

HOW CORPORATIONS SELL LEISURE COMMODITIES THAT ARE BAD FOR YOU¹

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Resumo:

Este artigo analisa a forma como produtos de lazer são reposicionados globalmente em um contexto em que o conhecimento médico e atividades de grupo de pressão identificam formas específicas de lazer como prejudiciais. Traz exemplos de reposicionamento amplo que incluem o consumo de álcool e o uso - e seus efeitos sobre o meio ambiente - dos veículos utilitários esportivos (SUV). O caso considerado longamente aqui é o tabaco. Historicamente, o fumo não se limita à esfera do lazer. Ela ocorre no local de trabalho e no transporte público. No entanto, desde o US Surgeon General's Report, em 1964, que identificou uma ligação entre tabaco e doenças evitáveis e de morte prematura, a tendência tem sido de o combate ao fumo concentrar-se não apenas na esfera do lazer, mas na esfera privada de lazer. A onda de proibições metropolitanas e nacionais de fumar no local de trabalho e transportes públicos e espaços de lazer se tornou mais forte desde investigação médica das ligações entre o fumar passivo, saúde e doença. No Ocidente, o tabaco é cada vez mais uma atividade marginal confinada à casa, automóveis particulares ou espaços licenciados.

Palavras chave: Lazer; Álcool; Tabaco; Meio ambiente.

Abstract

This article examines how leisure commodities are repositioned globally in a context in which medical knowledge and pressure group activity identifies specific leisure forms as harmful. Examples of re-positioning wide-ranging and include the consumption of alcohol and the use of Sports Utility Vehicles (SUV's) and their effect on the environment. The case considered at length here is tobacco. Historically, smoking was not confined to the sphere of leisure. It occurred in the workplace and public transport. However, since the US Surgeon General's Report in 1964 which identified a link between tobacco and preventable illness and premature death, the trend has been for smoking to be concentrated not merely in the sphere of leisure, but in the private sphere of leisure to boot. The wave of metropolitan and national bans on smoking in the workplace and public transport and leisure spaces has grown stronger since medical investigation of the links between secondary smoking, health and illness. In the West, tobacco is increasingly a peripheral activity confined to the home, private automobiles or licensed spaces.

Keywords: Leisure; Alcohol; Tobacco.

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The Problem

The global, commercial re-distribution of harmful leisure forms and practice are at an interesting juncture. It is scantily observed and seldom remarked upon by leisure professionals. This raises a separate set of questions about our political realism, cultural relevance and moral worth as an academic and practitioner body. How political should we be? How closely involved should we become in agitating, campaigning and organizing to moderate or halt leisure forms and practices that are harmful to the common quality of life or result in premature and preventable death? I will return to these questions when I consider what I take to be the provisions of the Sao Paulo Declaration (1998) and World Charter on Leisure (2000) – still arguably the most complete documents with respect to the global role of the leisure professional in the twenty first century that we possess. But that is for later in the discussion.

What do I mean by the statement that the commercial re-distribution of harmful leisure commodities has reached an interesting juncture? I am referring to the business strategies of the leading Western tobacco companies, notably *Imperial Tobacco*, *British-American Tobacco* and *Phillip Morris*, to re-position their commodities in the global marketplace. At the heart of this is the planned, industrially organized popularization of cigarette consumption throughout the markets of the emerging and developing world. Currently, multiple, mutually reinforcing advertising and branding strategies are being intensively applied by dominant Western multinationals in Africa, South East Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, to persuade consumers that tobacco smoking tallies with personal sophistication, cultural achievement, weight loss and Western-style independence. In a word, smoking is being portrayed as a suitable leisure activity. Three sets of interrelated ethical and political problems are posed here. They have to do with (a) health risk, (b) environmental degradation and (c) the cost-balance ratio of inward investment strategies from the developing and emerging world.

a) Health Risk

To come first to the question of health risk: the World Health Organization (WHO) (2004) estimates that 5 million people die each year worldwide from tobacco-related diseases. Approximately 1.3 billion people smoke cigarettes, one billion of who are men. In developing

countries it is estimated that 50% of men and 9% of women are smokers, as against 35% of men and 22% of women in the developed world (MACKAY; ERIKSEN, 2002). During the 1990s, exports from the leading Anglo-American tobacco companies soared. According to the *Tobacco Control Country Profiles* (TCCP, 2003), in 1994, 220 billion US manufactured cigarettes were sold abroad, an increase of 55% since 1989. The Asian market has been particularly significant. During the years of the Reagan and Bush Presidencies the US government implemented section 302 of the 1974 Trade Act to threaten trade sanctions against Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and South Korea unless they eased regulations against the import of US cigarettes. Thailand eventually introduced a ban on cigarette advertising through the provision of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which ruled that health issues must take precedence over the liberalization of trade. This did not stop a dramatic increase in tobacco consumption. Between 1982-99 Thai imports of cigarettes rose from 31,000 to 40,000 tonnes. South Korea witnessed an increase of 68,000 to 101,000 tonnes over the same period (Food & Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2003).

Given the immense size of its population, a prime target market for Western manufacturers is China. It is estimated that 300 million people in China smoke. With 20% of the world's population, the country accounts for 25% of the world's entire cigarette consumption (Non Smokers' Movement of Australia (NSMA) (2004). Smokers in the USA consume 450 billion cigarettes a year, while those in China consume 177 trillion (Chelala 1999). In China 75% of men aged 30 years or older smoke and domestic cigarette production is greater than in any other country (NSMA, 2004).

The health risks associated with tobacco smoking are well documented and disputed by only a statistically insignificant number of physicians, scientists and politicians. The World Health Organization (2004) maintains that tobacco is the second major cause of death in the world. Approximately one in ten adults die from tobacco related diseases every year. If current smoking patterns continue, smoking will account for 10 million deaths per annum by 2020, of which three quarters are estimated to be concentrated in the developing world (MACKAY, ERIKSEN, 2002). 84% of all smokers live in the developing world. Half of all smokers, approximately 650 million people, will eventually die as a result of tobacco – a greater figure of preventable and premature deaths than is accounted for by AIDS, illegal drugs, road accidents, homicide and suicide combined.

China is estimated to suffer a million deaths per year through the effects of tobacco, a figure that is projected to double by 2025 (PETO; LOPEZ, 2004).

b) Environmental Degradation

Turning now to the environmental dimension of smoking, tobacco production is associated with deforestation and soil degradation. In poorer countries, regulations on tobacco advertising and tar levels tend to be significantly higher than in brands sold in the USA and Western Europe. More than 40 developing countries do not require health warnings to be printed on cigarette packs. Of those that do, 73% are ambiguously worded and frequently published in English rather than the local language (*Tobacco Warning Labels and Packaging Fact Sheet, 2000*). Singapore, Brazil, South Africa and Thailand are leaders in the developing world in applying comprehensive tobacco control laws covering bans on tobacco advertising, sponsorship, developing smoke-free public environments and implementing effective health education campaigns. However, they are exceptions to the rule. Tobacco production threatens water supplies since tobacco cultivation uses a lot of water and has pesticides applied to it (MADELEY, 1999). It also contributes to the physical pollution of the environment, although it has proved difficult to quantify by how much.

c) Economic Cost-Benefit Ratio

Moving on now to the cost-benefit ratio associated with the developing and emerging world's support for tobacco production, in 2002 the three largest tobacco multinationals – *Japan Tobacco, Philip Morris/Altira* and *British American Tobacco* – had combined trade revenues of US \$ 121 billion. To put this into context, the World Health Organization estimates that this sum is greater than the combined GDP of 27 developing countries (WHO, 2004, p. 6). Not surprisingly, the leading Western tobacco companies constitute a significant interest group, influencing national and international policy on aid, debt relief and international treaties on the regulation of tobacco use. In 2003, the 171 nations comprising the *World Health Organization* approved an historical Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. This applied a ban on global tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The tobacco industry lobby, especially the *Philip Morris Corporation*, in the USA successfully delayed ratification by the American government and supported it with a donation of \$57,764 to the Republican Party. Under American pressure, restrictions on cigarette

advertising were eased, a pro-tax element for non-smokers was abandoned and the ban on descriptive terms like 'low tar', 'light' and 'mild', was relinquished. It should be noted here that tobacco companies have provided a major source of campaign funds for George W. Bush's Republican Party. Alterman and Green (2004, p. 123) report that in 1997, Republican candidates and committees received \$20.2 million, or 81 % of the tobacco industry's contributions.

With respect to investment in the developing world, tobacco companies have enjoyed high levels of success in stapling aid and relief packages to developing countries with friendly policies in respect of Western investment in tobacco production. Investing in tobacco production has been presented as creating jobs, boosting revenues and expanding exports and foreign exchange. The health costs of tobacco related illnesses and premature death have been systematically under played. The cost-balance ratio of tobacco production is subtly engineered to favour the interests of Western investors. Inward investment of seed, tools, curing barns and delivery systems is offset by a system of nuanced loans to small farmers for fertiliser and insecticides. The result is that local tobacco producers are trapped in a cycle of debt that makes them vulnerable to the initiatives and imperatives of Western tobacco companies. The *World Health Organization* has alleged that tobacco multinationals routinely engage in price fixing and credit busting for producers that refuse to comply with the tobacco cartel (WHO, 2004, p. 4).

The conclusions are inescapable. In the last two decades, Western tobacco multinationals have identified developing and emerging markets as a primary investment and marketing opportunity. They have sought to maximize margins by concentrating in markets where anti-smoking lobbies are weak, the history of litigation against tobacco companies is negligible, public health education programmes are inadequate and the popular cultural association between smoking and Western status is strong. They have exploited the image of tobacco as a sign of maturity, sophistication and choice in lifestyle and leisure. Advertising of cigarettes often develops this in very crude ways. For example, in Africa brand names include *Diplomat* (Ghana), *High Society* (Nigeria), *Sportsman* and *Champion* (Kenya) (Maxwell Report, 1997). In the developed countries this type of one-sided brand identification would be challenged and almost certainly prohibited. To put it bluntly, since the 1960s Western tobacco multinationals have defined the developing and emerging world as a soft market. Why?

The developed countries do not any longer constitute an attractive market for tobacco corporations. According to Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) (2004) demand is projected to fall for the foreseeable future. In 2010 the consumption of tobacco tonnage is predicted to be 10% lower than the 1998 figure. In contrast, consumption in the developing and emerging economies is anticipated to increase to 5.09 million tonnes – a 1.7% growth rate between 1998 and 2010. Some 80% of this increase in demand is projected for the Asian market, especially China.

The representation and theming of smoking as a leisure pursuit in developed Western economies has changed dramatically in the last forty years. There is nothing new in this.

Jason Hughes's (2003) illuminating and valuable study reveals the astonishing historical range of representations and symbols associated with smoking. For example, historically speaking, it was linked with high fashion, modernity, science, sexuality, cultural advancement and cool. Incredibly, it was also popularly believed to have medicinal value. At various times it was presented as a cure for both the plague and cancer, on the grounds that smoke must 'obviously' blast away all harmful deposits and residues in the body caused by other aspects of diet, stress and urban-industrial existence.

Yet from its introduction to Europe from the New World, smoking had its share of vociferous detractors. In England, in 1604, King James 1 published a treatise against smoking entitled *A Counterblast To Tobacco*. In the same century, Michael Feodovich, the first Romanov Czar, declared smoking to be a deadly sin, and worked up a variety of punishments for the possession of tobacco. During the same period, Pope Clement VIII advocated excommunication as a punishment for anyone found smoking in a holy place. However, these measures fell on stony ground.

By the early twentieth century, smoking rivalled only alcohol consumption as a popular leisure pursuit in the Western economies. There were many reasons for this. Smoking constituted a form of popular conspicuous consumption, in Veblen's (1899) sense of the term, since it was cheap, and therefore available to the masses, as well as the privileged leisure class. In a nutshell, it made a social and cultural virtue out of waste that was affordable to the non-leisure class. This signified social standing and cultural distinction by demonstrating individual freedom, from having to scrimp and save. More often than not this was a symbolic freedom. Smoking was a way of representing and theming status distinction. If you were wealthy enough to burn your money away by inhaling

tobacco smoke it provided transparent evidence that you were a person of substance, a man or woman to be reckoned with, or at least were well on the road to being regarded as such.

Smoking was also associated with quantifiable physical and psychological effects such as easing nervous tension, managing irritability and impatience, assisting contemplation, easing discussion and managing stress. It was not commonly associated with a risk to health and was therefore taken up and practised by millions as a positive leisure pursuit.

It was not until the *US Surgeon General's Report* in 1964, that the health risks associated with this pastime were popularly appreciated.³ This document established irrefutable links between tobacco smoking and many avoidable diseases, such as lung cancer, cardio-vascular degeneration and respiratory disease. Anti-smoking campaigners seized upon this to call for a ban on smoking. Gradually, the status of smoking was redefined, although looking back the process was remarkably gradual and uneven.

In the USA the *Federal Cigarette Labelling and Advertising Act* (1965) required manufacturers to print health warnings on cigarette packets. In the same year, the UK outlawed cigarette advertising on television. In 1970, the USA followed suit. In 1971 the UK government negotiated a voluntary agreement for tobacco companies to print health warnings on cigarette packets. The anti-smoking and health lobby turned their attention to banning smoking in public places. In 1973 US federal law introduced mandatory non-smoking compartments on domestic flights. In 1987, the law was extended to apply a total smoking ban on flights of less than two hours. In 1990 the US went further by banning tobacco smoking on inter-state buses and all domestic flights with a duration of less than six hours.

In 1992 the US Supreme Court made the historic ruling that warning labels on cigarette packets do not protect US companies from lawsuits. In 1999 the UK hospitality industry introduced a Voluntary Charter on Smoking in Public Places that advised pubs and restaurants to introduce signs informing staff and customers of the health risks associated with smoking. There have been many high profile, costly and successful legal actions brought against tobacco companies by victims of smoking related diseases in the West. In 2000 a US jury awarded damages of nearly \$145 billion against five US tobacco companies after a class action in the state of Florida. In 2003 the advertising and promotion of tobacco smoking was banned in the UK. New York followed

³ The US Surgeon General's Report was preceded by a Report from the *Royal College of Physicians* (1962), which drew broadly similar conclusions.

California and Delaware in introducing a state-wide ban on smoking in public places. Ireland took the same action in 2004. The UK government announced similar plans for a ban on smoking in pubs, cafes and restaurants to be implemented in England and Wales in 2009.

The reason for this dramatic and unambiguous public stigmatization of a long-standing, popular leisure pursuit in Western countries has to do with the repudiation of the libertarian argument in favour of smoking. After health risks were unequivocally established in 1964, the libertarian response was that the practice must therefore be redefined as a matter of personal conscience. If individuals chose to put their medium or long term health in jeopardy by smoking it was up to them.

This may be read as an expression of the old functionalist argument in Leisure Studies that leisure practice is a matter of individual choice, freedom and self determination so long as its consequences do not hazard the well-being of others (Parker 1981). The basic idea is not new. In the industrial era it goes back to J.S.Mill's (1859) famous defence of liberty that individuals are free to pursue their own wants, desires and interests so long as they do not impinge upon those of others.

In the 1980s and 1990s tobacco companies responded to this argument by dramatically increasing the number of brands, promoting filter and tar reduced cigarettes, thus suggesting that some products were 'healthier' than others (Glanz et al 1996:30). This was pursued in the name of extending consumer choice. Enlarging the range of brands was portrayed as contributing to the *individualization* of consumer culture. By extending choice, the tobacco companies argued that they enhanced the freedom of consumers to manage the health risks associated with consuming the product.

Secondary Smoking

In the West, it is precisely this libertarian principle that has now ceased to be tenable with respect to smoking. For medical research and public health policy in the 1990s, and the new century, has established a causal link between secondary smoking, illness and premature death. This took time to develop among researchers and medical practitioners. A causal connection between secondary smoking and preventable illness and premature death had been mooted as early as the 1970s. However, the evidence was inconclusive (JACKSON, 1994). As the 1980s unfolded a variety of studies researching the health hazards of passive smoking were published (ERIKSEN et

al, 1988). In Medical and Public Health circles, by the 1990s it was no longer a question of smokers dicing with only their lives. It was now an issue of being responsible for threatening the wellbeing of the Other: the well-being of non-smoking partners, children, work-mates, consumers and other social categories are imperilled by the smoker's habit.

The age of 'live and let live' with respect to smoking has passed. It is now popularly recognized that what the smoker does can damage the interests of others by causing preventable illness and premature death. At the same time, parallel research into the public costs of smoking related illness through hospitalization and days off work firmly embedded the practice as a health hazard in popular opinion. This is why it is now being discouraged by public health professionals and governments and the law is being extended and applied to ban it in public places such as work settings, restaurants, cafes and bars.

The adverse legal, political and public opinion conditions that apply to cigarette smoking in the West have forced tobacco companies to adopt a defensive management strategy in this territory and look for investment opportunities elsewhere. The emerging and developing world has been identified as an economically attractive and politically and culturally soft substitute. The ways in which the tobacco companies have sought to reposition a leisure practice that is now labelled as dangerous in the West in these markets are clever, but I think, morally reprehensible. The tobacco companies deny that they target women and children in the developing world as primary markets. But the ways in which their advertising and marketing departments link glamour, power and freedom with cigarettes makes these groups vulnerable.

At the 12th World Conference on Tobacco and Health in 2003, significantly increased smoking rates were reported among women in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Malaysia. Girls aged 15 and 16 are more likely to smoke than boys in Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Slovenia and the UK (www.womensnews.org). Promotional strategies associate smoking with cultural sophistication, weight-control and Western styles of freedom to chose. Smoking is portrayed as an extension of choice, flexibility and freedom. Since smoking is globally more common among men than women to the tune of 47% of all men smoking compared with 12% of women, the decision to smoke for women is celebrated by tobacco companies as a statement of female empowerment.

The web-site of the Women's Health Project in Johannesburg, South Africa (2003) highlights the advertising campaign for *Winston* cigarettes. The billboards show a young, attractive blonde woman sitting on a park bench holding a cigarette in her hand with the message: 'Do I look like I would cook you breakfast?' The message operates through connotation, but it is perfectly plain. Smoking is connected with escape from the world of female submissiveness and male domination. It castigates male domination and celebrates female emancipation. Yet this celebration cannot be concerned with human rights, since the balance of medical opinion strongly suggests that the well-established consequence of smoking is appreciably increased risk of preventable illness and premature death. The connotation with choice and freedom must therefore be spurious since the medically well documented effect of smoking is to damage health, but at the level of the individual and the community. So what is going on here?

British American Tobacco On Line Company Report 2004 (www.bat.com)

I think it is worthwhile to get deeper into the business strategy and marketing initiatives of the tobacco companies in peddling the message to the emerging and developing markets that smoking is good for you. Because that is what these strategies and initiatives are designed to do: they aim to negate or obfuscate the influence of medical and campaigning groups who identify smoking with illness and premature death, and redefine it with a positive, feel-good message that privileges cultural connotation over physical risks to the body. The health issues for the smoker and others are under-stated in favour of cultural connotations that associate smoking with individualism, freedom, power and achievement. Consider the British-American Tobacco website, a representative example of the business genre that tobacco corporations wish to present to the world today (www.bat.com).

Paul Adams, the Chief Executive, begins the on-line company report for 2004 with the banner headline of spectacular economic growth. The company achieved 29% growth per annum in the five years prior to the end of 2004, compared with an average minus 3% loss in the *Financial Times Share Index*. The company mission statement is organized around three central pillars 1) to grow the business; 2) to improve the quality of the product and 3) to embed principles of corporate social responsibility throughout the business and its markets. The phrase *corporate social*

responsibility is particularly significant and I shall come back to investigate it more closely presently.

Adams's report concedes that British-American Tobacco products constitute a health risk and that trading in them can be seen as controversial. Against this, he notes that tobacco products remain legal. The business strategy is to increase profit margins by improving productivity and increasing market share, not encouraging growth in the number of global smokers. In support of this, Adams points out that the number of global smokers has remained static at about one billion for some time.

But this is misleading. The question is not the size of the total number of smokers in the world, it is rather the *distribution* of smokers between the developed world and the rest. Knowledge about health risks related to smoking and the anti-smoking movement is most advanced in the West. As a result, the market for British-American Tobacco in these countries has been diminishing for some time. In 2004 British-American tobacco sales contracted in Germany, France, Canada and Japan; but this was offset by strong performance from Russia, India and Pakistan. China is identified as an attractive market for investment, because the country already accounts for one third of all tobacco sales. It is in the emerging and developing markets that rapid growth is underway. It is also here where the line between consumer choice and the effects of corporate promotion is hazy.

Adams submits that growth is achieved by offering consumers high quality products and choice. But in the emerging and developing markets the choice to smoke is firmly associated with the acquisition and demonstration of status. Through branding, marketing and advertising, tobacco companies seek to consolidate this connection. Smoking is linked with freedom and maturity, which in turn, problematizes the issue of personal choice.

At one point in his on-line report, Adams submits that the growth in the numbers of smokers in emerging and developing markets is evidence of social and economic progress. As an economy develops, he argues, consumers trade-up for quality goods. Increasing the numbers of consumers who smoke quality brands is therefore presented as evidence of personal, social and economic advancement. Adams presents British-American Tobacco as adding value to consumers. When British-American Tobacco began to focus on markets in China, India, Pakistan, Russia and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, millions of consumers were already smoking. The other side of the case, namely that smoking constitutes a drain on state expenditure because of public expenditure on

health care for smoking-related illness and the depletion of the environment, is not made. By offering quality brands manufactured and sold in an ethos of *corporate social responsibility*, Adams positions his company as improving the quality of life in emerging and developing markets. But what is corporate social responsibility?

Corporate Social Responsibility and Neat Capitalism

Neat capitalism is an approach that recognizes that social responsibility and environmental awareness are central to progressive business practice. Tom Frank (1997) traces the emergence of this shift in the structure of capitalism back to the 1960s counter culture.

Under pressure from consumers seeking more accountability, transparency, distributive justice and informality from corporations, capitalism began to restructure its relationship with consumer culture. Marketing and advertising departments started to re-gear their business to recognize the demands of consumers for enlarged corporate awareness about inequality, environmental risks, social justice and empowerment.

Of course, capitalist corporations had always cultivated a philanthropic side to their operations. In the late eighteenth century in Britain, Robert Owen developed the New Lanark community in Scotland which was regarded as a model of employer-worker relations. Cadbury's developed Bourneville in Birmingham (1895) and William Lever, Port Sunlight (1888) in the North West of England, as model housing estates for workers. Henry T. Ford employed 'social workers' to monitor the patterns of consumption among his workforce and indeed, the system of industrial management known as Fordism assumed that employers recognized a responsibility to regulate standards of consumption (and therefore leisure) as well as plan and maintain the production process. But none of this was based in an equal partnership with the consumer. Instead it sought to offer a sort of *consumer pedagogy* to consumers. By investing in good works and worthy causes, capitalist corporations aimed to proselytize their commitment to standards of good practice and encouraged consumers to emulate them. One might even see this form of consumer pedagogy as part of a contribution on behalf of big business to *civilize* the consumer, but always finally, according to the narrow criteria controlled and implemented by the corporation.

The business form of neat capitalism that emerged in the 1960s was quite different. It was based in listening to consumers and learning from them. Strictly speaking the partnership was not

equal since corporations held economic assets, power over cultural production and political influence that consumers could not hope to match. Conversely, consumers had significant cultural power in exposing the deficiencies and limitations of the traditional model of capitalism, and turning them into public issues. Neat capitalist corporations began to identify a range of organizational responsibilities that extended beyond achieving an acceptable rate of return for shareholders. These had to do with improving the environment, raising consciousness about health risks, producing adequate standards of employment, involvement in campaigns against world hunger, disaster relief and reducing needless bureaucracy and red tape. Corporations like *Virgin*, *the Body Shop*, *Routledge* and *Apple* positioned themselves in the market as 'big citizens'. They often turned to charismatic business owners or chief executives to function as the public face of the corporation. So Steve Jobs is the 'face' of Apple-Macintosh; Anita Roddick is the embodiment of the business values of *the Body Shop*; and Sir Richard Branson is the public face of the *Virgin* group of companies. This contrasted sharply with the traditional business culture of capitalist corporations organized around suits, hierarchy, officiousness and impersonality.

It also paid business dividends. Neat capitalist companies often achieved spectacular rates of economic growth. Richard Branson's *Virgin* group began from a first floor record shop selling cut price records above a shoe shop in central London in the early 1970s, to a multi-national empire which by 2005 consisted of over 200 companies, with businesses in leisure retailing, soft drinks, air travel, music recording, personal investment packages, mobile phones and insurance. As a result, traditional corporations began to re-engineer their businesses to adopt the rhetoric and some of the business practices of neat capitalist corporations.

But what do you do if you are the Chief Executive of a leisure corporation that produces commodities for a global market which scientific research has identified as causing preventable illness and premature death? This was the dilemma for the major tobacco companies in the 1990s. They developed a philosophy of corporate social responsibility that accepted the health and premature mortality risks involved with consumption of their products, but defended the sovereignty of consumer choice and recognized a variety of corporate responsibilities with respect to society and the environment. In the case of *British American Tobacco* these responsibilities were developed along eight distinct fronts of action: youth smoking prevention; sustainable development;

environment, health and safety; responsible tobacco production; biodiversity; eliminating child labour; enhancing the community; and supporting globalization and business integrity.

It would be wrong to attribute bad faith or cynicism to the principle of corporate social responsibility. It is better than doing nothing. But it should not be used to whitewash the risks to health and the environment associated with cigarettes. British-American Tobacco is typical of leading Western tobacco companies in piously noting the risks, but countering them with the arguments that a) tobacco smoking is legal and b) consumer sovereignty and choice are impregnable. Knowledge about the hazards of secondary smoking now make each of these arguments harder to apply in Western markets. Successive Western states have recognized the legality of smoking but taken steps to unequivocally state the risks to health and banish smoking from public places. To justify the intensification of the business activities of the tobacco companies in the emerging and developing markets, in the context of the general and unambivalent public reaction against smoking in the West, is a somewhat generous application of the term 'corporate social responsibility'. Clearly, the tobacco companies have turned to these new markets because the culture of trading conditions in their staple markets has been adversely affected by anti-smoking and public health campaigns. New and emerging markets offer a more attractive base for the exploitation and development of the business. As leisure professionals, where should we stand on this question? What ethical issues does it raise?

The Ethical Implications

In the social sciences a dualistic model of academic and professional ethics has emerged. This is sometimes referred to in terms of Gramsci's distinction between 'organic and traditional intellectuals' (GRAMSCI, 1971) or Bauman's (1987) differentiation between interpreters and legislators. Briefly, an organic intellectual regards his or her labour as possessing an indispensable political dimension. The point of intellectual labour is to engage with the latest ideas in a field and convey them to the masses in order to support progressive social and economic change. In contrast, the traditional intellectual is presented as following an apolitical ethic and regards himself or herself to be devoted to the disinterested (in a political sense), accumulation of 'objective' knowledge.

Bauman's distinction is slightly different. He argues that intellectual labourers fall into two camps: interpreters study data and human relations with a view to clarifying operational principles

and the consequences of behaviour; legislators, relate to data and human relations as a resource to generate strategies and policies designed to implement progressive social change. The distinction turns on the political involvement of intellectual labourers in so far as interpreters do not see it as their business to try to transform society in accordance with a set of ethical, social and political values, while legislators take the contrary view.

As leisure professionals we have not had a major debate in our field about the political character and obligations of our activities. Most leisure professionals are probably closer to the traditional/interpreter model than the organic/legislator one. This is certainly the case in North America where a neo-libertarian, value free ethic of research and practice is especially strong (EDINGTON; DEGRAAF; DIESER; EDINGTON, 2006). True, leisure professionals are enormously active throughout the world at local and national levels in confronting threats to leisure time and space (DE GRAAF, JORDAN, 2003; DE GRAAF, 2004; GLOVER, 2004). This is valuable work that has improved the quality of life of individuals and communities. Importantly, it has revealed the significance of leisure practice in the development of social capital, which has social consequences for the enhancement of community, and important fiscal implications by transferring burdens on the public purse to the area of voluntary labour. David Putnam (2000, p. 410), the chief architect of the concept of social capital, has explicitly acknowledged the significance of leisure in enhancing social integration, reinforcing community engagement and making a contribution to the economy.

But while it would be easy to under-estimate the significance of these activities, they do not constitute what might be called, an active, material force against the negative effects of global capitalism. The consequences of preserving a neighbourhood park from urban planners may be appreciated and revered by members of the neighbourhood. But capitalism is a global system. The leading corporations now treat the world as their 'domestic' market. Strategy, policy, management and resource allocation reflects the global character of the business.

If the reaction of leisure professionals to the global operation of capitalism is not to end in a battle between David and Goliath, it requires organized global co-operation and agitation. This requires the systematic, continuous, purposive international organization of leisure professionals.

Leisure Educators and Advocacy

True, the World Leisure Organization (WLO) constitutes an international nongovernment organization that contributes a global position on behalf of the community of leisure professionals. It has made a difference in many international issues ranging from heritage preservation, environmental protection, the exchange and communication of leisure resources, leisure policy and promoting the value of leisure in health and citizenship. In addition, the WLO organizes international conferences, expositions and symposia that foster the global exchange of ideas and information. This level of articulation is essential if leisure professionals are to seriously engage with the global dimension of capitalism. However, the WLO is a broad church. It is tricky to identify a coherent operational form of effective politics in its various activities. In addition, it is often difficult to envisage how central policies have any teeth to turn their aspirations into accomplishments.

The primary expressions of the political role of the world leisure community are the *Sao Paulo Declaration* (1998) and the *World Charter of Leisure* (2000). Among other things, following Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they submit that all people have a basic human right to leisure. They commit leisure professionals to persuade governments to create barrier free environments to express, share and celebrate leisure; promote leisure activities that enhance the quality of life; extend leisure provision for all; widen access to all forms of leisure resources; and encourage educational institutions to recognize the nature and importance of leisure for lifestyle and community well-being.

These are worthwhile, humanistic goals to which scarcely any leisure professional would object. But it is precisely the generality of means and ends specified in each document that weakens their force at the global level. Globalization creates many opportunities for leisure professionals, but it also raises many thorny questions. For example, Article 3 of the Sao Paulo Declaration encourages the development of 'barrier free environments' in expressing, sharing and celebrating leisure. Who can possibly disagree with this? One interest group that has shown itself averse to the notion of creating 'barrier free environments' for leisure practice is the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). This organization is in the midst of waging a series of high profile law suits against consumers who have been alleged to illegally download intellectual property from the internet. Illegal downloading has reduced the profit margins of the leading music

industry multinationals and contributed to the death of the singles market. It also threatens the legal markets for other forms of intellectual property such as literature, journals material and film. Where should leisure professionals stand on this issue? Viewed from one perspective, downloading intellectual property from the internet is simply maximizing the functionality of the computer/web interface. It is particularly valuable in widening access to leisure resources in emerging and developing markets. Yet the practice is illegal and is damaging the legitimate business of music industry multinationals and other businesses that trade in intellectual property. Should leisure professionals come down on the side of the copyright holders who assert ownership and therefore control over intellectual property? Or should they support illegal downloaders who point to the super profits of multinationals that trade in intellectual property and support access for all (GOLDSTEIN, 2004; ROJEK, 2005; 2006)?

Similarly, Article 2 of the World Charter states that ‘provision of leisure for the quality of life are as important as those for health and education.’ The World Leisure Organization supports the World Health Organization in its global campaign to educate populations about the health and environmental risks of smoking. But what should leisure professionals do, especially with respect to the business practices of the leading tobacco corporations in the emerging and developing markets?

As with all political documents that outline general principles of conduct and policy goals, in the Sao Paulo Declaration and the World Organization Charter for Leisure, the devil is in the detail. The scandal of Western tobacco corporation’s business strategy and policy in the developing and emerging world confronts leisure professionals with a series of eminently practical questions. Faced with the scientific evidence on the consumption of cigarettes, should leisure professionals organize and agitate internationally to stop premature illness and preventable death? Is a space emerging for the development of international nongovernment bodies within the leisure community to focus on specific issues relating to leisure, health, risk and the environment that supplement the operations of the WLO by taking direct and concrete action against forms of leisure that are harmful? Of course, nongovernmental anti-smoking organizations, such as the Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), play a significant role in popularizing awareness of the link between tobacco smoking and preventable illness and premature death. But historically and practically, smoking is located in our field: the field of leisure forms and practice. The time has come for us as a

professional body to develop global strategies and policies on leisure, health, risk and the environment. But this must be part of a wider debate, which is urgently needed, to clarify the issues and balance between traditional and organic intellectuals, interpreters and legislators in our field.

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