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Drink Wise, Enjoy Responsibly: News frames, branding and alcohol

Abstract

This article examines the communicative activities and press coverage of the alcohol industry-funded social change organisation DrinkWise. Established in 2005, DrinkWise funds health research in universities, runs public health campaigns, and engages in public relations activities. We use a framing analysis to examine the way DrinkWise frames problems, judgments and solutions related to alcohol consumption and policy. The aim of this analysis is to examine how journalistic practice legitimises DrinkWise and facilitates the organisation's communicative activities. In addition, we consider how DrinkWise's representation in the press works alongside the organisation's array of communicative activities to facilitate the commercial objectives of the alcohol industry. We draw on the implications of this analysis to conceptualise how distinct forms of communicative work, such as academic research; policy making; journalism; and marketing, advertising and public relations are interconnected.

Drinking Culture

Australia, we're told, has a 'drinking problem'. Politicians, health researchers, policy-makers, journalists and even the alcohol industry all state that Australia's 'drinking culture' needs to be changed (National Preventative Taskforce, 2009). In 2005, the alcohol industry established the 'evidence-based not-for-profit research and social change organisation' DrinkWise with a \$5 million grant from the Howard Government and \$5 million from the alcohol industry (Miller and Kypri, 2009). DrinkWise aims to 'foster innovative approaches towards developing and maintaining a safer drinking culture in Australia' (DrinkWise, 2010a).

This article develops a case study of DrinkWise's coverage in the Australian press. We use a framing analysis to explore three questions. Firstly, how does DrinkWise frame its message? Secondly, how is DrinkWise's frame reflected or not reflected in the Australian press? A critical framing analysis enables us to demonstrate how, in the case of DrinkWise, journalists both adopt and challenge

industry-constructed frames. Here we are not making a judgment about whether journalists are being 'good' or 'bad' but how, in their practices, journalists produce a variety of narratives about DrinkWise. In part, this analysis demonstrates how superficially competing frames are mutually reinforcing because they create an enduring media template (Kitzinger, 2000).

Thirdly, we pose an exploratory question: how does DrinkWise foster interconnections between the commercial interests of the alcohol industry, health researchers and journalistic practice? This question examines the role of professional communicators, such as journalists; researchers; lobbyists; and marketing, advertising and public relations professionals in constructing the political and economic frameworks within which the alcohol industry operates. Furthermore, we consider how these forms of communicative work are mutually reinforcing and conceptualise how DrinkWise, industry-funded research, community initiatives, events and campaigns—ostensibly targeted at reducing alcohol consumption—facilitate and reinforce marketing strategies aimed at stimulating alcohol consumption. In these terms, branding can be understood in both strategic and critical ways. In a strategic marketing sense, a brand is a symbol that attaches a set of meanings to a commodity. Brands make commodities more valuable. Marketers are concerned with increasing the value of brands to enable greater consumption of goods and services (Keller, 1993). Recent critical (Arvidsson, 2005; Hearn, 2008) and cultural (Holt, 2002) perspectives on branding highlight how branding is a social process and a political project. Creating brand value engages larger networks of communicative work than those of advertisers and marketers alone. In a media-dense social world, branding is as much about building a social, cultural and political context for brands as it is about the individual status of brands.

The examination of DrinkWise's press coverage will assist in conceptualising how DrinkWise facilitates the creation of brand value. Since the 1990s, the alcohol industry has invested in marketing innovations in promotion, product development and distribution (Jackson, 2000) to embed alcohol within popular culture spaces such as sporting events, entertainment precincts and music festivals (Carah, 2010). These branding strategies have transformed the social spaces within which alcohol is distributed and consumed. A significant threat to these branding activities is a political environment that may regulate and disrupt the industry's ability to access the social and cultural spaces it uses to build its brands and facilitate alcohol consumption (Jackson, 2000). DrinkWise's strategy protects brand-building spaces by locating the 'drinking problem' within Australian culture in general, and in the family home in particular. Through DrinkWise, the alcohol

industry draws on a common-sense idea that ‘we’ need to change our drinking culture. This narrative reinforces policies that protect the industry’s physical and mediated brand-building structures by framing debate away from these issues.

DrinkWise’s coverage in the press is understood as one element of its communicative activity. Rather than examining the ‘effect’ of DrinkWise’s coverage in the press, our aim is to examine how the press coverage is embedded in a larger meaning-making process. Between 2005 and 2010, DrinkWise ran public health awareness campaigns, funded academic research, and engaged in lobbying and public relations activities. DrinkWise ran two extensive public health awareness campaigns between 2008 and 2010: *Kids Absorb Your Drinking* and *Kids and Alcohol Don’t Mix*. Each campaign aimed to instigate ‘generational change’ by emphasising the ‘critical role of parents’ in influencing their child’s future drinking behaviour. The campaigns featured television advertisements that were reinforced by online resources at the DrinkWise website that parents could use to facilitate discussions with their children and with other parents (DrinkWise, 2010b).

The DrinkWise public health campaigns are supported by DrinkWise-funded researchers in several Australian universities (see Roche et al., 2007; Borlagdan et al., 2010; Lindsey et al., 2009; McLwain and Homel, 2009; Hickie, 2009). DrinkWise uses this research to reinforce its framing of alcohol consumption as a cultural problem that needs to be tackled by parents who are well informed by scientific and health research experts (DrinkWise, 2010c). These research-funding activities have attracted criticism from academics and researchers. Most prominently, in 2009, 57 researchers signed an open letter to the *Medical Journal of Australia* stating that they would not accept funding from the industry and called on other researchers to do the same (see Hall and Room, 2006; Miller et al., 2009; Miller and Kypri, 2009). In the letter they drew parallels between DrinkWise and tobacco industry attempts to ‘distract attention from their concurrent lobbying against policies that would actually make a difference’, such as taxation or reform of the alcohol environment through outlet density and licensing measures.

DrinkWise employs a range of public relations activities to promote its research, initiatives, campaigns and policy positions. Through its research and campaigns, DrinkWise creates content and events that are newsworthy. During the period of 20 June 2008 (when the first DrinkWise campaign began) to 22 December 2009, DrinkWise produced 29 media releases. In 2010, DrinkWise issued a further ten media releases which are not the subject of analysis in this article (DrinkWise, 2010d). The media releases were used in reporting by the Australian mainstream

press. In this article, we analyse online and print versions of the Fairfax and News Limited dailies in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

News frames, DrinkWise media releases and press coverage: theoretical framework and methodology

A news frame constructs a particular view of the world by offering specific problem definitions, diagnosing the causes of those problems, making judgments and proposing solutions within shared cultural schema (Blood, 2002; Blood and Holland, 2004; Blood et al., 2005; D'Angelo, 2002; Entman, 1993). The news frame is a useful conceptual framework for articulating how a news text 'calls to attention some aspects of reality while obscuring other elements' (Entman, 1993: 55). Frames also direct our attention to the social interaction between journalists, their sources and other professional communicators, such as public relations professionals. Interest groups like DrinkWise attempt to position their messages within shared cultural schema that other professional communicators (such as journalists, politicians, policy-makers and researchers) will enter into. A critical framing analysis is concerned with how the process of framing reflects commonly held cultural narratives—like 'Australia has a drinking culture'—in ways that privilege elite interests—like the alcohol industry, researchers, politicians or policy-makers (Blood and Holland, 2004; Louw, 2010). In our analysis we also draw on Kitzinger's (2000) related concept of the media template. News frames incrementally form a template that shapes 'how we make sense of the world' (Kitzinger, 2000: 81). A media template is a shared cultural schema from which all frames, including competing ones, are generated. A template is maintained through routine interactions between professional communicators.

The analysis begins with the 29 DrinkWise media releases produced between June 2008 and December 2009. Two coders inductively identified statements of problems, judgments and solutions in the releases. Following a description of the DrinkWise frame in the media releases, we examine press coverage of DrinkWise to determine how their frame is incorporated in that coverage. We searched the term 'DrinkWise' using a combination of Factiva and newspaper website searches to collect stories published during 2008 and 2009 that mentioned DrinkWise. Our search is as complete as possible and identified 107 articles. As Fairfax and News Limited publications syndicate stories across mastheads, use copy from agencies such as Australian Associated Press (AAP), and republish similar stories under different headlines, we narrowed down the collection to 55 unique articles that mention DrinkWise.

We present the analysis in four parts:

- (1) How DrinkWise frames its message in its media releases.
- (2) News articles that reproduce the DrinkWise frame: of the 55 articles, 30 are exclusively based on material in a DrinkWise media release and use only DrinkWise research and sources.
- (3) News articles that present the DrinkWise frame alongside competing frames: of the 55 articles, 15 offer problem definitions, judgments and solutions outside the DrinkWise frame or seek comment from non-DrinkWise sources in addition to using DrinkWise material.
- (4) News articles critical of DrinkWise: of the 55 articles, 10 draw attention to DrinkWise's industry funding and strategies. The majority of these articles are generated by the communicative activities of health researchers. Some articles offer DrinkWise a right of reply.

Framing is an ongoing social process. The DrinkWise frame draws on already established, shared cultural narratives, such as 'Australia has a drinking culture'. The framing analysis elaborates how 'media professionals "package" information' (Blood and Holland, 2004: 324) and draws attention to how the structure of a frame is determined by 'who is doing the framing' (Blood and Holland, 2004: 325). We follow the qualitative methodological approach of Blood and Holland (2004) that examines particular cases under each frame, paying attention to both the construction of the text and the array of sources. We identify evidence of three frames in the press coverage, each driven by different journalistic practices. The number of articles coded in each identified frame is only indicative. We do not infer that the greater frequency of any of these journalistic practices and their associated news frames necessarily has a material effect on the reception of Drinkwise messages..

The DrinkWise frame

The DrinkWise media releases coincide with either prominent cultural events associated with alcohol (such as the Spring Racing Carnival or Schoolies) or the publication and launch of DrinkWise's research, campaigns or events. The releases are organised around the statement and definition of a problem, judgments about the problem, and proposed solutions.

DrinkWise identifies and defines the problem in two ways. Firstly, DrinkWise claims that drinking is a part of Australian culture. For instance, 'in Australia we have an identified binge drinking problem, akin to a romance with alcohol' (*New research provides evidence-base for a reduction of alcohol related violence*, DrinkWise, 8 April 2009). And secondly, drinkers are too young. DrinkWise offers research that 'shows that more than a quarter (26.3%) of 14–19 year olds put themselves at

risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term at least once a month' (*International expert addresses national DrinkWise forum on safer drinking*, DrinkWise, 28 April 2009).

The predominant judgment made in the media releases is that problem drinking is learnt from parents. For instance, DrinkWise states, 'research shows that parents underestimate the influence they have on their children in terms of drinking behaviours but studies confirm that parents are the most important influence in this area' (*DrinkWise and Australian government to launch Australia's first generational change campaign to tackle risky drinking*, DrinkWise, 20 June 2009).

DrinkWise's solution is two-fold. Firstly, alcohol should be consumed in moderation. DrinkWise aims to develop a 'drinking culture in Australia that ... maximises the benefits from moderate alcohol consumption' (*DrinkWise and Australian Government to launch Australia's first generational change campaign to tackle risky drinking*, DrinkWise, 20 June 2008). And secondly, the issue of youth drinking is a message *about* young people not *for* young people. DrinkWise aims to 'ignite a parent-to-parent conversation about the importance of delaying teen introduction to alcohol' (*New campaign urges parents to delay teens' introduction to alcohol for sake of their brains*, DrinkWise, 24 August 2009). All the media releases are organised around this frame, with six exceptions that either do not mention parents as influencers of drinking behaviour, promote the idea that responsibility lies with parents, or refer to Australia's drinking culture. None of these exceptions present a frame that competes with or differs in substance from the other media releases.

The DrinkWise problem definition, judgments and solutions are made credible with research and opinions from health experts and researchers. DrinkWise conflates the commonly accepted problem with its proposed solution. If the problem is Australian culture, then DrinkWise makes the judgment that individuals and parents bear the responsibility of change, and offers research, expert opinion, advertisements and online resources as solutions. The onus for action is with parents. DrinkWise ignores the role the industry plays in making alcohol a seductive part of youth culture even where their own research has made these findings. For instance, in their DrinkWise funded research Roche et al. (2007: 133) provide an extensive overview of alcohol advertising and state that 'advertising and marketing is part of the cultural context that shapes the meanings young people construct around alcohol'. DrinkWise promotes the aspects of this research that refer to 'drinking culture' but do not address the findings about the industry's role in constructing and reinforcing that drinking culture.

Routine repetition of DrinkWise

Of the 55 articles that mention DrinkWise, 30 routinely repeat a frame consistent with DrinkWise’s media releases (see Table 1).

Table 1: Routine repetition of DrinkWise

| Article features | Number of articles |
|--|--------------------|
| Article uses DrinkWise sources exclusively | 8 |
| Article reports DrinkWise funded research findings | 7 |
| Article reports on the launch of a DrinkWise campaign | 5 |
| Article reports on a DrinkWise event | 4 |
| Article reports DrinkWise positions on public policy and regulation | 4 |
| Article calls on DrinkWise for comment as part of story about drinking culture and entertainment precincts | 2 |

Routine news articles are constructed exclusively using DrinkWise’s sources, events, campaigns or research. For instance, ‘One-quarter of teens boozing to excess’ (Fairfax, 23 July 2009) leads with:

More than 26 per cent of teenagers drink so much they put themselves ‘at risk of harm’ every month, with the percentage higher for females (28.3 per cent), than males (24.5 per cent).

The lead is drawn directly from the DrinkWise media release *Lord mayor launches practical guide to help parents raise drink wise teens* (DrinkWise, 23 July 2009) where DrinkWise CEO Chris Watters says, ‘Research shows that more than a quarter (26.3%) of 14–19 year olds put themselves at risk of alcohol-related harm in the short term at least once a month.’ The article details the launch of a DrinkWise five-point ‘responsible drinking’ plan in partnership with the Brisbane City Council. Both the media release and the news article detail DrinkWise-commissioned research (though the news article doesn’t state that the research is DrinkWise funded) that shows ‘51 per cent of parents did not know where to get information about drinking’. The news article exclusively uses sources from the media release: sports celebrity Tim Horan and Brisbane City Council Mayor Campbell Newman. The article draws all the content from the media release or the DrinkWise launch.

Using high-profile sources, DrinkWise embeds its message within shared cultural narratives about Australian drinking culture. ‘One-quarter of teens boozing to excess’ draws on DrinkWise sources at the launch who shared their personal experiences with alcohol consumption and parenting. From this shared schema, of alcohol being a problematic part of Australian culture, DrinkWise can present industry-friendly solutions. ‘The quest for a dozen good ideas’ (Fairfax, 12 April 2008) reports that ‘DrinkWise Australia wants to stop the glamourisation of intoxication through the media, often highlighted by the actions of celebrities and sports stars’. This statement is attuned to the common-sense idea that Australian culture celebrates drinking. This statement is then appended to an industry-friendly solution: ‘[DrinkWise] has called for a “clearing house” of

responsible alcohol initiatives across Australia so successful programs can be more easily identified'. As the intended clearing house would be managed by DrinkWise, health researchers have voiced concern about whether the clearing house would showcase only industry-friendly research (Miller and Kypri, 2009).

The scope, skill and resources of interest groups like DrinkWise are evident in their intimate knowledge of the journalistic process (Kitzinger, 2000; Louw, 2010). Interest groups are adept at crafting content that successfully meets their objectives within the professional practice of journalism. In these terms, we can conceptualise how DrinkWise provides content that is easily turned into news. It contains credible sources, such as researchers and industry figures, and research and online resources and it sensitises that content to journalistic practice (it contains culturally shared schema, such as 'Australia has a drinking problem') and the perception of the cultural context within which journalists work (such as the perception that 'drinking is an important social issue'). These media releases are reproduced as news articles within the daily routines of journalism. These routine practices should not be conflated with judgments about particular journalists. Individual journalists work across a variety of journalistic practices. In our analysis we found that individual journalists wrote a variety of routine, balanced and critical articles about alcohol consumption in Australia. Across their work, they produced a variety of different narratives about DrinkWise, of which routine summaries of media releases and related events are one practice.

Balancing DrinkWise

In distinction to reporting that explicitly mobilises DrinkWise's frame, 15 of the 55 articles present DrinkWise's material alongside competing perspectives. Irrespective of whether this balancing is superficial or nuanced (we examine both types below) this practice presents DrinkWise as a legitimate part of the debate about drinking culture and alcohol policy (see Table 2).

Table 2: Balancing DrinkWise

| Article features | Number of articles |
|---|--------------------|
| Article features DrinkWise source, research, event or policy position presented along with one or two other expert opinions | 4 |
| Article reports on a DrinkWise event where an expert or affiliated source expressed an opinion that diverges from the DrinkWise frame | 3 |
| Article features DrinkWise source, research or event as the primary subject of the article with minimal reply from one or two sources | 2 |
| Article presents the DrinkWise perspective as one among several other expert perspectives | 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Article reports on a DrinkWise event where a young person expressed an opinion that diverges with the DrinkWise frame | 2 |
| Article reports DrinkWise sources criticising irresponsible industry promotions or practices | 2 |

At a DrinkWise event, Australian swimmer Geoff Huegill advocated the DrinkWise messages of drinking in moderation and personal responsibility. He also said that alcohol sponsorship of sport was acceptable. In some news reports, this ‘industry-friendly’ point of view was balanced by other experts calling for regulation of alcohol marketing and, in particular, sponsorship of sport (‘Drink wisely says resized swimmer’, Fairfax, 31 March 2009). Here, the DrinkWise position is ‘balanced’ with the opinions of other prominent researchers or interest groups known to hold an alternative view. For instance, in the aforementioned example the first ten paragraphs detail Huegill’s statement at the DrinkWise forum. Appended at the end of the article is a comment from Paul Dillon, a researcher who heads Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia. In a two-paragraph statement, Dillon is reported to have claimed the ‘nexus’ between alcohol and sport ‘needed to be broken’, stated that he was ‘devastated when the Federal Government’s proposed alcopops tax failed to pass the Senate’, and ‘attacked the former Howard government for doing little to control alcohol abuse.’ In this coverage of the event, precedence is given to DrinkWise messages and sources (in this case a celebrity’s overcoming of alcohol abuse), while critics like Paul Dillon (with arguments about alcohol policy and regulation) are given a minimal reply. In this example, routine journalism superficially poses one view against another, it ‘scatters opposing facts’ (Entman, 1993). Rather than critically analysing multiple positions, this practice enables DrinkWise to frame the coverage.

Where the aforementioned example is DrinkWise-centric, with one alternative voice, DrinkWise can also be presented as one of a number of legitimate perspectives in a ‘healthy debate’ about alcohol policy. In ‘Hitting the drink’ (Fairfax, 15 June 2008) DrinkWise’s campaign to target parents who supply alcohol to their children is presented as one of a number of perspectives including government policy-makers, health professionals, health researchers, and industry figures. In this article, industry voices argue for cultural change targeted at specific groups of problem drinkers and caution against taxation measures, where other advocates like Alex Wodak from St Vincent’s Hospital Alcohol and Drug Service claim that taxation is the ‘single intervention best supported by evidence’. Health researchers and policy-makers tend to argue for regulatory reforms of the alcohol industry and make complex or nuanced arguments. For instance, in this article Alex Wodak and other experts explain that Australia’s alcohol consumption has ‘declined by 25%’ since the early

1980s. His comments are supported by a research study that shows ‘virtually no change in the pattern of risky drinking over the period 2001 to 2007’. Wodak follows this evidence with the argument that focusing on change in consumption is ‘nothing more than a detail’ and that ‘the first-order question we should be asking is whether Australia regards the health, social and economic costs of alcohol to be acceptable’. This is framed in more nuanced terms than DrinkWise’s claims that Australia has a binge-drinking ‘epidemic’ (*International expert addresses national DrinkWise forum on safer drinking*, DrinkWise, 28 April 2009). In ‘Hitting the drink’, DrinkWise’s viewpoint is presented as one legitimate and constructive part of the debate about alcohol consumption and policy. It is legitimised by being presented as ‘one of the experts’. Further, presented against other experts, DrinkWise appears to have a simple, common-sense and constructive message. Where other researchers offer insight into the complexity of the issue, DrinkWise defines the problem, makes a judgment and proposes a solution.

Critiquing DrinkWise

Of the 55 articles, 10 raise criticisms of DrinkWise. These articles appear to be generated out of the interaction between journalists acting as critical ‘watchdogs’ and health researchers and academics critical of DrinkWise directly engaging with journalists (see Table 3).

Table 3: Critiquing DrinkWise

| Article features | Number of articles |
|--|--------------------|
| Article details criticism by health researchers and experts on industry links or government funding of DrinkWise | 3 |
| Article covers a public forum of health researchers and experts organised to draw attention to DrinkWise’s industry links | 2 |
| Article criticises DrinkWise (using health researchers and experts as sources) as part of a larger critique of the alcohol industry | 2 |
| Article about health researchers letter in the <i>Medical Journal of Australia</i> calling on all researchers not to accept funding from DrinkWise | 1 |
| Article draws on health researchers and experts as sources who criticise DrinkWise advertisements | 1 |
| Article critiques the alcohol industry with a minimal reply from DrinkWise | 1 |

While the dominant frame in these articles is the health researchers’ criticism, DrinkWise took the opportunity of a right of reply to defend the industry, frame the message and cast doubt on the legitimacy of their critics. For instance, in ‘Big booze book of tactics exposed’ (Fairfax, 22 April 2009) health researcher Mike Daube claimed that DrinkWise aimed to ‘divert debate into the issue of under-age drinking or the promotion of ‘soft, low-key’ education campaigns’ and that it was a ‘diversionary tactic that avoided promoting ideas that would hurt alcohol sales’. DrinkWise CEO

Chris Watters was given a right of reply to Daube, where he 'fiercely denied his organisation was just a marketing tool'. The article continues:

Mr Watters pointed to many educational programs across the country and funding for university research.

"DrinkWise's mission is about building a safer drinking culture," he said. And DrinkWise did not recommend "fiddling with alcohol tax" or other "old thinking" about prevention, as "the facts just don't stand up".

He said the alcohol industry contributed \$6.4 billion to the economy and employed more than half a million people.

Alcohol company chief executives were on DrinkWise's board to build links between industry and the promotion of responsible drinking, he said.

The health researchers made explicit criticism of DrinkWise's industry-funders profiting from the 'drinking culture' they sought to change. While this criticism is clear and straightforward, there are no instances of DrinkWise 'corruptly' exploiting research or political process. This leaves critics to make more complex and implicit arguments about the cumulative and manipulative effect of DrinkWise. DrinkWise combats this criticism by continually showcasing its events, campaigns, research projects and other contributions to changing Australia's drinking culture. And, rather than conceal its industry links, the organisation argues that these links are a productive and innovative solution to the problem. DrinkWise uses criticism to make itself a legitimate part of the debate about alcohol policy. More than that, DrinkWise deflects criticism by positioning itself as 'new' (and therefore constructive) in the face of the 'old' (and implicitly unproductive) thinking of the health researchers. While critics simply *criticise* DrinkWise, DrinkWise points to its education programs, economic contributions and research funding as evidence of its proactive contribution to cultural change. In the examples considered here, DrinkWise adopts the logic of a promotional public sphere (Knight, 2010). It outmanoeuvres health researchers by more effectively packaging its message as a brand. Like all effective brands, DrinkWise presents the problem and solution together in clear and actionable terms.

Drinking Wisely

In the DrinkWise case, there is evidence that journalistic practices collate and present the opinions of experts in routine, balanced and critical ways. These journalistic practices are mutually reinforcing because they construct a media template that privileges a continuous circulation of expert ideas without explanation or evaluation. To some extent, health experts embed themselves

within this template. For instance, on *Croakey: The Crikey Health Blog*, Mike Daube and Simon Chapman, health researchers driving public criticism of DrinkWise, engage in a heated exchange with Noel Turnbull, a community representative board member of DrinkWise ('Some questions about the independence of DrinkWise', Crikey, 2010). In response to the health researchers raising questions about DrinkWise's industry links, Turnbull describes Daube as a 'PR campaigner pursuing a particular world-view and theory'. He states that the success and efficacy of DrinkWise campaigns are 'a most inconvenient fact from his point of view'. Turnbull sets out to legitimise the health researchers as political players in the debate, but delegitimises them as scientific experts. While each party raises doubt about the legitimacy of the other's claims, each is also treated as legitimate by the journalistic process. In both this exchange, and in reporting on DrinkWise, expert opinions are devalued where they are presented against one another without explanation, background or assessment.

We agree with the health researchers that DrinkWise does raise serious questions about the shape of the policy debate about alcohol consumption in Australia. But, health researchers' criticisms of DrinkWise don't appear to destabilise it at all. Media and communications research has a role to play in examining the interrelationships between the array of communicative activities undertaken by the alcohol industry and DrinkWise. This includes their interventions in public policy, academic research, and news media that promote the industry as a legitimate and responsible player in debate and policy about alcohol consumption. This activity must be considered in relation to alcohol brands' engagement with popular culture and advertising and entertainment precincts aimed at stimulating alcohol consumption and building brand value. These activities appear contradictory (some stimulate consumption, some aim to reduce consumption) but, actually, they are mutually reinforcing. One set of activities work toward maintaining and reinforcing political-economic structures that facilitate branding and consumption. The other set of activities build brand value and stimulate consumption.

The press coverage in this debate demonstrates, in part, how DrinkWise is an important component in the alcohol industry's construction of brand value. On one level, corporations and their brands compete with each other for attention but, as DrinkWise exemplifies, corporations can also work together to create, structure and reinforce cultural narratives in their interests (Goldman and Papson, 2006). No industry is in the business of deconstructing the political frameworks that make them profitable. Interest groups are most successful when they shape the enduring frame (Blood, 2005; Reese, 2001) that routinely organises news making around a particular set of enduring ideas.

DrinkWise's research and campaigns protect the industry's branding machinery partly by interacting with journalists and researchers to shape a media template in their interests. This media template shifts debate away from the alcohol 'environment'—that is, the industry's investment in media, advertising, popular culture and entertainment precincts—that promotes and facilitates alcohol consumption (Giesbrecht, 2000).

Media and communications research also needs to consider how the industry engages with and incorporates the reactions of critics into a media template that inhibits the debate from threatening the industry. This media activity takes place alongside selective funding of academic research. Where universities and researchers accept this funding they are incorporated into reinforcing an uneven distribution of symbolic resources. This problem is particularly critical in an era where policy-makers, researchers and scientists face a political-media process characterised by 'reflexive doubt' (Andrejevic, 2007: 160; Dean, 2010: 77); where their views on issues like climate change, economic crises, or health policy are treated as just one undifferentiated circulating opinion among many. Media templates are a useful conceptual framework because they direct our attention away from individual frames (such as whether the press is too PR-centric, too biased, or too focused on particular experts) and toward how these frames cumulatively create a media-political process that privileges the assumption that publicity will have a material effect on policy.

Journalists are central to the construction of media templates as a 'crucial site of media power' (Kitzinger, 2000: 81) because they facilitate the social process of constructing journalism as a legitimate space of public dialogue (Deuze, 2006; Schudson, 1978; Tuchman, 1979). Where journalists (and health researchers speaking within journalistic spaces) reach for their distinctive narratives of public interest, autonomy and credibility they contribute to the production of a media template that might well serve the industry's interests. An account of how the construction and reproduction of media templates is shaped by an uneven distribution of symbolic resources (Couldry, 2003) leads us to consider how they might be different.

Media templates can only be reshaped by professional communicators who can challenge not just what the alcohol industry says, but also the political and economic structures they use to communicate. Analysis of media templates draws attention toward how superficially paradoxical activities are complementary and how access to the template is uneven. The paradox of the current debate about alcohol consumption in Australia is that both alcohol industry and DrinkWise promotion of responsible enjoyment and health researchers' advocacy of new policies for regulating and controlling legal substances, such as alcohol and tobacco, may have a similar effect.

Both create and facilitate what health researchers call 'dark markets' (Carter, 2003; Darling and Reeder, 2004; Freeman and Chapman 2009). Dark markets are characterised by experiential, below-the-line, and culturally embedded branding strategies that create relationships between products, popular culture, social media and young people. Dark markets are not visible to the broader public or policy-makers and are therefore hard to track, control and regulate. The alcohol industry in Australia is a leading innovator in social change projects like DrinkWise that engage an array of professional communicators in research, policy and publicity work. This work diverts attention from the industry's concurrent innovation of experiential branding techniques that create 'stickier' and more affective relationships with young markets through popular culture and social media. The media template we have illustrated in this article keeps the debate from shedding light on the development of these dark markets.

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