

Alcohol and the commercial determinants of health

Dr Nason Maani

Lecturer in Inequalities and
Global Health Policy



Outline

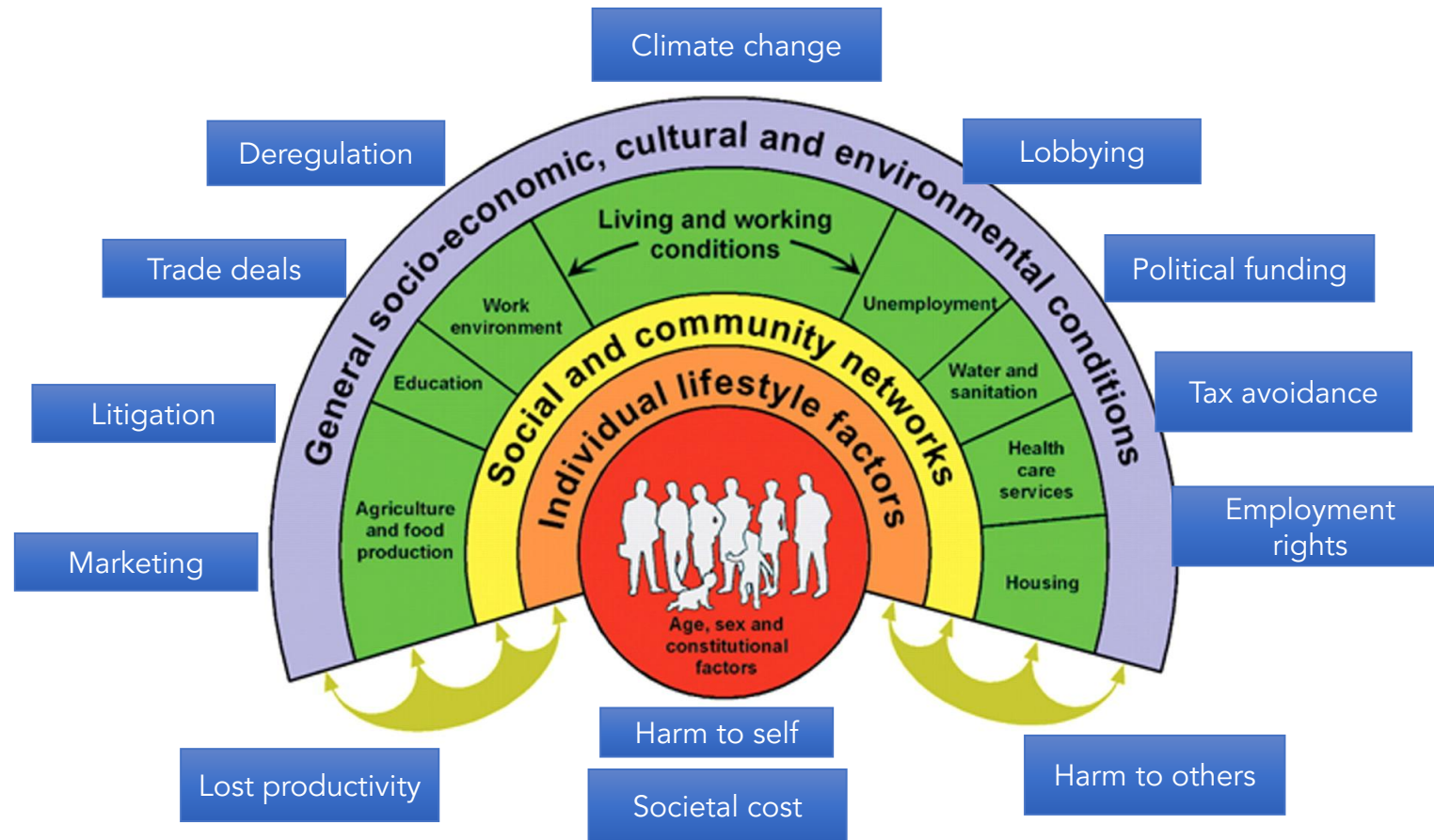
- Introducing commercial determinants of health
- Relevance to alcohol harms and their drivers
- Implications for public health practice

What is health?



Commercial determinants of health

- Factors that influence health which stem from the profit motive^{1,2}
- Large/powerful/ubiquitous enough to exert significant influence
 - Political
 - Economic
 - Sociocultural



What are we aiming for?

No surprises	Political intelligence gathering	Early warning systems in place Right mindset – “Healthy paranoia”
Playing the political game	Full political engagement	Build allies across several ministries Ability to influence the influencers Complete political power map Speak the right language – be relevant
Shaping the public opinion	Media relations	Ability to find right spin Ability to sell stories direct & indirect Established relationships with: – Key reporters
Utilizing the low hanging fruit	Use our own people	Employees Distributors Suppliers
Alliance of credible messengers	Third party coalition building	Broad business organizations Trade & retailer organizations IPR, TM, & anti-counterfeiting orgs. Think-tanks and policy groups
Establishing a critical mass	Ability to mobilize broad groups	Retailer mobilization Grower mobilization Consumer mobilization Marketing & advertising organizations
Have the best expertise on our side	Effective use of consultants	Lobbyists Door-openers Strategists Spin doctors
The right messages	Market specific argumentation	One-liners for PMI and allies Message testing research Impact assessment studies Legal opinions



Lancet Series on CDoH

Editorial by WHO DG

Articles on:

- Defining commercial determinants of health
- Going beyond unhealthy commodities
- Future directions for research

Commercial determinants of health

Published: March 23, 2023

Executive Summary

“Although commercial entities can contribute positively to health and society there is growing evidence that the products and practices of some commercial actors—notably the largest transnational corporations—are responsible for escalating rates of avoidable ill health, planetary damage, and social and health inequity; these problems are increasingly referred to as the commercial determinants of health.” Gilmore et al, 2023

The Lancet

The Lancet, Vol. 401, No. 10383

Published: March 23, 2023

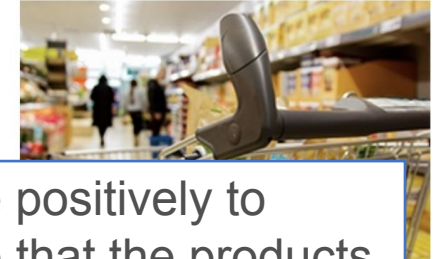
[Full-Text HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

Series

Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health

Anna B Gilmore, Alice Fabbri, Fran Baum, Adam Bertscher, Krista Bondy, Ha-Joon Chang, Sandro Demaio, Agnes Erzse, Nicholas Freudenberg, Sharon Friel, Karen J Hofman, Paula Johns, Safura Abdool Karim, Jennifer Lacy-Nichols, Camila Maranhã Paes de Carvalho, Robert Marten, Martin McKee, Mark Petticrew, Lindsay Robertson, Viroj Tangcharoensathien, Anne Marie Thow

The Lancet, Vol. 401, No. 10383



PERSONAL VIEW

Conceptualising the commercial determinants of suicide: broadening the lens on suicide and self-harm prevention

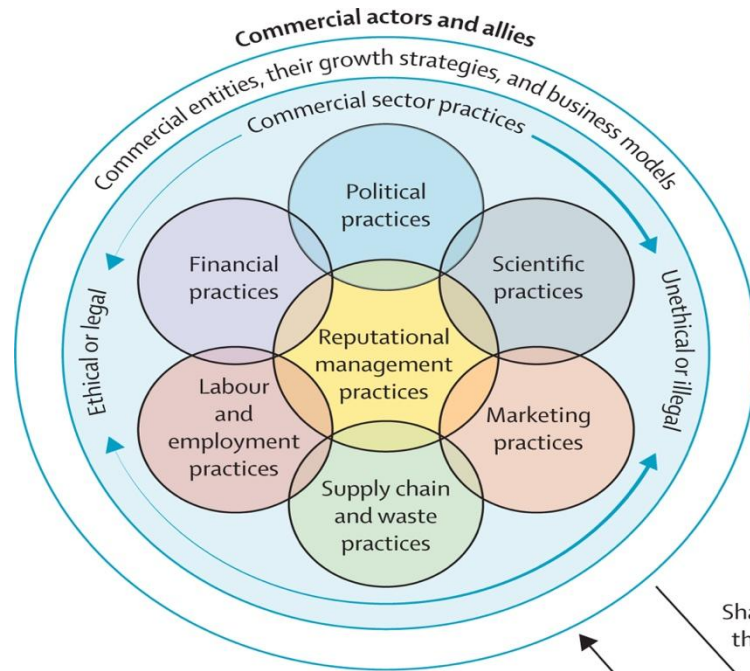
May C I van Schalkwyk, Jeff Collin, Michael Eddleston, Mark Petticrew, Melissa Pearson, Lisa Schölin, Nason Maani, Flemming Konradsen, David Gunnell, Duleeka Knipe

The Lancet Psychiatry, Vol. 10, No. 5

[Full-Text HTML](#) | [PDF](#)

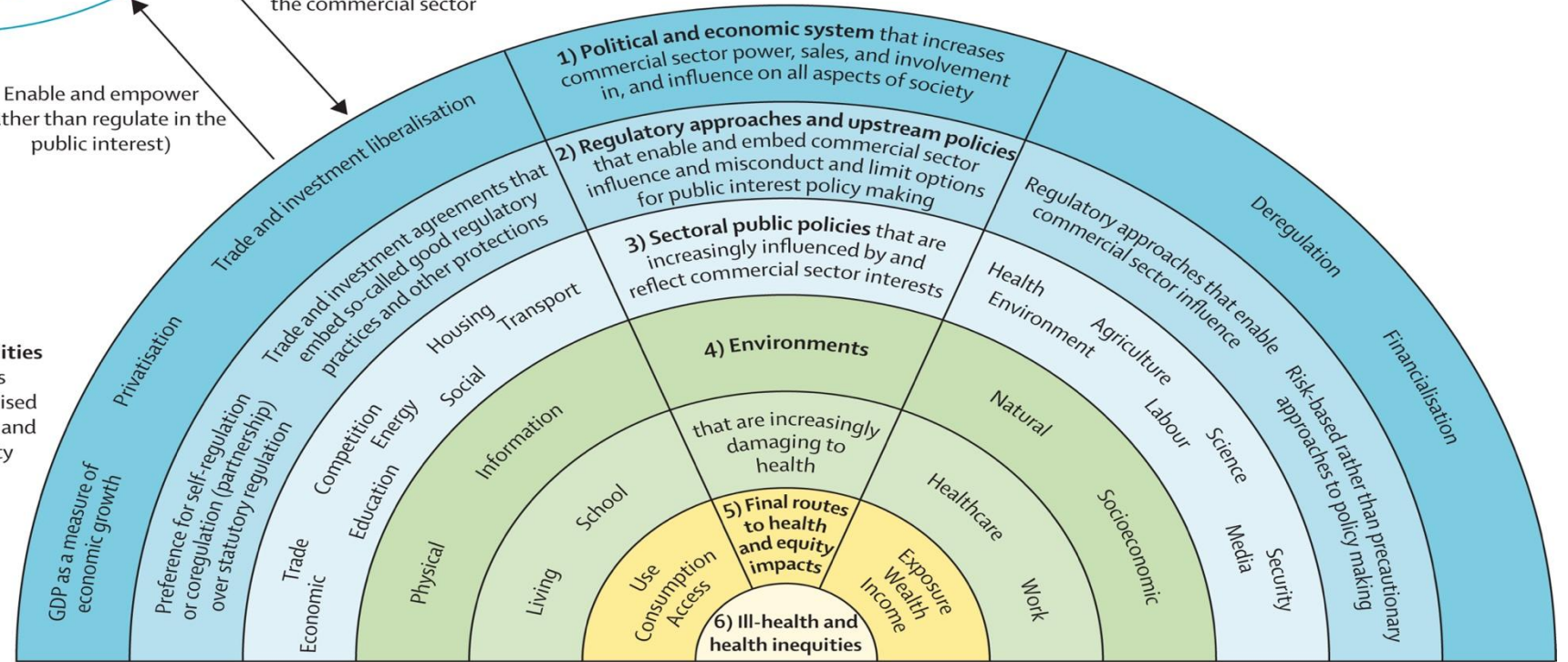
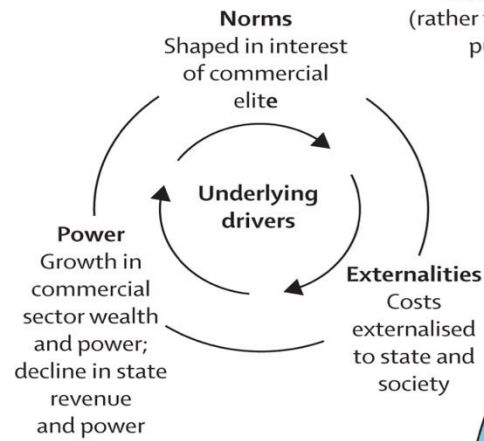
Infographics

Commercial influences across the social determinants of health



Shape in the interests of the commercial sector

Enable and empower (rather than regulate in the public interest)



Gilmore AB, Fabbri A, Baum F, et al. Defining and conceptualising the commercial determinants of health. Lancet 2023; published online March 23. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)00013-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00013-2).

The value of a commercial determinants lens

- A way of examining why, how, and what to do about business practices that affect health
 - Understanding/defining private sector, structures, influences
 - Re-defining interventions
 - Informing maximally positive interactions
- Systems thinking: Identification of cumulative effects, threshold effects, nodes for influence, governance, intervention

Increasing focus on synthesis/methods

Original research

BMJ Global Health

Asserting public health interest in acting on commercial determinants of health in sub-Saharan Africa: insights from a discourse analysis

Rene Loewenson ¹, Sue Godt ², Pascalina Chanda-Kapata ³

Methodology | [Open access](#) | [Published: 14 September 2023](#)

The Commercial Determinants of Health and Evidence Synthesis (CODES): methodological guidance for systematic reviews and other evidence syntheses

[Mark Petticrew](#) , [Rebecca E. Glover](#), [Jimmy Volmink](#), [Laurence Blanchard](#), [Éadaoin Cott](#), [Cécile Knai](#), [Nason Maani](#), [James Thomas](#), [Alice Tompson](#), [May C. I. van Schalkwyk](#) & [Vivian Welch](#)

Systematic Reviews **12**, Article number: 165 (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

Clinical & Experimental Allergy / Volume 53, Issue 7 / p. 697-710

REVIEW ARTICLE | [Open Access](#) | 

Formula milk companies and allergy healthcare professionals in India

[Hilary Allen](#), [Arun Gupta](#), [Alexandra Mundell](#), [Neeraj Gupta](#), [Anup Thakur](#), [Sowmya Nagarajan](#), [Daniel Munblit](#), [Phillip Baker](#), [Robert Boyle](#) 

> [Global Health](#). 2023 Jan 11;19(1):3. doi: 10.1186/s12992-023-00905-0.

The influence of share buybacks on ill-health and health inequity: an exploratory analysis using a socio-ecological determinants of health lens

[Benjamin Wood](#) ¹, [Gary Sacks](#) ²




International Journal of Health Services
Volume 52, Issue 1, January 2022, Pages 115-128
© The Author(s) 2021, Article Reuse Guidelines
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00207314211044992>



III. Political and Economic Determinants of Health in Low and Middle Income Countries



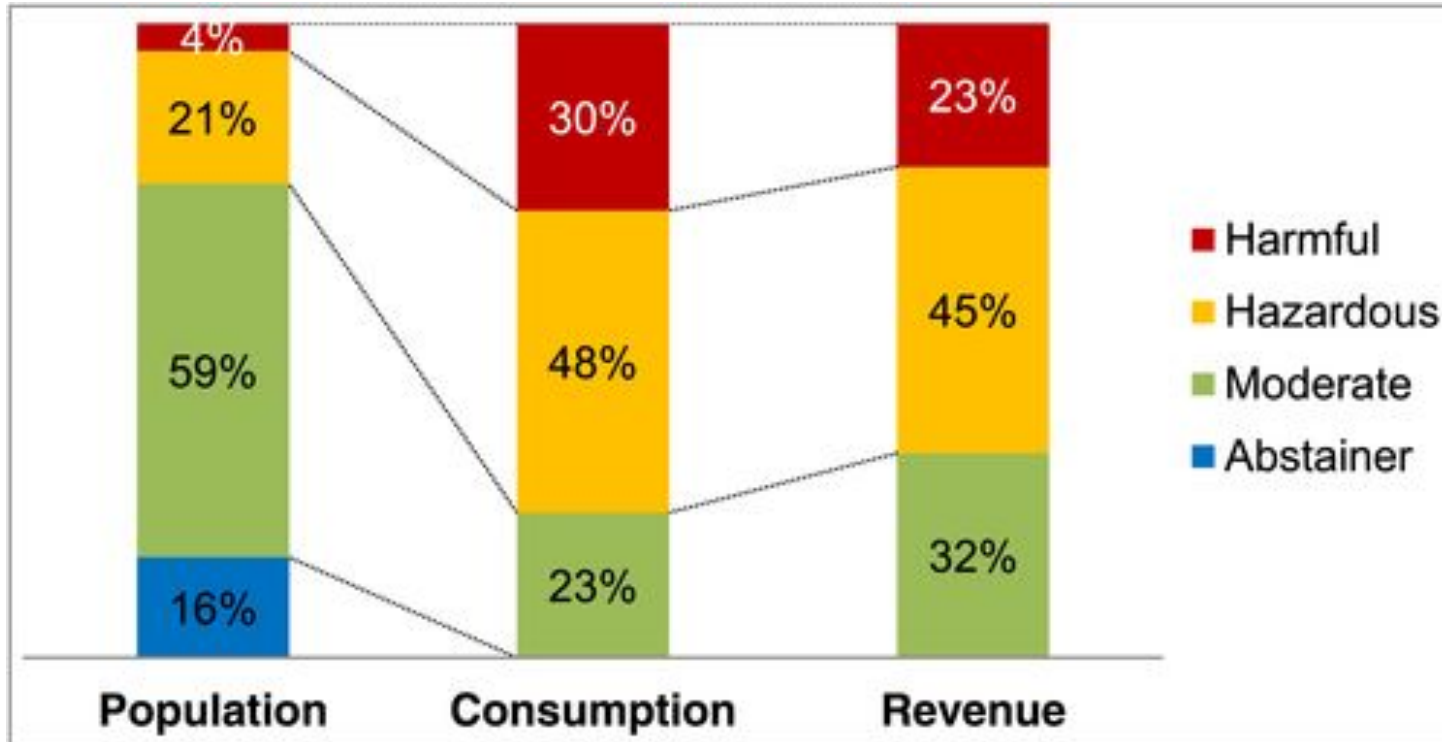
Measuring the Commercial Determinants of Health and Disease: A Proposed Framework

[Kelley Lee](#) ¹, [Nicholas Freudenberg](#)², [Marco Zenone](#)³, [Julia Smith](#)¹, [Melissa Mialon](#) ⁴, [Robert Marten](#)⁵, [Joana Madureira Lima](#)⁶, [Sharon Friel](#)⁷, [Daniel Eisenkraft Klein](#)⁸, [Eric Crosbie](#)⁹, and [Kent Buse](#) ¹⁰

Outline

- Introducing commercial determinants of health
- Relevance to alcohol harms and their drivers
- Implications for public health practice

Source of alcohol industry revenue



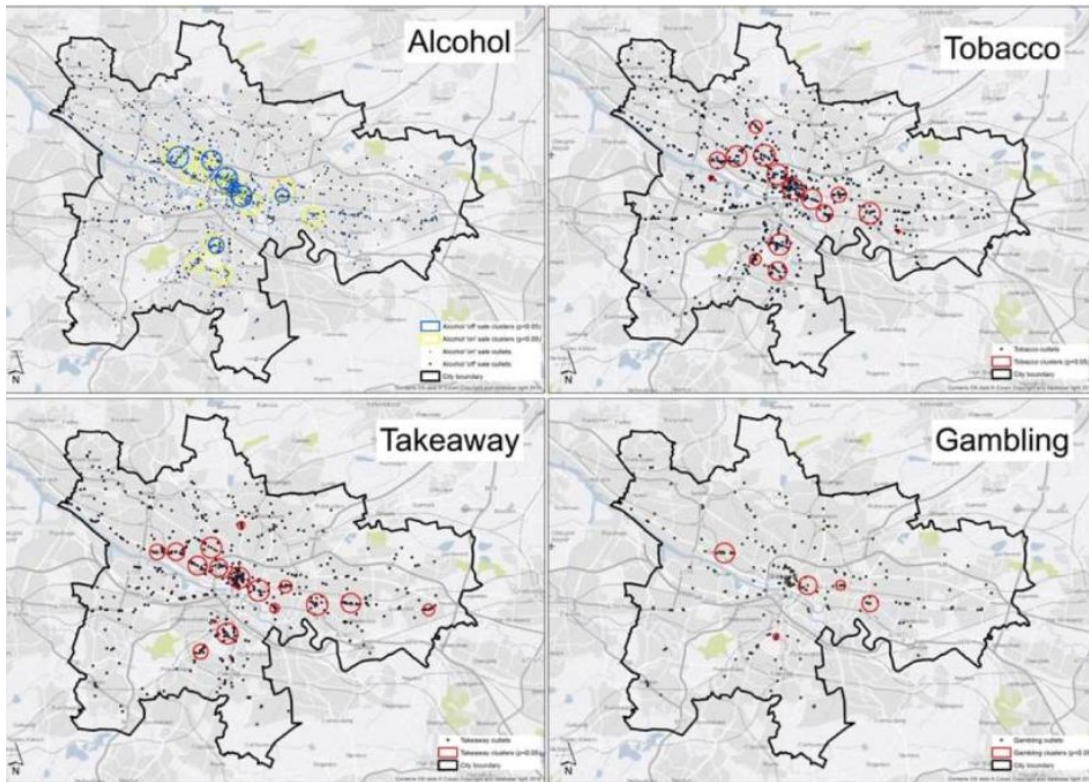
Everyone drinking in moderation would mean an extremely large drop in revenue (approx. 38%, or £13 billion)

Scenario modelling using descriptive analysis of pooled data from HSE and LCF surveys.

'moderate' drinking: below or equal to 14 units per week; 'hazardous: 15–35 units for women, 15–50 for men; 'harmful': 36+ for women, 51+ for men)

Bhattacharya A et al. Addiction 2018;113(12):2225-2232

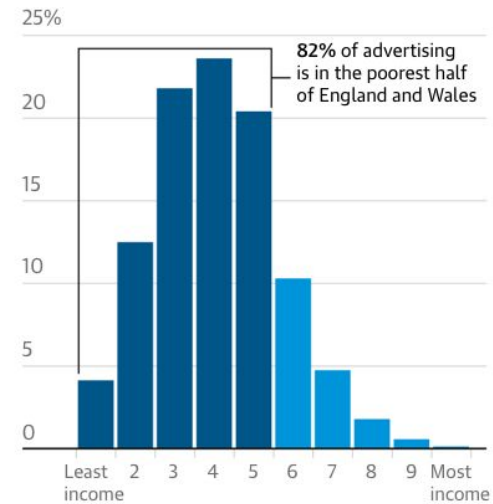
Cumulative effects and clustering



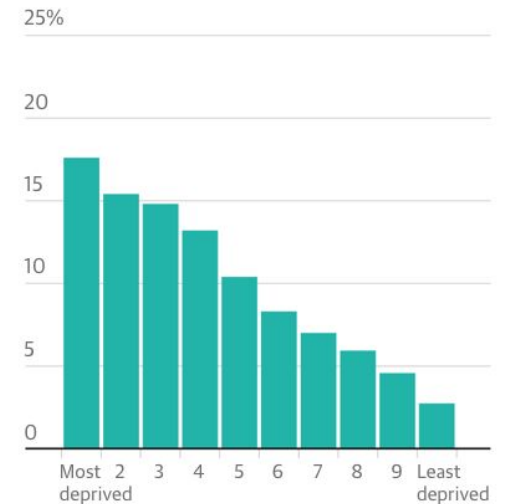
- Clustering of all outlets increases linearly with deprivation in Glasgow

Distribution of outdoor advertising

By income decile, England and Wales



By deprivation decile, England



Guardian graphic. Source: Peter Brooks, Adfree Cities. Note: Net annual income after housing costs (ONS 2018)

Macdonald et al. Health and Place 2018;51:224-231.

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/mar/04/four-in-five-billboard-ads-in-england-and-wales-in-poorer-areas>. Palmer et al. Nature Sci Reports 2021;11:4884

Reliance on heaviest consumers

- “As is the case in many post-mature markets, whisky brands are very reliant on a small number of heavy, and increasingly ageing, consumers, to provide the majority of volume...
...Our first advertising task was to protect and build this core drinker base by persuading existing consumers and drinkers of competitive blends to choose The Famous Grouse more often. In the longer term we had to attract more younger drinkers – the heavy-using loyalists of tomorrow” (Famous Grouse case study, 2006)
- “As with many other markets, the Pareto principle applies: 20% of drinkers account for 80% of sales. So, rather than struggle to make whisky appeal to younger consumers like the premium brands, we chose to focus on the core audience of heavy users. We knew that they were older. We knew they were primarily male. We knew that unlike malt users they tended to be downmarket” (Scottish Leader Whiskey case study, 2003).

Parallels in marketing segmentation



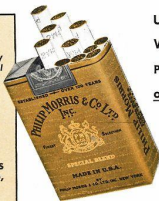
Don't test one brand alone ... compare them all!

TRY THIS TEST!

Take a PHILIP MORRIS—and any other cigarette. Then, here's all you do:

- 1 Light up either cigarette. Take a puff—don't inhale—and sip—why let the smoke come through your nose.
- 2 Now do exactly the same thing with the other cigarette.

NOTICE THAT PHILIP MORRIS IS DEFINITELY LESS IRRITATING, DEFINITELY MILDER!



Unlike others, we never ask you to test our brand alone. We say . . . **compare** PHILIP MORRIS . . . **match** PHILIP MORRIS . . . **judge** PHILIP MORRIS against any other cigarette! Then make your own choice! Remember

NO CIGARETTE HANGOVER
means MORE SMOKING PLEASURE!

CALL FOR PHILIP MORRIS



**"I hike alone, I bike alone, I climb alone.
But with my Smith & Wesson, I'm never alone."**

You travel your own path. You are an adventurer. Your choice of protection... a Smith & Wesson LadySmith.

Featuring small and medium frame revolvers and a compact 9mm pistol, these specifically designed handguns are made just for women.

After all, wherever that path leads, you want to get there safely.



Commonalities in argumentation

"Cancer is a very complex disease. Many factors have been associated with this disease besides smoking, including occupational and environmental exposures, diet, viruses, heredity and stress. Clearly there are many gaps in knowledge about lung cancer that only further research will resolve." BAT, 1992

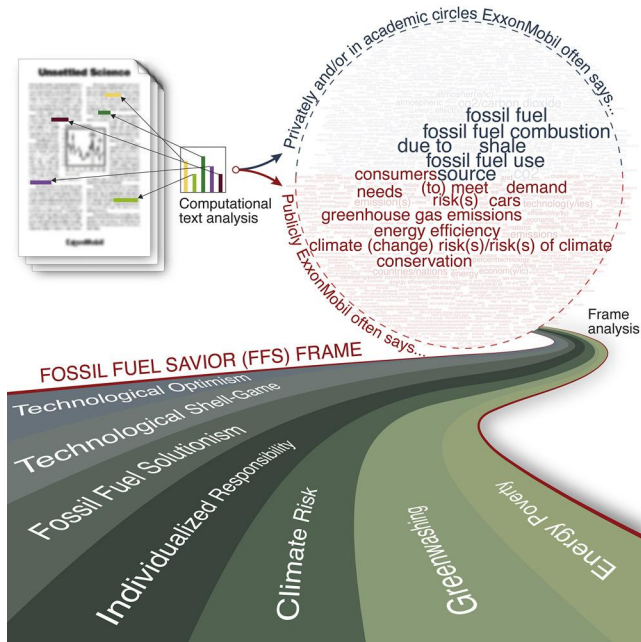
*"Problem gambling is complex and is about the person not the specific product."
Gala Coral, 2014*

"We believe obesity is a complex problem which cannot be reduced to the demonization of one ingredient... there is no simple answer to the complex problems of obesity" Food and Drink Federation, 2015

Not all heavy drinkers get cancer, as multiple risk factors are involved in the development of cancers including genetics and family history of cancer, age, environmental factors, and behavioural variables, as well as social determinants of health.' Drinkwise, 2019

*"Is there a cause-and-effect relationship between firearms and suicide? Nearly everything gets blamed for suicide at one time or another--love, hate, religion, pain, boredom, fear, shame, guilt, alcoholism, drug addiction, family dissolution, loss of a job, a new job, the news media, music, the time of year, terminal illness, old age and even the weather."
NRA-ILA, 1999*

Parallels in blaming individuals



"Problem gambling is complex and is about the person not the specific product." Gala Coral, 2014

"If all consumers exercised, did what they had to do, the problem of obesity wouldn't exist." PepsiCo CEO, 2010 interview

"Our brands are made with pride, and made to be enjoyed—responsibly. Consumed moderately and responsibly by adults who choose to drink, alcohol can be part of a balanced lifestyle." Diageo US, Leadership in Alcohol in Society article, 2016

*"We are all to blame"..
"demand driven" Oreskes et al,
2021*

"Lately, many Americans, myself included, have witnessed an erosion of personal responsibility." CEO of Daniel Defense, maker of the firearm in the Uvalde elementary school shooting

Parallels in policy influence

THE
MILBANK QUARTERLY
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF POPULATION HEALTH AND HEALTH POLICY

Original Scholarship

Public Meets Private: Conversations Between
Coca-Cola and the CDC

NASON MAANI HESSARI,* GARY RUSKIN,[†]
MARTIN McKEE,* and DAVID STÜCKLER[‡]

*London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; [†]U.S. Right to Know;
[‡]Donde Research Center, Bocconi University

Interactions Between the U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the Alcohol Industry: Evidence From Email Correspondence 2013–2020

GEMMA MITCHELL, PH.D.,^{a,*} & JIM McCAMBRIDGE, PH.D.^a

^aDepartment of Health Sciences, University of York, York, United Kingdom

AGRICULTURE

Coca-Cola tried to influence CDC on research and policy, new report states



Major Study of Drinking Will Be Shut Down

An investigation at the National Institutes of Health concluded that the \$100 million trial had been tainted by funding appeals to the alcohol industry.

CSR: Role of alcohol industry funded organisations

- The content of these organisations has been found to differ materially from independent charities
- This includes misinformation on key alcohol harms such as cancer,¹ CVD,² and drinking during pregnancy³
- It includes an emphasis on personal responsibility⁴
- Also includes “dark nudges” and “sludge”⁵



UK schools and alcohol industry-funded education programmes



PLOS ONE

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Distilling the curriculum: An analysis of alcohol industry-funded school-based youth education programmes

May C. I. van Schalkwyk^{1*}, Mark Petticrew^{1,2}, Nason Maani^{1,2}, Ben Hawkins¹, Chris Bonell¹, Srinivasa Vittal Katikireddi³, Cécile Knai^{1,2}

1 Faculty of Public Health and Policy, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, London, United Kingdom, **2** SPECTRUM Consortium (Shaping Public Health Policies to Reduce Inequalities and Harm), London, United Kingdom, **3** MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, United Kingdom

* may.vanschalkwyk@lshtm.ac.uk



UK pupils taught about alcohol with 'misleading' industry-funded resources

Researchers say teaching materials play down harms and shift responsibility on to young people



Teachers in thousands of UK schools employ resources produced by bodies with close ties to the alcohol trade. Photograph: Ian West/PA

Schools are using “misleading and biased” information materials funded by the alcohol industry to educate pupils as young as nine about drinking,

Seeking to shape discourse on harms



Friday Facts

Over a decade of falls in alcohol harm in Northern Ireland

14 units **80%**

Of adults either do not drink, or stick within the 14 units Chief Medical Officer low-risk guidelines ¹

Almost 2/3

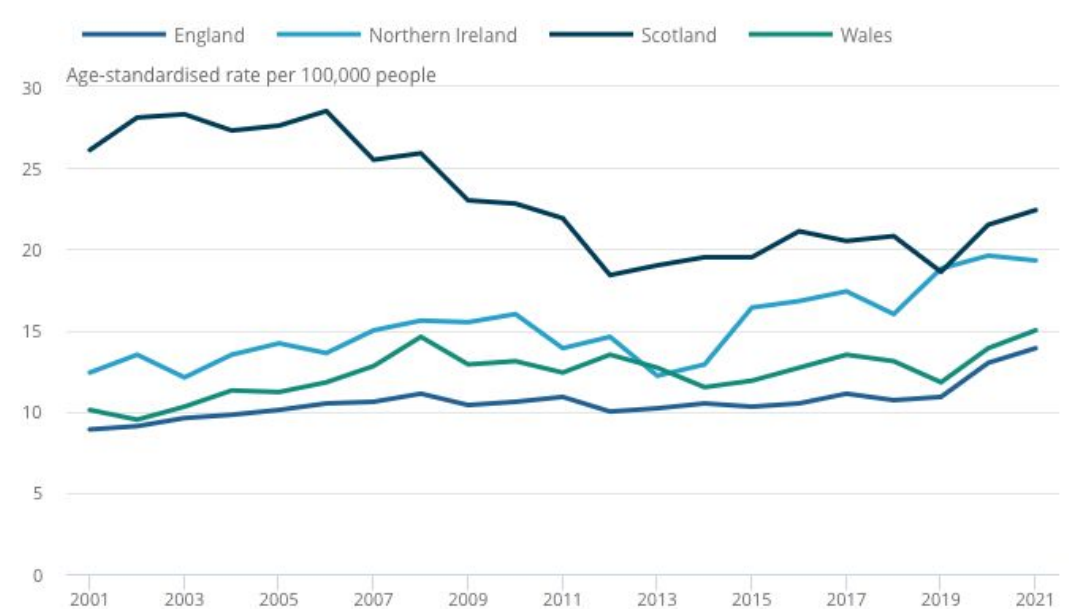
Of drinkers are drinking alcohol either once a week or less (64%) ²

50%

Fall in underage drinking between 2000 and 2019 ³

20 October 2023 Sources 1: Health Survey Northern Ireland, December 2020; 2. Drinkaware Northern Ireland Nations Report, November 2022; 3. NI Young Persons Behaviour & Attitudes Survey, September 2020.

Age-standardised alcohol-specific death rates per 100,000 people, UK constituent countries, deaths registered between 2001 and 2021



Friday facts



Mean weekly units have fallen to

9.7

in 2022 from 10.6 in 2016/2017.*

83%

of adults either do not drink or drink within the CMO's lower risk guideline of 14 units a week.*

Since 2016/17 those drinking over 14 units a week has fallen by

15%

just under a fifth (17%).*

*Welsh Health Survey, July 2023

SUPPORTED BY



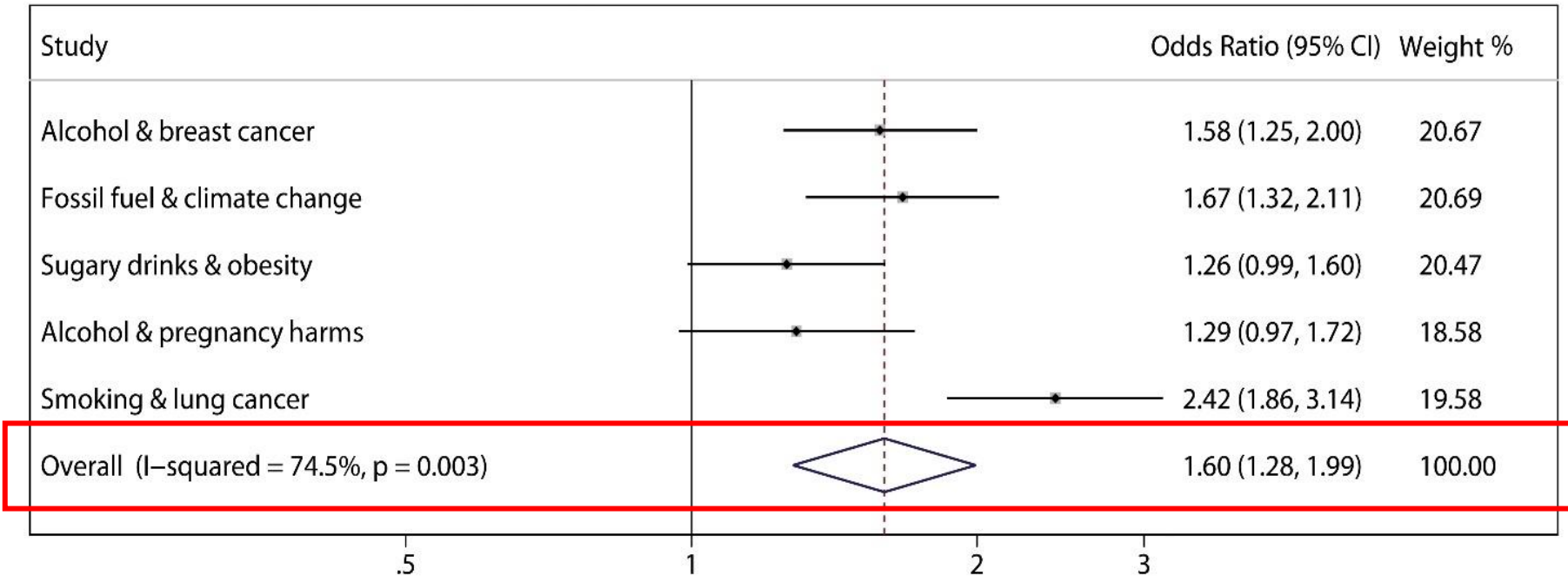
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/alcohol-specific-deathsintheuk/2021registrations>.

Maani et al. Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2023;8(5):398-400

Do such messages have an impact?

- Knowledge about harms and products increases public support for policy action¹
- Alternative causation arguments often used to dispute harms between products and harms²
- We sought to examine the effects of real-world alternative causation arguments by testing them via RCT

Results – impact on uncertainty



Overall, industry-sponsored uncertainty messages significantly increased the odds of uncertainty, or false certainty, by 60%, compared to independent sources of information

	Industry text n (%)	Non-industry text n (%)
	n=2511	n=2521
Certain it doesn't increase risk	384 (15.3)	377 (15.0)
Uncertain	697 (27.8)	520 (20.6)
Certain it does increase risk	1430 (57.0)	1624 (64.4)

Seeing alignment with wider corporate objectives

Dimensions of power

- 1) Power over decision-making and control over political agenda
- 2) Power to define issues and potential issues
- 3) Power to avert conflict and keep conflict latent



Vehicles of power

- Political environment
- Preference shaping
- Knowledge environment
- Legal environment
- Extra-legal environment

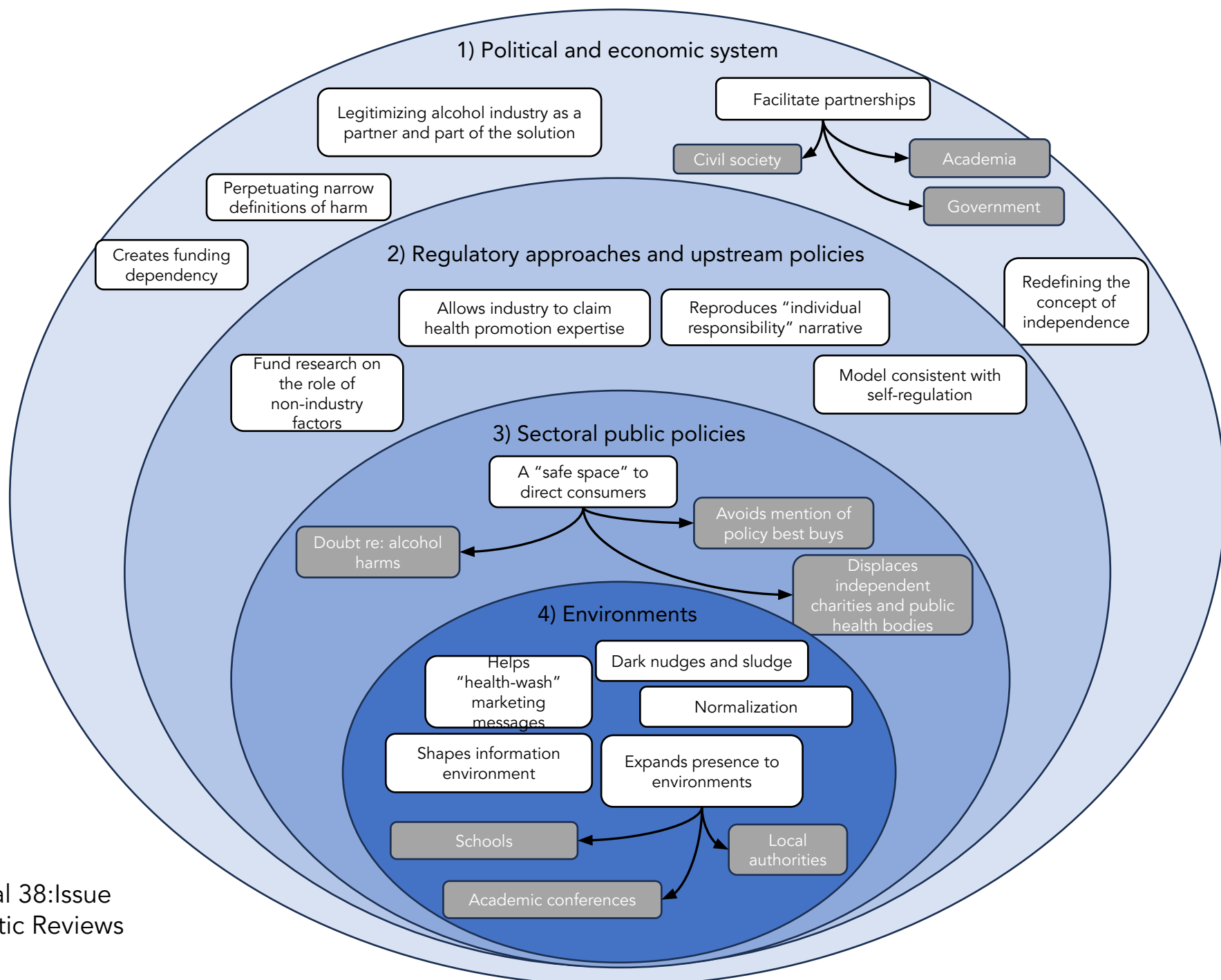
Practices of power

- Lobbying
- Corporate philanthropy
- Direct participation in
- Manufacturing dou
- Science to specification
- responsibility international
- Marketing and advertising
- Opposing research agendas

Examples

- Industry lobbying obstructed legal
- South Africa
- Stop the toasts: the Global Fund's disturbing new partnership
- Alcohol policy in
- Alcohol, cardiovascular disease and industry funding: A co-authorship network analysis of systematic reviews
- Su Golder^{1,2}, Jim McCambridge
- Alcohol Industry Involvement in the Moderate Alcohol and Cardiovascular Health (MACH) Trial
- Gemma Mitchell, PhD, Matthew Lesch, PhD, and Jim McCambridge, PhD
- Paternalistic, sexist
- Recruiting the "Heavy-Using Loyalists of Tomorrow": An Analysis of the Aims, Effects and
- Liquor industry calls halt to cancer warning labels on Yukon booze
- Mozambique

How to evaluate?
 Considering the
 system-level effects
 of alcohol industry
 CSR



The pollution of discourse

- Emphasis on individual responsibility vs government or manufacturers
- Emphasis on technological “downstream” solutions vs upstream societal ones
- Emphasis on self-regulation/de-regulation
- Disputation of public health evidence, trade-offs, economic costs
- Definitions of conflicts of interest/independence more broadly



Looking ahead

There is a growing understanding of the relevance of commercial determinants

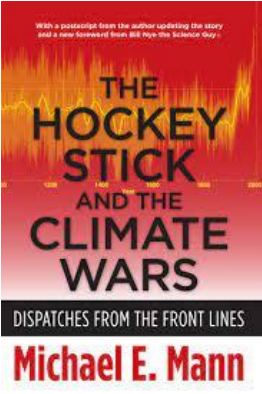
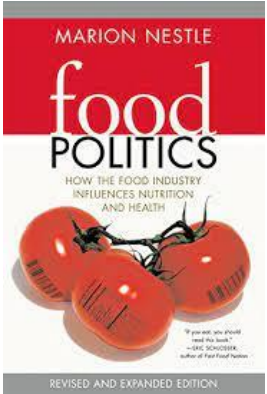
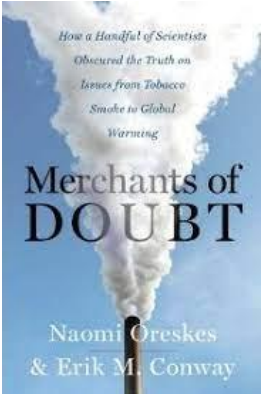
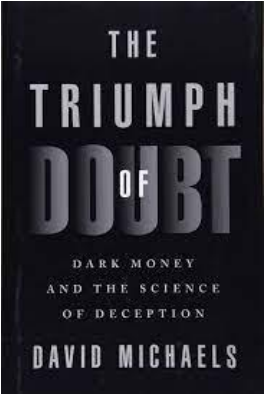
- Interest from WHO
- Coalitions among advocacy groups
- Emergence of research groups and communities
- Increasing research, reports and policy briefs
- Part of moving to “causes of causes” and complex systems thinking



Home / Newsroom / Fact sheets / Detail / Commercial determinants of health



Commercial determinants of health



SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN®

CLIMATE CHANGE

Exxon Knew about Climate Change almost 40 years ago

A new investigation shows the oil company understood the science before it became a public issue and spent millions to promote misinformation



Drinks firms ‘downplay alcohol link to cancer’

Food industry sway over public health gets new scrutiny

By CANDICE CHOI January 30, 2019



Civil society increasingly direct



i-Mark : Supporting Independence From Alcohol Industry Influence

Taoiseach: 'I don't think the drinks industry should be near schools'

Taoiseach: 'I don't think the drinks industry should be near schools'



**ALCOHOL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE**

COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL HARM

Dispelling Six Industry Myths About Alcohol Taxation

IAS Institute of Alcohol Studies



**ALCOHOL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE**

**Contents
unknown:**

How alcohol labelling still fails consumers

June 2022

Increasing support and guidance from WHO

WHO highlights glaring gaps in regulation of alcohol marketing across borders



WHO highlights glaring gaps in regulation of alcohol marketing across borders

Young people and heavy drinkers major targets

**Global alcohol action plan
2022-2030**



**Reporting
about alcohol:**

*a guide for
journalists*



World Health Organization
European Region

European framework for action on alcohol, 2022–2025

**Vision: A SAFER European Region
free from harm due to alcohol
A call to action**

The European framework for action on alcohol, 2022–2025 has been developed through consultations with Member States and civil society organizations and the public.

A more coordinated future

- Advocacy coalitions



NCD Alliance Scotland

NCD Alliance Scotland is a coalition of health organisations who are working together to reduce the health burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through action on alcohol, tobacco and high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products.

- Research consortia



- Regional and global networks

INTRODUCTORY E-COURSE

**GOVERNANCE, ETHICS,
AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST
IN PUBLIC HEALTH**

Open for Registration

In summary

- With current and future challenges to health inequalities and wellbeing, commercial determinants of health require greater focus and attention
- In an era of commercial consolidation, this requires global, multidisciplinary lens and inclusive “edge-dwelling” approaches
- There are signs that alcohol represents an example of policy incoherence, an increasingly obvious knowledge-action gap

Thank you

- Thanks to friends and colleagues: Mark Petticrew, Sandro Galea, Zain Hussain, Salma Abdalla, May van Schalkwyk, Kathrin Lauber
- Funders: NIHR, Commonwealth Fund, Health Foundation, UKPRP SPECTRUM

Email: nmaani@ed.ac.uk

Twitter: @spidermaani

