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Why Women and Girls Use Tobacco

6. The Marketing of Tobacco to Women: Global Perspectives

Introduction

Women smokers are likely to increase as a percentage of the total. Women are adopting more dominant roles in society: they have increased spending power, they live longer than men. And as a recent official report showed, they seem to be less influenced by the anti-smoking campaigns than their male counterparts. All in all, that makes women a prime target. So, despite previous hesitancy, might we now expect to see a more defined attack on the important market segment represented by female smokers?¹ Selling tobacco products to women is currently the largest product-marketing opportunity in the world. While marketing tobacco to women in the developing world is a relatively recent phenomenon, the industry benefits from 80 years of experience in enticing women in industrialized countries to smoke. Themes of body image, fashion, and independence resound in marketing strategies and popular media. The tactics used in marketing tobacco in the United States and other industrialized nations now threaten women in the developing world.

This chapter reviews the history of the marketing of tobacco to women in the United States, describes current US and Asian marketing strategies, outlines the changing roles of women in the Asia region as reflected in marketing, reviews research on how marketing affects tobacco use, and presents recommendations for action. The evidence presented highlights the importance of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) as the leading normative instrument in the effort to reduce the harm from tobacco use among women. In Article 13, *Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship*, the WHO FCTC mandates Parties to undertake a comprehensive ban or, in cases of constitutional limitations, a restriction of all tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Article 5.3, *General obligations*, directs Parties to protect tobacco control policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry.

Marketing Tobacco to Women in the United States

The rich history of the tobacco industry's targeted marketing to women in the United States provides insight into current and future industry marketing tactics in other parts of the world. At the beginning of the present century, the industry faced formidable odds, as few women smoked. Those who did were labelled "defiant" or "emancipated". The Lorillard Company first used images of women smoking in its 1919 advertisements to promote the Murad and Helman brands, but public outcry ensued. In 1926, however, Chesterfield entered the women's market with billboards showing a woman asking a male smoker to "Blow Some My Way" and achieved a 40% increase in sales over two years.²

Links to fashion and slimness soon followed. In 1927, Marlboro premiered its "Mild as May" campaign in the sophisticated fashion magazine *Le Bon Ton*, and in 1928, Lucky Strike launched a campaign to get women to "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet".³ These ads featured copy that directly associated smoking with being thin: "Light a Lucky and you'll never miss sweets that make you fat" and "AVOID that future shadow, when tempted. Reach for a Lucky", accompanied by a silhouette of a woman with a grossly exaggerated double chin. Another ad showing a slim woman's body and then an obese woman's shadow said, "Is this you five years from now? When tempted to over-indulge, reach for a Lucky instead. It's toasted".

Marketing Lucky Strikes as a weight-reduction product increased sales by over 300% in the first year and eventually moved the brand's rank from third to first.⁴ Actresses and opera stars were hired to promote Lucky Strikes, and American Tobacco paid debutantes and models to smoke in public.³ American Tobacco's public relations specialist, Edward Bernays, worked with fashion magazines to feature photographs of ultra-slim Paris models wearing the latest fashions. He also convinced the fashion industry to choose green, the colour of the Lucky Strike package, as fashion colour of the year.⁵ An American Tobacco executive likened the women's market to "opening a gold mine right in our front yard".⁵

By the end of the 1920s, cigarette ads regularly featured women with their new "symbols of freedom". Cigarette ads appeared in women's fashion magazines, including

Vogue, *Vanity Fair*, and *Harper's Bazaar*.⁶ The new era of targeted marketing of tobacco to women was under way.

The late 1960s and early 1970s brought further development of women's brands. Philip Morris launched Virginia Slims with the biggest marketing campaign in company history, "You've come a long way, baby".⁷ Its advertising stressed themes of glamour, thinness, and independence. In 1970, Brown & Williamson premiered the fashion cigarette Flair, and Liggett & Myers introduced Eve.

Since that time, other niche brands have appeared, yet women's brands account for only 5% to 10% of the cigarette market.⁸ The majority of women smokers (women represent 50% of the market share) smoke gender-neutral brands such as Marlboro and Camel. To understand how the tobacco industry markets its products to women, it is necessary to look at the components of modern-day marketing and their individual and synchronistic functions.

Components of Modern Marketing

Tobacco companies market their products to women as a segment of an overall marketing strategy. The women's market is further segmented by specific subgroup characteristics, as this quote from an American Tobacco Company document reveals:

*There is significant opportunity to segment the female market on the basis of current values, age, lifestyles and preferred length and circumference of products. This assignment should consider a more contemporary and relevant lifestyle approach targeted toward young adult female smokers.*⁹

Modern marketing strives to attach symbolic meaning to specific tobacco brands by carefully manipulating the brand name, packaging, advertising, promotion, sponsorship, and placement in popular culture. The purpose of tobacco marketing is to associate its product with psychological and social needs that the consumer wants to fulfil, some of which emanate from the restructuring of social reality that advertising itself provides. Marketing is more successful when its components work in a synchronized fashion, surrounding the target consumers with stimuli from multiple sources.

Brand Name and Packaging

Cigarette brands project distinctive identities.¹⁰ The attraction of a particular brand of cigarettes is affected by its name, logo, and package colours, because they signal an overall image that cues the attitude of potential customers towards the product.¹¹⁻¹³ Brands may use the image to attract women to particular features (e.g. "Slims" to weight control) or to negate negative feelings such as smoking being inappropriate for women (e.g. "Eve").¹⁴ Brand identity may be particularly important, because women make 80% of the purchasing decisions in the general marketplace.¹⁵

Tobacco has been called the ultimate "badge product", because it is like a name badge that sends a message every time it is seen.¹⁶ It is used many times a day, frequently in social settings. Its package design and brand are visible every time it is used, conveying a particular image. This visual image is enough to stimulate purchase of a brand without recalling its name.¹⁷ Packaging affects consumer attitude to a product and influences brand choice.^{18,19} The colour and graphics of the package transfer attributes they symbolize to the product. Blue and white are often used for health products because they send a signal of cleanness and purity.¹⁸ Red is a popular colour for tobacco packaging because it connotes excitement, passion, strength, wealth, and power.^{19,20} Red also aids recall of a product.^{12,13}

Other colours frequently used in tobacco packaging send different signals,^{19, 20} as shown below:

| | | |
|--------|----------|--|
| Blue | Light: | calm, coolness, insecurity |
| | Intense: | loyalty, honesty, royalty, restlessness |
| | Dark: | tranquillity |
| Green | | coolness, restlessness, nature, cleanliness, youth |
| Purple | Light: | femininity, freshness, springtime |
| | Dark: | wealth, elegance, serenity |
| Pink | | femininity, innocence, relaxation |
| Orange | | warmth, fame, friendliness, security, appetite stimulation |
| Yellow | Light: | freshness, intelligence |
| | Bright: | optimism, sunshine |
| | Gold: | wealth, esteem, status |

Packaging works most effectively when its symbolic signals (attributes) match the brand's positioning (the image created for the target audience) and are carried through in advertising and promotions.^{18,19} When the copy and colour attributes appear in advertisements, they act as stimuli to enhance recall and retention of the brand.¹²

Advertising

Tobacco advertisements are commercial messages that appear in print, on radio or television, and on outdoor signs (in countries that do not restrict them). In 1996, the tobacco industry spent US\$ 578 million in the United States to advertise cigarettes, 11% of total advertising and promotion expenditures in the country.²⁰ Advertising serves several purposes. It builds a brand's image and raises awareness of it.¹⁷ Advertising preconditions the consumer to buy, formulating the attitudes needed for considering a purchase. An attitude about a brand has two parts: a cognitive or logical component that holds beliefs about the benefit of the product, and an affective component in which emotions energize behaviour.

Products project a psychological and social meaning to the consumer who buys them.²¹ Smokers and potential smokers who identify with the projected images may purchase the brand as a means of "adopting" the behaviours or attributes portrayed in the ads.²² Themes such as glamour, romance, and independence appeal to buyers' self-image and may affect their structuring of social reality. When a role, such as smoking, is new to consumers, they may rely on the social meaning of the product portrayed in advertising to guide how it is used. Brand images may appeal to the socially insecure by appearing to pose solutions to identity problems.^{10,23} Viewing ads that feature attractive models and elegant surroundings may generate pressure to conform to the lifestyle portrayed.²⁴

In addition to attracting new purchasers, advertising is used to reduce fears about smoking and to encourage brand loyalty. It attempts to reduce health fears by presenting figures on lower nicotine and tar content of particular brands, with the implication that these brands are better for health. In fact, the industry has aimed low-tar brands at women, because its research shows that women are generally more concerned with health issues than men are.²⁵ Positive imagery (e.g. dazzling blue skies and white-capped mountains, models engaged in sporting

pursuits) is commonly used in advertised messages. Such advertising also attracts repeat purchasers, reinforcing preferences so that brand switching is less likely.^{26,27}

Examples of Cigarette Advertising

Cigarette brands targeted to women project themes of thinness, style, glamour, sophistication, sexual attractiveness, social inclusion, athleticism, liberation, freedom, and independence. Advertisements for Capri cigarettes (Brown & Williamson) use the slogan, "She's gone to Capri and she's not coming back". The ads, set in a romantic island scene, feature thin models in glamorous or romantic poses, usually holding the ultra-slim cigarette.

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Virginia Slims (Philip Morris) has used various themes. "You've come a long way, baby" often portrays scenes from women's advances in society or shows a woman taking a dominant role with a man. Glamour and business appeal are used to advertise Virginia Slims clothing and calendar promotions. Misty (American Tobacco Company), advertised heavily in women's magazines, uses "slim 'n sassy's slim price too" copy. Attractive women hold the slim cigarette. Gender-neutral brands such as Merit (Philip Morris) have featured couples. Marlboro (Philip Morris) has its quintessential Marlboro Man cowboy, who exudes independence, freedom, and strength. It also uses peaceful outdoor scenes shot in open surroundings. Strong colours such as red and deep blue are used in the ads that encourage one to "Come to Marlboro country".

Some brands have focused on the product itself, such as Winston's (R. J. Reynolds) ads that proclaim "No additives, no bull". Carlton (Brown & Williamson) makes

the claim that “Carlton is lowest” in tar and nicotine, using blue and white colour schemes. Menthol brands such as Kool (Brown & Williamson) and Newport (Lorillard) use blues and greens to signify coolness and healthfulness, often showing activities near water. Discount brands such as Basic (Philip Morris), Doral (R. J. Reynolds), and GPC (Brown & Williamson) frequently appear in women’s magazines, touting their reasonable cost and simple features. Ads for Basic have also shown how their product fits in: “Your basic 3-piece suit”. Camel (R. J. Reynolds) was known for the funky cartoon character, Joe Camel, who was shown as the life of the party in bars—“Joe’s Place”—or the man-about-town. For a brief period in 1994, R. J. Reynolds introduced Josephine Camel and her female friends, noting that “There’s something for everyone at Joe’s Place”. Joe Camel was withdrawn from Camel ads by Reynolds in 1997 because of a pending lawsuit after years of protest from medical, legislative, and public-interest groups about using a cartoon character to market cigarettes.

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Advertising, then, uses factual material or suggestive imagery to influence attitudes and beliefs.²⁸ These attitudes and beliefs form the basis of consumer action, which takes place when a behavioural prompt, such as a product promotion, stimulates the consumer.²⁹ Advertising builds awareness, attitudes, and perceptions over the long term.

Promotions

Promotions aim for more-immediate action on the part of the consumer.³⁰ They can be quite varied and include coupons, multiple-pack discounts (“Buy two, get one free”), promotional allowances paid to retailers, point-of-sale displays, free samples, value-added promotions offering free merchandise such as lighters or clothing, endorsements, and placement in movies and television. In 2005, the tobacco industry in the United States spent US\$ 13.11 billion on advertising and promotions.²⁷

More than 40% of the total expenditures on advertising and promotions went to retailer promotional allowances, which pay retailers for stocking brands and devoting specific shelf space to them. Allowances also pay for cooperative advertising and cover the costs of retail/wholesale sales incentives. Point-of-sale promotions place cigarettes in convenient retail locations, such as at the ends of aisles or in displays at the checkout counter.

Promotions are used to convince consumers to try a product, build purchase volume, encourage brand switching, win customer loyalty, and enhance corporate image.^{3,26,28,31} Value-added promotions, which offer extra specialty items, stimulate short-term sales.²⁸ They also offer a promotion boost, however, since consumers wear or use the branded clothing or accessories, serving as free “walking billboards” for the companies. These items do not carry the health warnings required in advertisements.

Discount coupons may be especially effective for reaching women and young children, who may be sensitive to lower prices than men are.³² Jurisdictions that increase taxes on tobacco should expect to see the price increase offset somewhat by increases in discounts, as was reported in California and Arizona after their tax increases. The tobacco companies create databases when coupons or other promotions are redeemed by mail. These databases provide demographics used in further marketing. They are also used to alert tobacco users to take action when tobacco control policies are being voted upon. A newer promotional strategy, used by Philip Morris, is to offer discounts on non-tobacco items, such as food or drinks, with a tobacco purchase.³³ As policies restrict direct tobacco promotions further, there may be a proliferation of this alternative discount strategy.

Philip Morris, the manufacturer of Virginia Slims, the most successful women's brand, offers many promotions. For years, Philip Morris has offered a Virginia Slims annual engagement calendar, the Book of Days. Its V-wear catalogues offer clothing items such as blouses, coats, scarves, and accessories in exchange for proofs of purchase from packs of Virginia Slims cigarettes. Each of the catalogues has a theme (e.g. glamour) that is reflected in the catalogue copy, photographs, and print advertising. To obtain the items, one must amass large numbers of proofs of purchase. For example, a black coat lined in raspberry pink requires the purchase of 325 packs,³⁴ at a cost of US\$ 621, based on an average per-branded-pack cost of US\$ 1.91.³⁵ The theme is carried through in stores, where small plastic shopping baskets feature the ad for Virginia Slims, and plastic bags with the VS logo hold purchases. The fall 1998 catalogue carried a "Light up the night" theme for its clothing.

Misty Slims, an American Tobacco Company product, has offered clothing, lighters, and even a Rand McNally outlet-mall shopping guide. R. J. Reynolds' Camel Cash catalogues offer clothing, jewellery, lipstick holders, lighters, and other accessories. Philip Morris's Marlboro brand has a Marlboro Country Store catalogue and unique promotions, such as a seat on the "Marlboro Train" trip or a vacation at the "Marlboro Ranch". Philip Morris spent US\$ 200 million on its Marlboro Adventure Team catalogue.³¹ In addition to fashion, glamour, and adventure, tobacco company promotions feature themes of independence and liberty. Philip Morris once gave away playing cards featuring the Statue of Liberty, and Brown & Williamson sent its loyal customers crystal Christmas tree ornaments engraved with the Liberty Bell and the Brown & Williamson logo.

Tobacco companies use promotions to target women by carrying through the themes, colours, and packaging from the ads to the promotional items, reinforcing the image of the brand. While the tobacco industry also targets men with these strategies, women represent a special-interest group. The industry advertises and promotes its products to create primary demand for new users to try them; to reinforce purported tobacco benefits and maintain customers, to make the use of tobacco seem normal, to position products in prominent locations, to minimize the risks of use, and to achieve social legitimacy, and create goodwill.³⁶⁻³⁹

Sponsorships

Brand or corporate sponsorship of entertainment, sporting events, and organizations is the fastest-growing form of tobacco marketing. In 1995, tobacco companies spent about US\$ 139 million on sports and entertainment sponsorships in the United States.⁴⁰ Sponsorship allows a company to reach a niche market economically and embeds advertising within the event or organization by linking product attributes or images to it. For the cost of a 30-second Super Bowl commercial, a company that sponsors a NASCAR Winston Cup team receives more than 30 hours of television exposure.⁴¹

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Sponsorship creates prestige and credibility for tobacco brands through association with important events (e.g. fine arts performances or art exhibitions). Tobacco sponsorship may blunt criticism of the industry, socially legitimize smoking, create gratitude from recipient organizations, and produce allies or neutral feelings about tobacco industry practices.^{3,14,42,43} Tobacco companies use sponsorships as a platform for directing other marketing strategies, such as advertising and promotion.⁴¹ They have long been used to reach women.

Sponsorship of women's tennis is the classic example of such targeting. Women's tennis represents the independence, assertiveness, and success attributes sought by brands such as Virginia Slims or its British counterpart, Kim.¹⁴ From 1973 to 1994, Philip Morris sponsored the Virginia Slims professional tennis tour.⁴⁰ Television coverage and other media reports of the tournaments

helped promote the brand and its logo, and cigarette samples were given away at the entrances to matches.³ At a Wimbledon match, Martina Navratilova wore a tennis outfit that was made in the colours of Kim packaging and included the Kim logo.⁴⁴

Philip Morris ended its US\$ 5 million per year sponsorship of the tour in 1995. The company replaced it with a US\$ 3 million per year Virginia Slims Legends Tour, intended to reach older women. The tour included a six-site tournament of former tennis greats, including Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, and Martina Navratilova. It also presented a concert featuring female singers, including Barbara Mandrell and Gladys Knight.^{40,45}

While many assume that car racing is of primary interest to men, a recent study estimated that children 12 to 17 years of age make up 14% of the audience at these events, and more than 25% of children 12 to 17 years of age watched auto racing on television in 1996.

Links to the fashion industry appear in sponsorships as well. More cigarettes, a product of R. J. Reynolds, sponsored fashion shows in shopping malls that were tied to advertising in fashion magazines.³ They also sponsored the More Fashion Awards for designers in the fashion industry.⁴⁶ The tobacco industry sponsors family-oriented festivals and fairs for community cultural groups, events that can lead to dependency on tobacco.³⁸ For example, it supports the Hispanic Cinco de Mayo street fairs in many communities that have Hispanic organizations. Philip Morris's Marlboro brand sponsored 18 major fairs, including large state fairs, in 1995, spending US\$ 850 000 to reach 20 million family members.⁴⁰ The Newport brand (Lorillard) spent US\$ 155 000 to reach more than 15 million attendees at 31 New York City family and children's events in 1996. Events including family festivals, a Fourth of July (Independence Day) celebration, and even the Sierra Club's Earth Awareness Day accepted these sponsorships.⁴⁰

Tobacco companies also support the arts and athletics.^{38,40-46} In 1995 alone, Philip Morris spent US\$ 1.2 million to sponsor 15 dance companies (e.g. American Ballet Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, and Joffrey Ballet) and two dance events.⁴⁰ Tobacco companies have also sponsored performances of the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre; a photographic exhibit featuring images of the late civil rights leader Dr Martin Luther King; the Vatican Art Exhibit at New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art; and the Arts Festival of Atlanta (attended by more than 10 million people). Many of these events target communities with significant numbers of Hispanic and Afro-American members.

Sponsorship of music concerts and festivals also offers opportunities to promote tobacco brands. The Kool Jazz Festival is a traditional sponsorship event. Rock concerts have benefited from tobacco support; for example, as part of its Rockin' Ticketmaster Campaign, Camel (R. J. Reynolds) offered discounted tickets to major rock events, advertising the tickets in a two-page pop-out magazine ad that featured Joe Camel handing the reader a pair of tickets. Getting the discounted tickets required sending in 100 proofs of purchase from Camel packs.⁴⁷ The industry has also offered support to female rock artists, with the Virginia Slims Woman Thing Music tour, prompting one young musician, Leslie Nuchow, to publicly turn down Philip Morris's support.⁴⁸

Civic-improvement awards targeted to inner-city leaders are sponsored by Brown & Williamson's Kool brand, a menthol cigarette favoured by Afro-Americans. Kool Achiever Awards honour five such leaders annually, presenting a US\$ 50 000 donation to a nonprofit, inner-city organization chosen by each person honoured.⁴² Major Afro-American organizations, including the National Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the National Newspaper Publishers Association, participate in the selection process.³⁸

Tobacco companies also sponsor motorsport racing events, such as the NASCAR Winston Cup stock car and drag races, the Indy Car World Series, and the Marlboro Grand Prix. Additionally, individual cars and drivers receive sponsorships. While many assume that car racing is of primary interest to men, a recent study estimated that children 12 to 17 years of age make up 14% of the audience at these events, and more than 25% of children 12 to 17 years

of age watched auto racing on television in 1996.⁴⁹ These events also reach many women via television broadcasts. In 1992, more than 350 motorsports broadcasts reached audiences—which included women—of more than 915 million people.⁵⁰ Tobacco brands received more than 54 hours of television exposure during these broadcasts, and more than 10 000 mentions, having an exposure value of US\$ 57 million (Winston, US\$ 41 million; Marlboro, US\$ 12 million; Camel, US\$ 4 million).

NASCAR's own demographic studies (Harris Poll data) estimate that women constitute 39% of its audience.⁵¹ Several NASCAR officials have described this trend:

We want to continue in our direction of becoming a white-collar sport, where it's mom, dad, and the kids sitting around the TV and rooting for their favourite driver on Sunday.

Now, racetracks are places you can bring your kids. I wouldn't say that 20 years ago. It's safe, full of families, the drinking has been greatly curtailed and of course it's all over TV.⁵²

The sponsorship of motorsport racing events communicates an image of courage, independence, adventure, and aggression.³⁷ A vice president of marketing for Philip Morris stated, “We perceive Formula One and Indy car racing as adding, if you will, a modern-day dimension to the Marlboro Man”.³⁷ Tobacco companies also support newer forms of racing, such as motorcycle and hydroplane boat races.

Sponsorship of Women's Organizations

Perhaps the most insidious form of tobacco company support is sponsorship of women's organizations. As part of a long-standing strategy to support groups representing racial/ethnic minorities and women—who strive for acceptance and expanded roles in American society—tobacco companies have supported women's organizations for many years. In 1987, Philip Morris gave more than US\$ 2.4 million to more than 180 Afro-American, Hispanic, and women's groups, while R. J. Reynolds gave US\$ 1.9 million.⁴²

Women's groups that promote women's leadership in business and politics have been a special target.

These groups include the National Women's Political Caucus, the Women's Campaign Fund, the Women's Research and Education Institute, the League of Women Voters Education Fund, Women Executives in State Government, the Center for Women Policy Studies, the Center for the American Woman and Politics, the American Association of University Women, and the American Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.^{42,43}

In recent years, organizations such as the National Organization for Women, Women's Policy, Inc. (the nongovernment organizational affiliate of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues), and the American Medical Women's Association have actively refused tobacco funds and have worked in the area of women's health and tobacco control.

The National Organization for Women accepted funding from Philip Morris in the past to print its meeting programme.³ A conference drawing half of the nation's female state legislators was held by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University (New Jersey), using funding from Philip Morris and R. J. Reynolds.⁴³ In 1987, those companies also provided 10% to 15% (US\$ 130 000) of the budget of the National Women's Political Caucus.⁴² A former congresswoman, Patricia Schroeder, a member of the caucus's advisory board and a prominent spokesperson for women's rights, employed fellows funded by the Women's Research and Education Institute and presented the caucus's “Good Guy Award” to a vice president of Philip Morris in 1989.⁴³ Philip Morris also sponsored internships for the Center for Women Policy Studies and provided funding for a national directory of female elected officials.⁴²

Tobacco industry support of minority women's groups is typical of its support for organizations representing racial/ethnic minorities. The industry has funded the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the Mexican-American National Women's Association, the US Hispanic Women's Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs.⁴³ Philip Morris has funded leadership training programmes for Hispanic women in New York and gave US\$ 150 000 in 1987 to the US Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.⁴²

A two-year study commissioned by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of National Drug Control Policy found that 89% of the top 200 movie rentals in 1996–1997 contained scenes of tobacco use.

Other minority organizations that have benefited from tobacco company support include the National Council of La Raza, the League of United American Citizens, the National Hispanic Scholarship Foundation, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the United Negro College Fund, the National Urban League, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Black Journalists Hall of Fame, and tobacco companies have provided funding for directories of national Afro-American and Hispanic organizations.^{42,43,46}

Many of the organizations that have received tobacco industry support claim that the industry supported them, along with individuals, through hiring and promotion processes when no one else would. The Women's Campaign Fund Executive Director noted, "They were there for us when nobody else was. They legitimized corporate giving for women's groups, from my perspective".⁴³ But this support has not come without receiving something in return. As the leading sponsorship-tracking organization in the United States reported, "Cause marketing is

expected to show a return on investment".⁴¹ Sponsorships buy visibility and credibility that may lead to neutral or supportive stances on tobacco industry positions.^{42,43,46} The director of the fellowship programme for the Women's Research and Education Institute stated it this way:

*I simply think it's part of their way to make themselves look better. They know they're perceived negatively by representatives who are concerned with health issues. To tell you the truth, I'm not that interested. I'm just glad they found us.*⁴²

An August 1986 Tobacco Institute memo reflected the buy-in of women's organizations:

*We began intensive discussions with representatives of key women's organizations. Most have assured us that, for the time being, smoking is not a priority issue for them.*⁴²

Women's groups that take tobacco money have rarely supported anti-smoking campaigns.⁴³ For example, in 1991, the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues introduced the Women's Health Equity Act. Although the package included 22 bills, six of them on prevention, none of the proposals addressed smoking.⁴³

Mainstream minority organizations have also not been in the forefront of activism against tobacco industry practices that target their members. The National Black Monitor, inserted monthly into 80 Afro-American newspapers, ran a three-part series on the industry. The first article in the series called upon Afro-Americans to "oppose any proposed legislation that often serves as a vehicle for intensified discrimination against this industry which has befriended us, often far more than any other, in our hour of greatest need".⁴² Another instalment, ghost-written by R. J. Reynolds, argued that "relentless discrimination still rages unabashedly on a cross-country scope against another group of targets—the tobacco industry and 50 million private citizens who smoke".⁴²

Sponsorships thus serve many purposes and are a potent addition to advertising and promotion strategies. The marketing of tobacco products has been overwhelmingly successful in the United States. Even while prevalence rates among male smokers were declining by half, women's rates of smoking rose before they declined.⁵³ In recent years, organizations such as the National Organization

for Women, Women's Policy, Inc. (the nongovernment organizational affiliate of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues), and the American Medical Women's Association have actively refused tobacco funds and have worked in the area of women's health and tobacco control. These actions and activities by women's organizations are noteworthy and important to document.

Placement of Tobacco in Popular Culture

Tobacco finds its way into popular culture through exposure in films, television, and music. While the tobacco industry states that it no longer pays to have brands placed in popular movies (no expenditures were reported to the Federal Trade Commission in recent years), during the 1980s, Brown & Williamson paid Sylvester Stallone US\$ 500 000 to smoke its cigarettes in six films.⁵⁴

Several studies note the pervasiveness of tobacco in popular films. One study that looked at smoking in movies for four decades (1960–1996) found that tobacco depictions in movies increased in the 1990s to levels found in the 1960s.⁵⁴ To analyse this trend, the researchers divided the total length of time of each film into 5-minute segments. In the 1990s, one third of the 5-minute time intervals in the films contained a tobacco reference, and 57% of the major characters smoked. Between 1991 and 1996, 80% of the male and 27% of the female leads smoked. The studies also noted the increasing appearance of cigars—all of the five films in their 1996 sample depicted cigar use.

Another study examined the top 10 moneymaking films in each year from 1985 to 1995 and found that 98% of them had references that supported tobacco use, such as showing smoking or smoking paraphernalia.⁵⁵ Again, one third of the 5-minute segments portrayed pro-tobacco events, and in 46% of the films, at least one lead character used tobacco. In 1996, a newspaper reported that the 10 top-grossing films of that year all contained tobacco use, as did 17 of the 18 films in distribution.⁵⁶ A two-year study commissioned by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of National Drug Control Policy found that 89% of the top 200 movie rentals in 1996–1997 contained scenes of tobacco use.⁵⁷ Children's animated feature films also portray tobacco use. Of 50 such films produced between 1937 and 1997, 68%—including all seven such

films released in 1996 and 1997—displayed at least one episode of tobacco use.⁵⁸

Film stars are important marketing vehicles for the tobacco industry and portray tobacco use more frequently than the actual prevalence among users. Also, a known risk factor for youth smoking is overestimating the number of peers who smoke.⁵⁴ John Travolta, Gwyneth Paltrow, Winona Ryder, Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, Whoopi Goldberg, Bill Cosby, and other popular stars who smoke on film have broad appeal beyond the United States, helping to spread the smoking image to countries where tobacco advertising is restricted. Perhaps the ultimate portrayal of tobacco in film is the 1999 release *200 Cigarettes*, which shows young people with little to do other than hang out in bars and clubs smoking.

Television also offers opportunities to show characters smoking. One study of prime-time television in 1984 found smoking taking place at a rate equal to once per hour.⁵⁹ A similar study in 1992 found the same rate-per-hour occurrence, with 24% of prime-time programmes on the three major networks depicting tobacco use.⁶⁰ Popular music is another venue for portraying tobacco use. Music videos shown on television make a visual connection between tobacco and music. One study found tobacco use portrayed in 19% of the music videos shown on four music video networks.⁶¹ Posters advertising new music releases and the CD covers themselves also show the musicians using tobacco products.

Philip Morris uses music to attract women to smoking. The company has sponsored a live music series, Club Benson & Hedges, at clubs in cities such as Los Angeles and New Orleans. In 1997, Philip Morris launched its own record label, Woman Thing Music, which matched its print ad slogan "It's a woman thing". The CDs, which feature new women performers, are marketed with packs of Virginia Slims. A music tour included auditions in the cities where performances were held. Admission to some of the performances was free, and attendees received Virginia Slims gear.

Women's magazines, too, provide visual smoking messages (discussed later in this chapter). In addition to formal cigarette advertising, advertising for other products, such as clothing and accessories, may feature popular models who are smoking. Stories about popular screen stars or models often include photographs of

them smoking. It appears that even though the terms of the Master Settlement Agreement in the United States preclude tobacco companies from specifically targeting teens in their advertising, the companies are not only continuing to target youth but are actually reaching more of them. As noted in recent press releases from the American Legacy Foundation, cigarette makers have increased their advertising in magazines that have large teen readerships.

The Internet offers the most modern opportunity to market tobacco products to women. Numerous sites on the Internet offer tobacco products, clothing, and fantasies. *Smoke* magazine (<http://www.smokemag.com>) offers smoking-related clothing and accessories, and many sites offer tobacco products by mail, some at discount prices and with few or no protections to prohibit sale to minors.

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The major tobacco companies operate their own web sites, on which company and product information mingles with promotional material. For example, the Brown & Williamson site includes sections on its sponsorship of community organizations and its programmes to reduce youth use (<http://www.bw.com>). Its sponsorship of Fishbone Fred, a Grammy-nominated children's performer, is noted on the site. Fred's performance tours include his song "Be Smart, Don't Start", and his *Safety Songs for Kids* cassette is marketed at the Brown & Williamson site.

Thus, messages about tobacco use pervade women's popular culture. These messages boost the advertising and promotion campaigns that tobacco companies use to target women. Popular culture reinforces the themes of marketing campaigns and sends exaggerated messages about the pervasiveness of women's smoking.

Marketing Strategies in the United States

Contemporary tobacco advertisements and promotions reveal marketing patterns carried forward from the beginning of the 1990s. The women's brands continue to market romance, glamour, independence, and the "in-charge" woman. Virginia Slims (Philip Morris) uses the "It's a woman thing" slogan, with ads that portray feisty, but sexy, women making comments about men. One ad shows a woman looking at a trophy and a stuffed moose head, saying to her partner, "The real reason we have garage sales? Your stuff".⁶² In this ad, the woman is demonstrating her control over the domestic sphere and mocking her partner's inability to control his spending. *In Style* carries a Virginia Slims ad showing a man and a woman each driving a blue convertible, along with a shot of the woman's foot in a high wedge sandal decorated with fake fruit. The copy reads, "So maybe we define practical a little different than you".⁶³ Another ad features a woman in a blue dress pushing a guy in a black suit into a pool. It says, "When we ask what you love most about us, answer carefully, and quickly".⁶⁴ Again, these ads assert women's difference from men and reinforce their "in-charge" abilities.

Capri (Brown & Williamson) still uses the slogan "She's gone to Capri and she's not coming back" with a photo of a Mediterranean boudoir overlooking the city below.⁶⁵ Basic (Philip Morris) uses a "Keep it Basic" theme that shows the pack,⁶⁶ while another discount brand, GPC (Brown & Williamson), shows a woman at the edge of a lake at sunset and the words "Best smoke of the day",⁶⁷ and Doral (R. J. Reynolds) features a cat staring at an oversized goldfish in a bowl and the words "Imagine getting more than you hoped for. Get your paws on big taste, guaranteed".⁶⁸ Themes of relaxation and pleasure from smoking are increasingly appearing in magazine advertisements.

Merit (Philip Morris) touts its ultra-lights with a series of spoof ads—"Discover the rewards of thinking light"—that depict a sumo wrestler in pointe ballet shoes taking a leap⁶⁹ and an Eskimo musher and his loaded sled being pulled by a dachshund.⁷⁰ Carlton (Brown & Williamson) uses its familiar blue-and-white format to feature its 1 mg of tar: "Isn't it time you started thinking about number one? Think Carlton. With 1 mg. tar, it's the Ultra ultra light".⁷¹ Camel, after withdrawing Joe Camel, turned to parody ads, many of which spoof the

Surgeon General's warnings by including a large "Viewer Discretion Advised" box, noting what out-of-the-norm symbols you can find in the ad. For example, one ad shows a young man behind jail bars and an overweight policeman. The second page reveals, from a back view, that the young man is a cutout figure made of Camel packs. The ad advises that "this ad contains package tampering, self parole, and overdue books".⁷² Another ad shows a jungle scene, with women and men in a large cauldron over a fire. The "Viewer Discretion Advised" box warns of "hungry women, hot guys, and man stew".⁷³ Another ad spoofs the latest resurgence of health warnings about large steaks and big drinks. It shows a street parade with floats. One float has a large golden Camel, a pyramid, an overweight sultan, and belly dancers. Another shows a huge dancing steak and butchers (one smoking a cigarette) holding sausages and hams. The "Viewer Discretion Advised" box notes the "politically incorrect parade, red meat, and moving violations".⁷⁴

Marlboro's current ads for Marlboro Lights feature a two-page Marlboro cowboy, "Come to where the flavor is",⁷⁵ scenic cliffs with "Come to Marlboro Country",⁷⁶ and a deep blue riverside scene.⁷⁷ Marlboro Lights enjoy extensive popularity with women and girls, who may prefer their milder taste. Lucky Strike (Brown & Williamson) has a retro ad featuring a diner with a male smoker and a faceless waitress and the slogan "An American Original".⁷⁸ Newport's (Lorillard) "Alive with pleasure!" ad shows a man clowning with an umbrella, a woman at the beach, and a bright green sky.⁷⁹ Another menthol cigarette, Kool (Brown & Williamson), also features green prominently in its "B Kool" ad, showing a large man's arm with a chain-link bracelet, the hand holding a lit cigarette and a pack of Kools. Two non-white women are looking at the man, and an Afro-American man has his arm around one of the women.⁸⁰ In the United States, menthol cigarettes are used more frequently by non-whites than by whites.

Winston Lights (R. J. Reynolds) uses a red-and-white motif to promote its "No additives, no bull" theme. One ad proclaims, "Blue collar. White collar. How about no collar. No bull".⁸¹ It shows two men and a woman in a recording studio. Another approach is used in an ad in which a woman looks disgusted as she says, "I wanted a light, not his life story. No additives. No bull".⁸² An edgier ad for Regular Winston (R. J. Reynolds) is a two-page spread. One page has a grainy black-and-white photo of a flying-saucer spaceship. The copy on the

following page reads, "If aliens are smart enough to travel through space, why do they keep abducting the dumbest people on earth? Winston. Straight up. No additives. True taste".⁸³ Interestingly, Asian models are starting to appear in tobacco ads. Two Virginia Slims ads mentioned previously⁶² feature an Asian woman, and a Merit ad features a sumo wrestler.⁶⁹ The industry obviously sees great potential in marketing to women in Asia, since smoking prevalence among Asian women is low compared to prevalence among women in Western countries. In essence, advertising becomes globalized when the same ad is used in different countries.

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Marketing Tobacco to Women and Girls in Asia

Women and girls in Asia constitute a vast untapped market for the tobacco industry. Despite the financial crises occurring throughout Asia, transnational tobacco companies continue to identify positive aspects of the Asian market. An editorial in *Tobacco Reporter* reinforces this optimism: "The situation does not fundamentally change the underlying strengths of the market. Rising per-capita consumption, a growing population, and an increasing acceptance of women smoking continue to generate new demand".⁸⁴ Changing gender norms and roles combined with increases in women's earning power may lead to increased marketing resources being directed towards tobacco consumption.

Just as in the United States, marketing is a crucial component of the tobacco industry's expansion and is the

primary method of competition in a highly concentrated industry dominated by a small number of relatively large firms. The largest international tobacco company is Altria/Philip Morris, with 17% of the global market, 8.5% of which is accounted for by Marlboro, the world's most popular cigarette.⁸⁵ British American Tobacco (BAT), which has merged with Rothmans, has 16% of the global market share.⁸⁶ Japan Tobacco, which bought out R. J. Reynolds, has become the third largest tobacco company,⁸⁷ and China National Tobacco Corporation also has substantial shares in the global market.

Marketing expenditures in China are substantial: in 1994, Marlboro was the biggest advertiser (US\$ 5.2 million), followed by 555-State Express (US\$ 3.1 million), which is produced by PT BAT Indonesia. The absence of domestic cigarette advertising in China has allowed foreign tobacco companies to use their marketing expertise with great effect.

Industry documents reveal that in 1993, a BAT corporate strategy, code-named Project Battalion, was conceptualized. The strategy targeted marketing efforts at a hit list of the "top 50 cigarette markets". Asia was the largest target, with China at the top of the list, closely followed by India, Brazil, and Indonesia. Other Asian countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, and Viet Nam, were also on the list.⁸⁸ Multinational tobacco companies are already doing an impressive business in Asia, where almost half of the world's cigarettes are consumed.⁸⁹

Cigarette sales, which fell by almost 5% in North America between 1990 and 1995, increased by 8% in the Asia Pacific region during the same time period.⁹⁰ In 1996, 70% of the cigarettes sold by Philip Morris and almost 60% of those sold by R. J. Reynolds were sold overseas, with exports totalling 11 billion packs.⁹¹ In general,

tobacco consumption in Asia continued its upward trend between 2002 and 2007.^{92,93} Cigarette consumption in China rose from 1643 billion sticks in 2002 to 2163 billion sticks in 2007.^{92,93}

Tobacco companies rank among the 10 top marketers in several Asian countries. In Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Philip Morris is the ninth largest marketer, spending US\$ 12.9 million annually. In Malaysia, three tobacco companies rank among the top four marketers. Rothmans ranks first, with annual spending of US\$ 36.2 million, BAT ranks second (US\$ 19.7 million), and R. J. Reynolds is fourth (US\$ 9.5 million). While it is not possible to determine what percentage of the overall marketing expenditures is spent on women and girls, tobacco advertising in Asia is so ubiquitous that it has a powerful effect on everyone, including young children. What can be said with some certainty is that women and girls are strategically important to the long-term growth of the industry. In the past five years, Philip Morris International and BAT have purchased the largest tobacco companies in Indonesia. The industry recognizes that there are strategic opportunities to enter the large and growing market of kreteks (locally manufactured clove cigarettes), which are smoked by over 90% of smokers in Indonesia. This market could include women in the future.

In a marketing strategy paper, BAT outlined details for transforming its staid, traditionally male Benson & Hedges brand to a woman's-appeal cigarette, as part of an "up-market socializing" strategy. Describing Benson & Hedges' present male smokers as loyal but "getting older", the paper reports that "in many ways, they [men] represent the cigarette world of yesterday, rather than the market of tomorrow".⁹³ It is to women and girls that they will turn for tomorrow's market. Women in China represent the largest potential market for the tobacco industry. As noted by a vice president of Philip Morris Asia some years ago, "No discussion of the tobacco industry in the year 2000 would be complete without addressing what may be the most important feature on the landscape, the China market. In every respect, China confounds the imagination".⁹⁴

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tobacco companies to use their marketing expertise with great effect. Intensive marketing efforts by transnationals seem to be paying off, as smoking is reported to be on the rise, particularly among men. Trade restrictions are still in place, however, so current sales of foreign cigarettes in China are somewhat limited.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, a former BAT executive with knowledge of the company's Chinese operations reported that in 1995, BAT sold 400 million cigarettes to the China National Tobacco Corporation, 3 billion to duty-free shops, 4 billion to special economic zones, and 38 billion to distributors who smuggle the goods into China.⁹⁶ In fact, there is evidence to suggest that smuggling is good for business, as it keeps the price of foreign cigarettes down (no taxes are levied) and eliminates the need for warning labels.⁹⁷

Despite the fact that advertisements in China are not allowed to mention cigarettes or actually show people smoking, foreign cigarettes have become firmly entrenched and may influence brand preference and future buying patterns. Foreign brands are important status symbols in China.⁹⁸ A recent study of 1900 college students in three Chinese cities revealed that Marlboro was the most familiar brand of cigarette as well as the most preferred.⁹⁹ Importantly, non-smokers and smokers were equally familiar with tobacco products, suggesting that communal knowledge is a better predictor of familiarity with cigarette brands than is smoking status. It is disconcerting to consider that advertising effects may be amplified in such a market, where information gleaned from cigarette advertisements is effectively channelled into a shared pool of knowledge among women and men. Cigarette advertisements for products such as Marlboro and Salem may be a particularly potent force in China and other Asian countries, since their level of sophistication renders them visually distinct from indigenous advertising.

Global advertisements sometimes require “makeovers”, as was the case with the Marlboro Man when he first appeared in Hong Kong SAR. During an interview, the advertising director for Hong Kong SAR's Leo Burnett, the advertising agency responsible for creating the Marlboro Man in the United States, explained how people in Hong Kong SAR did not identify with the worker image of the cowboy, although the Chinese consider the horse a very good symbol, representing health, success, vitality, and energy. The Marlboro Man had to be transformed and upgraded from a labourer to a leader.¹⁰⁰

Consumer Culture

An understanding of consumer culture is critical to a discussion of the marketing of tobacco to women and girls in Asia. Consumer culture can best be characterized as a culture of mass consumption, wherein the consumption of goods carries with it the consumption of meaning and symbols. Consumer culture is visual, and images—often images of Western-styled modern women—play a dominant role in Asia. They imply that through the practice of consumption—i.e. by buying the advertised product—one can create a new identity. Consumer culture “holds out the promise of a beautiful and fulfilling life: the achievement of individuality through the transformation of self and lifestyle”.¹⁰¹ Tobacco advertising engages the consumer in a fantasy, inviting her or him to participate in a promise “that the product can do something for you that you cannot do for yourself”.¹⁰² Although only the elite in the developing world can consume in a truly Western manner, cigarettes promise to fulfil this fantasy inexpensively. In some countries, costly foreign brands can be purchased as single sticks, rendering them relatively more affordable.

Consumer culture is visual, and images—often images of Western-styled modern women—play a dominant role in Asia. Through the practice of consumption—i.e. by buying the advertised product—one can create a new identity.

Three important points may be noted with regard to consumption in Asia, particularly in developing countries. First, regardless of whether an individual chooses to consume the product (the cigarette) or not, he or she can still observe and absorb the image. Like window-shopping, observing ads can be a vicarious form of consumption. Second, despite the fact that many people in Asia, particularly women and girls, are illiterate, most have visual literacy. That is, even those who cannot read

are influenced by and understand the intent of image-based tobacco advertising. Third, pervasive, highly seductive images of what cigarettes can do for you exist in environments where little information is available about the negative health consequences of tobacco use.

Women's bodies have been used to sell tobacco, alcohol, and other products worldwide for many years, and tobacco advertising in the Philippines provides some excellent examples of this strategy.

In Western cultures, identity is not ascribed by or anchored in tradition or religion but is generally chosen by the individual. Asian youth, who are often caught between the traditional world of their family and the modern world they encounter in advertisements and the media, may be particularly susceptible to images of modernization that link products with feelings, emotions, and lifestyles. For young women, creating a new, fashionable identity is intricately linked to the body. Female college students interviewed in South India repeatedly stated that in order to wear Western clothes (e.g. jeans and short skirts) and look good in them, a girl *needed* to be thin. Whereas traditional dress, which is loose and unfitted, was viewed as complimentary to all women, Western dress required that one have the “right” body shape. In the global consumer culture, having the right body becomes central to a woman’s identity. By using women’s bodies to sell cigarettes, the tobacco industry reinforces a strong association between the two.

Women's Bodies and the Selling of Cigarettes

Women’s bodies have been used to sell tobacco, alcohol, and other products worldwide for many years, and tobacco advertising in the Philippines provides some excellent examples of this strategy. Calendars produced

and widely distributed by Fortune Tobacco Corporation, the largest tobacco company in the Philippines, are a prominent medium of cigarette advertising. One calendar that is posted in local provision shops throughout the islands shows a fair-skinned model seated with her legs wide apart, wearing a see-through, netted bra and silk boxers, gazing off into the distance. Behind her is a box of Hope cigarettes that is almost as large as she is. She clutches a pack of Hope in one hand, and in the other, she holds an unlit cigarette. Appearing to be absorbed in her daydreams, her image suggests that her cigarettes can help her relax and enjoy the experience. In fact, observational data suggest that Hope is the cigarette brand of choice for many young Filipinas.¹⁰³ The brand name itself reflects the dream of many Filipinas, that is, hope for a better life and a good marriage.

In another ad, a light-skinned model with pronounced cleavage is seated on a deck overlooking the ocean. She wears only an oversized men’s shirt, unbuttoned to reveal most of her breasts, and a baseball cap with “Alaska” written across it. Her pose is provocative, and her eyes boldly stare at the viewer. In her hand, she holds an unlit cigarette. Pictured next to her are two cameras, leading one to imagine that she is a photographer. A carton of Champion cigarettes and two unopened packs lie next to her legs. The logo for Fortune Tobacco Company is visible in the corner of the calendar.

The model (the same one is featured on both calendars) embodies the characteristics of a Filipina beauty: She is a Euro-American mestiza, with white skin and a pronounced “American-style” nose. Her unbuttoned blouse reveals her “American-sized” breasts, referred to locally as pakwan suso, or watermelon breasts. Large breasts, such as those of Baywatch’s Pamela Anderson, are discussed and admired by Filipino women, who refer to their breasts as small fruits (calamansi suso) in comparison with those of foreigners.¹⁰⁴ Not only is the Fortune calendar model endowed with a beautiful “Western” body, she is also daring enough to show it off in revealing attire. Typically, Filipino women are modest and do not go to the seashore in anything more revealing than a T-shirt and blue jeans, for fear of being labelled promiscuous.

Remarkably, these calendars find their ways into the homes of villagers in remote islands of the Philippines. They are tacked up in small, one-room thatched homes,

where they represent images of beauty and whiteness, which serve as much-desired symbols of modernity and wealth. These images are typically hung near the family religious shrine, which consists of statues and candles, often side-by-side with Jesus and the Virgin Mary.¹⁰⁵ In fact, one Fortune calendar “ingeniously used the Filipino faith in Mother Mary”¹⁰⁵ to sell cigarettes. It featured the face of a very white Mary (sometimes called “American Mary”), bordered by all 17 brands of cigarettes distributed by Fortune Tobacco.

Similar to the advertising in the Philippines, advertisements in Viet Nam commonly use women’s bodies to sell products, particularly on posters advertising beer and cigarettes. Such posters typically portray big-busted foreign women in scanty clothing. In real life as well, women’s bodies become the medium by which cigarettes are distributed to men. On the streets of Hanoi, for example, attractive young women are employed to dress in the recognizable colours of cigarette brands and stand on street corners, smilingly giving away free samples to passers-by.¹⁰⁶

In Tonga, multinational corporations such as Benson & Hedges and Royal Beer sponsor beauty contests, replacing the original sponsors who were the heads of extended families and the eiki (ruling class). The winners of the contests then become spokeswomen and promoters of the sponsors’ products for the reigning year. The shift in sponsorship has also been marked by shifts in desired body shape. Increasingly, the body of choice is a more streamlined Western body, narrowing notions of diversity and promoting a global consensus of what constitutes beauty.¹⁰⁷

Women’s Brands in Asia

As in the United States, brands of cigarettes designed to appeal to women have been introduced in many Asian countries, typically with themes highlighting independence, sophistication, glamour, and sexuality.

These images hold particular appeal for young and impressionable women and girls who seek to emulate or acquire the attributes of the models in the ads. Not uncommonly, advertisements for women’s brands in Asia feature Western models. For example, the model in advertisements for Capri Superslim cigarettes in

Japan is a blonde woman who is both an executive and an artist, while Salem’s Pianissimo cigarettes similarly feature a Nordic blonde woman. Why, we might ask, are foreigners used in these ads? What do they lend to the visual image and say about the product that a local model would not? To put it most simply, Westerners function as symbols of the West. According to Japan’s largest advertising agency, Dentsu, Caucasian models lend a sense of foreignness to Japanese products, serving as symbols of prestige, quality, and modernity.^{108,109}

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Remarkably, however, the Tobacco Institute of Japan, headed by the President of Philip Morris’s Japan branch, insists that the ads that feature women are targeted at men.¹¹⁰ The institute echoes the time-weary argument that advertising and marketing activities do not cause new segments of the population to initiate smoking, but rather are designed to influence existing smokers to switch their brand loyalty.

To emphasize the link between smoking and fashion, Vogue cigarettes in Japan feature a “whippet-thin, chiseled-cheek-boned model” who stares coolly into the distance as an adoring man nuzzles her neck. Floating in the corner of the ad is a pastel-coloured pack of cigarettes. In case her European features are not obvious enough, flowing Japanese script declares, “This woman is Vogue”.¹¹⁰ In the globalized context of consumer culture, a Western woman and her choice of cigarettes project a powerful symbol. Interestingly, the Vogue brand is described in the

European journal *Tobacco* as “a stylish type of cigarette with obvious feminine appeal, being slim and therefore highly distinctive”.¹¹¹

According to an advertising expert in Tokyo, “Tobacco companies are putting a great emphasis on advertising low-smoke cigarettes that are basically designed for women who hate to have their hair and dresses spoiled with the smell of tobacco smoke”.¹¹² R. J. Reynolds has marketed Pianissimos as a low-smoke, reduced-smell version of Salem that has been popular among women.¹¹³ Smoking among young Japanese women has been on an increase in recent years, although as recently as 1950, smoking was considered to be a habit of professionally promiscuous women, such as prostitutes and geisha. This is true in other Asian countries as well.¹¹⁴ In a 1999 nationwide survey on smoking behaviour in Japan conducted by the Ministry of Health and Welfare, smoking prevalence among adult women was reported to be 13.4%. About 44% of current female smokers reported smoking their first cigarette while they were minors. Data from two nationwide surveys conducted in 1996 and 2000 among Japanese high-school adolescents showed that current and daily smoking rates for girls increased across all grades.¹¹⁵

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Foreign brands, like foreign models, are gaining in popularity in Japan. A Philip Morris executive, commenting on the increase in sales of the company’s products in Japan, noted, “We have been relentless in the last few years. Our marketing is really good: I think we’re feeling the pulse of the consumer as well as possible. For many years, Marlboro was a slow burner here, but now it’s on fire. It’s growing more than 25% year-to-year”.¹¹⁶ Although clearly not advertised as a woman’s cigarette, Marlboro is the most popular brand among both male and

female adolescent smokers in the United States, with 60% of the market share.¹¹⁷

Data from Thailand indicate that young smokers prefer foreign brands and that young women in particular show a marked preference for foreign cigarettes, especially Marlboro Lights. Little research to date has identified what underlies these preferences, although it is not difficult to imagine that there is a connection to weight control and concern with smoking what is perceived to be a “healthier” cigarette.¹¹⁸

In India, where smoking by women and girls is generally considered to be culturally inappropriate, a BAT subsidiary launched a women’s cigarette named Ms in 1990. The launch involved large-scale promotion and the use of attractive female models who promoted Ms and gave away free samples. In response to protests by women activists about the direct targeting of women and girls in a culture where females traditionally do not smoke, company representatives rallied to the defence of Ms, explaining that “the brand was targeted towards emancipated women, that they were showing models only in Western rather than traditional Indian dress, and that the female models were not actually shown smoking”.¹¹⁹ Concerned that Indian women might be hesitant to purchase the cigarettes in shops, advertising copy proclaimed, “Just give us a call and we will deliver a carton at your address!”

In 1997, Just Black, a cigarette in an all-black box, was introduced in Goa, India. The advertisement for this product featured a young, fair-skinned woman sporting long braids, a tennis outfit, and a demure smile. She was shown leaning against a large black motorcycle, holding her tennis racket, seemingly waiting for her boyfriend, her tennis partner, to return. She appeared both innocent and sexy, and the reader was left to wonder whose cigarette it was—his or hers. The handwritten copy read, “Me and him and Just Black”, implying that it was “their” mutual friend, something they shared. It is an interesting circumventing of cultural prohibitions on women’s smoking: her smoking was implied, although not overtly spoken about. The advertisement also posited a spurious association between being athletic and being a smoker.

Industry documents reveal that the Just Black campaign arose out of a secret BAT project, code-named Project Kestrel, whose objective was to develop a brand that “breaks the rules”, appeals to a new generation of

youth, and shocks their parents.¹²⁰ The memo directly refers to the “literate youth of today, being very image-oriented” who require a unique brand of cigarettes, not like Marlboro, “but which are completely unconventional, which set new standards encouraging their rebellion, not necessarily just against parents”. This new brand would be responsive to teens’ individuality and have a totally distinct brand name “so that no preconceived ideas could be formed”. The brand needed to reflect durable youth values such as rebellion and the glamour of danger. The packaging was to be distinctive, preferably black, a colour that was noted to be popular among youth.¹²⁰ Despite the obvious ramifications of increased marketing to youth, the industry adamantly denies that it has specifically targeted them. “We don’t advertise to children.... First of all, we don’t want young people to smoke. And we’re running ads aimed specifically at young people advising them that we think smoking is strictly for adults. Kids just don’t pay attention to cigarette ads, and that’s how it should be”.¹²¹

Although China already consumes 37% of the world’s cigarettes,⁹² this market might be substantially enlarged if women, who presently constitute only a small percentage of smokers, could be enticed to smoke. Attempts to lure women into smoking have been documented. In 1998, two new Chinese cigarette brands targeted at women smokers were introduced. Chahua and Yuren (literally, “pretty woman”) are promoted as low-tar products, delivering 12 and 15 mg of tar, respectively, in contrast to the average 18-mg delivery of other domestic cigarettes. Yuren is described as slim, with a white filter and “mild” taste.¹²² Cigarette advertising worldwide has persistently used images and language to reassure present and potential smokers that they can engage in “healthy smoking”.¹²³ In actuality, smokers of lower-yield cigarettes puff more frequently or more intensely than those smoking higher-yield cigarettes to obtain their usual level of nicotine.¹²³

Interviewed about Yuren, the manager of the Kunming Cigarette Factory was quoted as saying, “China has more than 30 million female smokers, and yet China made no cigarettes specially designed for women. In the past, women smokers had to rely on imported and smuggled cigarettes made for female smokers”.¹²⁴ No data are available at present about the popularity of these products among Chinese women, and it will be important to monitor this, as well as the development of other wom-

en’s brands. Throughout Asia, packaging is an important component of women’s brands and promotional materials. The “feminine touch” is apparent: Brown & Williamson’s Capri cigarettes are sold in slim white boxes and feature a floral design. In Viet Nam, feminine-style lighters that are slim and pink (imported from Japan) are available in the marketplace; other lighters for women resemble a perfume bottle or feature a romantic picture of a couple.¹⁰⁶

Prominent Themes in Advertising to Women and Girls in Asia

Several key themes noted earlier in the section on marketing tobacco to women in the United States have been documented in cigarette ads targeted at women and girls in Asia. These themes are discussed below.

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The launch involved large-scale promotion and the use of attractive female models who promoted Ms and gave away free samples.

Independence

The woman who smokes is typically depicted as free and autonomous. Philip Morris advertised its Virginia Slims brand with the slogans “Be you” and “You’re on your way”. One Virginia Slims ad in Japan features a ballerina, with the caption “I want to dance to my own music without others’ direction”. A Japanese brand, Frontier Slims, echoes a similar theme of independence. It features

a young-looking, slim Japanese woman with the copy stating, “I care for my feelings, not for others!”¹²⁵

Research confirms that the theme of independence is important to women smokers. A study conducted among female airline cabin crew from 10 Asian countries found that when shown a Virginia Slims advertisement and asked to classify the woman featured, more smoking than non-smoking respondents viewed the woman as attractive, elegant, fit, and sociable. The authors of the study suggest that these women may smoke to enhance their images of independence.¹²⁶

Stress Relief

Intensive market research conducted in the United States has enabled sophisticated segmentation of the female market, and these strategies are being transferred abroad. An industry document from Brown & Williamson shows a plan to market cigarettes for working women who have to juggle multiple roles. It states, “Keep it simple. Make them comfortable. To deal with the stress, complexity and speed, they will be looking for relief”.¹²⁷

Phillip Morris advertised its Virginia

Slims brand with the slogans “Be you” and “You’re on your way”.

One Virginia Slims ad in Japan features a ballerina, with the caption “I want to dance to my own music without others’ direction”.

Stress and tension relief are common themes discussed among youths in the United States and Asia with regard to smoking.¹²⁸ For example, when Hong Kong SAR youths were asked about the positive attributes of smoking, “smoking calms your nerves” was reported by more than one third of the male and female ever-smokers.¹²⁹ Similarly, the study of female airline cabin crew described above found that the most

common reasons these women gave for smoking were to control their mood, to gain control over their life, and to help cope with stress.¹²⁶

Weight Control

As discussed earlier, the association between weight control and smoking has been documented in the marketing of cigarettes to women for many years. A study among Asian women that specifically asked about smoking and weight control found that almost 40% of the women sampled believed that smoking would help control body weight.¹²⁹

Tobacco Use as a Gendered Experience

The increase in smoking among females in Asia is not the only issue of concern. Of equal importance is the question of why this shift is occurring. What role does smoking play in the lives of women and adolescent girls? If women and girls are beginning to smoke more and at younger ages, why are they doing so? Beyond the advertised image, what is women’s experience with tobacco, and does it differ from the experience of men? In other words, from the layperson’s perspective, does smoking confer distinct benefits for men and women? To answer these questions, it is necessary to consider the behaviour of females and males within specific cultural contexts. While few published studies have been conducted on gendered patterns of smoking, some anthropological accounts from fieldwork in the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and China provide preliminary insights.

Trends in the Philippines

The 2003 World Health Survey on tobacco consumption in the Philippines reported that 58% of adult males and 12% of adult females were current tobacco smokers.¹³⁰ Data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey showed that 28% of adolescent males and nearly 18% of adolescent females (13 to 15 years of age) were current tobacco smokers in 2007.¹³⁰ Little is known about the age of smoking initiation among women and girls. While there are no distinctive women’s brands on the market, particular brands seem to be popular among women of different ages.

Although about 12% of the women in the Philippines presently smoke,¹³⁰ smoking is a private habit for women rather than a public one.¹³¹ While some women in their twenties do smoke when they go to bars or clubs, if they are seen smoking on the street, their behaviour may be misinterpreted. Men routinely discourage their girlfriends from smoking on the street, warning them overtly, “Don’t smoke. It doesn’t look good. You’ll look like a prostitute”.¹³¹ Both smoking and drinking are commonplace among bar girls and among the foreign men who frequent bars.

Despite cultural restrictions on smoking by young women, smoking is acceptable among older women, who tend to smoke alone rather than in social situations. Observations of Filipinas who smoke indicate that cigarettes are often used as a substitute for expressing feelings, indicating sadness, anger, or depression. In a culture in which it is inappropriate to talk about one’s feelings overtly, a woman can show displeasure or loneliness by smoking quietly while listening to evangelical music. Thus, smoking may serve as a form of self-medication in an environment where few other resources are available. When a woman smokes, she is rarely talkative. Men in her household who observe her smoking may choose to leave her alone, recognizing that she wants her own space. In contrast to women’s patterns of smoking, Filipino men light up frequently and in multiple social settings—at work, while drinking beer, playing pool, killing time, etc. When a group of men are smoking, women smokers typically do not join them.¹³¹

Observational data and ethnographic interviews indicate that some girls in their late teens believe that smoking helps reduce hunger and appetite.¹³² Young women in the Philippines are extremely conscious of their body shape and weight, and many wish to lose weight to increase their popularity with the opposite sex. Considering the ubiquitous cigarette advertising featuring nearly nude, thin women, it is not surprising that some girls associate weight control with smoking. However, cigarettes are not considered to be suitable (hiyang) for everyone, and both cigarettes and alcohol are discussed in relation to body type. Some women complain that cigarettes are not hiyang for their body and that smoking results in undesirable weight loss.¹³² Research is needed to understand the changing pattern of smoking among young Filipino women and the complex association between dieting and smoking.

Trends in India

In India, the rate of cigarette smoking among females is low (3.1% in 2005¹³³), and women’s smoking of cigarettes is confined to the urban elite classes of such large cosmopolitan cities as Delhi, Pune, Mumbai, and Bangalore. In these cities, modern girls are reported to smoke in pubs and at colleges, with particular colleges having “reputations” for female smoking. A note of caution should be raised, however. While conducting focus groups on smoking with female students at a medical college in a small South Indian city (Mangalore), anthropologist Mimi Nichter was told, “If you come back to India in ten years, all the professional women will be smoking!” When asked why this would be so, responses included, “to be modern, to be free, to be like boys, for weight control, and for tension”. “In the cinema,” one girl explained, “a guy smokes when he is depressed, when he has tension. In Hindi movies, women also smoke—especially the modern wife”.¹³³ Recently, the Hindi film *Godmother* featured smoking by the heroine throughout the film. The actress who plays the godmother, Shabana Azmi, is extremely popular and is known for her social activism. The depiction of such a well-known actress smoking may serve as a role model for other Indian women.

Observations of Filipinas who smoke indicate that cigarettes are often used as a substitute for expressing feelings, indicating sadness, anger, or depression.

Further discussions with college students identified a strong association between stress relief and smoking, a connection clearly garnered from the media. One male college student noted, “We know from advertisements that we see in the newspaper and in the cinema that cigarettes help with tension. In the ads, you see businessmen preparing their accounts, and they always have a cigarette in one hand and a packet on the table. In Hindi films, when the hero loses his girlfriend, he smokes a cigarette. Films and advertisements give us the reason why we should do it, and we follow”.¹³⁴

When female college students in India were asked what percentage of women their age in the United States were smokers, responses ranged from 50% to 75%. Further discussion substantiated that this impression was largely derived from watching imported Western movies and from satellite television. Satellite television, another important factor in Indian women's exposure to female smoking, is increasingly popular and is also influencing dress style and behaviour.¹³⁴

With regard to gender differences, several Indian girls noted that boys smoked to impress girls and that some male college students believed that "a cigarette in hand makes you a man". One girl explained, "Boys feel great if they're smoking". When asked what image a young male smoker projects, responses were largely positive: smokers were seen as being modern, macho, confident, and fashion-minded. These depictions mirrored the images of men in cigarette advertisements and in the cinema. Although many of the young women interviewed actually disliked smoking, the majority thought it would be inappropriate to disclose those feelings to a male.¹³⁴

Indonesia is the fourth largest market for tobacco in the world. Tobacco advertising literally saturates the landscape. The country can best be described as an "advertiser's paradise", as it provides a largely unrestricted regulatory environment.

Despite the positive features attributed to the image of a smoker, male and female college students in India know of the health risks of smoking. In a survey conducted among more than 1600 college students, over 80% stated that they believe tobacco use is a problem among youth in India, and 90% stated that students should receive more information about tobacco in school settings.¹³⁴ Many male students who smoked were interested in getting information on how to quit. Concern was expressed, however, that if one were accustomed to smoking, quitting would "shock" the

body and would be harmful. Cultural perceptions about tobacco were also revealed. For example, college students believe that more-expensive cigarettes are made of better tobacco, which they believe is less harmful to one's health. In addition, they believe that it is easier to become addicted to more-expensive cigarettes, because they are smoother and easier to smoke. This results in higher levels of smoking.¹³⁴

It is important to emphasize that the vast majority of women in India do not smoke, and cultural restrictions continue to be in place throughout the subcontinent. While it is critical to understand changes that are occurring among some upper-class segments of the population, it is equally important to identify protective factors within specific cultural contexts that promote resiliency in women and girls and serve to inhibit the initiation of smoking.

Trends in Indonesia

Indonesia is the fourth largest market for tobacco in the world. Tobacco advertising literally saturates the landscape. The country can best be described as an "advertiser's paradise", as it provides a largely unrestricted regulatory environment.¹³⁵ Cigarette marketing in Indonesia is among the most aggressive and innovative marketing in the world. The ubiquity of tobacco advertising serves to normalize the behaviour of smoking. As of 2009, Indonesia was the only country in South-East Asia that had not signed the WHO FCTC, which would require implementation of a ban or, if constitutional limits precluded a ban, restriction on advertising, promotion, and sponsorship. According to a 2007 national survey, almost 60% of men and 5% of women in Indonesia smoke.¹³⁵

Although it is considered culturally inappropriate for women to smoke, smoking appears to be on the increase among affluent and educated women in urban areas, such as Jakarta, and among women working in nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).¹³⁶ In recent years, women have begun to be featured in cigarette advertisements, sometimes alone—that is, without men accompanying them, as was more typical of earlier advertising. For example, ads for the Clas Mild brand, typically thought of as a starter product, show a young, wealthy, modern woman on a cell phone, wearing a mini dress. She is perched next to an expensive foreign convertible car and appears to be dressed for a night out on the town. The copy

reads, “Yesterday is gone, Clas Mild is today”. Although the attractive model in the ad is not holding a cigarette or smoking, the implication is that this is the type of woman who could be a smoker. Another Clas Mild ad shows a beautiful young woman, heavily made up and wearing a jacket with a fur collar, snuggling against her boyfriend, a Westerner. The tag line repeats the message “Clas Mild is today”, suggesting changing possibilities for women. Indeed, most of the ads for this popular youth brand portray modern women, and the copy emphasizes “the new sensation, the new classy breed” that the cigarette promises. Ads for other youth brands, such as L.A. Lights, feature a lineup of cosmopolitan males and females dressed for a night out on the town.¹³⁷ It will be important to document the growing placement of women in tobacco advertising in Indonesia, as well as changes in smoking prevalence rates. In a recent study, young adults noted that women who smoke prefer brands such as Clas Mild, L.A. Menthol Lights, and Marlboro Lights. Of the three brands, the first two include women in their advertisements. In 2008, two new slim cigarettes (Djarum Black Slims and Surya Slims) were introduced into the Indonesian market. The billboards and banners advertising these brands do not carry a photo, but rather feature the slim, sleek package. Although women are not visibly connected to these new product lines, slim cigarettes are typically targeted at women.¹³⁷

Trends in Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, nearly 50% of the men currently smoke, but only 2% of the women do.¹³⁸ Smoking among women is considered to be unfeminine and a sign of promiscuity. One study that asked Vietnamese women about their attitudes towards male smoking found that they considered smoking to be a strong, masculine behaviour. “When I was young,” one woman explained, “I liked my boyfriend to know how to smoke because it made him seem more manly”. Despite the associations between smoking and masculinity, another survey among Vietnamese women found that almost three quarters were bothered by men’s smoking.¹³⁹ However, women expressed a feeling of powerlessness to object to their husbands’ or other men’s smoking. As one woman poignantly noted, “If you hate cigarette smoke, you’ll still have to marry a man who’s heavily addicted to tobacco. Out of 100 men, 99 smoke. If you’re afraid of tobacco then you’ll have to live alone; it will be very depressing.”¹³⁸

Trends in China

As noted earlier, smoking prevalence among Chinese women is low. Traditionally, it has been considered inappropriate for women to smoke or drink alcohol. Although few qualitative data exist on smoking among women, a recent ethnographic study of changing gender roles in China provides insights into this behaviour.¹³⁹ Some young working women who were interviewed expressed resentment at their social status compared with that of men. One 23-year-old woman explained her discontent in the following way: “It’s not fair. Women must have children, they must do housework; women can’t smoke, can’t drink”. Not only were smoking and drinking considered by the interviewees to be social activities that men could engage in with friends, these behaviours also appeared to be powerful coping devices for dealing with life’s pressures. These “resources” are presently unavailable to women. It will be important to document how Chinese women of different ages view cultural restrictions on smoking and whether their perceptions change over time.

Brand-stretching, the use of tobacco brand names on non-tobacco merchandise or services, is a strategy that has been used worldwide by the tobacco industry.

Circumventing Legislation: Brand-Stretching

In the face of increasing bans and restrictions on tobacco advertising in electronic and print media throughout Asia, the transnational tobacco industry has been forced to become increasingly creative in designing new forms of advertising to circumvent existing legislation and procure the product exposure that is critical to sales. Brand-stretching, the use of tobacco brand names on non-tobacco merchandise or services, is a strategy that has been used worldwide by the tobacco industry. The explicit purpose of brand-stretching is “to find non-tobacco products and other services that can

be used to communicate the brand”, together with their essential visual identifiers. The principle is to ensure that tobacco can be effectively publicized when all direct lines of communication are denied.¹⁴⁰

Three nights per week, one of Beijing’s large discos literally becomes “transformed into a free-floating advertisement” for BAT’s 555 brands of cigarettes. Entering the disco, one is greeted by “slim Chinese women in blue tops, miniskirts, and boots emblazoned with the 555 logo, handing out free cigarettes”.

Internal documents from R. J. Reynolds define a similar strategy for circumventing bans, recommending “a creative approach to legal matters” to achieve “a balance between legal risks and desired benefits”. Specifically, they advocate the adoption of cigarette brand names for “lifestyle products” such as clothing, shoes, and watches. Brand-stretching has been practised in Asia for some years, and a recent study in Hong Kong SAR provides data on the impact of this strategy on youth. When asked whether they had recently seen cigarette logos on products, both male and female students overwhelmingly reported that they had. The products included cigarette lighters (50%), ashtrays (37%), T-shirts (28%), compact discs (26%), hats (21%), jeans (18%), backpacks (13%), and watches (12%), to name but a few.¹⁴¹ Although such products were not considered tobacco “advertisements” by the industry, they clearly have the effect of normalizing cigarettes, bringing them into the everyday lives of school-age youths. Other brand-name-bearing items that have been observed are Marlboro packets of tissues and Marlboro disposable cameras.¹⁰⁶

There are many examples of how brand-stretching is being implemented throughout Asia, with Malaysia some-

times regarded as a “showcase” country. Although direct advertising of tobacco was banned in Malaysia in 1993, and many tobacco control measures have been implemented (including raising taxes, banning smoking in many public places, and controlling the amount of tar and nicotine in cigarettes), indirect advertising is still permitted. In 1996, four of the top 10 advertisers in Malaysia had a cigarette brand in their name: Peter Stuyvesant Travel, Benson & Hedges Bistro, Dunhill Accessories, and Salem Cool Planet.¹⁴²

Faced with a declining market share, Benson & Hedges opened bistros in Kuala Lumpur that were well advertised on television and in newspapers. At these bistros, customers are served a special blend of Benson & Hedges coffee by waiters whose uniforms are adorned with a gold-coloured cigarette package. Gold, a prominent colour in all of Benson & Hedges-sponsored “experience environments”, was purposely selected to represent the company’s “confidence in a bright future”.¹⁴³ A spokesperson for one bistro explained, “Of course, this is all about keeping the Benson & Hedges brand name to the front. The idea is to be smoker friendly. Smokers associate a coffee with a cigarette. They are both drugs of a type”.¹⁴⁴ The bistros provide a context in which smoking is both anticipated and encouraged. Looking beyond their bistros, BAT noted that it was also planning to sell Lucky Strike clothing and Kent travel.

The effect of this “indirect” advertising is noteworthy: The number of smokers in Malaysia is increasing by about 3% per year, with the incidence among girls reported to have increased nearly threefold in the past 10 years.¹⁴⁵

Sponsoring Discos

Another form of brand-stretching has been the sponsoring of discos, which have an obvious appeal to young people. In China, BAT has aggressively and relentlessly pursued the youth market, including women. Three nights per week, one of Beijing’s large discos literally becomes “transformed into a free-floating advertisement” for BAT’s 555 brands of cigarettes. Entering the disco, one is greeted by “slim Chinese women in blue tops, miniskirts, and boots emblazoned with the 555 logo, handing out free cigarettes. Customers crowd the smoke-filled dance floor, writhing to rock music below two huge banners with the 555 logo that proclaim: ‘Be free from worldly cares’”.¹⁴⁶

Similar enticements of young women have been reported in Sri Lanka, where less than 3% of women presently smoke, and there are strong cultural sanctions against women smoking.¹³⁰ While conducting fieldwork, researcher Tamsyn Seimon visited a disco sponsored by a BAT subsidiary, the Ceylon Tobacco Company. “Within a minute,” Seimon writes, “a ‘golden girl’ approached me, holding out a box of Benson & Hedges: ‘Here take one.’ I took it—she encouraged me: ‘Go ahead—I want to see you smoke it now.’ I told her I thought it would make me cough. ‘No, these are smoother, not so strong,’ she reassured me. ‘I want to see you smoke it now’”¹⁴⁷

The golden girls, who were probably fashion models, were dressed in gold-coloured saris and matching gold platform shoes. Throughout the night, the words “Benson & Hedges” flashed onto the walls of the disco with a laser beam, as blaring music filled the room with the top 10 dance hits from the West. Benson & Hedges cigarettes and alcohol were freely available from the golden girls. Draws for prizes that included Benson & Hedges key rings, shirts, and caps were held repeatedly during the evening.¹⁴⁷

To further popularize and normalize their product, Ceylon Tobacco Company hires young women to “hang out” at popular shopping malls, on university campuses, and on upscale commuter trains, where they distribute free cigarettes and merchandise. Young women are also employed as drivers of bright red Player’s Gold Leaf-brand cars and jeeps, from which they distribute free cigarette samples and promotional items, including hats, T-shirts, and lighters.¹⁴⁷ Notably, these women are paid higher salaries than those typically earned by university graduates.¹⁴⁸

In the inner world of the disco in China, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries, young women are invited to participate in behaviours associated with being modern, fashionable, and Western. They are directly cajoled and challenged to smoke by glamorous, thin fashion models whose attire is at once traditional (the sari) and modern (gold and glittery). Fears of the cigarette’s strength are assuaged—the women are told that these are mild cigarettes, suitable for a woman. In contrast to the direct encouragement to smoke that young women encounter in the protected world of the disco, in the outside world, where smoking remains culturally inappropriate, young women are used as vehicles for product promotion rather

than as overt participants in it. Both inside and outside, however, the connection between women and cigarettes is normalized through widespread and repeated exposure.

One of the most prevalent methods of tobacco advertising in Asia is the prominent display of cigarettes in local shops. In effect, the shop itself becomes the advertisement.

Selling Fashion

Selling fashion accessories in shops has become a profitable way to advertise cigarettes indirectly, as well as a way to increase visibility of the products. For example, Marlboro Classics clothes, designed to capture the imagery of the “Wild West”, are immensely popular—there are more than 1000 established Marlboro Classic Stores in Europe and Asia.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, R. J. Reynolds has designed Salem Attitude (clothing stores) in Asia in an effort “to extend their trademark beyond tobacco category restrictions”. An internal document from the company unabashedly states, “The Salem Attitude image will circumvent marketing restrictions”.¹⁵⁰ In Thailand, Camel Trophy clothing, including T-shirts, pants, and other adventure-style garments, has become very popular among young people. While many youths are unaware that the clothes are connected to cigarettes, Camel as a brand is becoming increasingly recognizable in the Thai market.¹¹⁸

Product Placement

One of the most prevalent methods of tobacco advertising in Asia is the prominent display of cigarettes in local shops. In effect, the shop itself becomes the advertisement. Throughout India, for example, even in states that have enacted advertising bans (such as Kerala), the tobacco industry has provided signage for shops. These signs, which bear the name of the cigarette, are attractive, modern, and painted in the signifying colour of the brand. Point-of-sale advertising is an excellent means by which new brands can get

maximum exposure. Poor shopkeepers are more than willing to accept these signs that confer status to their shops. In Thailand and the Philippines, display cabinets with company and brand logos are common in almost every corner store. The cabinets, provided by the tobacco companies, ensure that cigarettes are highly visible.

A survey conducted among 6000 male and female secondary-school students in Hong Kong SAR found that more than one third of them had watched a tobacco-sponsored tennis tournament.

Sports Sponsorship

Sponsorship of sporting events, a long-established form of brand-stretching worldwide, has taken on a new intensity in Asia. In China, sports represent one of the most conspicuous examples of the commercialization of contemporary Chinese society. Philip Morris invests heavily in soccer and sponsors the national league known as the Marlboro Professional League. During the league's extremely popular, nationally broadcast games, ads for Marlboro are seen everywhere in the stadiums.¹⁵¹ Basketball is also a popular sport, and in 1996, a spokesperson for Chinese basketball noted, "We are developing our commodity economy and professional basketball treats players as commodities—so this is our direction".¹⁵² Not surprisingly, one year later, in 1997, Chinese basketball acquired its own professional league—the Hilton League—named after the cigarette brand of its sponsor.¹⁵³ Another popular event with cigarette sponsorship is the 555 Hong Kong SAR-to-Beijing motor rally, a nationally televised long-distance automobile race.¹⁵⁴ While one might think of these sports as traditionally male-oriented, women in many countries share in the excitement that such programming brings into their homes.

Tennis star Michael Chang, who was regarded as an idol of adolescent girls, regularly played in Marlboro and Salem tennis events in China, Japan, Hong Kong SAR,

and the Republic of Korea. A release of industry documents shows that Chang was paid US\$ 80 000 to "maintain a good relationship" with the companies. In addition, the organizers of the Salem Open, Hong Kong SAR's leading tennis event, signed a contract stating that they would use their "best efforts" to prevent players from criticizing smoking. Marlboro executives described Chang's signing "as a coup" and proudly disclosed in a sales review, "We have been successful in drawing an unusually targeted audience to this otherwise fairly upscale sport in great part due to Michael Chang's enormous popularity".¹⁵⁵

A survey conducted among 6000 male and female secondary-school students in Hong Kong SAR found that more than one third of them had watched a tobacco-sponsored tennis tournament.¹⁵⁶ In addition, children who were stopped on the street during a Salem tournament were asked what cigarette Michael Chang smoked, and they quickly responded, "Salem!" In 1995, Princess Diana attended the Salem Open Tennis Tournament in Hong Kong SAR and accepted a check from the sponsor, R. J. Reynolds, as a donation for the Hong Kong SAR Red Cross.¹⁵⁷ The linking of internationally regarded women with tobacco sponsorship serves to legitimize and valorize the industry, transferring attention from the selling of addiction to charitable works.

Although female athletes are less commonly sponsored by tobacco companies, one notable exception was a full-page ad that appeared in Malaysian newspapers featuring popular female climber Lum Yuet Mei suspended from a rock face. The copy read, "She took the challenge and realized her golden dream".¹⁵⁸ Displayed prominently on the page were the Benson & Hedges logo and the company's gold colours. In Viet Nam, the manufacturers of Dunhill cigarettes have given almost a half-million dollars to help develop professional soccer in the country.¹⁵⁹ They also sponsor television broadcasts of Saturday night soccer, circumventing the country's advertising ban by showing their logo with the slogan "The Best Taste in the World" without showing the actual cigarette.¹⁶⁰

Cricket, a sport that enjoys immense popularity in Asia, has long had tobacco sponsorship. In Sri Lanka, BAT began marketing Benson & Hedges by introducing it on a televised cricket match from Australia, where the Sri Lankan team, the defending world champions, was playing. This allowed the company to circumvent Sri Lanka's ban on domestic

cigarette advertising.¹⁶¹ In India, Wills, a BAT subsidiary, is the official sponsor of the national cricket team, and its logo is prominently displayed on the outfits of the players. Cricket matches are widely televised, and both male and female audiences are ardent fans of the game. Child-size T-shirts bearing the Wills logo are available internationally. Wills' sponsorship of cricket has been contested in India by anti-tobacco activists, who insist that it be stopped. A spokesperson for the Voluntary Health Association of India stated, "It [Wills' sponsorship] is not popularizing cricket in India, but hooking young people to the deadly smoking habit. The playing fields of India must not be turned into mass graves where children lie buried. It is this realization that has to seep into the Board of Cricket Control in India who have been accepting tobacco sponsorships".¹⁶²

Advertising for the Marlboro Tour in the Philippines, a 23-day cycle race on several islands, declares, "The Marlboro Tour is the biggest national summer sports spectacle held yearly in the Philippines". Internal documents, however, describe a far more insidious plan behind this event, particularly for low-income Filipinos: "The tour inspires poor young men. It gives them hope of making it big. It answers their dreams".¹⁶³

Sponsorship of Music, Art, and Cultural Events

In Sri Lanka, BAT circumvents a ban on cigarette advertising on the radio by underwriting a "Golden Tones Contest" on the English-language radio station, which is especially popular with trendy, Western-influenced youth. BAT also publishes a weekly pop music supplement in an English-language newspaper, which features large, colourful advertisements for Benson & Hedges cigarettes with the motto "Turn to gold".¹⁴⁷

In Malaysia, Rothmans' Peter Stuyvesant brand sponsored a nationwide tour by Malay singer Ziana Zain, who is very popular with adolescent girls. BAT's subsidiary, the Malaysian Tobacco Company, launched its Benson & Hedges Lights in Malaysia by organizing live concerts and subsequently releasing an album called Benson & Hedges Light Tones.¹⁶⁴ Jewel, an American teen star who is particularly popular among adolescent girls, toured Malaysia with Salem sponsorship. Of late, best-selling pop star and teen idol Robbie Williams expressed anger over his name being used to promote Benson &

Hedges in Asia. His publicist noted, "Although Robbie smokes, he would never endorse tobacco. He smokes but is desperate to give it up".¹⁶⁵

In Sri Lanka, BAT circumvents a ban on cigarette advertising on the radio by underwriting a "Golden Tones Contest" on the English-language radio station, which is especially popular with trendy, Western-influenced youth.

The opening of music stores, such as the Salem Power Station in Kuala Lumpur, has also been used to reach youth and imprint a brand logo on their consciousness.¹⁶³ Obviously, the main customers for such businesses are teens, who leave the shop as walking advertisements for cigarettes. The Philip Morris Group has sponsored the prestigious ASEAN Art Awards, which it credits with building links for cooperation between art communities in ASEAN and bringing art to the public in South East Asia.¹⁶⁶ In 1994, an exhibition of finalists was held in Singapore, where the government gave Philip Morris special exemption to stage the event;¹⁶⁷ the next award ceremony was held in Hanoi, amid much fanfare and publicity. The Philip Morris Group has also donated US\$ 100 000 for purchasing winning paintings from the contest that are kept in a permanent collection at the Singapore Art Museum.¹⁶⁶

It is important to note that the ASEAN art awards are viewed with scepticism in some countries. Because of protests from anti-tobacco activists in Thailand, the event receives little coverage in the Thai media. Activists have discussed the difficulty of protesting this contest because, technically, Philip Morris is not in breach of Thailand's tobacco laws, and the activists do not want to appear "overzealous in the eyes of the public".¹⁶⁶ Such a perception might jeopardize the legitimacy of the position they have established in trying to prevent transnational tobacco companies from making further inroads into Thailand.

In 1999, a Gay Pride event in the Philippines benefited from sponsorship by Lucky Strike, which paid for the stage and the master of ceremonies and widely publicized its contribution to the event. Some activists participating in the event were angered by the commercialization of the gathering and the selling out to big tobacco and have vowed not to allow tobacco sponsorship of such activities in the future.¹⁶⁸

Television and Movies

In the Philippines, where television advertisements of tobacco products are still permitted, commercials for Winston cigarettes show young adult American men and women happily partying. The message states that these young people (and their cigarettes) represent the “spirit of the USA”, an image that further perpetuates the colonial mentality among Filipino youth.¹⁶⁸ In Japan, television commercials for Lark cigarettes have featured popular Western actors, including James Coburn, Pierce Brosnan, and Robert Wagner, starring in action vignettes.¹⁶⁹

In 1999, a Gay Pride event in the Philippines benefited from sponsorship by Lucky Strike, which paid for the stage and the master of ceremonies and widely publicized its contribution to the event.

India, which has the largest film industry in the world, produces more than 800 films per year. Tobacco use appears to be widespread in Indian films, although no formal studies have investigated this subject. Some popular actors are renowned for their individualistic smoking styles, and it is common for youth to attempt to emulate these styles in front of their friends. Increasingly, women in the developing world are being reached by satellite television and the Internet, which are practically unrestricted. Even countries that have comprehensive advertising bans on tobacco products are exposed to tobacco promotion in these media.

The Impact of Tobacco Marketing on Smoking Behaviour: United States and Asia

Individual Behaviour

A monograph published in the United States by the National Cancer Institute in 2008 found that the total weight of evidence, from multiple studies using data from many countries, demonstrates a causal relationship between tobacco advertising and promotion and increased tobacco use.¹⁷⁰ A study that looked at prevalence data from 1890 to 1997 found two historic periods of increases in smoking uptake among young women and not among young men: one from 1926 to 1939 and the other from 1968 to 1977. The first coincided with the early Chesterfield and Lucky Strike campaigns aimed at women, and the second followed the introduction of Virginia Slims and the proliferation of women’s brands that began in 1967.^{171,172}

Research in the United States has provided evidence of the effect of advertising on youth smoking. A study of the exposure of junior-high-school students to tobacco advertising in magazines found that adolescents with high exposure to advertising were more likely to be smokers than were students with low exposure.¹⁷³ A study that reviewed 20 years of cigarette advertising found that when the advertising of a brand increased, teen smoking of that brand was three times more likely to increase than adult smoking.¹⁷⁴

A longitudinal study of adolescents in California who had never smoked provides evidence that advertising and promotional activities can influence them to start.¹⁷⁵ Although having a favourite advertisement predicted progression to use from non-use, the availability of a promotional item more effectively predicted progression to use. The authors attributed 34% of smoking initiation to advertising and promotion. Another longitudinal analysis of adolescent California never-smokers determined that tobacco marketing was a stronger influence on adolescents than was exposure to peer or family smokers or demographic variables.¹⁷⁶

Other research has also shown a link between familiarity with advertising and brand preferences to

smoking among adolescents in the United States.^{177–180} Owning promotional items and willingness to possess a promotional item have been strongly associated with smoking experimentation.^{175,178,181} In addition, two studies in the United States found that the three most heavily advertised brands—Marlboro, Camel, and Newport—have substantially higher market penetration among adolescents than among adults.^{182,183}

Research conducted after the introduction of Joe Camel revealed that children 6 to 11 years of age identified the Camel brand of cigarettes with the new cartoon camel and that these advertisements made smoking more appealing to children.¹⁸⁴ After the introduction of Joe Camel, Camel cigarettes' market share of smokers under the age of 18 increased almost 650%, from virtually nothing to almost one third, with sales estimated at US\$ 476 million per year.¹⁸⁴

In Asia, cigarette advertising has had similar effects on smoking behaviour. In one study of 198 female nursing students in Japan, 95% of the respondents reported having exposure to advertising.¹⁸⁵ More than 50% of the students who had past or current smoking histories reported being “frequently” exposed to cigarette advertising via television and billboards, while 50% of the never-smokers reported only “occasional” exposure.

A study in three cities in China looked at brand familiarity, recall of advertising, attitudes towards advertising, and cigarette use among college students at 12 universities.¹⁸⁶ Eight brands were most familiar, four foreign and four domestic. The leading brand was Marlboro. Chinese students were more likely to have seen advertising for foreign brands than ads for domestic brands. Current smokers who reported having seen a Marlboro ad in the previous month were significantly more likely to prefer Marlboros.

Among adolescents 13 to 15 years of age in Hong Kong SAR, perceiving advertisements for cigarettes as attractive was more strongly associated with smoking than were 13 other factors (adjusted odds ratio (OR) = 2.68; OR = 2.62 in boys and 2.71 in girls).¹⁸⁷ Participation in a cigarette promotional activity was also positively related to use (adjusted OR = 1.24). Another study of more than 9500 Hong Kong SAR students 8 to 13 years of age found that ever-smokers were more successful than non-smokers in recognizing cigarette

brand names and logos (adjusted OR = 1.67).¹⁸⁸ The two brands most successfully identified (95%) were Salem and Marlboro.

A 1997 study of smoking in Viet Nam found that 73% of males were smokers, and where print, electronic, and outdoor advertising were banned, 38% recalled tobacco advertising.¹⁸⁹ Of these, 71% recalled a non-Vietnamese brand as the brand advertised. Only 16% smoked non-Vietnamese cigarettes, although 38% would have liked to if they could afford them.

After the 1995 India–New Zealand cricket series, a survey was conducted among youths in Goa to determine the effect of sports sponsorship on tobacco experimentation. Despite a high level of knowledge about the adverse effects of tobacco, both boys and girls were more likely to experiment with smoking as a result of cricket sponsorship by tobacco companies.¹⁹⁰ A majority of those surveyed believed that cricket players smoked, and some expressed the opinion that smoking improved athletic performance, including batting and fielding. The notion that cigarette smoking increases concentration and helps one think is widespread among college students in South India.¹³⁴

Girls in both the industrialized and the developing world may be more vulnerable to advertisements than young men are. Studies based in the United States show that girls' sense of self-worth and perception of their appearance are lower than those of boys, that they fall with increasing age during adolescence, and that they are associated with regular smoking.¹⁹¹ Young women may also be more concerned than young men about what is socially acceptable and may face gender-role conflicts different from those of their male peers.^{192–194} Certainly, the developing world, with its much lower rates of smoking among women, is prime territory for targeted tobacco marketing that uses gender differences to create appeal. In addition to affecting individual behaviour, cigarette marketing affects organizational behaviour that influences women's preferences.

Women's Magazines

Cigarette advertising appears to affect the coverage of the risks of smoking in magazines, especially women's magazines. A study of magazines in the United States

from 1959 to 1969 and 1973 to 1986 looked at the probability that magazines carrying cigarette advertisements would have articles on the risks of smoking.¹⁹⁵ The probability of including an article addressing health risks of smoking was 11.9% if the magazine did not carry cigarette advertising and 8.3% if it did. For women's magazines, the probabilities were 11.7% and 5%, respectively. An increase of 1% in the share of advertising revenue derived from cigarette ads decreased the probability of women's magazines covering the risks of smoking three times as much as it did in other magazines.¹⁹⁵ Studies in the United Kingdom similarly found that magazines that accepted cigarette advertising were less likely to cover the health consequences of tobacco use.¹⁹⁶

A study of 13 popular women's magazines from 1997 and 1998 noted that the ratio of cigarette advertisements to antismoking messages increased from 6:1 in 1997 to 11:1 in 1998.¹⁹⁷ Between 1997 and 1998, anti-smoking messages declined 54%, and cigarette advertisements declined 13%. Articles about smoking made up 1% or less of all health-related articles. When tobacco was mentioned, it was often relegated to a mere reference. For example, a Redbook article on ways to prevent cancer mentioned quitting smoking in the introduction but did not list it as one of the "top nine ways".¹⁹⁷

Marketing of tobacco, then, affects both individual and organizational behaviour. Individual women, both novice and experienced tobacco users, receive and act on marketing messages transmitted through brand name, packaging, advertising, and promotion strategies. Direct-advertising revenues affect the coverage of health concerns about smoking in media such as women's magazines. Sponsorships and the placement of tobacco within components of popular culture send additional signals that make tobacco use appear normal and reinforce the marketing messages of more-direct forms of advertising and promotion. In some cases, such as sponsorship signage at televised motorsport racing events, sponsorship provides advertising exposure that circumvents advertising bans. Sponsorship of organizations with which women and their families interact (e.g. the arts, museums, and community fairs) associate tobacco with everyday life and the social fabric or infrastructure in which women live. Finally, tobacco support for advocacy organizations and political leadership groups limits the involvement of these organizations in protecting the health of women.

Actions Against Tobacco Marketing

There is increasing evidence that the tobacco industry is focusing its efforts on the marketing of tobacco to women globally. While the WHO FCTC provides tools to assist countries in enacting comprehensive tobacco control legislation, there remains an urgent need for global monitoring of how the industry fights and circumvents this legislation. As the Guidelines for Implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 note, there is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests. Among the countries that are Parties to the WHO FCTC, it will be critical to document delaying tactics of the industry, as well as emergent forms of advertising, promotion, and other marketing strategies being developed to specifically target women. In addition to the implementation of industry monitoring and controlling tobacco advertising, in accordance with Articles 5.3 and 13 of the treaty, respectively, it is important to ensure that gender-sensitive warnings are used on all tobacco products. The WHO FCTC's Article 11, *Packaging and labelling of tobacco products*, establishes an obligation for Parties to ensure that warning labels that clearly communicate the dangers of tobacco use in the principal national language constitute not less than 30% of the principal display areas on all tobacco products and that they rotate periodically.

Transnational tobacco companies use similar strategies at different times in different parts of the world, and domestic tobacco companies mimic the successful approaches. A gender-sensitive early warning system could advise tobacco activists about strategies likely to be used, especially new developments, enabling them to devise global responses.

Uniform, ongoing reporting on the acceptance of tobacco sponsorship funds is needed, similar to the reporting on political campaign financing in the United States. Women who belong to affinity or advocacy groups should be aware of which of these organizations accept tobacco funding and at what levels.

To promote women's active participation, tobacco control activists need to increase and strengthen their outreach to organizations concerned with children's and women's rights in order to involve them actively in this fundamental rights issue.

Wider recognition is needed of the global health problem resulting from women's tobacco use and their exposure to second-hand smoke and of the need to develop women-centred programmes.¹⁹⁸ Non-traditional partners should be sought to organize women speaking out against predatory marketing practices. A global movement to find alternative sources of funding for women's organizations should be a priority. Corporate sponsors of women's products (i.e. non-tobacco products) should be approached for this funding.

Gender-specific approaches that focus on women are needed. Media literacy skills that teach women and girls to analyse the messages of tobacco advertising and how the industry targets them are essential to protect them from these messages. Media literacy should be included in health education in schools and should also be provided by women's rights and service organizations. The potential impact of tobacco use on health needs to become a part of basic education and must be incorporated in medical- and nursing-school curricula.¹⁹⁹ In countries in Asia where smoking among women is culturally inappropriate, it is important to actively involve women in heightening community awareness of the negative effects of passive smoking on women's and children's health, as well as to encourage their efforts at helping male family members quit smoking.

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