'positive, upbeat way'" (*Variety*, Jan. 22, 1986, p. 1).

Managing the messages of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs in the mass media is a complex system of legislative, judicial, and industry controls. On the whole, the system serves three major functions. The first and best developed is that of protecting business from any extension of existing constraints. Most laws and court decisions, hard fought though they may be at the time, come to be used as shields against further encroachments.

The second function is to adjust the rules of competition to fit the interests (and powers) of the major players and to protect their markets from invasion and erosion as long as possible. The third and most problematic function is to help adjust the images and messages to changing public sensibilities.

However, there is no reliable system of communication by which either public or private codes reach those who actually produce the ads, commercials, and programs. A pilot study of the application of existing guidelines to the making of beer commercials (Meister 1987) found that the producers of the commercials and even advertising agency account executives had little specific knowledge, if any, of laws and codes that presumably guide their work.

Network censors and NAD, NARB, and other review boards pay most attention to competitive complaints and demands for claim substantiation. The important claims from a public health point of view deal with lifestyle—the association of drugs with attractive living—and are rarely monitored or checked. In fact, there is no authority, public or private, that systematically monitors either compliance with or enforcement of the relevant laws or guidelines.

Tobacco

Tobacco is the most heavily promoted commercial product in America. It is also the most lethal. More than one out of seven deaths are smoking related. Smoking kills about 1,000 people a day, more than the number attributable to heroin, cocaine, alcohol, fires, car crashes, homicides, suicides, and AIDS combined.

Smoking costs the United States about \$439 billion a year in medical expenses and lost workdays. Smoking one pack a day adds an average of 18 percent to a person's medical bills and cuts life expectancy 6 years (FTC 1981; *Advertising Age*, April 20, 1987; *Newsweek*, March 23, 1987).

In 1986 the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the decreasing social acceptability of smoking in industrialized countries is offset by a "world pandemic" of smoking-related illnesses responsible for 1 million deaths a year, "fueled mainly by intensive and ruthless promotional campaigns on the part of the transnational tobacco companies" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 18, 1986; Development Forum, May 1987, p. 3).

By the late 1980s the proportion of men who smoked decreased from about half to less than one-third. But among women, young people, minorities, and people in many Third World countries, increases in smoking offset, or more than offset, any drops in smoking. Those who still smoke are generally the heaviest smokers.

The rising awareness of consequences and the emerging shift in health and cultural policy have increasingly troubled the tobacco industry. But the diversification and conglomeration of corporate structures infuse the industry with new financial resources, political clout, and cultural vigor.

Industry Power

The tobacco industry spends about \$2.8 billion a year on advertising and promotion. It earns all levels of government \$22 billion in taxes. Government subsidies to growers total considerably over \$3 billion in loans and interest. With about \$314 million for tobacco advertising paid to newspapers, tobacco companies are the largest national patron of the daily press (*Presstime*, April 1984). Tobacco is second to alcohol as the leading magazine advertiser. In fact, increases have been reported in magazine advertising for cigarettes, especially in magazines with mostly youth and women readerships.

The tobacco industry has used its power to impede the flow of information about the consequences of smoking—consequences known at least since 1938

when Raymond E. Pearl of Johns Hopkins University presented data on 6,813 men showing that smoking is associated with definite impairment of longevity.

An outpouring of studies and medical reports followed, confirming and elaborating the evidence linking smoking to cancer and other diseases. Few organs of the free press were free enough from advertising pressure to report the findings. George Seldes, muckraking writer and founder of the first publication devoted to press criticism (*In Fact*) gave information about this phenomenon to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. On a broadcast of "Town Meeting of the Air" in 1939, Ickes discussed the suppression of research findings about smoking and cancer (Seldes 1987). That was the beginning of the anti-smoking movement.

It took many years for the movement to gather momentum in the face of industry obstruction and media complicity. The trial of Liggett Group Inc. for failure to advise of health risks before warning labels were required in 1966 provided detailed information about the strategies of tobacco companies in evading, denying, and combating health research findings throughout the 1940s and 1950s (*New York Times*, April 22, 1988). The companies responded to the early revelations by stepping up competitive health claims, introducing king-size and filter-tipped brands, targeting young people and women, beefing up advertising budgets, and stimulating a sales boom that lasted with few interruptions until the early 1980s.

Glaring conflicts between increasingly rosy advertising and gloomy research findings prompted the FTC to publish its first tobacco order and report in 1942. Again, few newspapers published the conclusions. The crusading newsletter *In Fact* stated on May 8, 1950 (p. 4): "The daily press published news about the FTC order telling two of the five leading brands they were better than others, but 90 or 99 percent of the press of the nation suppressed every word of the same report confirming . . . that tobacco contains poisons and is harmful to almost everyone who uses it."

In Fact soon became a victim of the McCarthy era, but its revelations had to be countered. The counterattack began in 1954 with full-page ads in 448 newspapers announcing the formation of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee (TIRC) to combat the bad news. From then on, TIRC (later, the Tobacco Institute) publicists were cited in news stories in order to "balance" adverse information.

Among broadcasters only Edward R. Murrow (a chain-smoker who later succumbed to lung cancer) and other CBS public affairs programs under the direction of Fred W. Friendly gave the medical reports serious attention. TIRC objected that the programs were "unfairly edited" and alerted television reviewers around the country to protest them. (For a full account see *Columbia Journalism Review* 1963.)

Tobacco companies were reported to have pressured publications not to carry advertising for Bantron, a smoking deterrent (*Advertising Age*, April 6, 1959). When the *New York Times* decided not to accept cigarette ads unless they carried a health caution notice and tar and nicotine figures, the American Tobacco Co. pulled its ads from the *Times* and denounced the policy in full-page ads across the country as a "bum rap." A story on smoking regulations cost *Newsweek* its tobacco ads in that issue. *Mother Jones*, *Reader's Digest*, *Time*, *The New Republic*, *Psychology Today*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Ms.* are among magazines reported to have had to censor articles dealing with smoking or suffer reprisals by tobacco companies—champions of a free press—for not doing so.

Smith's (1978) study demonstrated that magazines carrying growing amounts of cigarette advertising failed to print stories on tobacco's threat to health. Tsien's (1979) trend study showed that when the number of cigarette ads in news magazines increased (after the ban on cigarette commercials on television), the number of news items and editorials on health problems decreased. Furthermore, news reports on the adverse health effects of smoking were usually countered by arguments from the tobacco industry. This application of the journalistic practice of "balance" tended to neutralize and undermine the conclusions of research.

Perry's (1982) survey of studies also observed "a disturbing connection between cigarette advertising and the frequency and accuracy of articles about smoking." Weis and Burke's (1963, p. 4) study of tobacco marketing strategies concluded with classic understatement: "The tobacco industry has a history of exerting financial pressure on publishers to suppress the printing of information which would impair tobacco sales."

The Weis and Burke study also pointed out that "one reason editors give for the lack of media coverage of smoking is that health effects from smoking are not 'newsworthy.'" Other studies of news reporting reflect this reluctance to assign much "news value" to information about smoking. Freimuth and others (1984) found that cigarette smoking, the major controllable cause of cancer, was discussed in only 7 percent of news stories that focused on causes of cancer. A frequent event that is rarely reported is de facto not newsworthy.

Through their control or ownership of companies marketing food, drinks, other heavily advertised products, and even a major television network, tobacco conglomerates exert influence far beyond their own ads or even the print and broadcast media. Outdoor advertisers are reluctant to carry antismoking messages because they are dependent for up to half their revenue on tobacco companies and tobacco-owned soft drink and alcohol conglomerates. One of the largest billboard, airport display, and radio-television firms in the country, Ackerley Communications, is reported to have refused to sell billboard space to the American Cancer Society for any message at all, not even to "Fight cancer."

The company also ordered its other divisions to reject public service announcements for the American Heart Association and other antismoking organizations (Weis and Burke 1986).

Industry power was able to delay for decades—and is still able to obscure and dilute—the full impact of research vital to the Nation's health.

The Broadcast Ban

Cigarette advertising has concerned the FTC since the 1930s, when it sought to prevent companies from claiming health benefits from smoking. There was little evidence to counter these claims until the first major experiment in 1938. But during a subsequent 15-year period the FTC issued only seven cease and desist orders to eliminate various false claims.

Following the 1964 Report on Smoking and Health by the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Surgeon General, and after a long campaign by health education and consumer activists, the FTC concluded that cigarette advertising that failed to disclose the health risks of smoking was "unfair and deceptive." It proposed requiring clear and prominent disclosure of cancer and other hazards on cigarette packs and ads. An alarmed tobacco industry put its first advertising code in place and appealed to Congress for protection. In 1965 Congress preempted the FTC by enacting legislation with a milder and less prominent warning. But Action on Smoking and Health Executive Director John F. Banzhaf III and other consumer advocates used the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) "fairness doctrine" to force broadcasters to carry antismoking countercommercials. As cigarette sales began to slide, the tobacco industry dropped its code and, in the words of the chair of the Tobacco Institute, "offered to discontinue all advertising on radio and television." Congress passed the cigarette ban in 1970, "accepting that offer" (Kornegay 1986). The ban also drove countercommercials from the air.

Contrary to dire predictions, neither broadcasters nor the industry suffered from the ban. Other advertisers quickly filled the gap, and commercial time rates continued to rise in a sellers' market. Tobacco ad budgets zoomed fivefold, and tobacco advertising in magazines more than doubled. Women's magazines increased the most: tripling the ad space in *Redbook*, and sixfold in *Woman's Day* (Feinberg 1971). Cigarette sales resumed their rise. *Broadcasting* magazine (Jan. 16, 1971, p. 82) could not help noting with considerable sarcasm "that the newspapers and magazines that were most vocal in promoting the broadcast ban are carrying all the cigarette advertising they can sell, and staying silent editorially on their own role in the increase in cigarette consumption."

The tobacco industry counterattack rolled on with new brands, new marketing targets, and new campaigns. "Cigaret Men, Happy Despite No TV Ads, Roll Out New Wares" announced the front-page lead headline in *Advertising Age*

(Nov. 15, 1971). The now notorious female- and minority-oriented campaigns were born. American Brands launched Silva Thins, a cigarette for women, with a macho television commercial. It caused an uproar but gave John Landry, Philip Morris's marketing chief, the idea that led to Virginia Slims and "You've come a long way, baby!"

A full-page *Ebony* ad (June 1972) featured the large bold title "This Is L&M—Super Bad" over an intimate, happy, racy scene at a cozy dining table. "Her pad. Ribs and a good rap topped off with sweet potato pie and coffee—you can't take another bite. And now—you're both ripe for L&M," said the blurb. The health warning was not yet in place.

While cigarette sales in the female and minority markets continued to rise, tobacco sponsorship of youth-oriented sports and other broadcast programs came to an end. In a parting gesture to viewers, Philip Morris Companies, Inc., bought television time on all 1971 New Year's football games at a cost of \$1.25 million. In the words of a network representative, the company wished to give America's youth one last video "farewell to Marlboro Country, Winston's bad grammar, the disadvantages of Benson & Hedges and to all those idyllic scenes of springtime and cattle roundups and menthol-cooled mountain vistas" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 1, 1971, pp. 1, 6).

Government Ambivalence

In 1978 the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) proposed a modest Government campaign to discourage smoking. He was attacked by the Tobacco Institute for "Big Brother tactics" (*Advertising Age*, Oct. 9, 1978, p. 80), a "prohibitionist mentality" (*Newsweek*, Jan. 30, 1978, p. 73), and a "frenzied dictatorial effort" (*Broadcasting*, Oct. 9, 1978, p. 51). He was undercut by presidential assurances to the tobacco industry that "we have only a \$30 million budget on tobacco at HEW. That is all Joe Califano asked for, and I think that's what he will get." Two-thirds of that was going for research, President Carter explained to a North Carolina audience of tobacco growers: "Tobacco, in some instances, is damaging to our nation's health, particularly among very young children and those who have respiratory diseases Certainly no one need fear the emphasis on research that will make the use of tobacco in the future even more safe than it has been in the past." The story that reported the speech was headlined "HEW's Cigarette Battle Goes Up In Smoke" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 17, 1978, p. 6-A).

It had been estimated that 1 year's Government funding for education about smoking was less than 1 day's cost of cigarette advertising (*Christian Science Monitor*, April 1, 1975). As the HEW campaign was getting under way, the program aimed at teenagers was cut and its director resigned in protest.

Antismoking drive keeps gaining, but impetus seems to have slowed was the *New York Times* headline on Jan. 26, 1979 (p. A-8). The story reported that although most States had approved some restrictions, only Minnesota had passed a comprehensive Clean Indoor Air Act. The tobacco companies spent 10 times as much as their proponents, defeating, or at least delaying for a decade, the next major threat, a California proposition that would have banned smoking in most public places. The campaign was repeated in Florida, with the same effect.

The FTC's staff report of 1981 (FTC 1981) found surprisingly low public awareness of the hazards of smoking. The report noted the increasingly shocking revelations about these hazards even for nonsmokers and demonstrated the ineffectiveness of existing health warnings in the face of tobacco advertising and marketing techniques. It recommended remedial action including expanded educational efforts; prime-time antismoking announcements; making health warnings larger, more prominent, and more specific, including disclosure of carbon monoxide levels; limiting the use of nature, health, glamor, and success imagery to what the trade calls "tombstone" ads showing packs only; and replacement of the current warning with a rotational warning system.

Congress has implemented only the last recommendation. The others are as valid for the 1990s as they were for the 1980s.

Advertising Campaigns

Cigarette manufacturers continue to associate their products with images of nature, beauty, sports, health, and vigor, but they can no longer claim explicitly that smoking is beneficial for people. The emerging shift in public health policy and the increasingly militant assertion of the private right to health have put the industry on the defensive. It is a robust defense, marked by counterattacks and victories as well as defeats and strategic retreats.

Issue Advertising

The formation of the TIRC triggered the first high-powered campaign to counter the findings of medical research. It was also the beginning of the long and successful drive to shield tobacco company disputation of research findings as "issue advertising," which is more fully protected than product advertising.

In full-page ads in January 1954 titled "A Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers," TIRC pledged to contribute to research "into all phases of tobacco use and health" under the guidance of an advisory committee of "distinguished men" who were "disinterested in the cigarette industry." The Hill and Knowlton public relations agency, which created and managed the tobacco industry campaign, was credited with "brilliant inspiration in rescuing the cigarette industry from the most damaging assault it has ever sustained" (Galbraith 1960, p. 42).

Individual tobacco companies attacked the problem of research about tobacco's toxic elements and health hazards in various ways. "The public can choose with confidence" declared a Liggett & Meyers ad, citing tests with "a half-million dollar, 30-ton machine" and unnamed "eminent scientists from leading universities." The carefully crafted copy went on to describe "the most exacting scrutiny, including thousands of analyses of millions of pounds of tobacco. From all these thousands of analyses, and other findings reported in the leading medical journals, our Research Department has found no reason to believe that the isolation and elimination of any element native to cigarette tobaccos today would improve smoking." This blatantly disingenuous "finding" led to the conclusion that, therefore, you can choose with confidence the three Liggett & Myers brands "tested and approved by 30 years of scientific tobacco research."

The long-running Vantage brand campaign was even bolder. It featured confident, sincere-looking women and men representing "us" in heroic battle against "them." "They" are "those people who are always knocking cigarettes," "always telling us not to smoke," who "make me feel guilty." "They" are also extolling the virtues of the "low 'tar' and nicotine cigarettes" ("a lost cause," "like . . . sucking on a pencil," "as much flavor . . . as a toothpick"). "We" are different. "I smoke because I enjoy it," "I love them," "I am smoking Vantage."

As findings of indirect hazards from cigarette smoke in public places and work settings began to appear, and as studies showed the effectiveness of smoking restrictions, the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. (now the RJR Nabisco conglomerate, makers of Vantage, More, and other brands) launched an issue advertising campaign that made legal history.

RJR placed full-page ads in leading newspapers and magazines that declared: "Workplace Smoking Restrictions: A Trend That Never Was" and "Passive Smoking: An Active Controversy." One ad told about a survey conducted for the Tobacco Institute that found most companies had no smoking restrictions (in 1985) and preferred "to encourage individual workers to settle smoking issues with mutual respect for each others' legitimate rights and feelings." The other reported that "the connection between [environmental tobacco smoke] and lung cancer has not been scientifically established to date" and complained that "one-sided coverage" leads to "growing alarm . . . being translated into social strife and unfair antismoker legislation."

When another ad titled "Of Cigarettes and Science" declared "the issue between smoking and health is an open one," the FTC finally issued a complaint. It claimed that R.J. Reynolds understated the risks of smoking and the ad was, therefore, false and misleading. Reynolds appealed, and in August 1986 an administrative law judge ruled that the ad was an expression of corporate opinion, not sales talk, and was thus outside FTC jurisdiction (*New York Times*,

August 7, 1986, p. A10). The attorney for the FTC argued: "Reynolds is free to speak on this issue . . . before the legislature, in news stories, op-ed pieces and scientific journals, and it can advertise truthfully. But it may not make deceptive statements in paid-for advertising to minimize consumers' fear about this most salient product attribute of cigarettes."

Advertising Age, however, was quick to point out in its headline that "RJR Ruling May 'Open Up' Issue Advertising." Industry representatives were cited as saying the ruling "gives advertisers the opportunity to get their story out to the public on controversial issues"—as, for example a beer marketer "placing ads arguing for a drinking age of 18"—(*Advertising Age*, August 18, 1986, pp. 6, 77).

Winning the legal battle on issue advertising provided a basis for pressing forward with a new defense of product advertising. The new campaign set out to join the cause of tobacco with that of civil rights and freedom itself. The industry with a long history of pressure and suppression now claimed that it was victimized by zealots, bigots, and other enemies of liberty.

Free Speech Campaigns

"The Most Inflammatory Question of Our Time," according to the headline of a full-page Reynolds ad, was "Hey, would you put out that cigarette?" The ad went on to observe that such a question threatens smokers, creates social discord, and "can make sparks fly." This plea for tolerance concluded by suggesting that learning "peaceful coexistence" with smokers may also be the way to solve "our many other problems" (*New York Times*, Sept. 10, 1985, p. A-15).

Other ads went further. Some printed an article "presented in the public interest by Philip Morris, Incorporated." It began:

The civil rights act, the voting rights act and a host of antidiscrimination laws notwithstanding, millions of Americans are still forced to sit in the back of planes, trains and buses. Many more are subject to segregation in public places. Some are even denied housing and employment: victims of an alarming—yet socially acceptable—public hostility. This new form of discrimination is based on smoking behavior. If you happen to enjoy a cigarette, you are the potential target of violent antismokers and overzealous public enforcers determined to force their beliefs on the rest of society (*New York Times*, Dec. 29, 1984).

"Free Speech Is Under Assault" claimed a sympathetic Mobil ad on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* (Dec. 18, 1986). "Censorship? Here in the USA?" asked a followup to the Philip Morris civil rights ad. According to the copy, "The issue is not smoking. The issue is simply the abuse of a constitutional right by a few who would obstruct the flow of information in an attempt to bend human behavior to match their notion of the ideal, their concept of the acceptable."

The censorship ad was also the opening gun in a \$15,000 Philip Morris magazine essay competition for the best essay that, in the words of the sponsors, "defines and defends the First Amendment's application to American business; and that specifically questions the ramifications of a tobacco advertising ban on the future of free expression in a free market economy."

The announcement was sent to journalism schools across the country along with a large poster asking in bold type, "Is Liberty Worth Writing For?" over an enlarged facsimile of the first amendment. "Our founders thought so. And we think so too," declared the sponsors, explaining that the struggle for freedom leads directly to the fight against "a tobacco advertising ban now under consideration in Congress."

That struggle also involved a broadly orchestrated campaign to depict regulation of cigarette advertising as a threat to free speech and "consumer sovereignty." A friendly Congressman, Thomas Luken (D-OH), chair of the subcommittee that oversees the FTC, warned that even though "tobacco is a harmful product . . . imposing restrictions on its promotion and advertising constitutes a precedent which is bound to be imitated. Censorship is contagious."

Daniel Oliver, chair of the FTC, charged by law to oversee advertising, went further. Identifying a cigarette advertising ban bill as an "attack on consumer sovereignty itself," Oliver told a meeting of advertising executives, "Your industry will be the battlefield." Alluding to the campaign that defeated the move by an earlier and more active FTC to regulate children's television commercials, he said, "The enemy is worse than the National Nanny. It is Big Brother who is now stalking consumers" (*Advertising Age*, April 13, 1987, pp. 18-19).

At about the same time, *Newsweek* columnist Robert J. Samuelson complained that "the assault on smoking" aims to "breed intolerance and alter behavior." In an issue (March 23, 1987) that carried six pages of tobacco and alcohol advertisements, Samuelson developed an admittedly convoluted line of argument. Banning cigarette advertising, he wrote,

is especially undesirable because, paradoxically, it may be allowed by the Constitution. In 1986 the Supreme Court ruled that Puerto Rico could ban advertising for gambling, which, though legal, was considered "harmful." If this precedent survives, all that prevents Congress—and State legislatures and city councils—from stopping advertising of "harmful" products is custom and good sense. Abolishing cigarette ads would loosen this self-restraint. Would alcohol be next . . . ?

It was clear that the ultimate goal of the "issue advertising" and "free speech" campaigns was protection of the cigarette sales pitch—and any sales pitch—from further restrictions, taxation, or outright bans. The campaigns could not halt moves to restrict smoking in many public and working spaces. But they succeeded in deflecting the national media spotlight from America's foremost

health hazard and in defeating, diluting, or delaying every major attempt to blunt, let alone ban, the tobacco industry's power to fill print and outdoor media with lively images of rugged, happy, attractive, healthy smokers.

Legislative Attempts

Medical and public health organizations have long argued that it is incongruous to have the Government spend billions of dollars on antidrug drives, cancer research, and other health campaigns while promoting tobacco through subsidies to growers and tax exemptions for cigarette advertising. Bills trying to address such anomalies have regularly stalled in Congress, however.

Antismoking Bills

The AMA, the American Lung Association, and the American Cancer Society have been among prominent organizations calling for the elimination of tobacco product advertising and promotion, especially cigarette company sponsorship of sports and cultural events that attract young people. As a first step, they recommended the elimination of glamorous models, joyous social occasions, and robust scenes set against beautiful natural scenery. Only the brand name, tar and nicotine content, and the health warning would be left in the cigarette ads.

The tobacco companies' standard retort is that (1) advertising is addressed to smokers only, (2) it may affect brand choice but not total consumption, and (3) any restriction violates their right of free speech (see, e.g., *New York Times*, March 14, 1986, p. B-5).

The print media position was stated in a joint letter by the American Newspaper Publishers Association and the Magazine Publishers Association to the AMA. It presented a fourth major argument: "Products that can be legally sold in our society are entitled to be advertised; if it is legal to sell a product, it should be legal to advertise it" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 11, 1985, p. 3-A).

The day after the Virginia Slims tennis tournament opened in January 1985 in Washington, DC, the Coalition on Smoking and Health, an umbrella group of antitobacco forces, asked Congress to "rid the U.S. of smoking and tobacco use by the year 2000." *Advertising Age* complained (January 10, 1985, p. 52) that the coalition "singled out cigarette and smokeless tobacco advertising and promotion for the criticism frequently heaped on beer and wine marketers—that they use rock concerts, sporting events and other appealing settings to target America's youth."

Congress has, in fact, considered bills to restrict or ban cigarette advertising, to eliminate its full tax deductibility, to require counteradvertising, and to restrict ads to "tombstone" messages without lifestyle images. Proponents of this measure argue that advertising promotes all consumption, not just brand

loyalty; that it is aimed at young people; that it is deceptive by failing to fully explain health hazards; and that the industry's advertising budget clout is used to suppress or neutralize adverse information. Opponents claim free speech protection and lack of evidence of harm from advertising; they say that bans—increasingly used to control smoking in other countries—don't work.

The administration, after some hesitation, permitted Surgeon General C. Everett Koop to testify for the ban in 1986, but the Government's own spokesman came out against it. "Deregulation" was the policy line. While the politically more appealing antidrug bandwagon rolled into high gear, congressional support for cigarette advertising control wavered.

The Political Economy of Tobacco

Surgeon General Koop repeated his call for the ban at a meeting held in the first Non-Smokers Inn (a Dallas, TX, motel). "But," he added, "don't anyone weep over the future of American cigarette manufacturers, because they are exporting disease, disability and death to the Third World as fast as they can" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 29, 1987, p. 1-A).

The tobacco companies need not be worried. The business has never been more powerful, concentrated, prolific, or profitable. By the end of the 1980s six leading companies were selling more than 280 brands and filling nearly all the demands of about 50 million adult cigarette smokers. "Cigarettes are a fantastic cash cow," said industry analyst John C. Maxwell, Jr., adding that the financial condition of the tobacco companies is also "fantastic . . . Philip Morris and Reynolds are throwing off almost \$2.5 billion in [uncommitted] cash this year" (*Advertising Age*, August 4, 1986).

Cigarette income enabled R.J. Reynolds to acquire Nabisco, Del Monte, and Hawaiian Punch; Philip Morris to buy Miller Beer, Seven Up, and General Foods; American Brands to absorb companies from Pinkerton guards to sporting goods makers. Lorillard, Inc., profits helped Loews Corporation buy a controlling share of CBS, Inc.

Advertising Age (Aug. 4, 1986) reported that tobacco executives felt they had enough muscle to defeat most bills to ban advertising at home and abroad. Even those that passed would only consolidate the position of the leaders by making it difficult to introduce a new brand. They were "not in a panic over the fact that sales are sliding 1% to 2% per year, or over various moves to further curtail tobacco usage in the U.S.," the report noted. "There are about 940 to 950 packages of cigarets sold in this country every second of every day around the clock," said the president of Loews Corporation's Lorillard unit. "If it declines to 936, that's fine. If it declines to 932, that's fine too."

Media Clout

Legal clout has gained the industry the right to cloud the issues with issue advertising. Media clout has given it the power to continue to push tobacco advertising as free speech and to obscure or obstruct attempts at controls.

While the antidrug campaign of 1986 reached a fever pitch, attempts to publicize the Tenth Annual Great American Smokeout had a mixed reception. Few of the major media gave it much play. Most of those that did greeted it with derision and ran tobacco industry countercopy.

"Pre-Smokeout Philip Morris Passes Out 'Smokers' Kits'" was the banner headline over a story detailing the company's "big budget pre-emptive strike" and 13-city news conference via satellite hookup, complete with Milton Berle, "who asked nonsmokers to 'lighten up and let us smokers light up. We'd all get along a lot better'" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 20, 1986, p. B-9). An Associated Press story used the occasion of the smokeout to announce that a Tobacco Institute survey had "found that 72 percent of the 500 people polled said they believed money spent to promote the smokeout could be better spent on cancer research."

The *New York Times* sent a reporter to Winston-Salem, NC, to report, "Smoking drive feeble in the tobacco capital." A companion story was headlined "Smokers Trying To Cut Back Inhale Deeper, Study Shows" (Nov. 20, 1986, p. A-10). When WHO declared its headquarters a no-smoking area, a *Times* story stressed the "mixed response" and cited heavy smokers' comments in a dispatch from Geneva headlined "Guardians of world health find it hard to quit smoking."

Tobacco power still packs a strong media punch. If not constrained, it can continue to inflict huge economic losses on countries rich and poor and to devastate the world's youngest and most vulnerable populations for a long time to come. The early 1990 defeat of RJR Nabisco's effort to introduce a new brand targeted specifically at upper-income Blacks suggests that the fortunes of the tobacco companies may be changing; public opinion is hardening in opposition. Nevertheless, the tobacco industry remains a formidable presence in our life and culture.

Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are the most widely used, enjoyed, and abused addictive substances in America. Although they exact 1 1/2 times the health cost and 3 times the economic damage of tobacco, their lethal toll is more concentrated. Five percent of the drinkers consume 50 percent of all alcoholic beverages and inflict on themselves and others 1 in every 12 fatalities, or an average of more than 570 deaths a day.

The cost in lives, health problems, troubled families, and economic problems has made Demon Rum a perennial moral and political issue. It precipitated the most radical social intervention in America's habits: Prohibition. Some claim that Prohibition had health benefits, but no one denies that it was a moral and political disaster. In the light of new wars on drugs and the industry argument that the only legal way to ban advertising is to make the product illegal (a claim the Posadas decision, upholding a ban on advertising that may have serious harmful effects, made somewhat disingenuous), the lessons of Prohibition may be instructive.

The National Prohibition Enforcement Act of 1919 and the 18th amendment to the U.S. Constitution (1919-1933) were adopted after many years of agitation and public discussion, and against determined opposition. Large majorities in Congress voted for the amendment. More States ratified it than any other amendment—46 of the 48.

Giant industries, a booming international trade, and thousands of saloonkeepers were outlawed without compensation. New enforcement agencies were created, and drastic police powers (including car searches without a warrant) were upheld in the courts. Treaties with other countries were signed to help prevent smuggling. Convictions rose from nearly 18,000 in the first year of prohibition to 53,000 the last. Various studies claimed overall productivity and health benefits. The battle for morality, sobriety, and industry seemed to have been won.

As time went on, there were reports of more drinking by young people than before Prohibition. Widespread smuggling, overcrowded jails, jammed courts, and the activities of underground empires flaunting the law grabbed the headlines. Moral issues were submerged in a storm of indignation and resentment directed against lawlessness and corruption. A review of research by the Federal Council of Churches (1925) hinted at the absence of cultural supports for Prohibition when it concluded that "the illicit liquor traffic will be finally overcome when and where education in temperate living strongly reinforces the arm of the law" (p. 83).

Historian W.E. Woodward summed up the "colossal failures" of Prohibition by observing that it had simply turned the liquor business over to bootleggers.

They sold liquor poor in quality and high in price, and they paid no taxes. The enormous revenue of the government from the excise tax in liquor vanished in a day. That meant an inevitable increase in the income tax and in the tariff Although thousands of enforcement officers were employed, the illicit liquor business continued to grow All the preprohibition evils of liquor persisted, and were worse than ever, because they were beyond government control. (Woodward 1938, p. 781)

When the Great Depression wiped out any economic benefit of Prohibition and boosted demands for jobs and revenue, the 18th amendment was repealed. All limitations, including controls on quality, marketing, price, and age, were passed on to a patchwork of liquor laws and regulations. Former bootleggers emerged as leading industrialists. The profits and power of alcohol regained legal control of a significant segment of media culture.

Industry Under Pressure

The alcoholic beverage industry, a \$1.3-billion-a-year advertiser, pays 4 to 5 percent of the total cost of U.S. commercial media. More than half goes to television for beer and wine commercials. Some 18 percent goes to magazines, 8 percent to newspapers, and the rest to outdoor, cable, and other media. Today the industry is at a crossroads. The boom in the sale of distilled spirits shifted into reverse in the 1980s. The beer market, growing at the rate of 3 to 4 percent a year in the 1960s (when the baby boom generation reached drinking age), went flat in the 1980s. And the wine boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, riding the crest of a demographic and lifestyle swell, began to fade.

Many pressures contribute to a shift in drinking habits and sales. Health and calorie consciousness, the graying of the prime beer-drinking population, the substitution of wine for distilled spirits, the raising of the drinking age in many States, the bans on happy hours, the rising concern about drinking on campus and in the workplace, warning signs in many liquor stores, and lawsuits making the server legally responsible—all contributed to a change in the social climate of drinking. The Federal excise tax, lowered to give industry a boost, rose by 19 percent in 1985. State taxes followed suit. The militant campaigns of MADD, the activism of Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD), a petition by national organizations for a ban on all alcohol advertising directed at or reaching the young, and the law requiring health warnings on alcoholic beverage labels reflected and supported the shift.

Despite falling sales, however, alcohol beverages remain a profitable business. The trend toward diversification and consolidation marks (according to a marketing report) "a shift from weaker to stronger hands, a trend toward deeper pockets" (*Advertising Age*, Oct. 13, 1986, p. 28). Liquor publicists are also

working hard to make a comeback. A typical news story inspired by the National Association of Beverage Importers, citing a 35-percent rise in vodka imports and interviews with local bartenders, carried the headline, "The martini is coming back strong; dry spell is over for the time-honored civilized drink" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 9, 1987).

Analysts are divided on the nature and extent of the dry spell. They point out that despite the decline in overall sales, the number of adult alcoholics was still on the rise (see, e.g., *New York Times*, October 1, 1985). Furthermore, an increasing proportion comes from young people, women, and minorities. A National Association of Junior Leagues study found that more than half the women being treated for alcoholism in New York were 18 to 34 years old. The director of the study stated, "We are seeing the first generation of women who report drinking for the purpose of getting drunk" (*New York Times*, April 24, 1987, p. 17).

Advertiser Action

In recent years alcoholic beverage advertisers have explored a variety of ways to protect and extend their markets. Some want to abolish the ban on liquor commercials on television, but others are afraid of a legislative backlash. Some States are considering proposals to give up their monopoly of liquor sales and open supermarkets to wine and possibly beer sales, a common practice in other States.

Brewers are the most aggressive. "Faced with similar problems," a marketing study reported, "many other industries would have pulled in their marketing horns long ago The brewing industry's response has been almost the opposite [It] is doing everything possible to attract new customers, and one brewing industry executive calls it a 'panic'" (*Advertising Age*, Jan. 31, 1985, p. 16).

Some firms are promoting products with low alcohol content, promising more sobriety and fewer calories per glass. Others, such as Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc., make grants to organizations like SADD.

The Seagram Companies, whose "moderation campaign" dates back to 1934 ("We who make whiskey say: Drink Moderately" stated the ads) produced commercials claiming that 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, and 1 1/4 ounces of distilled spirits have equal alcoholic content. The three major networks refused to run the commercial, prompting Seagram to attack them in print ads. Critics charged that commercials placing distilled spirits on an equal footing with wine and beer was part of the effort to regain lost market share by selling it on the air. Seagram also increased its advertising budget by 6 to 8 percent to well over \$100 million a year in a move to increase sales by getting more people

to drink less," claimed president Edgar Bronfman, Jr. (*Advertising Age*, July 18, 1985, p. 14).

Messages and Images

A.C. Nielsen, the broadcast rating and market research company, provides point-of-sale information to brewers, distillers, importers, and vintners through its Alcoholic Beverage Service. Clients can "assess the sales and marketing strategies of their own brands, as well as those of their competitors... [and] receive important 'reasons why' data"... (ad in *Advertising Age*, January 31, 1985, p. 33).

Armed with such intelligence, media buyers shop for best buys, and media sellers offer their services in the competition for the best drinkers in the marketplace. The following examples from ads periodically placed in recent issues of *Advertising Age* by upscale, downscale, and minority newspapers and magazines indicate the types of appeals media sellers make to media buyers, looking for alcoholic beverage industry patronage.

Scotland for Scotch. Johnnie Walker for America. The Journal for results. (*Wall Street Journal*)

People in the liquor business look for magazines with proven records. The fact is, since the repeal of the Volstead Act in 1934, *The New Yorker* has carried more pages of alcoholic beverage ads than any other magazine. (*The New Yorker*)

Our readers are your best new market bet. Out of the total number of women in the United States who consume alcoholic beverages, they include: 1 out of 5 liquor drinkers! 1 out of 5 wine-drinkers! 1 out of 5 beer drinkers! (*Family Circle*)

She is black. She makes her own money Proportionately, compared to the total U.S. female population, she drinks more rum. More gin. More vodka. More imported dinner wines. More champagne and sparkling wines. But what she really drinks up is *Essence*. (*Essence*)

More than 72 percent of *Diario las Americas* reader households consume alcoholic beverages, spending more than \$15 million annually So advertise in *Diario* and you'll never have to worry about your liquor sales running dry.

The "Black Market"

One relatively recent development is a growing emphasis on extending the market "downward" into minority groups and ethnic communities that have not been prime advertising targets in the past. Some marketers turn to specialized or advertising agencies to develop special campaigns. Burrell Advertising of Chicago, for example, became the leading black-owned agency 14 years after its founding in 1971. According to a story about advertising executives in the trade

paper *Advertising Age* (December 19, 1985), its billings of \$50 million were expected to double in 3 years and then double again in 5.

When given the Black advertising account by B-F Spirits Ltd., marketers of Canadian Mist, the *Advertising Age* story explained as follows:

The agency knew that the rugged outdoorsy general-market theme wouldn't play in a Black consumer market Burrell's solution was to position drinking Canadian Mist as an event Each "Misting" ad shows a smartly dressed couple . . . against a vague background You didn't really know where they were. The "Misting" campaign changed the face of liquor advertising Canadian Mist's share of sales to Blacks has risen from about 7 percent to 25 percent.

Jack Daniel Distillery, a Tennessee-based company with a "distinctly white, Southern image," hired Burrell to launch a black-targeted effort. "The agency was careful to capture the history of Jack Daniels while skirting around its southernness," explains the manager of its distilled spirits account. "You can't take black people back to the good ol' days in the South because those are the days when we were getting lynched."

Another Black agency, Lockhart & Pettus of New York, was engaged by Canadian Club (of Hiram Walker, Inc.) to create a "black version" of its "Be a Part of It" campaign prepared by the firm's general market agency. Lockhart reasoned that "being 'a part of it' is not always desirable or possible for blacks" and created an ad showing a Black couple attending a fashion show and toasting each other. The theme in large type was "Forget About The Rest." "A copy change that suggests ignoring the rest of the world makes sense," Lockhart said. "It also supports a Hiram Walker program that pays tribute to Black designers and the company's sponsorship of fund-raising fashion shows."

Targeting requires a keen eye for nuances of the culture, executives said. But they also complained that "some critics look a little too hard" and cited this example:

A recent Burrell-created spot for Stroh's beer shows some boyhood pals of a wealthy young black man drop by his palatial home. "Can you believe it?" one exclaims. "J.T. with an \$18 million contract!" J.T. then leads his guests to an ice-choked swimming pool filled with Stroh's. The client loved it. Burrell was so proud of it, it was added to the agency's presentation reel. But one woman continues to write to the agency complaining that the spot perpetuates the stereotype that Blacks can succeed only in sports and that it condones overconsumption of alcohol.

Nevertheless, Burrell executives believed, "the positives outweigh the negatives."

Relatively untapped market potentials also exist in countries where limited resources and traditional cultures have kept drinking within bounds of

occasional celebrations and ritual uses, and where advertising and marketing regulations are weak or nonexistent. Israel was such a market when Anheuser-Busch entered in 1984 with an aggressive campaign to promote "new American-style beer-drinking habits" (Weis 1986, p. 3). The campaign extolled the virtues of Budweiser's alcohol content being higher than that of domestic beers. (That practice is illegal in the United States. It was first reported on the business page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Dec. 1, 1985.)

Another imported beer of even higher alcohol content followed in 1986 with a different appeal. It showed a stein of Tuborg beer together with a glamorous car, ignoring the alcohol-impaired driving implications. An analysis of alcoholic beverage ads in Israel showed most aimed at young people, especially young women, with lifestyle themes (success, sex, pleasure) dominating and dangers or moderation never mentioned (Weis 1986).

The Youth Market

The alcoholic beverage industry continues to be a major promoter of sports events and of youth- and sports-oriented programs and media. It pays about 20 percent of the cost of sports programming on television and radio.

In 1984 NAB engaged well-known first amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams to help oppose a ban on beer and wine commercials during prime-time sporting events programs. NAB President Eddie Fritts warned the proposed ban would have "a major impact" on college and university revenues from such programs (*Broadcasting*, July 16, 1984, p. 33). The ban did not materialize.

Furthermore, despite public pressure against programming targeted at youth, BATF relaxed its interpretation of the ban on active athletes in beer and wine commercials. Under the new interpretation, disingenuous in the extreme, active athletes were allowed to endorse alcoholic beverages as long as they were not shown drinking the product.

The broadcasting networks, mindful of the ever-present threat of an advertising ban, refused to embrace the new interpretation. Athletes and their agents were also cautious. "For athletes alcohol and substance abuse are such hot issues that a direct beer pitch might well lead to image meltdown," wrote *Advertising Age* columnist Robert Raissman (May 26, 1986).

No such timidity prevails in sponsoring racing and other sporting events. Anheuser-Busch paid nearly \$1 million (not counting expensive television ad time) for the right to use the Budweiser beer logo at the 1987 Hagler-Leonard championship bout, including this announcement over the loudspeaker: "Once in a lifetime, two legends meet in the ring. Budweiser is proud to be the official sponsor of the Super Fight." Similarly, "Olympic fever" regularly grips beer advertisers long before the event. A \$25-million deal with NBC secured Miller

Brewing Co. 3 years of major league baseball broadcasts as well as sponsorship of the 1988 summer and winter Olympics.

Beer ads on banners, gate signs, athletes' uniforms, and other prominent places at frequently photographed and televised large-scale sports and other events circumvent any limitation on youth-oriented advertising. It was noteworthy to see on the front pages of the sports sections of daily newspapers a news shot from the national collegiate track and field championship in which the words "Bud Light" appeared five times (e.g., *New York Times*, June 1, 1989, p. B-9). At the same time the era of deregulation has resulted in a 51-percent decrease of issue-oriented public affairs programs that may provide opportunities for education about alcohol (Donahue 1989).

The Campus Market

The battle for young consumers is also being joined on college campuses. Alcohol awareness campaigns and other administrative moves have dampened the chugalug and other drink-to-get-drunk party promotions of beer companies, but they have not fundamentally altered the culture and environment of heavy drinking and the blatant sexism associated with it.

Publishing guidelines have attempted to restrict the most extreme forms of alcohol promotion on campus such as the examples that follow. A report in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Feb. 6, 1985) observed: "Beer and liquor companies account for a large part of the advertising in student newspapers across the country—some say as much as two-thirds of it. Although the guidelines have helped clean up the content and message of those ads, many still associate drinking with glamor, with success, and with sex."

Another review of studies (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 25, 1987, pp. 32, 34) concluded that "serious alcohol use among students remains at high levels." Most campus officials consider alcohol drinking by far the most damaging drug problem, promoted by the "glamorization of alcohol use in the media." An alcohol risk survey of 325 campuses showed that many colleges had failed to back up their policies with adequate abuse prevention programs (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, Dec. 17, 1986).

The cover story of the April 1985 issue of an occasional publication called *Newsweek on Campus*, "Crackdown on Drinking," featured a poll showing 7 out of 10 students drinking "generally... too much." Pictures of sexy, active students drinking on spring break illustrated these presumably discouraging norms.

The 1987 "Spring Break Guide" color brochures and posters published by brewers and distributed nationally as inserts in college newspapers typically made no mention of any crackdown. Prominent on the cover was a blond-wigged, smirking Hulk, strolling among palm trees, lifting a gigantic beer can into the

air, pushing male wimps into the sand, and (pied piperlike) attracting bikini-clad beauties. Each inside page offered fame, fun, laughs, prizes, nostalgia, girls, and T-shirts with every can of beer. The posters elaborated these themes.

One poster pursued the "brute" theme with a giant, hairy black arm extending a "King Kan" of beer toward the tanned body of an admiring blonde. Another featured a "party headquarters calendar." In the middle was the open door of a refrigerator showing three shelves. On top were nine bottles and four cans of beer, some milk, cheese, mustard, and a half-eaten sandwich. On the middle shelf were nine cans of beer, an 8-pack and a 12-pack of bottles of beer, one open can of tomato soup, and a half-eaten pizza tray alongside a large bottle of beer across the top of the packs. The bottom shelf held more King Kan cans. The back of the calendar advertised 12 other posters. They featured beer with guitar music, beer with a blonde beauty, beer with a Black beauty, beer with nostalgic scenes, beer with racing cars—all appealing, all available.

In 1989 these industry-sponsored supplements did not include alcohol ads, possibly in response to antialcohol pressures. It is too early to tell, however, whether that policy will be permanent.

Regulation and Legislation

Efforts to strengthen controls in force since the mid-1930s led to the voluntary ban on broadcast commercials for distilled spirits, leaving only beer and wine to be sold on the air. The movement for further controls escalated in the 1980s. As with tobacco, ads linking alcohol with images of glamor, youth, sports, and healthy living were among the movement's major targets.

Project SMART (Stop Marketing Alcohol on Radio and Television), a coalition of some 25 citizen groups including MADD, the National PTA, and the National Council on Alcoholism, supported legislation and petitioned the FTC to place warnings and other restrictions on all alcohol advertising and to ban beer and wine commercials from the airwaves. The FTC rejected the petition and agreed with the advertisers and broadcasters that there was no convincing evidence that advertising necessarily leads to abuse.

Coordinated since 1984 by CSPI, SMART shifted its campaign to counteradvertising. It supported bills to require warnings on labels and to compel radio and television stations to give time for countercommercials equal to paid time for alcohol commercials.

Congress passed a labeling law that took effect in late 1989. It requires warnings on cans and bottles (but not in ads) of the hazards of drinking while pregnant and while driving a car or operating machinery. The beer industry's response was a stepped-up campaign of moderation and reassurance with

slogans like "Know when to say when" and "It's older than the written word and as basic as bread."

Regulation on the air proved to be more problematic. The congressional statute that banned tobacco commercials blazed a legal trail for the regulation of alcohol advertising. The courts upheld its constitutionality on grounds that (1) although printed messages require literacy and an affirmative act to be read, broadcast messages are "in the air" and virtually inescapable; (2) the public owns the airways and broadcasting is a regulated and licensed activity in the public interest; and (3) the loss of advertising revenue per se does not deprive the broadcaster of first amendment rights. A review of these and other legal considerations (Schofield 1985, p. 539) concluded that, "should legislation be enacted banning alcoholic beverage advertising from radio and television, any First Amendment challenge to that law is most likely to fail."

A broader legal analysis of the future of alcohol advertising (Hovland and Wilcox 1987) reviewed the consequences of the *Posadas* decision upholding an advertising ban if "serious harm" can be proven. Although the conclusion was again that "advertisers have good cause for concern," the concern may be groundless as long as the FTC imposes a difficult test for attributing "serious harm" from advertising alone.

The tactic that drove smoking commercials from the air in 1971 proved to be difficult to apply to alcohol, especially in the political climate of the late 1980s. With \$750 million in television advertising at stake (*Variety*, January 23, 1985), NAB joined with advertisers and the alcoholic beverage industry to block any regulation. NAB announced that saving beer and wine commercials would be the organization's "number-one priority." "Haunted by the memory of what happened with cigarettes and determined to protect their hefty beer and wine billings . . . , TV's Big 3 have no trouble accommodating paid youth-oriented ads and free drunk driving admonitions," wrote *Advertising Age* columnist Maurine Christopher (August 12, 1985, p 46).

It had taken a relatively active FCC and a court order to admit tobacco counteradvertising under the Fairness Doctrine. But in the mid-1980s the FCC abandoned the Fairness Doctrine and let many public interest provisions lapse or allowed the marketplace or industry to perform on a voluntary basis. Even the requirement to keep logs was abolished, making it difficult if not impossible to ascertain what was broadcast.

Like tobacco, alcoholic beverages are products of increasingly concentrated and even overlapping but diversified conglomerates well integrated into the economic and media structure of American society. Drinking itself is an integral part of the culture and of the dramatic formula seen on television plays even more often than on commercials.

Unlike tobacco, alcoholic beverages have redeeming features, but their destructive path is broader. Public and legal pressures forced the industries—and their trade and governmental protectors—to go on the defensive. It has been a strong and largely successful defense, including forays into new areas of marketing opportunity and social vulnerability.

Other Drugs

Substances that can cure, soothe, and thrill; that can be used for medication, celebration, recreation, and mind alteration; and that can calm and captivate their consumers will inevitably be manufactured, promoted, and used on a huge scale. They will be judged helpful or harmful, and legal or criminal, depending on the time, place, and occasion and the cultural, historical, and medical (or nonmedical) circumstances of their use. In addition to all other functions, they will also serve purposes of power and profit. In the long run, industrial priorities, political realities, and cultural values and taboos have played and will continue to play a major role in structuring the role of drugs in our society.

Legal Drugs: Marketing and Advertising

The pharmaceutical industry is one of the key players in the drug-oriented culture. It perpetuates the use of chemical substances by producing and marketing three main kinds of drugs. Current issues, controversies, and trends in cultural representations can best be understood in light of the history of these categories:

- drugs prescribed by doctors and sold exclusively by pharmacists;
- drugs that need no prescription but are promoted through medical professionals under the so-called ethical policy (some drugstore chains have begun to challenge this policy by selling "ethical drugs" as well); and
- drugs advertised and sold directly to consumers as OTC drugs, including the so-called proprietary (patent) medicines.

Drug advertising has long been a controversial issue. It has been debated by the pharmaceutical, advertising, and media industries, and by legislatures, courts, regulatory agencies, and medical and consumer groups. These groups have fought over pricing and labeling; false, deceptive, or spurious claims and cures; and the broader implications of "pill popping" and the "drug culture."

Nostrums and remedies supported the rise of the commercial press and still provide significant media income. "Sal Hepatica was the cornerstone upon which Bristol-Myers was built..." said the executive vice president of the Proprietary Association, which represents drug manufacturers. "Carter's Little

Liver Pills and many others played similar roles for their companies" (*Advertising Age*, May 23, 1960, p. 31). One still finds in media presumably targeted at the readers of publications such as True Confessions many mail-order ads for panaceas for problems related to health and sex.

The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 included the first attempt to control blatant exploitation of sick and gullible people (Cook 1958; Holbrook 1959). Yet a watered-down bill left most patent medicine pitchmen free to hawk their wares.

A press survey in 1933 found that most newspapers carried patent medicine ads condemned by the AMA. A bill to strengthen public controls over the drug industry and its advertising practices provoked the vigorous opposition of drug manufacturers and virtually all newspapers, magazines, advertisers, and broadcasters. A study of New York Times news coverage between 1933 and 1935 found 19 stories dealing with the potential loss to business if the bill were passed and only 1 noting its importance to the consuming public. The proposed bill was first weakened, as the Pure Food and Drug Act had been, and then amended to switch regulation from the FDA to the FTC, whose control of drug labeling and advertising had been less vigorous (Nichols 1972).

Continuing medical and public clamor led to the passage of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938, which specified that a category of the more dangerous drugs should be sold only by doctor's prescription and through licensed pharmacists. The promotion of these drugs through what was later called "ethical advertising" was to be directed to physicians and pharmacists rather than the consuming public. The policy, immediately attacked by some drug manufacturers and advertisers, eventually fell victim to the deregulatory era of the 1980s.

In the meantime, the National Better Business Bureau reported in 1957 that the number of flamboyant and false drug ads was rising again: in 2 years, the number of complaints had increased tenfold (*Advertising Age*, October 7, 1957). Hearings conducted by Senator Estes Kefauver revealed 7000-percent manufacturers' markups, 33-percent pharmacists' takes, promotion-inflated prices, fraudulent advertising, and other anomalies affecting both prescription and OTC drug marketing. The hearings paved the way for the Kefauver Drug Amendment of 1962 requiring ads for ethical drugs to disclose side effects, contraindications, and effectiveness.

Prescription Drug Advertising

Prescription and ethical drug advertising, a \$25-billion business, supports highly profitable medical and pharmaceutical journals and other forms of promotion to health professionals. The AMA's drug testing program restricted the advertising of prescription drugs without its seal of approval until the

mid-1950s. When that program was discontinued, advertising in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* tripled and its revenue nearly doubled (*I.F. Stone's Weekly*, July 17, 1961; Gewirtz and Graham 1970), despite AMA's ban on distilled spirits and tobacco ads.

With what *Advertising Age* described as the "boom in the ethical drug industry" (March 24, 1958, pp. 3, 72), new medical publications were established, creating additional sales vehicles—and income. The slick newsmagazine-style *MD*, launched in January 1957, limited its advertising to 100 pages an issue. It was turning down ads by March and doubled its gross income in the first year.

Ethical advertising came under attack in the courts, the legislatures, and the marketplace. When some drug manufacturers looking for broader markets began selling ethical brands directly to the consuming public, alarmed pharmacists and consumer advocates pressured the FDA to sponsor a moratorium halting the practice. The plan was to study the effects of previous advertising of ethical drugs, conduct test marketing, and review FDA rules in light of the results. But the FDA suspended the moratorium before it ended, without report or explanation.

Other events of the mid-1980s came into play. Deregulation was in full swing. The FTC had refused to strengthen advertising controls or ban children's program commercials. Its new chair, a noted deregulationist, became director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB in turn put pressure on the FDA to lift its moratorium on prescription drug ads aimed directly at consumers (*Advertising Age*, August 26, 1985, p. 1). "A lot of people here are kind of bent out of shape over this," an FDA official told *Advertising Age*. "They think this is being shoved down our throats by OMB."

The ethical prescription drug industry was not happy either. It was already spending at least \$1 billion a year advertising to medical professionals. That sum broke down to more than \$2,500 for each physician writing prescriptions (*Advertising Age*, Jan. 28, 1985). The industry was anxious about alienating physicians and pharmacists who benefited from the ethical drug policy. As it was, prescription drugs accounted for 70 percent of all drug-related deaths, more than the deaths resulting from all illicit drugs combined. Switching to direct advertising of ethical and prescription brands, as the advertising industry and some drug manufacturers intended to do, exposed pharmaceuticals to new legal liabilities in exchange for uncertain benefits.

Nevertheless, foreign competition and domestic price-cutting (mostly from generic versions of once-patented drugs) moved some major drug companies toward consumer advertising of previously ethical products. At least one major broadcasting network (CBS) prepared guidelines to accommodate the new source of commercial income.

A staff report for the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations cautioned, a bit plaintively: "If the pharmaceutical industry, broadcasters and other media and advertising industry members feel they ultimately stand to gain from initiating this advertising, they should be prepared to explain their calculations in a hearing" (*Advertising Age*, January 20, 1986, p. 67). But with the growing practice of direct advertising to physicians and even selling drugs to patients, it was unlikely that, short of comprehensive new legislation, the ethical policy of public and consumer protections in the drug field could be restored.

Nonprescription Drug Advertising

Ten of the biggest drug companies control the \$7-billion-plus nonprescription, proprietary, or OTC drug market. More than \$1.5 billion in this market is spent on advertising. The media stakes are high, and the cost of offending can be equally large. A critical article in *Life* magazine, based on facts Senator Kefauver's hearings revealed in 1960, prompted one of the biggest drug advertisers, Abbott Laboratories, to pull \$300,000 worth of advertising from the magazine (*Advertising Age*, Oct. 31, 1960).

Fierce competition and questionable promotion practices make OTC drug advertising a target of national consumer and health organizations and such worldwide bodies as the International Organization of Consumer Unions and WHO. The advertising code of the drug industry in each country is designed to comply with the laws and prevent harsher restrictions. While some countries have few or lax controls over drug advertising, others (including Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Canada) use either pharmaceutical or both pharmaceutical and media experts to screen all drug ads.

Bangladesh was the first developing country to adopt (in 1982) a policy banning harmful, unnecessary, and imported drugs that can be produced at home by simple technology. The eight transnational drug producers that control 80 percent of the drug market in Bangladesh fought the measure by bringing pressure through their Governments (Connington 1982).

In 1984 the International Advertising Association (IAA) released a study of drug advertising in 54 countries. The survey found that most countries permitted OTC drug claims for specific diseases and many had no government-mandated groups reviewing ads. The IAA warned as follows:

Intensive competition among some drug manufacturers has occasionally led them to invent vague ailments (the "blahs" or "behavioral drift") for which they claimed that their products were suitable. Or they may have promoted the notion that the taking of certain OTC drugs is essential in maintaining good health (laxatives, vitamins and dietary supplements) or, at least, would not do them any harm.

Together with repeated exposure to print and broadcast advertisements, these methods have generated criticism that the drug industry is fostering a cultural "drug orientation" that inculcates a dependence on medicines—both prescription and OTC—to solve all sorts of physical and emotional problems. (*Advertising Age*, April 22, 1985, p. 55.)

Encouraged by the successful drive to ban cigarette commercials, U.S. consumer groups, media critics, and health professionals pressed claims that much OTC drug advertising is harmful and leads to abuse. They pushed for stricter controls, including banning drug ads from the airwaves. Broadcasters, facing the prospect of losing more than \$500 million in revenues, fought back and extended their codes in self-defense.

The NAB guidelines had advised that drug commercials refer to the need to follow the instructions on the label, not show pills being taken on screen, and be wary of advertising drugs in children's programs or showing children in drug commercials. The guidelines allowed the showing of nasal sprays being administered but gave the improbable advice that there should be "a time lapse between the taking of the medicine and the improved condition of the sufferer" (*Advertising Age*, March 26, 1973, p. 4). Although the industrywide code was abandoned in the late 1970s, the networks and some independent stations decided to extend drug commercial controls.

At the height of the citizen and consumer movements to effect changes in broadcast programming and policy, 15 State attorneys general petitioned the FCC to ban drug commercials on television before 9 p.m. A few months later Donald L. Kanter, former advertising agency executive and chair of the graduate marketing program at the University of Southern California, released a 1976 study of schoolchildren revealing that although television commercials had lower salience than the programs, pharmaceutical advertising might be "one more cultural prop in the maintenance of favorable attitudes toward drug usage among the young" (*Advertising Age*, April 5, 1976).

Prodded by these developments, the FCC and the FTC sponsored forums in which industry executives and their researchers confronted citizens, consumers, and academic critics—and called for more research. Meanwhile, the industry counterattack, congressional failure to overhaul the Communications Act of 1934, and the powerful drive to dismantle rather than strengthen public interest regulation led to the collapse of the citizen reform movement.

Illegal Drugs

The magnitude, intractability, and corrupting influence of the illicit drug trade probably exceeds that of the illicit alcohol industry during Prohibition. A *New York Times* report (August 10, 1984, p. A25) estimated its scope, though not necessarily its damage, at 10 times that of legal drugs. The size and

profitability of the trade equals that of any one of the top two or three industries in the country. Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato (R-NY) charged, "Law enforcement agencies have been outmanned, outgunned, and outfinanced by an illegal industry whose gross receipts are estimated to exceed well over \$100 billion per year" (D'Amato 1986). Even though the drug business inflicts an annual toll of \$59 billion in health and related crime damage (Graham 1987), the evidence is overwhelming, and all too visible in the news every day, that drug trafficking is a "highly organized, relatively low-risk, lucrative commercial venture" (Susman 1975).

Global "Wars on Drugs"

The media spotlight in the never-ending global "drug wars" tends to focus on current trouble spots. In 1840 the British defeated the Chinese in a war fought to provide an "open door" for opium traders. When the traffic into the United States prompted the Government to sign a drug treaty with China in 1880, the trade had become too large and profitable to enforce it (Susman 1975). The focus shifted to Red China in the 1950s, Southeast Asia in the 1960s, and Central America and the Caribbean in the 1970s and 1980s. Political pressures and public anxieties provoked diplomatic and military adventures reaching deep into the economic life of many countries, threatening their independence and straining their relationships with the United States.

The Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 was one result of these developments. It mandated automatic suspension of aid, bank loan support, and preferential trade agreements to countries not certified by the President as having made "significant progress" in controlling drug traffic. "On no other issue does the United States have a tougher automatic foreign sanctions law," commented the *New York Times* (Oct. 23, 1986, p. A-8). In its first report to Congress required by the act, the Department of State announced that all countries had received Presidential certificates except Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria, none of which received American aid in any case. Meanwhile the illicit drug trade rose both globally and domestically, more than offsetting any reductions the interdiction and eradication programs may have achieved (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 3, 1987).

The current war on drugs is part of a series of cyclic attempts to control the drug problem. Historian David Musto (1973) has noted that the same basic drugs (opium derivatives, marijuana, and cocaine) have been involved throughout.

One million pounds of raw opium had been smuggled into the United States by 1897—drug traffic that fed the prejudice against Chinese laborers (Susman 1975). The use of coca preparations in Europe and the United States was widespread around the turn of the century and gave the famous cola drink its

popular start. The charge that, unlike alcohol or tobacco, cocaine was a "hard" drug was made partly on racial grounds (Zinberg 1975). The Narcotics Act of 1914 led to a sweeping crackdown directed largely at Black users. Visions of "Negro cocaine fiends" attacking white women and generally running amok filled the press and fed and justified both bans and repression (Ashley 1976).

Then, in the 1920s and 1930s, "reefer madness" became an issue. The Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 was directed at Hispanics of Mexican descent. "Psychedelics" added to the polarization of society during the upheavals of the Vietnam war era, giving Nelson Rockefeller his biggest campaign issue, later to be escalated to the national level.

"The Rockefeller laws," passed in New York State in 1973, eclipsed all previous legislation in severity. They led to no reductions in use but to larger case backlogs and further wars on drugs riding the crest of ever more alarming media-publicized crime waves and drug epidemics. A study of drug arrest records in 1975 found that at times of great publicity and "get tough" legislation, such as mandatory sentences, "revolving door" justice prevails. "Community pressures and police perception of public demand ... changed who was arrested, where, for what, and in what manner," typically concentrating on nonwhite areas (DeFleur 1975, p. 98).

Zinberg and Robertson (1972) found that on a day when there was no major news item concerning drugs, the subject nevertheless occupied 11 columns in the *Boston Globe*, 12 in the *Washington Post*, and 19 in the *New York Times*.

The Omnibus Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, and After

Although drug use in general peaked in 1979, the sudden notoriety of cocaine use by Hollywood personalities and other celebrities and the spread of crack started a new war on drugs that is still under way—one that has been abetted and often distorted by the media. Publishers, broadcasters, and advertising trade associations fired salvos through antidrug campaigns reported "worth about \$1.5 billion in time and space over the first three years" (*Broadcasting*, July 14, 1982, p. 67). The professional sports establishment, university campuses, and many large private and public organizations followed suit.

In the spring and summer of 1982, *Newsweek* ran three drug cover stories, a total of 34 pages on the "drug epidemic" (and 5 to 10 pages of distilled spirits and tobacco ads in each issue). Other magazine cover stories, televised "drug raids," network spot announcements and documentaries, daily newspaper coverage, and massive publicity followed. "I was a drug-hype junkie," Adam Weisman confessed in the title of his article in the *New Republic* (October 6, 1986). A *New York Times*/CBS poll reported in August 1986 that more respondents termed drugs our most pressing national problem than named unemployment, the economy, or fear of war—a sixfold increase in 5 months.

The drug-related deaths of Black basketball stars Mike Helms and Len Bias further spurred Government drives and legislative initiatives. Despite the fact that cocaine-related deaths were a fraction of the deaths from alcohol or tobacco and not much more numerous than deaths from appendicitis (Weisman 1986), the money, power, and corruption generated by the drug traffic continued to grow. Congress, the White House, and candidates for office in the fall of 1986 rushed to advocate tough new antidrug measures in an unprecedented preelection stampede.

On October 27, 10 days before election day, President Reagan signed the most massive antidrug bill ever enacted by Congress. The original language of the bill urged the media to refrain from producing material glamorizing drugs and to produce materials "which encourage rejection" of drugs. These provisions, the only ones dealing with the mass cultural sources related to drug use, proved to be too strong. The final act merely asked "media outlets . . . to provide information" about drug abuse.

As the war on drugs continues, relatively little time is taken for serious reflection about the underlying issues and the role of the media. Public opinion researcher Lloyd Johnston (1987) observed that although the crack crisis was real, and awareness of that was needed, placing drama above substance was the main problem. Johnston observed (pp. 7-8),

an endless chain of drug busts and airplane and boat chases to the exclusion of a more thoughtful and penetrating look Prevention and demand reduction strategies are getting increasing lip service . . . but when you look at where the column inches, program minutes, and Federal dollars go, only a small portion goes to demand reduction The resulting inability of our society to deal with a very serious problem is too high a price to pay for entertainment in the news.

Media Content

Studies of how the media depict smoking, drinking, and other drug use vary in scope, method, and objective. Some focus on specific marketing, editorial, and program strategies. Others report systematic monitoring and analysis dealing with large systems of messages to which millions of people are exposed.

In previous sections of this chapter, media content was cited mainly to illustrate policy. Here the emphasis is on what the analysis of representative samples of media content can reveal about the often implicit strategies and dynamics of institutional media behavior. The next section will review research about its consequences in public information, attitudes, and actions.

Smoking

Laws, codes, and regulations notwithstanding, no American can escape growing up and living with vivid images of daring, sexy, happy, and healthy smokers. Few witness the consequences. The FTC once noted that funds promoting these happy images are "several hundred times greater" than those spent alerting the public to the hazards of smoking (FTC 1981, pp. 2-3).

Studies of cigarette advertising confirm familiar visions of seductive, wealthy, healthy, adventurous smokers (Barlow 1985) and of youthful models, suggestive poses, and inviting scenes (Frost 1986). An analysis of the psychology of cigarette advertising (Fine 1972) suggested that with:

what tobacco officials call "The Health Scare," cigarette advertising must serve three distinctly separate purposes. First, for some individuals, particularly the young, [it] must convince them that they will enjoy smoking. Second, for those already smoking, and those about to begin, promotions must convince them that it is smart and safe to smoke. Third, for those currently smoking, the advertisement must convince the target to smoke the "correct" brand.

In order to "sell death" successfully, Fine concluded, the advertising campaigns establish associations between smoking and the themes of scientific risk reduction (lower tar, filters, and so on), humorous relief, macho illusions, female independence and creativity, and the natural good life.

A review of more than 50 press commentaries and institutional ads from 1974 to 1985 confirmed some of the themes of tobacco issue advertising discussed previously. It concluded that "both unpaid and paid tobacco propaganda employ four major, overlapping strategems: (1) Isolate the enemy. (2) Ennoble smoking and smokers. (3) Scare the bystanders. (4) Embrace sweet reason." Together these strategems embody the underlying contention that "Tobacco is democracy. Tobacco critics endanger personal freedom and national liberty" (Shear 1985).

Studies of news reporting reflect the ambivalence noted in the discussion of news policy in previous sections of this report. Freimuth and others (1984) found that measures individuals could take to minimize the risk of cancer received little coverage. Cigarette smoking, the major cause of cancer individuals can control, was discussed in only 7 percent of news stories focusing on causes of cancer.

The medium most conspicuously free from tobacco advertising is television. Smoking on television programs is relatively rare. The University of Pennsylvania Cultural Indicators data bank (Gerbner, et al. 1982) showed that 7 percent of all major characters (11 percent of males, 2 percent of females) smoked in prime time. There was less smoking in situation comedies, more in crime and

adventure programs. The most smoking was observed in serious drama (including old movies); there 13 percent of men and 4 percent of women smoked.

No study observed any character refusing to smoke or expressing antismoking sentiments. However, there was a hint in some studies of a declining frequency of smoking and increasing negative associations with smoking. De Foe and others (1983, p. 33) reported that cigarette use was "shown sparingly, less than once in every three hours of program time, and the rate appeared to be going down over the period of five seasons." Greenberg's (1984) study of 10 top-rated programs and 2 daytime serials found one instance of smoking in every 4 hours of programming and several accidents due to smoking, such as an explosion and a fire. Finally, 13 of the 34 alcoholics found in the Cultural Indicators' 14-year sample also smoked (Signorielli 1986). That is 36 percent compared to the 7 percent of all television characters who smoked.

Drinking

The effects of drinking, as well as the habit itself, are largely culturally conditioned. Marlatt's (1982) study suggests that American men become more aggressive when they think they are drinking vodka tonic (but actually only tonic water) and less aggressive when they believe they are drinking only tonic (but actually vodka and tonic). In Western art and literature, drinking tends to be associated with relaxation, sociability, and coping with the rules and pressures of the game of life; drunkenness, with testing or breaking those rules.

As a stock literary and dramatic device, drinking provides pauses, bridges, and transitions. Getting drunk is supposed to help shed inhibitions and show the inner or other self, with comic or tragic effects. Advertising and the portrayal of drinking in general media content play on such associations. In so doing, they form the most pervasive common cultural bases for cultivating assumptions about drinking in American society.

Advertising

The heaviest concentration of alcohol ads is in such upscale magazines as *The New Yorker*, *Scientific American*, *Psychology Today*, and certain men's magazines. However, Black-oriented magazines also have a higher than average concentration of alcohol ads. The use of celebrities is the most frequent device (one in four ads) in Black adult-oriented magazines (Strickland and Finn 1984).

A study of themes in a large sample of alcohol ads in 13 national magazines (Breed and De Foe 1979) observed that *Playboy* and *Ebony* devoted the most space to these ads, followed by *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and *Time*. The most frequent themes associated drinking with wealth, success, and luxury (28 percent); social approval and friendship (22 percent); relaxation (22 percent); and pleasure (22 percent). These were followed by exotic adventure, in-

dividualism, and sex (each more than 10 percent). The implied association between the beverage and the promised value could stand a test of logic in only 7 percent of the ads. Appeals to moderation were made in only 10 of the 454 ads in the sample, but 28 seemed to encourage more than moderate drinking, as implied by the number of glasses and bottles pictured per person shown. Appeals to tradition, history, royalty, and military or literary success were made in more than one-third of the ads. The researchers questioned whether the ads did not support heavy drinking (as well as distorted images of the "good life," past and present) by their glamorous associations and denial of problems. "Alcohol ads," they concluded, "...show only the pleasant and relaxed face of alcohol while blacking out the ugly face" (p. 521):

College newspapers, particularly magazine supplements folded into college newspapers, rely heavily on alcohol advertising, especially beer advertising. Half of all national ads in a sample of 32 college papers were for alcoholic beverages. Three times as many column inches per issue were devoted to alcohol as to books. Typical beer ads show likable rebels flouting the rules and having the time of their lives—with a bottle in hand.

Atkin (1984) summarized research on both magazines and television, including studies by Atkin and Block (1981) and Finn and Strickland (1982). Almost all television beer commercials showed people, but only one-third of magazine alcohol ads did so. Males in their early thirties dominated both portrayals—in addition to the bottle, which was centrally featured in about two-thirds of the commercials and half the magazine ads. The characters typically held the bottle but were not shown in the act of drinking. The lifestyle appeals extolling generic benefits of drinking rather than specific brand characteristics were, in order of prevalence, social camaraderie, masculinity-femininity, escape, elegance, romance, adventure, social acceptance, sexuality, social esteem, and success. Many ads (42 percent on television, 8 percent in magazines) implied that alcohol can be consumed in great quantities. Few suggested moderation (none on television, 8 percent in magazines), and no ads provided information about harmful consequences.

Stories, Plays, and Movies

Winick (1981) traced the connection through classic works of fiction and biography to modern mass media. News stories featured drinking when related to crime, accidents, or celebrities. More than 10 percent of country music featured drinking, both as normal and as leading to ruin.

The Motion Picture Production Code (in effect through 1968) cautioned against the use of distilled spirits "when not required by the plot for proper characterization." During the 1960s about 5 percent, and in 1972 about 9 percent, of films included significant portrayals of drinking. Winick noted the

outstanding works showing the devastation caused by alcoholism and described lighter treatments, including the association with sex, in many plays, films, and television programs. He claimed that British, French, and Italian films seldom showed disinhibition resulting from alcohol; in those films drunks were more likely to fall asleep. He reported that jokes about drinking represented 6 to 8 percent of all jokes, more than half of which dealt with the bizarre behavior of heavy drinkers.

Stories, fictional as well as factual, can be seen as advising readers on how to act or not to act. Breed and others (1980) studied three popular magazines from that point of view. They found that "readers of *Modern Romances* get a picture of drinking as dangerous, readers of *Playboy* learn that drinking is expected, and readers of *Cosmopolitan* receive a mixed picture of drinking. Overall, the quality of advice is uneven."

Similarly, Breed and De Foe (1982) found a mixed picture in comic books. Superman, of course, never drank; other superheroes drank only ceremonially, and those who drank to excess were either villains or derelicts. The code of the Comic Magazine Association of America forbids scenes showing minors drinking alcohol. However, drawings of bottles, glasses, and goblets in the background of some frames suggested drinking, and the alcohol problem was ignored rather than being given serious treatment, the researchers concluded.

Early movies played an important role in the movement for temperance. They presented an attractive alternative to saloons, and many showed the evil effects of drink. Liquor industry and brewers' trade journals complained that the movies never showed drinking in a good light (Herd and Room 1982).

Religious pressures and a strict production code kept the frequency of drinking in movies low until after World War II. The code was abandoned in the 1950s. With the rise of television, movies became more specialized and sensational, with more frequent, casual, and explicit alcohol and drug use (Herd 1983).

Temperance melodramas continued to be made until the early 1930s. Many of their conventions—such as "the stock scene of delirium tremens, and the ever-faithful wife—were in fact carried over into the alcoholism films of the postwar period," wrote Room (1985). "The Lost Weekend" initiated a new era of films influenced by the antialcoholism movement. But by the 1960s, drinking became more a province of television than of movies (Room 1985). With a nightly audience higher than movies had ever had in a week, and a more formula-bound method of serial productions, television introduced a new era of repetitive and pervasive cultural portrayals.

Drinking on Television

Drinking on television is inescapable. Futch and others (1984) observed it on 12 of the 15 "most popular prime-time programs." They found an average of 2.2 drinking scenes and 5.3 verbal references to alcohol per program hour. The mean duration of the drinking scenes was 97 seconds, much longer than the scenes in which nonalcoholic beverages were consumed (40 seconds). Most such scenes took place in homes (42 percent) and bars (17 percent). Studies since the 1970s show that the patterns are stable and enduring. They are built into the basic dramatic formulas that still govern commercial television.

In a review of research on alcohol use on television, Greenberg (1984b, p. 145) concluded as follows:

During no hour of the evening does the alcohol usage rate on fictional television series average less than 1 1/2 acts per program hour. And during the later hours of prime-time—9–11 p.m.—no hour goes by with an average of less than three instances of usage. One can find no program type, save Saturday mornings, with less than one or two instances per hour, and the more heavily watched types of situation comedies and crime shows exceed four acts per hour during the most recent season analyzed. Conservatively, a youngster, too young to drink, will be exposed to 10 drinking acts on television during a day's viewing; . . . this can be projected to more than 3,000 in a year's period. (p. 145)

A subsequent report by Greenberg and others (1984) found that the rate of alcohol use increased to 2.7 per hour of prime time, with crime and action shows averaging about twice the rate of family dramas. Situation comedies, however, became the most likely to show drinking (4.7 times per hour) during the 2-year study period.

Looking more closely at the 10 top-rated programs, Greenberg (1984) found it "startling" that half of all the beverage consumption was alcoholic (8.1 alcohol incidents per hour), with "Archie's Place" (set in a bar) reaching 16.5 per hour. Noting the concentration of drinking in four CBS situation comedies in the top 10, Greenberg commented that "if one watched this lineup with any regularity, and 30+ million did every Sunday night last season, there would be fifteen to twenty alcohol incidents in their two-hour time period." The occurrence of any single category of human behavior at such a rate, Greenberg suggested, "has to rank high on the set of things one could reasonably expect to be occurring frequently" (p. 203).

Wallack's (1985a) study found that 10 percent of all prime-time scenes made some reference to alcohol, and the average was 11 drinking acts per hour. Feature movies in prime time had the highest rate (18 per hour) of drinking scenes. Three-fourths of all scenes showed preparation and one-fourth showed the actual ingestion of alcoholic drinks. Alcohol is clearly the preferred beverage

of television drama. "While it accounts for only one-sixth of total beverage use in the real world, on television alcohol drinking acts are found almost three times as often as the combined total for coffee/tea, soft drinks, and water" (p. 11). Breed and De Foe (1981) also found that alcoholic beverages not only outnumbered other beverages consumed on television but that the pattern of drinking on television was virtually the inverse of the pattern in daily life. Alcohol drinking acts were more than twice as frequent as the second-ranking coffee and tea, 14 times as frequent as soft drinks, and more than 15 times as frequent as water. Of all identifiable alcoholic beverages, 52 percent were hard distilled spirits, 22 percent were wine, and 16 percent were beer. Alcohol "was treated almost as a neutral substance, almost as a prop" (p. 14).

Nor is all this drinking a casual affair of a glass or two. Breed and De Foe (1981) analyzed 233 scenes about alcohol in prime-time drama and found that 40 percent showed "heavy drinking" (five or more). An additional 18 percent involved chronic drinkers.

Despite the rising concern about alcohol, the frequency of drinking on television has not abated. The University of Pennsylvania's Cultural Indicators data show that reference to or portrayal of alcohol had increased since 1969, reaching 70 percent of prime-time programs in the 1980s. More than one-third of all characters in television drama were shown actually drinking (something commercials are not allowed to do), but less than 2 percent suffered any ill effects (Signorielli 1986).

Turow and Coe (1985) studied the incidence of illness in prime time and found that the frequency of an exotic disease like leprosy was the same as that of alcoholism. De Foe and others (1983) also noted a steady increase in alcohol-related acts per hour from fewer than five in 1976 to more than eight in 1982. Although increases were found for nonalcoholic drinks, they were not nearly as steep. Wallack (1985) reported that the frequency of alcohol use on television rose from 62 percent of all beverages to 74 percent during the 8-year period of the study.

Who are the drinkers? The Cultural Indicators data showed that about 37 percent of major adult characters were seen drinking alcoholic beverages. Unlike in the real world, television women are as likely to drink as men. Drinkers are as likely as nondrinkers to be good and successful but more likely than nondrinkers to be serious, and also married or romantically involved. They are also more likely to be wealthy (Signorielli 1986).

Breed and De Foe (1981) summed up their findings on justifications for drinking:

Heavy drinking was very seldom excused or rationalized in the dramas, but it often was—39 percent of the time—in the situation comedies. The chief mechanism was humor. The episode would end with the alcohol abuser suffering a hangover, while others (and sometimes the drinker) would deliver a joke or a series of jokes. In other cases, intoxication was excused by rationalizations, usually based on acute stress preceding the bout.

The most frequent reason given for drinking on television is a personal crisis. Drink is a means of dealing with crisis or tension in 61 percent of significant incidents. Leading actors in prime-time series drink in a crisis 74 percent of the time. Lesser characters drink for social and other reasons. Only a few "bad" characters use alcohol to manipulate other people.

Of 18 drinking and driving episodes analyzed, four involved accidents, five showed near misses, and nine were problem free. Of the six "good" characters shown drinking and driving, only one met with an accident.

Despite some memorable films and programs showing the consequences of alcoholism, perhaps the most conspicuously absent character, considering the high number of drinkers, is the problem drinker or alcoholic. Signorielli (1986) reported that the Cultural Indicators data base yielded an average of only between 1 and 2 percent of major characters depicted as problem drinkers. The television alcoholics are a dangerous but pathetic lot: they kill twice as many people as nonalcoholics but are four times as likely to get killed themselves. They are also twice as likely to fail and five times as likely to smoke or use illicit drugs.

The 5-year study by De Foe and others (1983, pp. 34-35) described some of the dramatic patterns. "Several episodes," they wrote,

graphically dramatized the hazards of alcohol abuse, with a teenager usually depicted as the problem drinker who at the end is helped to learn a lesson. Most of the patterns, however, sent messages that would not be approved by specialists in alcohol education... : youth lusting for the time they can drink, infrequent disapproval of alcohol abuse voiced by other characters, and regular actors receiving lesser punishment for alcohol abuse than nonregulars. Others are: drinking to escape or to cope with stress or crisis; the glamorization of drinking; gratuitous drinking which makes no contribution to plot, character, or context; allowing a character no opportunity to decline a drink; and most often, heavy drinking with no indication of possible hazards.

Garlington (1977) found the world of daytime serials, turbulent and troubled as it was, also saturated with alcohol: "The soap operas averaged almost three 1-minute intervals per 21-minute program during which an alcohol-related event occurred." Lowery's (1980) study recorded at least six scenes of alcohol use at a rate ranging from about one to more than seven per hour of daytime serial, or an average rate of three per hour. She identified three patterns of

alcohol use. The first, "social facilitation," accounted for 47 percent of the drinking incidents and consisted of either "ritualistic" or "tension-reducing" functions facilitating social interaction. The second, "crisis management," accounted for 23 percent of drinking incidents and used alcohol to reduce stress or overcome a crisis. The third, "escape from reality," accounted for 30 percent of the incidents and denoted a long-term pattern to compensate for loss or stigma. These incidents were the most likely to result in undesirable consequences and serious discussions about harmful effects. On the whole, however, 70 percent of the instances of alcohol use were either reinforced or had no consequences.

"Alcoholics in the soap operas are much easier to rehabilitate than those in real life," wrote Lowery (1980, p. 837):

The message transmitted to the audience is that problems cause problem drinking or alcoholism. The cure for an alcoholic is apparently to resolve the underlying problem. Once this has been accomplished, the alcoholic can return to his family and job—and even to social drinking—as if nothing had ever happened. Thus even escape drinking is not portrayed as a serious problem . . . While drinking for the purpose of escaping into oblivion is shown to have punishing consequences, these consequences are not permanent, suggesting that drinking is an appropriate response to certain problems.

A thoughtful dramatic policy was reflected in the conclusions of a study of "All My Children" by Wallack and others (1984). While the rate of drinking was still almost four acts per hour, it was "presented in a realistic and accurate fashion. Social drinking is done at appropriate times and places. Drinking under pressure or to relieve stress is, for the most part, negatively reinforced, and very heavy drinking or alcoholic behavior is responded to directly."

Other Drugs

Most drug-related messages are, of course, advertisements for OTC pharmaceutical products. Hanneman and McEwen (1976) found that such television commercials occurred at an average rate of about twice per hour in prime time. They observed no antidrug messages in 2 weeks of monitoring, and they observed that "those messages *promoting* chemical use far surpass, in numbers and accessibility, those which *warn* of abuse potentials" (p. 76). In another study the same authors found that 9 out of 10 antidrug public service messages were telecast outside prime time, during lower audience availability periods.

Barcus (1976) found that more than 6 percent of all television commercials advertised OTC drugs, and more than one-third of these were for internal analgesics. In addition to the 132 drug commercials observed during the study

week, there were 17 noncommercial antidrug messages. Of 99 different drug commercials, half portrayed suffering followed by quick relief and only 2 cautioned of misuse. Smith and others (1972) included news and entertainment in their analysis and reported 10 times as many messages favoring the use of pills and other remedies as warning against abuse.

In an analysis of psychotropic drug ads in medical journals, Stimson (1975) observed social problems portrayed as individual stress symptoms to be treated with tranquilizers and antidepressants, showing mostly women in need of such treatment.

Winick and Pezzella (1976) noted a number of casual references to illicit drug use in television entertainment programs. They dealt mostly with marijuana, and mostly in a humorous context. The number of programs containing significant portrayals of illicit drug use was 56 in a 39-week period, an average of one network program every 9 days. Only seven of the programs showed drug use as a social activity, and none showed it as pleasurable. Almost four times as many programs dealt with law enforcement as with treatment.

Drugs in the News

Although surveys often identify news as the most common source of drug abuse information, few have analyzed its extent and nature. A content analysis of major metropolitan U.S. newspapers (cited by Addiction Research Foundation, 1981) revealed that 8 percent of total news space was devoted to social problems, and more than one-third of that dealt with crime and law enforcement. Health issues accounted for 17 percent (of the 8 percent), and drug abuse garnered less than 1 percent of that. But crime stories related to drugs and drug traffic occupied, as I have noted before, a large amount of space (from 11 to 19 columns a day) in such newspapers as the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times* (Zinberg and Robertson 1972).

It was against the background of primary association with law enforcement, rather than health or treatment, that the drug war cycle of the late 1980s unfolded. After a slow rise in the mid-1980s, and despite the decline of overall drug use (but not of cocaine use), national media coverage of drug issues exploded in the late summer and early fall of the election year of 1986 and then suddenly declined (Merriam 1987).

The complexion of coverage also changed over time. Merriam's analysis shows that trafficking and drug busts claimed most of the press attention. In 1985 coverage rose by 80 percent over the previous year. In 1986 it nearly doubled again. Crack, the Len Bias and other celebrity stories, the "Just Say No" campaign, and the rising frustration with crime and corruption propelled drugs to become a top election issue. Shoemaker and others (1987) found that shifts in public opinion followed each cycle.

Social Dynamics

Analyses of social dynamics find the tenor of drug portrayals and coverage, and even antidrug messages, often counterproductive. Presenting drug abuse in a context of deviance, morality, and law enforcement, rather than one of cultural values and uncontrolled (and untaxed) moneymaking, media treatment lends itself to political exploitation. Young (1981) concluded that "by fanning up moral panics over drug use, [the coverage] contributes enormously to public hostility to the drug taker and precludes any rational approach to the problem." An Australian study by Bell (1985, p. 18) suggested that

news reports confirm the view that drug consumption is the principal social issue. This might serve much the same ideological ends as explicitly blaming the victim, for it displaces complex social problems on to the consumers of drugs who are then seen as being in need of legally-sanctioned "correction," or of medical or psychological help Hence the symptoms of a drug-using society are ritualistically portrayed as the disease itself, and the social welfare and legal apparatuses are visible as the mechanisms for controlling or alleviating these symptoms.

The repressive potential and stigmatizing functions of antidrug abuse literature were explored by Gerbner (1977). The bulk of the analysis consisted of comic book images, including a widely distributed antidrug booklet used by the Department of Defense. Of the 142 persons depicted in the booklet, performing a great variety of tasks, women and nonwhites were shown only as drug addicts or as listening to white males give orders or lectures. Scantly clad female drug addicts writhed in agony, oriental belly dancers gyrated in drug-induced religious ecstasy, drug-crazed hordes of Southeast Asians rushed headlong to their deaths in futile battles. But white soldiers used drugs to relieve suffering and, if they became addicts, were treated as sick men or tragic figures. The implicit social message cultivated conventional prejudices and, as wars on drugs also tend to do, doubled as an instrument of general social control.

Large systems of mass-produced messages released into the mainstream of common consciousness constitute the record of industrial behavior in the field of culture. Studies of these message systems reveal the often implicit but binding institutional policies, pressures, and constraints that govern their production. The extent to which their consequences can be reliably demonstrated is the subject of the next section.

Consequences

Research Issues

Three major conceptual difficulties complicate and limit the empirical demonstration of media effects related to health. The first involves the sharply divergent distributional characteristics of television and other media. The second has to do with the problem of attributing specific conceptions or actions to specific and distinct types of media content. The third is the problem of causation in dealing with complex and largely culture- and situation-bound activities. Let us consider each of these problems in turn.

Media Differences

It is useful to distinguish between selectively used and relatively nonselectively used media. The selectively used media—print, film (except on television), audio and video recordings, and some cable services—require some literacy, mobility, and buying ability to be chosen by the user. Therefore, they tend to be independently selected and used during and after school age. The choices tend to reflect tastes and predispositions cultivated by the stories told and habits acquired in the home from parents, school, church, and other socializing institutions. These influences have traditionally distinguished different socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, political, and other groups.

Since the 1950s, however, a relatively nonselectively used medium, reaching all groups with essentially the same limited set of messages, has tended to erode some of these distinctions and absorb into its cultural mainstream many otherwise traditionally diverse perspectives. That medium is television.

Television watching is more like a ritual than use of any other popular medium. Most viewers watch by the clock rather than by the program. Viewing is part and parcel of stable styles of life. The amount of viewing varies inversely with income and education. The total audience for television depends on the time, the day, and the season, regardless of programming. Entertainment and information appeal to the same markets. Viewers' expressions of program preferences may reflect assumptions of desirability but bear little or no relationship to actual viewing choices (Goodhart et al. 1975). Heavy viewers watch more of everything on the air.

Children are born into a home in which the television set is on for an average of 7 hours a day. Instead of acquiring tastes and values mainly from the parents during the first 5 or 6 years of life, they are inserted at birth into a stable and repetitive symbolic environment of shows, news, and commercials designed to hold and sell the largest possible public at the least cost to the advertiser. Television tells its stories to children and parents at the same time and carries

the information embedded in them to millions who otherwise may not select it. It is, therefore, the only medium since preindustrial religion that can reach an entire community with a ritualistically used system of messages quickly, daily, and throughout life.

Single programs and isolated messages or even campaigns may be submerged in the daily and weekly rhythms of the television ritual. But its recurrent patterns of images and messages become parts of the inescapable cultural mainstream. They establish their own set of predispositions and affect preferences for other media. They blur the social, cultural, and political distinctions among otherwise diverse groups and publics (see Gerbner et al. 1986, 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1981).

These media distinctions have far-reaching implications for analysis, research, and action. Selectively used media are obviously subject to self-selection by users. Generally they do not reach those who do not select them. They are best understood and used as targeted vehicles conveying specific types of information to those who seek that information.

Nonselectively used media in general, and entertainment in particular, reach those who do not seek information or perceive a need or use for the information to be conveyed. For this audience, perhaps the majority of people, television entertainment is by far the most pervasive source of information. It is information, however, that may be integrated by different groups of people into different frameworks of knowledge in different ways.

Attribution and Causation

The effects of specific media messages are difficult to establish. It is even more difficult to attribute ideas to specific media content or even types of content. Media tend to cultivate stable images anchored in group norms. Conventional distinctions between information and entertainment, news and fiction, and so on, do not necessarily imply differences in learning. Imaginative stories of how things work, depicting fictional characters embodying invisible ideas and acting out hidden forces, are learning experiences at least as powerful as fragmentary accounts of events (news) or stories about value and choice (advertisements).

None of these experiences comes isolated from the others. No specific idea or act—let alone changes in otherwise stable patterns—can be reasonably attributed to occasional exposure to a single content element in isolation from its context. Therefore, it is unlikely that, for example, the effect of alcohol advertising, separated from its context and other representations, can be convincingly related to changes in drinking behavior, as the FTC demands.

An experiment can artificially expose subjects to content they may (or may not) otherwise select, and it can usually demonstrate short-range recall of

information. But such exposure is not a good test of what actually happens in the course of the daily cultivation of concepts and images through both selective and incidental exposure to media.

Media-originated ideas also reach people through other people. Expressions of beliefs, values, or tendencies to act in certain ways can rarely be reliably traced to simple single causes. Images and messages bombarding each of us most of the time from all sources, media, and types of content are inevitably intertwined in consciousness.

When large investments are at stake, proprietary research is often used to cast doubt on or to magnify uncertainties in any study. When the media themselves are interested parties, such doubts are even more likely to justify stressing disagreement among experts and selective citation or balancing of studies.

Finally, the question of causation is often raised. Which came first: exposure to a specific health-related message or the behavior pattern? With selectively used media, that question is an appropriate one, but not with regard to television. The child is born into a home in which television is a member of the family. There is little or no prior development of selectivity, although there are, of course, other influences.

In any case, causation of complex behavior patterns, like the supports of a three-legged stool, is multiple. More important than finding the elusive single cause is the demonstration of stable associations between exposure, ideas, and behaviors. No single leg makes the three-legged stool stand up, but take away one leg and it may collapse. Similarly, without cultural support a conception or behavior is not likely to become established or is likely to collapse.

Change and Resistance to Change

Culture is a system that resists change. The daily flow of images and messages cultivates stable patterns of thinking and action. Most information campaigns fail to bring about change, or even recall; they are simply absorbed into existing frameworks of knowledge.

The advertising industry wondered why it spends \$95 billion a year on ads and commercials when its own survey showed that 53 percent of the more than 13,000 adults polled could not recall any specific advertiser or advertisement (*Advertising Age*, March 3, 1986). The survey revealed that among those who did spontaneously recall any advertising at all, soft drinks, fast food, and beer ranked highest. Market researchers believed that perhaps half of all advertising is "awareness advertising" but that there is little or no accurate measure of the effect of "awareness" on sales (*Advertising Age*, Nov. 17, 1986, p. 50). The Addiction Research Foundation (1981, p. 102) concluded its wide-ranging review

of the research literature by saying, "The overwhelming evidence . . . leads to the conclusion that health-oriented mass-persuasion programs have not succeeded in demonstrating lasting behavioral change."

Both tobacco and alcohol industry representatives and researchers contend that their advertising cultivates brand awareness rather than total consumption; therefore, restricting or banning ads would not affect the total number or people smoking or drinking. Tobacco Institute officials told House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health and the Environment that while tobacco advertising expenditures increased, smoking by high school seniors declined (Kloepfer 1986). They reported that control of tobacco advertising in certain countries is not reflected in tobacco consumption and often rises after a ban is enacted (Boddewyn 1986). And they stressed, in something of a non sequitur, that although tobacco advertising may make smokers switch or stick to their brands, "it does not *cause* smoking any more than soap advertising causes people to bathe or detergent advertising causes people to wash their clothes" (Kornegay 1986, p. 33). Another researcher speaking for the industry summarized studies showing that attitudes developed while growing up with parents, peers, and older siblings are the most important determiners of the decision to smoke (Blackwell 1986). Of course, none of these arguments addresses the issue of the media's role in contributing to (rather than single-handedly causing) and cultivating relatively stable patterns of thinking and action.

The leading industry arguments of brand name cultivation and the theory of "mature" markets actually confirm rather than deny (as they are intended to do) the powerful consequences of steady exposure. Constant innovation and plugging of brand names is of course a way of saturating a market by targeting a large variety of ages, tastes, and styles and developing a niche for every group. The mature market theory takes saturation as its starting point and advances the argument that no change in that market means advertising has no effect, at least in terms of total numbers of consumers.

A leading exponent of this theory is Scott Ward, professor of marketing at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and a perennial expert witness for the Tobacco Institute at congressional hearings on bills to ban advertising. In the 1986 and 1987 hearings before the House subcommittee on Health and the Environment, Ward (1987) argued, somewhat inconsistently, that "the role of advertising for mature products is to keep consumers who use that product loyal to the brand being advertised or to prompt consumers of other brands to switch." Ward cited his own and other studies claiming that tobacco advertising does not by itself increase the total number of smokers.

A mature market is stable by definition because it assumes market saturation for the particular product. The task of advertising and promotion is to keep it that way. That task can be accomplished only by the constant replacement of

old smokers by new, the fending off of competing product appeals, and the minimizing, neutralizing, and countering of health messages. Young people and other less mature markets must be targeted and converted to being consumers of the product. Other influences are also at work and may at times be instrumental. But they are varied and conflicting, while advertising contributes the steady, positive common environment in which decisions are made.

In fact, even brand advertising has been found to spill over to competing brands (Kamen 1987) and help total sales (Miller et al. 1987). A West German study also found that advertising has a significant impact on cigarette sales (Leeflang and Reuijl 1985). Indeed, if one were to take seriously the claim that cigarette advertising merely supports already established habits, one would have to wonder why its limitation warrants such industry concern.

Wallack (1983a) noted several reasons for the failure of many prevention and information campaigns. They included inadequate models of behavior change, a narrow definition of the problem, a focus on the individual instead of culture as the target, and unrealistic expectations.

Scare tactics, sources with obvious vested interests, provocative arguments unwittingly running up against strongly held norms, and exposure of naive populations to new information against hitherto nonsalient practices can all result in a boomerang effect. An experiment testing antiamphetamine and antibarbiturate radio messages on groups of high school students found the respondents became significantly less, rather than more, negative about these substances after hearing the message. The researchers (Feingold and Knapp 1978, p. 63) suggested that "well intentioned campaigns and agencies may be unwittingly nudging (if not pushing) drugs through their drug abuse information programs."

Wallack (1981) reviewed efforts resulting in similar boomerang effects in the areas of smoking, drinking, other drug use, and drunk driving. He noted the glamorization side effects of fear appeals and concluded that "the effects of public education are largely limited to increasing knowledge and reinforcing established attitudes and behavior patterns" (p. 229). In another study, after a month-long radio campaign against drug and alcohol use in "media city," the researchers found that the adolescents of the control city (who did not receive the campaign but were otherwise exposed to the usual media content) were still more, rather than less, knowledgeable about sources of alcohol and other drug information (Morrison et al. 1976).

Prevention and behavior-change campaigns are up against the daily cultivation of stable cultural patterns. They can be best discussed, therefore, in the context of those patterns.

Learning About Smoking

The studies of cigarette advertising reviewed in the previous section confirm that children in America grow up surrounded by images that portray cigarette smoking in a positive and attractive light. We can assume that children learn this message well. Roberts's (1980) review of studies concluded that children learn from advertising at an early age. Young children do not distinguish information from persuasion and are particularly vulnerable. Aitken and others (1985) reported an experiment in which children of different ages were shown a holiday travel ad that contained the imagery of a cigarette ad but no mention of cigarettes or the brand. They found that 20 percent of 6-year-olds already recognized the brand. Most secondary school students (91 percent) identified it as a cigarette ad and responded as adults do.

Once people actually become smokers, their perceptions are affected by the habit. Studies examining the relationships between knowledge of the link between smoking and cancer and one's own smoking behavior shed some light on mechanisms of evasion and rationalization. Lane (1959) found that half as many smokers as nonsmokers watching a television program on lung cancer accepted the evidence linking smoking to cancer. A closer look showed that the more smokers rejected the link to cancer and the more they said they liked smoking, the less they were inclined to watch the program. O'Keefe's (1971) survey of two groups, high school students and adults, found that although most had seen antismoking commercials, only half could recall specific messages, and smokers in both groups were least likely to believe they would be effective.

Another study examined more directly how teenagers perceived the effectiveness of both smoking and antismoking messages (Monismith et al. 1984). The researchers reported that tobacco ads were effective in cultivating the desire to smoke among half of smokers and 14 percent of nonsmokers. Most teenagers were aware of the dangers of smoking, but twice as many smokers as nonsmokers found antismoking messages "useless" and "boring."

Antismoking campaigns have to be seen against the pervasive environment of prosmoking messages and images. To be successful, antismoking projects require broad cultural efforts or personal involvement of some sort, rather than isolated campaigns. An example of a broad media campaign is the Stanford Heart Disease Prevention Project reported by Maccoby and Farquhar (1975). A small experimental community receiving intensive mass media exposure to messages about diet and smoking did almost as well as a control community that also received personal instruction in reducing the risk of heart disease. Another successful effort was an intensive, 15-month, all-media antismoking campaign in Austria that resulted in a 7-percent drop in the number of persons who called themselves smokers and a 2.2-percent decline in tobacco sales

(Gradler and Kunze 1984). An ongoing campaign in France had similar results (Cohen-Solal 1982).

Similar campaigns, perhaps less intensive, failed to achieve significant results. However, the Scandinavian countries that have enacted comprehensive smoking reduction programs coupled with advertising bans report decreases of up to one-half the number of young smokers.

In a test of the theory that active personal involvement is required for effective communication that goes against the grain of general culture, Goldberg and Gorn (1982) involved teenagers as consultants and change agents in an antismoking campaign of films and lectures presumably directed at younger students. The teenagers actively involved scored higher on tests of negative attitudes and intention about smoking than a matching group exposed to the same messages but not actively involved. Similarly, a test of the voluntary use by adolescents of a computer program providing health information, including information about smoking, showed some promising results (Hawkins et al. 1987).

It is clear that favorable images and messages about smoking are prevalent in our culture. Their influence on media policy and on those who grow up with them seem to be able to deflect or overwhelm countermessages. The limited effectiveness of antismoking campaigns has to be seen in light of what they are up against.

Powerful images, assimilated even before a child learns to read, establish norms of desirable behavior to which there is no equally compelling cultural challenge. Images of the happy, sexy, healthy, young smoker signaling independence, adventure, and adulthood need no literacy or information seeking to absorb. They are visible in newspaper and magazine ads, posters, billboards, and sports- and other youth-oriented events. These messages both initiate and legitimize or reinforce the attractiveness of smoking.

By contrast, information about the deadly consequences of smoking is relatively rare. It requires both literacy and active information seeking to find the information, let alone assimilate it. As long as that imbalance exists, we are marketing death on a cultural assembly line, especially targeted at the most vulnerable groups of people in our country and the world.

Learning About Drinking

Some cultures introduce children to drinking in infancy (Breitenfeld et al. 1973); others discourage or even forbid it. But most children learn about it from family and friends, and nearly all encounter it in stories. Alcohol is, as we have seen, inescapable on television.

In a laboratory experiment Futch and others (1984) investigated how fourth-grade children might respond to specific problem-solving tasks after watching drinking in various contexts on television. Ten-minute videotapes from a popular prime-time show ("M*A*S*H") portrayed drinking alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages in circumstances of enjoyment or tension. After the tapes were shown, hypothetical problem situations and possible solutions were presented. The children who saw the alcohol-drinking tape rated the solution using alcohol as more appropriate than did the children who saw the nondrinking version. In giving their reasons, the children who saw the "tension drinking" version of the alcohol drinking film were especially articulate in reporting that alcohol was used to make the characters feel better, to help them forget their problems. The results were interpreted as showing how children may develop expectations for alcohol use and habits.

In general, experimental studies of exposure to alcohol (or other) messages show at least short-term effects. Brown (1978) showed a group of adult social drinkers slides of alcohol ads and then asked them to perform a 20-minute drink recognition and preference test. He found the ads increased not only recognition but also consumption even of the nonpreferred alcoholic beverage. Kohn and Smart (1984) screened videotapes of soccer games with and without beer commercials. Both groups of viewers had access to snacks and drinks. The beer commercials increased consumption of the advertised beer among those who were exposed to them. Atkin and Block (1983) found that celebrity endorsements also resulted in more favorable ratings (especially among teenagers) than did beer commercials without celebrities.

Large-scale surveys provide more broadly representative responses under more natural conditions. In one of the most extensive series of studies, Atkin and his collaborators assessed the relationships between exposure to alcohol advertising on television and other media and a variety of attitudes and behaviors of both young and adult respondents (Atkin 1980; Atkin and Block 1981). They reported that the average respondent was exposed to magazine ads for distilled spirits 11 times per week, and the rate was highest in the years immediately after high school. Beer and wine commercials on television were recognized by four out of five respondents, who reported seeing each about five or six times a week, most often during and immediately after the high school years.

Respondents highly exposed to alcohol ads and commercials recognized brand names and attributes significantly better than those not so exposed. The more highly exposed respondents also tended to perceive drinkers as more friendly, relaxed, fun loving, happy, manly, sophisticated, and good-looking. They also gave a higher estimate of the typical amount of alcohol consumed by the average person than did the less exposed. Similarly significant positive correlations were found for attitudes toward drinking measured by agreement with such state-

ments as, "It's OK for a teenager to get drunk every once in a while," "alcohol helps people relax and unwind," drinking will "help you get away from your ordinary situation," and so on.

In a study of excessive and hazardous drinking, Atkin and others (1983) found "high exposure" respondents not only drinking nearly twice as much as "low exposure" respondents but also worrying more about it (18 percent compared to 12 percent) and getting into trouble more at school or at work because of drinking (8 percent vs. 3 percent). The more highly exposed respondents also reported more often driving while drunk (39 percent vs. 28 percent). The researchers noted that such correlations do not suggest advertising as the single cause. The application of various statistical controls showed that the habit of drinking itself, various demographic and interpersonal factors, and the exposure to alcohol advertising form a stable cluster of self-reinforcing relationships with alcohol-induced problems and hazards. That a small but significant "relationship remains after drinking is partialled out," they observed, "further suggests that advertising has an impact beyond sheer drinking, perhaps by producing a more accepting attitude toward heavy or hazardous consumption" (p. 323).

Having noted in earlier studies that adolescents may be particularly susceptible to suggestion and to experimentation with alcohol, Atkin and others (1984) surveyed young teenagers in three States to see what influenced them most. They found that advertising exposure was the most significant predictor of liquor drinking, with peer influence second, whereas the relationships were reversed with beer drinking: peer influence was the strongest correlate and advertising second. For wine drinking, peer and parental exposure led the correlations. Separating respondents into high and low ad exposure groups, the researchers found that those who were highly exposed scored higher on all consumption measures, tried many more brands, and (if nondrinkers) were more likely to plan to drink in the future.

The researchers again noted that such correlations (even with demographic and other factors controlled) do not necessarily indicate causal direction as much as the strength of association. Nevertheless, exposure to ads usually comes before drinking, and the intention of highly exposed nondrinkers to drink in the future also suggests advertising as a likely antecedent.

Despite the disclaimers and cautions, the studies by Atkin and his collaborators were criticized in reports on a series of studies supported by alcoholic beverage industry organizations. Strickland (1982, 1984a, 1984b, 1985) claimed to have found no significant relationship between advertising and alcohol consumption. In a critique of the Strickland studies, Watkins (1985) noted vague and weak measures of consumption and pointed to data hidden in the reports. For example, young people who expressed a high desire to be characters in alcohol ads did report a higher level of drinking than those who did not identify

with such characters, but these data received no attention in the reports. Watkins pointed out that Milavsky and others' (1976) longitudinal study of the relationship between drug advertisements and drug use supports the case for a causal relationship between ad exposure and the use of advertised substances among youth.

Atkin's own review (1984, p. 70) of more than a dozen effects studies (including McGuinness 1979; Ogborne and Smart 1980; Strickland 1984; and Atkin and Block 1983) concluded that:

alcohol advertising exerts an influence on the frequency and quantity of adult alcohol consumption. The degree of impact is not strong, because at least a part of the association between exposure and drinking can be attributed to reverse causation, and the raw correlation is reduced when third variables are controlled. A quantitative estimate of the contribution of alcohol advertising is difficult to calculate, but it is likely that ads account for a 10-30 percent increase in the total amount of alcohol that would be consumed without advertising, based on correlational and self-reported effects data.

Associations between advertising and adolescent drinking, heavy drinking, and favorable attitudes toward drinking support similar conclusions.

Attempts to relate advertising to actual, rather than intended or reported, alcohol consumption have been less successful. Consumer behavior responds to a variety of economic and social factors such as price, income, community standards, and demographic trends in the population. Nevertheless, Cowling and others (1975), Comanor and Wilson (1974), Peles (1971), and Leeftang and Reuijl (1985) reported econometric studies that showed some relationships between advertising expenditures and sales of some alcoholic beverages and of cigarettes.

Studies of consumption in countries that enacted bans on liquor advertising Finland, Norway, Sweden, and The Canadian Provinces of British Columbia and Manitoba) have come to conclusions the interpretation of which depends on relating the findings to general trends in consumption. For example, in those countries where consumption levels were increasing, the ban seemed to have slowed the increase (Watkins 1985). But no clear declines in drinking were directly attributable to the advertising ban alone.

Pervasive patterns of traditional behavior deeply embedded in a culture and cultivated daily by a great variety of images and stories cannot be expected to respond quickly or sharply, if at all, to the withdrawal of one of many sources of cultivation. Even concerted antidrinking campaigns, as in the Soviet Union, ran into stubborn resistance and had to be modified. The lessons of advertising bans are mixed and, of prohibitions, wholly negative. Reducing advertising control over a wide sector of the youth culture, producing images and role models

that challenge conventional patterns, and saturating the community with health information, but not criminalizing behavior attractive to many, may be required for effective control of the damage alcohol causes to people and society.

Learning About Other Drugs

Stetler (1973) found that while drug abuse in the community he studied rose sharply, physician prescribing of psychoactive drugs had lagged behind overall prescription growth trends. Reporting for the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Association, he interpreted these results as showing that legitimate drug prescription and promotion are unrelated to illicit drug abuse.

Studies of the effect of advertising OTC drugs on the consumption of illicit substances—a difficult task—found no direct influence. Large-scale surveys by Milavsky and others (1976) and Robertson and others (1978, 1979) failed to find any direct link between exposure to drug commercials and illicit drug use. Whatever excesses pill-popping ads might promote, there was no evidence that the use of narcotics was among them. However, teenage respondents to surveys by Kanter (1976) reported that advertising for some pharmaceuticals might lead to some product misuse, especially by younger (fifth-grade) students. The study also found that users of illegal drugs were more receptive to such advertising than nonusers.

A study of teenagers by Atkin (1978) found that exposure to proprietary drug ads affected children's views of sickness and medicine in general but not of illicit drugs. There was some indication that receptivity to drug ads may relate to an attitude of defiance or rebellion: those most receptive tended to be healthy, bright, higher status youngsters whose parents disapproved of medicine usage.

Where do young people learn about illicit drugs, and what do they learn? A large-scale Canadian study (Fejer et al. 1971) found that nearly 6 out of 10 high school students learned about drugs from the news media with friends, school and church, and family (in that order) far behind. The influence of the media depended on the inclination to use drugs. Users naturally relied more on their own experience or on friends. Half of those who thought marijuana was harmful attributed their information to the media, whereas those who thought it was safe (one in five) attributed it equally to media and friends. The study suggested that media are not only the widest repetitive source of drug information but also the most trusted (especially by nonusers), precisely because they are seen as objective, expert, and impersonal, "less concerned with preventing drug use and more with providing information. In other words, close personal relationships on controversial topics such as drug use may lead to less trust between source and receiver than when such a relationship does not exist" (p. 241).

A survey of American college students, 94 percent of whom had used marijuana, also found that "media content and drug abuse ads do account for

the greater amount of initial awareness about drugs" (Hanneman 1973, p. 188). With marijuana and amphetamines, friends and media generated about an equal degree of awareness. "Drug users exist in a drug culture, a milieu with its own reference norm and reinforcement," the survey concluded (p. 189). Media call attention to drug abuse mainly through crime stories, sports and other celebrity overdose stories, and antidrug abuse messages. These messages may be parts of the socializing context of the distinct identity of the drug culture, a symbolic no-man's-land in which consumer values and conventional norms both mesh and clash.

This review of research on prevention, incidental learning, and advertising effects illustrates the difficulty of measuring and attributing long-range effects to specific messages or even broad campaigns within the flow of complex message systems. One direction for research on the dynamics of effects, and particularly on the sources of change and resistance, leads to the mainstream of that flow, television.

Television is the largest single source of information about smoking, drinking, and drugs, as well as other health-related behaviors. Single programs and isolated messages may be submerged in its flow, but regular exposure to its coherently composed and repetitively presented world of programs—news, commercials, and entertainment—has been found to cultivate a stable conception about many aspects of the real world (e.g., Gerbner et al. 1986). For example, although television viewing seems to promote confidence in doctors, it also perpetuates poor nutrition and general complacency about health among heavy viewers (Gerbner et al. 1982a). Viewing is also associated with the erosion of religious prohibitions against smoking and drinking among Mennonites (Umble 1987). Further research on television's role in the cultivation of relevant conceptions and actions could provide the general background against which to trace processes of socialization regarding smoking, drinking, drug use, and other health-related behaviors.

In a broader sense, however, consequences reach beyond effects on attitudes or even actual consumption. The cultural mainstream (including advertising) supports industries, shapes policies, affects large organizations—both public and private—and upholds ideologies. Dorn and South (1983) pointed out that the promotion of new products, the cultivation of brand loyalties, and the competition for those who would switch loyalties do more than stabilize markets and enhance profitability. They also help subsidize commercial media to confirm the values and associations that provide a suitable context for advertising messages. Future effects research should be attentive to the cultivation of lifestyles and other associations, as well as to influences on consumer action.

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