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EDITOR'S NOTE

Volume 2 | Issue 2

As the autumn draws in and students return to their studies, this note is a reflection on developments in the higher education sector during the summer months. Still baffled by outcomes of the EU referendum in the early summer, UK universities are presently fully focused on a more immediate mini-revolution. This summer has indeed witnessed an important shake-up of the higher education landscape, as the Education Bill and the Stern Review make universities reappraise how they manage the core activities of research and teaching.

The 'post-Brexit' government decided to swiftly take forward the previously mooted plan to establish a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). The criteria chosen as a measure of excellence are summary, and fully focused on outcomes. This emphasis reflects a pragmatic view of the nature and benefits of a university education – level of satisfaction, staying power, and job destinations. These are important factors indeed, although scholars in teaching and learning may argue that they produce an insufficient measure of excellence. Within these limitations, the TEF exercise matters, as it brings to the fore debates on teaching excellence, and value for students. Discussions on learning and education in universities represent of themselves, a significant step forward. It is therefore reasonable to propose that ideas about teaching and learning in higher education will continue to become more sophisticated, and inform – even through controversy – the TEF endeavour.

The Stern Review, on the other hand, also published in the summer, will fuel reflections on research and the Research Excellence Framework (REF). In an almost benign reference to the TEF, Stern appears to imagine that both TEF and REF might work harmoniously to enhance the way universities operate. He describes a new landscape for research in which 'gaming' would disappear and inclusiveness reign. These proposals will be firmed-up before the winter and whilst some will remain sceptical of the proposed changes to the REF, the review beckons the way forward.

In this context, contributors to *New Vistas* reflect on their academic work. Bennett and Henning expose the power of photography, and its (paradoxically) fluid character – the first quite literally through a captivating weaving of text and image; the second through a discussion of the mobile nature of photography. Konwicki and Searby and Görzig discuss obesity from two very different perspectives – the potential impact of sugar taxation on this condition; and the way obese people are portrayed in the media. Also from a media perspective, Otrebski, in his article, challenges the view that old people are marginalised by advertisers. Finally, Aylesworth-Spink invites us to reflect on the role of tutors in educating students so that they can confront and respond to 'oppressive' global challenges.

Professor Joelle Fanghanel
New Vistas Editor

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MISSION STATEMENT

New Vistas is published by the University of West London (UWL) and provides a forum to disseminate research, commentary, and scholarly work that engages with the complex agenda of higher education in its local, national and global context.

Published twice a year (with occasional special issues), for a broad (academic, international and professional) audience, the journal will feature research and scholarly analysis on higher education policy; current issues in higher education; higher education pedagogy; professional practice; the relation of higher education to work and the economy; and discipline-specific research.

We welcome thought-provoking scholarly contributions from external and internal authors, with the explicit intention to give a voice to early-career researchers and scholars.

Email: newvistas@uwl.ac.uk

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University of West London

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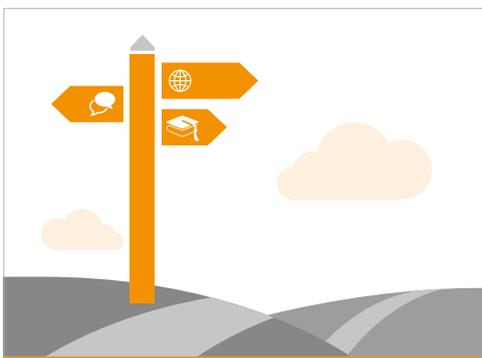
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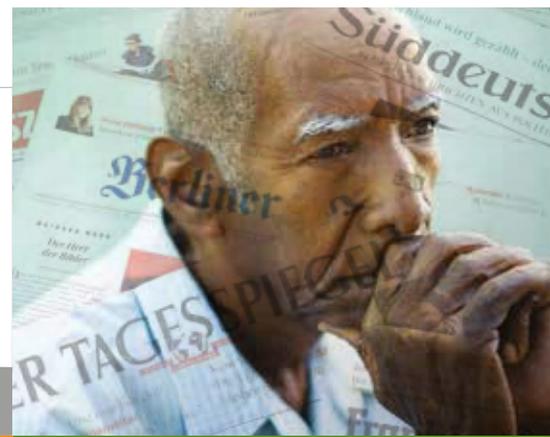


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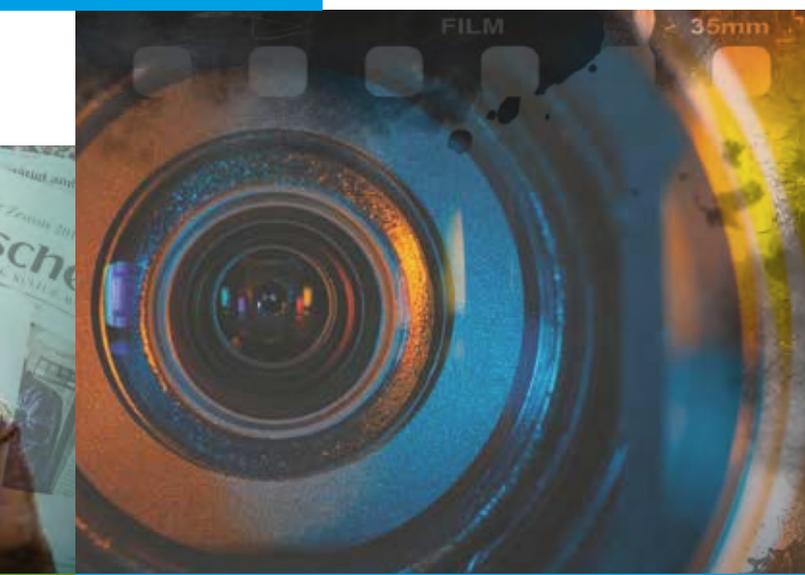
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Mission and values

New Vistas is a peer-reviewed publication edited by the University of West London. It provides a forum to disseminate research, commentary, and scholarship work that engage with the complex agenda of higher education in its local, national and global context. With contributions from external and internal authors, and the explicit intention to give a voice to early-career researchers and scholars, it adopts a broad definition of scholarship and includes work on policy, professional and educational practice, and discipline-specific research. It welcomes thought-provoking scholarly contributions that offer some of the following characteristics:

- A focus on application of knowledge, and relevance of research to practice, policy and/or work; and the wider the educational/ economic sector
- Explicit engagement with the local community and with national and international context and debates
- Discipline-specific and interdisciplinary research and scholarship

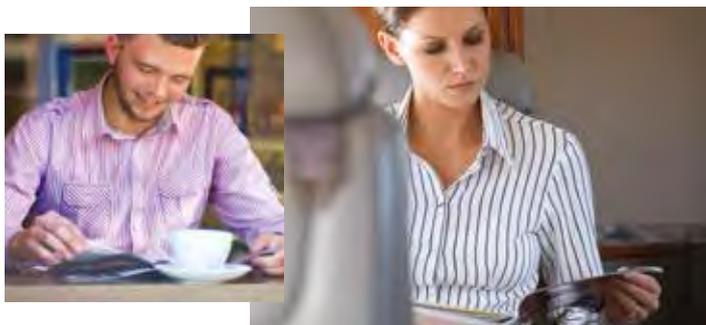
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Peter Bennett | University of West London

GOING AWAY

A photographic representation of the coast as a remembered place of childhood experience



The metaphors of the process of photography, and the fluidity of the sea, work in parallel to produce a sense of transience echoing the fleeting imprint of an involuntary memory, 'flashing up' before dissolving away again

This paper presents a piece of practice-based photographic research called *Going Away* that explores the coast as a 'remembered place' based on my own childhood visits to the seaside. The work takes the form of wall-mounted prints, while existing also as a limited edition artist's book. *Going Away* is fictional in that, although it depicts real places and real objects, it is not the same actual place experienced in childhood. Rather, it is a place that triggers notions of escape and imaginative departure into past time. The nineteen photographs that make up this body of work were taken along several distinct stretches of the Cumbrian coast. *Going Away*, although showing particular locations, suggests a more generic childhood memory of the seaside and the loss of those times.

A Place of Memory

The work uses photography to transform the coast into a place of memory, possessing a sense of latency, like a photograph emerging from a state of development or fading through overexposure to light. The metaphors of the process of photography, and the fluidity of the sea, work in parallel to produce a sense of transience echoing the fleeting imprint of an involuntary memory, 'flashing up' before dissolving away again. *Going Away* principally creates the sensation of faintly-glimpsed fragments of the past. The liminality of the coast as the border between land and sea is echoed by the liminality of the faded image, as the border between visibility and invisibility, remembering and forgetting, and the conscious and unconscious mind.

Inscription and the sea

The sea, as a surface, evades inscription and is therefore resistant to the marks of past time. Its constant motion and lack of fixity defy the locatedness of memory and erase the traces of what has been. The landscape depicted in *Going Away*, the border between land and sea, is a place where the action of the tides transforms the nature of what can be seen and thereby remembered. At low tide, the shoreline reveals vast uninhabitable spaces, inviting exploration on foot and the possibility of literally walking out to sea. The tranquil appearance unveiled by the sea's absence belies the hidden quicksand and perilous tides ready to claim the lives of those who are lured too far from the safety of land. The dwellings that inhabit this edge of land appear like models against the infinite shifting expanse and sublime power of the sea. This duality of sea and land is culturally linked to wider notions of what is geographically fixed and boundless, knowable and unknowable, stable and unstable, located and placeless.

The scenes depicted reflect such notions of fixity and impermanence; a little shack nestles on the edge of land, looking out over the infinite unknowable vastness of sea and sky (Picture 1, left). A lighthouse stands alone, warning passing vessels in a landscape where the sea is now absent; the miniature houses huddling behind are rendered insignificant by the vast scale of the empty and featureless space (Picture 2, overleaf and right). A caravan, a symbol of recreational mobility and freedom, sits on a roadside verge beside the sea, a temporary dwelling left stranded



Picture 1:
Going Away #1



Going Away, while showing the appearance of a real place, aims to present a fiction about a place of memory. But the fiction that can be created with words is different from that possible through the use of photography



in a transient emptiness (Picture 3, overleaf left). Diminutive figures are seen walking out to sea with the faint outline of distant lands rising up out of the haze of the horizon line where land and sea appear to merge (Picture 4, overleaf right). The images depict a place far from the thrust of the city, where vast reflective spaces provide a backdrop upon which to project past memories and past dreams.

The materiality of the photographic process

The materiality of the photographic process forms a prominent motif in *Going Away*, the temporality of the photographic object echoing the ephemeral presence of the scene it portrays. The 'bleaching out' of the images and liminality of the spaces suggest a metaphorical association with the processes of fading and erasure of memory. To achieve this appearance, the 'time' of the image was extended by exposing it to too much light and allowing that excess of light to distort the tonal range, giving the images a washed-out bluish green hue. Thus light becomes both the creator and eventual destroyer of the image, the appearance of the prints alluding to the look of old photographs, which over time, undergo their own material transformations, bleached by the action of light and eroded by contaminants. The visible appearance they preserve slowly 'washed away'. The materiality of the photographic remnant, while prolonging the passing of memory, can be seen ultimately to echo the transience of the moment it displaces.

The bleaching out of memory

This process of bleaching out alludes to a form of instability of both the photograph and the scene it depicts. In *Going Away*, the places presented evoke the empty aftermath of events, as if returning many years later and projecting an imagined past onto what remains. It can be argued that the fleeting impressions implied by such images form a photographic equivalent of the instability of involuntary memory discussed by Henri Bergson, which he said 'flash[ed] out at intervals' (Bergson 2004: 101), momentarily revealing the past before

disappearing once more. This is memory experienced as photographs but also as place.

The action of the sea and exposure to light both act as agents in the bleaching out of memory. The discolouration of time presents itself in the washed-out hue of the images in *Going Away*. Like the muted hue often found in archaeological fragments, colour is used to evoke a sense of the fading of the vibrancy of memory.

The metaphor of the sea

The metaphor of the sea becomes a surface for the projection of the psyche. Land represents the knowable, while the sea is the unknowable; in Freud's view, looking out to sea is linked to a sense of 'eternity', with 'a feeling of something limitless, unbounded – as it were "oceanic"' (Freud, 2004: 1), while Barthes sees a clear division between land and sea, claiming that the sea has no semiotic message. Land and sea form a binary opposition between culture and nature, history and historical void: 'Here I am before the sea; it is true that it bears no message. But on the beach, what material for semiology!' (Barthes, 1993: 112). According to Messier and Batra, the denotational 'nothingness' that Barthes associates with the sea is because 'it bears no material manifestation of human passage or cultural history in contrast to the land' (Messier and Batra, 2010: 4).

Conclusion

Going Away, while showing the appearance of a real place, aims to present a fiction about a place of memory. But the fiction that can be created with words is different from that possible through the use of photography. The camera always presents what Barthes' terms 'noeme' ('that-has-been') (Barthes, 2000: 96) and it is photography's literalness to the depiction of the subject in front of the lens that makes the use of metaphor and allegory so different compared to literature. There is always something specific about a photograph that binds it to the particular rather than the general. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes

Picture 2:
Going Away #2



For photography to transcend the specificity of subject matter, it has to present the subject using an aesthetic and language that speaks not just of this one instance, this particular scene, but relates it to a wider sense of the concept to be conveyed

provides a detailed description of the 'Winter Garden Photograph' in words, but is not prepared to show the actual image:

I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the 'ordinary'; it cannot in any way constitute the visible object of science; it cannot establish an objectivity; in the positive sense of the term; at most it would interest your studium: period, clothes, photogeny; but in it, for you, no wound. (Barthes, 2000: 73)

In order for photography to transcend this specificity of subject matter, it has to present the subject using an aesthetic and language that speaks not just of this one instance, this particular scene, but relates it to a wider sense of the concept to be conveyed. Thus in Barthes' 'Winter Garden Photograph', the meanings he wishes to convey are only accessible to him; the nature of his memories and his sense of loss are not inherent in the photograph in a way that will be apparent to a wider audience. In dealing with memory, displacements can often occur; one thing is substituted for another in space and time, and there is often a lack of factual clarity about any 'true' nature of events that took place. *Going Away* thus becomes a displaced fiction formed through photography; it is an attempt to evoke something of the sensation of those times and places lost in childhood, reconstructed through the eyes of an adult.

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About the author

Peter Bennett is Lecturer in Photography at the University of West London

Keywords

Practice-as-research, photography, memory, forgetting, place, seaside



Picture 3:
Going Away #4



Picture 4:
Going Away #16



Shelley Aylesworth-Spink | University of West London, UK

TAKING THE LEAD FROM STUDENTS

How can we connect our academic practice to raise students' awareness of complex global issues?

Studying in a world seemingly off its axis. Shattering recent events like the Bastille Day in Nice, Paris in January 2015, Brussels in March 2016, Istanbul and Orlando attacks in June, the violence of ISIS, the referendum on Britain leaving Europe, and the migration of thousands of refugees fleeing war, call into question the role of academic practice in universities. In this context, reflecting on learning theories that promote engagement can help us understand how students can become inspired as active citizens of the world.

September 2015 heralded a barrage of troubling world events and issues. The world appeared to have shifted off its axis. Beginning in September, the Syrian Civil War took a dangerous turn when Russia began air strikes from its bases in Syria, raising the global temperature with superpower involvement in war. Throughout the autumn, Europe faced a wave of nearly a million refugees seeking escape from the Syrian Civil War or similar instability and violence elsewhere.

The so-called Islamic State, meanwhile, took its fight beyond the Middle East and on October 10, killed more than 100 people at a peace rally in Ankara, Turkey. Just two weeks later, a bomb brought down a Russian passenger airliner over the Sinai Peninsula, killing all on board. In just two more weeks, 130 people were killed during ISIS attacks at four locations across Paris. The year ended in December when a couple loyal to the self-described Islamic State killed 14 people in a shooting in San Bernardino, California. These attacks prompted fresh Western air strikes against the Islamic State and sharpened domestic politics in France and the U.S. Yet 2016 began with fresh tragedies and an uncertain future for the UK and the European Union from the June Brexit referendum result.

This whirlwind of complex global issues makes us question the obligations of university educators. How do shattering events like the Paris attacks, the violence of ISIS and migration of thousands of refugees to Europe fleeing war affect university students? This is particularly relevant as University of West London students – like all students in London universities – live in an international capital; some are from Europe, others are British citizens; and most have some connection with Europe. How can we work with students so that they feel empowered to not only



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discuss but work to resolve these issues? Can our pedagogical approaches catalyse students' interest and their drive to act towards positive world change?

Using constructivist theories to challenge academic practice

Two learning theories, both within the constructivist framework, help us understand how lecturers can build academic practices that help students confront complex world issues. Guiding this discussion are social constructivist theorist Lev Vygotsky and Paolo Freire's humanistic theory, which emphasises a commitment to raising the consciousness of individuals.

In this article, I will use questioning as a reflective compass to analyse these learning theories and explore how they can help embed issues of social justice and awareness into universities' classrooms. Importantly, examining these learning theories provides a platform to consider shifting academic practices so that they recognise and inspire students as active citizens of the world.

Shaping and questioning academic practice using social development theory

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's social development theory is based on the assumption that social interaction is essential to develop awareness in children. According to Vygotsky, cultural development occurs first between people at the social level, and then inside the child at the individual level. Higher functions, he argued, begin at the level of relationships between people (Vygotsky, 1978: 57). His theoretical approach focuses on the concrete details of a child's engagement with others and with the world (Bakhurst, 2015).

This approach, when translated from its application to children to include all learners, can guide academic practice to expand global consciousness among students. Above all, this theory sets the stage for how classrooms, as part of the broader university community, can play a vital role in how students view the world. For example, classrooms can become spaces where students analyse world issues by discussing the similarities and differences that exist in different regions of the world and thus engage in comprehensive, global conversations about urgent societal issues.

The second aspect of Vygotsky's social development theory is that the potential for cognitive development depends on the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978: 85). In this zone, students develop greater skills with instructor or peer collaboration than through learning alone. Key to the zone of proximal development is the instructional technique of 'scaffolding' (McKenzie, 2000). Students build on their current knowledge to learn new information in this scaffolding environment. As parts of the scaffold fall away, students come to new levels of awareness, success and independence.

In academic practice, we can imagine the zone of proximal development related to active global citizenship. Recognising this 'zone' complements the view that affecting the world is a lofty and daunting prospect. Figure 1 (overleaf) adapts Vygotsky's zone of proximal development to provide a pathway for global citizenship development.

From this diagram, it is possible to imagine how educators can contextualize learning. Students in the centre circle may have varying current levels of global awareness. With help and structured activities on this theme in the classrooms, in the zone of proximal development, students can better see how they can affect the world's issues through their actions. The outer circle shows students and educators where they can least affect change. This adaptation of Vygotsky's model identifies a place or 'zone' where resides the greatest potential for transforming world issues.

Given Vygotsky's perspective that emphasises the significant role of social interaction, how can lecturers encourage students to further their social development? Assessments would need to be structured to include, for example, community service components, working with community members to improve non-profit services, volunteer activities or work experience. This approach recognises that students can reach their highest potential when they can see the positive effects of their actions. In this case, individual student development will build on their prior social interactions to include the social and cultural context of the communities included in their academic work. Students could then see the difference they can make in the world through their chosen academic and future career and the specificities of their chosen discipline.

Raising consciousness using Freire's humanistic theory

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, in the 30th anniversary edition released in 2000 of his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, guides educators to imbue their teaching with social justice. Freire presents a theory of humanistic learning in the context of revolutionary struggle between the oppressed and oppressors. A central idea is that the oppressed must free themselves to become people 'in the process of liberation' so that they may, in turn, free their oppressors (Freire, 2000: 56). Freire urges educators to help students understand oppression as a starting place for action towards freedom.

Contemporary academic practice should aim to raise student awareness and encourage action as global citizens; thus it relates to Freire's pedagogy in several ways. First, foundational to academic practice must be the notion of partnership with students to discuss and define global issues of oppression. By defining the fear evoked from terrorism as oppression, for example, students will more clearly see the options for liberators. Students could thus rebalance the idea of violence as coming from a place of oppression and position themselves as active participants in rejecting this course of action.

Next, as Freire tells us, educators must first question their own social identity so that they may be fully and completely available to students. Simultaneous to raising consciousness, educators recognise that students come to university with their own life history, informed and developed by their background and experiences. These students are confronting enormous change as they develop emotionally, socially and intellectually. Thus, teachers' and students' identities are tied to one another in an interlocked relationship (Rozas, 2007) that generates development and perspective-changing. In the case of global citizenship, instructors and students can enter a path of learning together about world issues.

Global issues today certainly involve oppression. Let's consider, for example, terrorist acts. They leave communities feeling fearful even as people go about their everyday lives, sitting in coffee shops and attending concerts. Similarly, we identify with the human despair of the enormous refugee migration across Europe. In much the same fashion, students understand how such global issues affect their identities. Academic practices that engage in this kind of reflection can encourage student discussions about how these issues make them feel; and how these issues impact students, and their families and friends. This dialogue can bring to light the struggle experienced by students who confront these issues. It constitutes an act of humanity as opposed to the inhumanity that lies, as Freire tells us, at the heart of the oppressor's violence. This conversation can unearth students' relationships with the world, their perception of these issues, and bring these themes down to the level of personal impact. Student self-awareness will then become a catalyst



FIGURE 1 Academic Practice for Global Citizenship: Zone of Proximal Development

Contemporary academic practice should aim to raise student awareness and encourage action as global citizens

for learning (Freire, 2000: 107). The task of the educator, then, is to show students that their perceptions matter and that they connect to the reality of the larger issues.

Freire encourages academic practices that engage students as citizens who believe they can play a part in understanding and contribute to solving some of the most vexing problems of the 21st century. Rather than seeing these issues as too big, insurmountable, or simply perplexing, educators can encourage students to confront these tragedies. Students, as part of this practice, will be encouraged to bring their knowledge of the world to the conversation. This approach sends a message to students that no problem is too complicated or too complex for their involvement and discussion.

However, working with students to identify oppression and its effects is not enough. Educators, (or a 'revolutionary educator' as described by Freire, 2000: 75) must ensure that their academic practice is infused with a profound trust in students. Instructors are not simply transferring information to students about global issues, or imposing on them a sense of hopelessness. Instead, educators practice, as Freire terms, 'liberating education,' or 'problem-posing education' that overcomes the traditional roles of teacher and student (Freire, 2000: 79). This style of teaching recognises that the educator joins in learning, and in being responsible for that learning, with students, through dialogue.

What would classrooms look like in this problem-posing model? Students are no longer

listeners but 'critical co-investigators' in discussion with each other and the teacher (Freire, 2000: 81). Instead of simply representing facts of these global issues as a lecture, under this model, lecturers represent these issues as problems in need of conversation. This style of education allows students to see the ways they exist in the world and they 'come to see the world not as static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation' (Freire, 2000: 83). Indispensable to problem-posing education is students bringing their own history and experiences to discover the perspectives of others. Freire notes that this approach 'affirms people as beings in the process of becoming – as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality' (Freire, 2000: 84). As students participate in these discussions, they will expand their understandings of complex issues. In these moments of self-awareness, students will be open to the possibilities to create change.

How can academic practice help move students from the abstract to the concrete in this dialogue? A leading response to this question is in creating a structure that encourages action. For example, groups of students could discuss the impact of terrorism on their lives, report back and then engage in a full classroom discussion to develop a vigorous analysis. Students can break down themes, seeking projects that tackle these issues. Classrooms become places where students watch interviews of specialists in cultural diversity and radical fundamentalism and where tutors post magazine and newspaper articles for discussion. Students can also be encouraged to





discuss how different media cover these issues and question, for example, why different newspapers have certain interpretations of the same facts. This approach would encourage students to view public information not as passive readers but with questions and criticism. In this model, students will own the ideas and themes as much as they do their actions so that 'the important thing... is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest' (Freire, 2000: 124) in their own suggestions and those of their classmates.

Next steps

University lecturers can learn a great deal about academic practice involving active global citizenship through the constructivist learning theories of social constructivism and humanism. These theories can be applied in academic practice in my field, public relations and advertising, and could be considered for use across all fields of study.

Vygotsky's social development theory is grounded in a learner's engagement with the world and others. I have shown how it is possible to reimagine his 'zone of proximal development' model as a way of describing and enacting individual awareness about students' impact on the world. One result of the use of this model would be bringing into the classroom an increased cultural, historical and community awareness of groups and individuals, a practice vital to the education of future generations.

The humanistic theory put forth by Freire, when applied to academic practice, involves students understanding the concepts of oppression through a 'problem-posing' learning style. Here, classrooms are sites of co-investigation where students and tutors discuss the broader impacts of world issues such as terrorism, climate change, or mass migration. At the same time, educators can devote themselves to taking action through individual and group projects that raise their awareness and commitment to world change.

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About the author

Dr. Shelley Aylesworth-Spink is a Senior Lecturer in Public Relations in the London School of Film, Media and Design at the University of West London

Keywords:

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Dennis A. Otrebski | University of West London

ON THE FRINGE OF SOCIETY?

Investigating the standing of older people in the perception of German society

In a previous paper, I discussed the value of looking at a social group through the lens of media studies to fully understand stereotyping (Otrebski, 2015a). Now, having spent the past twelve months considering the portrayal of older people in advertising, I am able to challenge the claims made in previous research that older people are 'eking out a shadowy existence' in the perception of German society (Kuehne, 2007: 108); a perception allegedly marked by scant attention, marginalisation and dismissiveness.

My research since the 2015 paper has shown that the so-called 'shadowy existence' or invisibility of older people is, in fact, a myth. However, when this segment of society is looked at more closely and not treated as a homogenous group, one can see that certain sub-groups are indeed being ignored – the elderly aged 75 years and over and non-white older people.

Vitality theory

The present paper considers this subject – which is of interest to many academic disciplines, including sociology, anthropology and gerontology – from a media studies perspective, following the idea of 'vitality theory' (Ehala, 2010). According to this theory, the standing of any social group within a society is reflected by the media and, thus, can be successfully determined through the examination of, for example, advertising. Vitality theory is based on the grouping of individuals via socio-demographic variables, such as their proportion of a population, geographical distribution, political awareness and social status. Behind this lies the assumption that groups of greater number and social importance are considered to have greater 'vitality', and thus continue their survival as groups; and their groups' specific features are propagated. A group that possesses more vitality will receive much greater support and representation in society as a whole, including in the media. Therefore, by looking at how groups are portrayed within the media, one can gain an insight into the social standing and the perception of these people within a society.

The present paper shows how the perception of a social group can be examined and interpreted through analysing advertising and how it can be

theoretically framed by vitality theory. Three dimensions seem to be particularly suited to evaluating the vitality of the social group of older people, aged 50 years and over, in this regard – the occurrence of older people in absolute terms, the occurrence of older people in relative terms, and the role prominence assigned to older characters within advertising.

A content analysis, comprising a frequency analysis complemented by qualitative insights, was chosen to examine a selection of contemporary German print advertisements featuring adult characters. The data set comprised a total of 1,017 adult characters that were found in 1,422 advertisements from four of the country's most circulated weekly magazines (*Stern*, *Bunte*, *Bild der Frau*, *Hörzu*) that were published between January and March 2013, reaching a combined readership of over 20 million people every week.

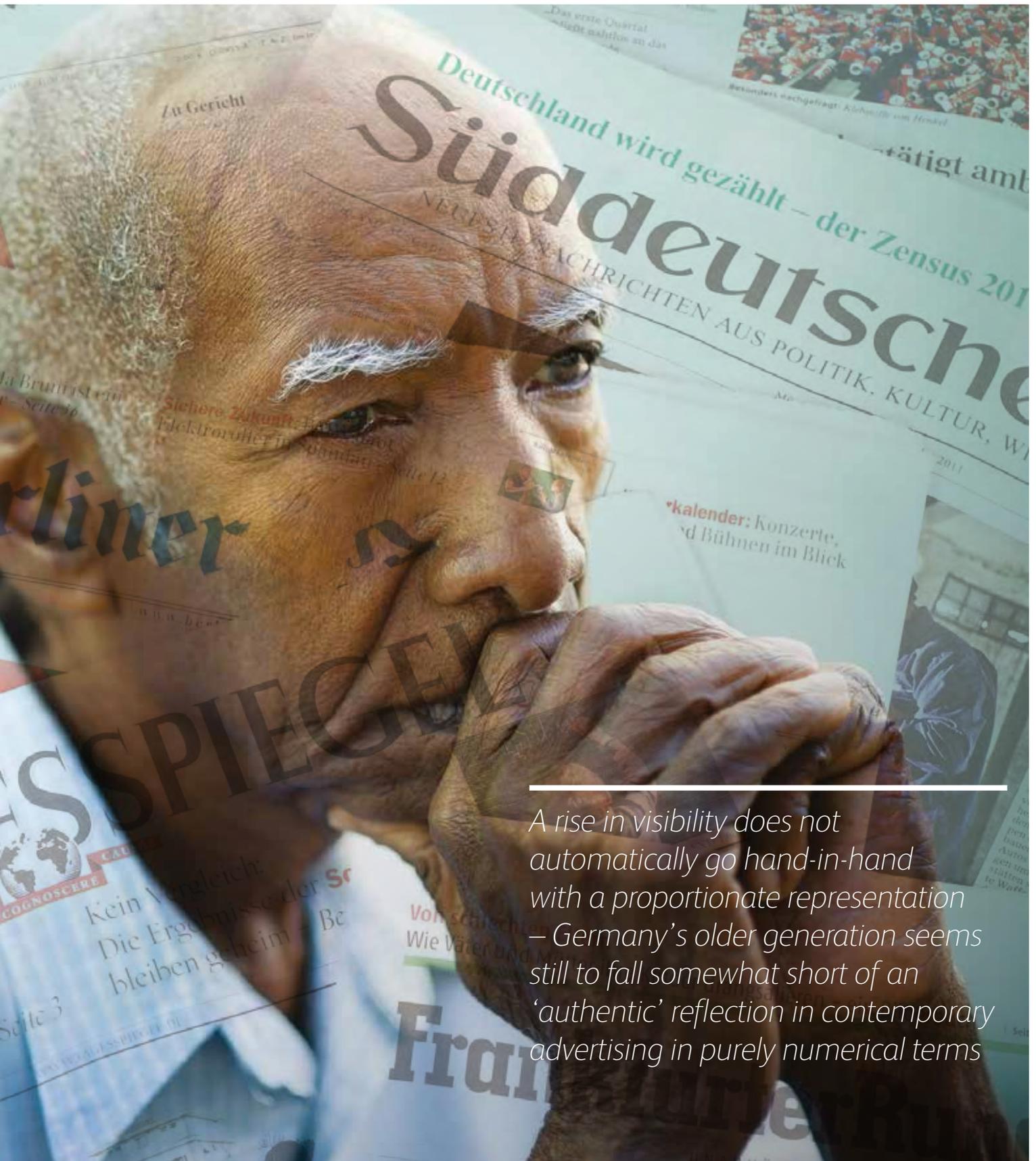
The myth of invisibility in old age

Looking at contemporary print advertising in Germany, it appears that older people are established characters in the stories told by advertisers. There is an undeniable notion of vitality – in the sense of *visibility* – of this social group, with almost every fourth advert involving an adult character also featuring at least one character aged 50 years and over.

Although the trend towards greater visibility of older people in marketing communications is difficult to trace with great precision in Germany, due to the scattered research on this topic and the varying findings of previous studies (Otrebski, 2015b), it seems legitimate to say that, overall, there has been an increase over the past five decades; from below 5% of characters featured in advertising in the 1960s and 1970s to more than 23% today. This social group is therefore acknowledged in today's perception of German society and furthermore, it holds an increasingly prominent social standing and therefore can be considered far from the 'fringe' or the shadows of German society.

This rise in visibility, however, does not automatically go hand-in-hand with a proportionate representation of this population group, where circa 42% of the population are currently aged 50 years and over. In this regard, Germany's older generation seems still to fall somewhat short of an 'authentic' reflection





A rise in visibility does not automatically go hand-in-hand with a proportionate representation – Germany’s older generation seems still to fall somewhat short of an ‘authentic’ reflection in contemporary advertising in purely numerical terms



in contemporary advertising in purely numerical terms. Although this does not contradict the finding above that older people have visibility within German society *per se*, it could indicate a negative bias against this age group.

An under-representation of older characters does not come as a surprise, as this has been pointed out before by other researchers – such as Hastenteufel, Dennersmann and Ludwig, or Roehr-Sendlmeier and Ueing (cf. Otrebski, 2015b) – and is often interpreted as a negative public attitude towards old age. Yet, in his study from 2009, Schwender highlighted that, in addition to older characters, teenagers (aged between 13 and 17 years), for example, were also largely under-represented in German television spots; something that appears to still hold true for contemporary print advertisements. This suggests that the under-representation of old age might be part of a phenomenon of favouritism towards younger adults rather than an old age-specific negative preconception.

A case of favouritism

An explanation for this favouritism towards younger adults is easy to find – being, or at least appearing to be, young, active, spontaneous and self-determined is a central element that most advertisers work with, in order to arouse desire in the audience for a brand, product or service. Kochhan (1999) summarises these kinds of characteristics under the term *youthfulness* and puts them on the same level of importance in terms of successful advertising, as the actual presentation of the goods or services promoted within a campaign. It is easier, of course, to create youthful characters and situations believably and convincingly by utilising age groups that embody these desired characteristics. Whilst teenagers often lack the monetary funds – as well as social and legal self-determination – to authentically embrace every sort of activity and act of spontaneity in life, in the minds of advertisers older generations often struggle with appearing to be young and active enough. The older a person is, as is commonly believed, the more this person is set in his/her ways, often shying away from spontaneity in life – thus potentially being a less attractive choice for advertisers compared to a younger adult.

But there is more to this apparent favouritism than just the embodiment of visible youthfulness. The chronological age of the target audience also plays a role in the casting of characters in advertising campaigns. This choice is also influenced by the target audience's *desired age*; this means, for teenagers, appearing to be slightly older; and for older adults, slightly younger – in both cases depicting a desired age works in favour of younger adults.

That the under-representation of older people in contemporary print advertisements is unlikely to be due to a negative bias against this social group is also supported by insights into those characters' role prominence. Older characters are frequently shown in lead roles within the stories told by advertisers, thus regularly demonstrating their relevance in a variety of reflections of social situations. In fact, characters aged 50 years and over are significantly more often assigned lead roles in contemporary advertising, and less often seen in minor roles – in the period I considered for this research – compared to younger adults, weighing palpably against the theory that there exists a negative bias against old age.

In light of these findings, older people in general can by no means be considered invisible or eking out a shadowy existence in Germany. Based on vitality theory, the group's regular occurrence does not only indicate visibility, but, in combination with the pronounced role prominence of older characters, speaks for a solid standing within German society, despite the prevailing under-representation with regard to their share within the population demographics.

A whitewashed 'young-olds' representation

Whilst older people in general might not be invisible, there are two aspects of this social group where invisibility appears to be very much the case in contemporary German advertising, and thus potentially in the perception of German society. Those are ethnic diversity and 'old age diversity'.

Although Germany might not have the reputation of being a particularly culturally diverse nation, in terms of older people, the country currently boasts a fairly multi-cultural cohort. This is mainly due to Germany's federal recruiting programme from the



The older a person is, as is commonly believed, the more this person is set in his/her ways, often shying away from spontaneity in life – thus potentially being a less attractive choice for advertisers compared to a younger adult



1950s and 1960s, during which a large number of foreign workers were purposefully recruited by the government to migrate to West Germany, in order to meet the demands of a booming post-war economy. The recruitment programme predominantly targeted young men in their early 20s from Mediterranean countries; hence, most foreign workers during that time arrived from Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and the former Yugoslavia.

As a consequence of the active recruitment policy, the foreign population in Germany rose from 1.2% in 1960 to about 4.9% in 1970. By 1973, some 2.6 million foreign workers had migrated to Germany (Tews, 1999). Unlike the original plans of the programme's initiators, who foresaw only a short average residence of a few years for each new recruit, a large number of workers stayed in Germany after their individual working cycles ended. Thus, these former *Gastarbeiter* – i.e., 'guest-workers' – and their spouses, who arrived in the following years in the course of a subsequent federal family reunification programme, have become an integral part of the country's society and are now part of its older generation (Bernstein, 2015). Today, approximately a quarter of Germany's population has a migrant background. Slightly less than one third of this group is currently aged 50 years and over, equalling approximately 6 million people, or every sixth older person in Germany, making this age group moderately multi-ethnic.

Despite the fact that Germany's society is multi-ethnic, older characters in advertising do not demonstrate a level of ethnic diversity remotely commensurate with the ethnic composition of this age demographic. In contemporary print advertising, less than 1% of characters presented are of a non-white / non-Caucasian background, making ethnic diversity elusive and also signalling that scant attention is given to the specificities of old age within Germany.

Once again, however, the lack of 'authentic' representation – or, in this case, adequate multi-ethnic reflection – appears not to be limited to older people. Looking beyond the age group of 50 years and over, the lack of ethnic diversity in advertisements appears



to be a phenomenon that is irrespective of age – pointing at a potentially bigger issue with regard to the perception and standing of ethnic minorities within German society.

Old age diversity appears to be particularly critical in relation to the current perception of older people, with characters beyond the age of 75 years being almost invisible in contemporary print advertising. *Prima facie*, it might seem surprising that this age group should be more severely under-represented than their younger counterparts as, after all, the elderly are the fastest growing age demographic in almost all Western societies, including the US, the UK and Germany (Brooks, 2013 for example). A more thorough look at this particular age group, however, reveals a number of possible reasons for their particular under-representation in advertising that need to be considered. For one, it may relate to the wealth, spending power and attitude to spending of this social group; or it may be due to the fact that the depiction of very old characters might be unappealing, even to this age group itself.

Over the past two decades, countless market reports and surveys from governmental bodies have established the increasing discretionary income of the target audience '50-plus' relative to other age demographics in Germany. Compared to previous older generations, the attitude to spending of this golden market segment has changed – they wish to treat themselves and enjoy their own wealth. The target group '50-plus', however, is not a homogenous group. With an average life expectancy in Germany nowadays of 80.57 years, this group subsumes people from well over three decades. The increase in wealth and discretionary income is largely documented for the younger end of this market segment. Similarly, the change in attitude towards more spending appears to be only registered in those younger than 75 years of age. It therefore seems unsurprising that the elderly do not attract the same attention from advertisers as younger old people, and thus that they are under-represented within advertising, whose primary goal is to sell.

In addition, there might be an extra layer of difficulty in portraying the upper end of the age scale in a way

that is both positive and authentic. Advertisers may struggle to portray the elderly without showing old age deficits that are unappealing, and a visual image of old age deficits may give a negative connotation to the product through mere proximity or being presented within the same context (Cook, 2001). Hence, the elderly may be seen as somewhat risky characters and a challenge that advertisers are not prepared to take on. There may not even be any reward for taking it on, as the elderly may prefer to see 'young-olds' in advertising, who portray their desired age which is, according to representative studies, approximately 10 to 15 years younger than their own chronological age (RUB, 2006).

Finally, advertisers may struggle with the role that elderly people are able to play believably within advertising. Typical strategies such as desirability through beauty, or status through a prominent position in society, might be more challenging to adopt with very old characters. Trying, for example, to convey expertise or authority in order to attach cachet to a product – a common strategy when employing older models – might be difficult with an elderly model, as people aged 75 years and over are likely to have been outside of the job market for a significant period of time, with the average age of retirement currently at 63.5 years in Germany; so their knowledge may be seen as outdated and unconvincing. Using beauty and sexual appeal to sell products, another common strategy, with very old models might also confound advertisers.

Overall, the under-representation of elderly people therefore is not necessarily a reflection of marginalisation within society, but is likely to be due to a mix of reasons. It appears that advertisers are not targeting the upper end of the age scale as potential customers because of their assumed lack of financial resources and / or their unwillingness to indulge in consumerism. Furthermore, this age group is not conventionally understood to have visual appeal (including to the elderly themselves), and the difficulty in creating *authentic* and at the same time *appealing* elderly characters would require advertisers to come up with new, or at least different advertising strategies.



From a socio-political point of view, a positive-authentic image appears to be important, as public images of social groups have the power to shape people's perception of others – in the long as well as in the short run

Conclusion

Vitality theory has enabled me to show that older people in general are a well-represented demographic group in advertising, and are likely to have a good standing within the perception of current German society. However, the findings also show that despite the apparent visibility and vitality of older people as a social group as a whole, there are still prevailing aspects of old age that are clearly neglected in advertising, and possibly within the perception of society.

Creating an authentic and positive image, however, could and should be in the interest of both businesses and politicians. For businesses, the inclusion of, for example, ethnic diversity in advertising might lead to improved penetration of existing markets. According to insights from *ethnic marketing*, the use of a more realistic ethnic composition within communications campaigns might be beneficial in creating a broader appeal for a brand and thus increasing demand in consumer groups within existing markets (Ayguen 2016). This seems particularly relevant in times where most markets appear saturated and new target groups are desperately needed.

From a socio-political point of view, a positive-authentic image appears to be important, as public images of social groups have the power to shape people's perception of others – in the long as well as in the short run (Otrebski, 2015a). Public discourse – largely shaped by the media and thus by advertising – influences in many ways how people perceive and evaluate members of a particular social group. Public images can assign a specific place within society to individuals and create conditions that lead to the confirmation of that image – like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Furthermore, they can cause compliant behaviour, by the mere fact that the group members concerned are aware of the existing public perception. However, in rapidly ageing societies, such as in Germany, maintaining an open mind regarding the potential social contribution of older people is crucial in order to remain competitive.

About the author

Dennis A. Otrebski is a PhD researcher in the London School of Film, Media and Design at the University of West London

Keywords

Image of ageing, vitality theory, advertising research, ethnic diversity, Germany

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Tony Searby | University of West London, UK
Anke Görzig | University of West London, UK

DOES STEREOTYPING EXACERBATE OBESITY?

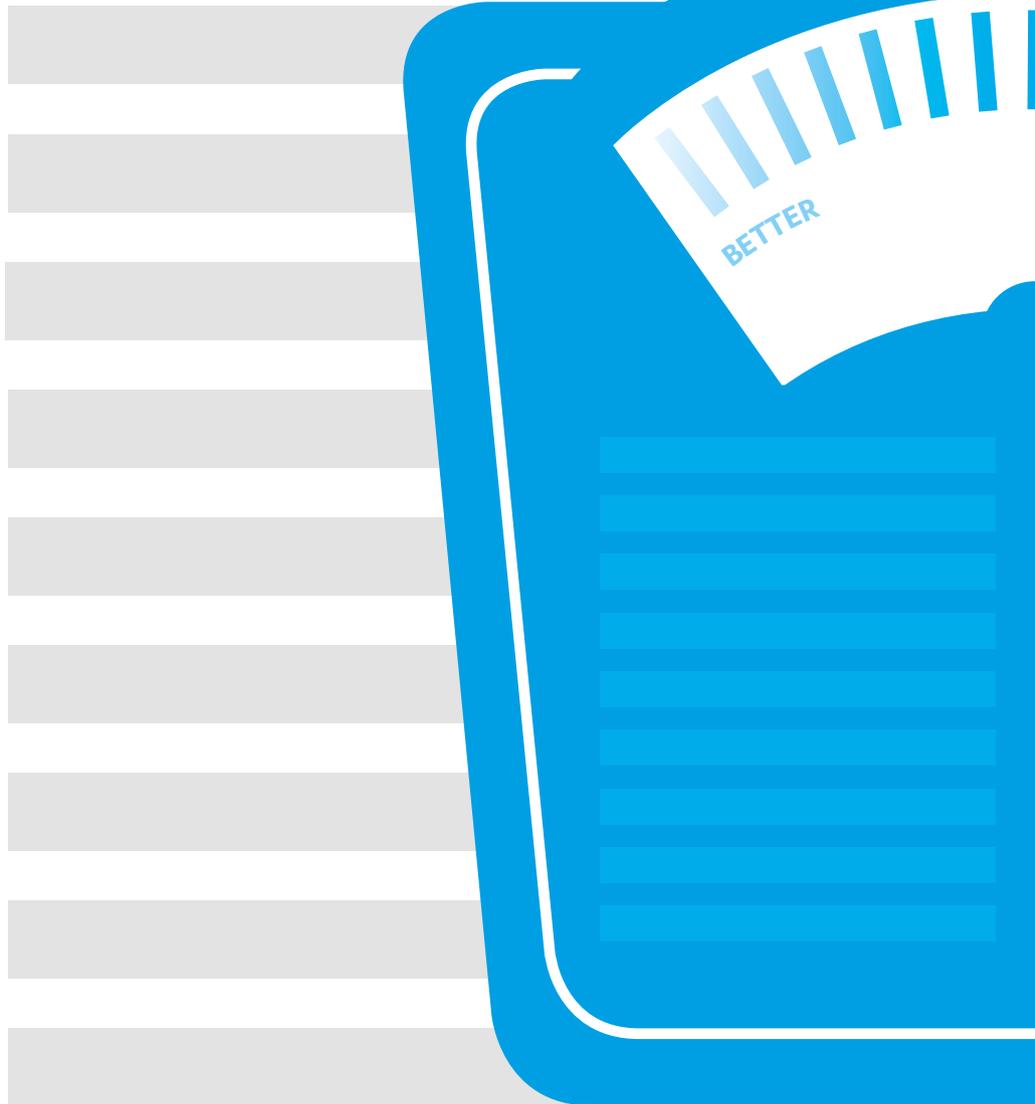
Considerable evidence suggests that stereotypical stigmatisation of obesity is psychologically damaging and counter-productive to successful weight loss

As rates of obesity continue to rise throughout most of the world, much has been researched and written on the adverse consequences of weight gain to physical health (Reilly, Methven, McDowell, Hacking, Alexander, Stewart and Kelnar, 2003). Much less attention has been given to the emotional consequences of obesity, particularly around the topic of weight bias. Negative stereotypes about people carrying extra weight – including descriptions such as ‘lazy’, ‘undisciplined’ and ‘unintelligent’ (Schwartz, Chambliss, Brownell, Blair and Billington, 2003) – predominate, and are frequently justified by the popular media as being necessary motivators to help people lose weight. However, such popular perceptions are contradicted by research evidence strongly suggesting that stigmatising stereotypes have numerous detrimental effects, especially within the areas of mental health, discrimination and prediction of future weight gain (Jackson, Steptoe, Beeken, Croker and Wardle, 2015; Puhl and Heuer, 2010).

The current research aims to gain an understanding of how negative stereotypes of obese individuals might be created, maintained and perpetuated via the use of social media. It uses the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2006) which is based on the known evolutionary need to answer two important questions when encountering strangers, which need to be evaluated quickly and with the minimum of mental effort (Cuddy et al. 2006):

1. Are strangers friendly and likely to cooperate in our quest for resources, or are they a threat and likely to compete against us for resources? (*warmth* dimension)
2. How competent do they appear in their ability to cooperate with us or compete against us? (*competence* dimension)

The crossover of the resulting dimensions of perceived warmth and competence establishes four clusters of stereotypes (i.e., high warmth/high



Popular perceptions are contradicted by research evidence strongly suggesting that stigmatising stereotypes have numerous detrimental effects, especially within the areas of mental health, discrimination and prediction of future weight gain



competence, high warmth/low competence, low warmth/high competence, low warmth/low competence). Each of those has been shown to elicit a specific emotional response (Cuddy *et al.*, 2006). This model has been further extended to include behavioural responses to stereotypes based on passive and active facilitation and harm. This model is based upon Cuddy *et al.*'s 'Behaviour from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes' (BIAS) framework, (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2007).

The SCM and BIAS models provide a basic framework for understanding how obese individuals are stereotyped by society. Competence is underpinned by status and, in modern western society, excessive weight gain does not confer status or indicate competence. The stereotype for obesity is not admired or envied (Hilbert, Rief and Braehler, 2008). However regarding the dimension of warmth, two outcomes are potentially realistic, depending upon whether obesity is attributed to external and uncontrollable, or internal and controllable factors. If obesity is perceived to be of external causality then obese individuals will be seen in a similar way to the elderly or the disabled, and regarded as victims of circumstance, warranting sympathy or pity. Alternatively, if obesity is seen as within the control of the individual they are likely to be blamed for their weight gain and viewed with contempt or even disgust (Weiner, Perry and Magnusson, 1988).

Social media provides a unique way to explore which (if any) of these two possibilities might occur. The current research will evaluate readers' written responses to articles about obesity and consider the content of their replies at the level of cognition, affect and behaviour, and search for patterns of integration and connection as predicted by the Stereotype Content Model. It focuses on the perceptions and reactions of newspaper readers and seeks to further explain the underlying causes of prejudicial stereotyping against obese individuals.

Method

Readers' written responses to two *Daily Mail* articles were obtained from their online website. 'Obesity is a disability' was chosen because the article contrasted obesity with disability. The second article, 'Mocking the overweight should be illegal' was based on expert research and provided a very empathic portrayal of obesity. Thematic analysis using a top-down approach was used to evaluate the data with initial themes and codings. Participants were readers of the *Daily Mail* who responded to the two articles.

Data consisted of a selection of online written responses to the two *Daily Mail* articles on obesity. 'Obesity is a disability' was published on 18th December 2014 (containing a total of 1470 responses) and 'Mocking the overweight should be illegal' on 24th March 2015 (containing a total of 1198 responses). This article was based on the research of Sarah Jackson (Jackson, *et al.* 2015).

Reader responses to the two articles were evaluated on an oldest to newest basis and were included until all the key themes were well represented by a variety of different responders and no new relevant themes emerged. The anonymity of responders was maintained by removing all names from their responses.

Results

A clear majority of reader responses stereotyped obese people within the 'contemptuous' quadrant, characterised by a lack of both warmth and competence. The key themes to emerge are illustrated in a concept map which shows that specific beliefs about the causes, continuation and reversibility of obesity are necessary for a consistent stereotype to emerge.

The single most important opinion expressed by readers is that obesity is a choice. The causation of obesity is a set of choices that are entirely controllable for every individual, and are expressed through a set of behaviours relating to food intake and activity levels:

What utter rubbish (in response to the article 'Mocking the overweight should be illegal'). You can't help the colour or the sex you are born but you sure as hell can help yourself from becoming obese! Fact. Fat people are fat because they eat too much and don't exercise enough. End of!

Most obesity is just plain stupid greed with choice unlike say Parkinson's. What next? Laziness is a disability?'

Choices extend to the correction of obesity which is seen as entirely reversible through the same set of behaviours:

Obesity is not a disease. It is a lifestyle choice, if you do not want to be fat eat less and exercise!

How can obesity be construed as a disability when a fat person could 'cure' it? This is an insult to people who are truly disabled i.e. through genetics or an accident, not through pure greed!



However the choices facing an obese individual are not free choices, they are moral choices, with people who make the 'wrong' choice deserving of punishment:

You cannot choose your race or gender [for most of us]. But fat is a moral failing. And WE are paying the price, in the NHS and in utter disgust and horror.

Fat people should be shamed and have to pay more for flights / clothing etc. they are horrible

This series of attributions creates a stereotype that stigmatises obese individuals as lacking warmth and competence and, as predicted by the Stereotype Content Model, this was expressed in strongly emotional language implying both passive and active harm:

Obese people purposely let themselves become obese. They brought the ridicule and shame and health problems on themselves and deserve nothing except contempt from all hard working tax payers who are stuck paying towards their health costs and their benefits claims through absolutely no fault of their own.

The Stereotype Content Model predicts that lack of warmth occurs when a stereotyped group is seen as competing for resources. The previous comments all reflect indeed a perceived financial injustice caused by obese people that needs to be corrected.

Not all responders see obese individuals in such a contemptuous light. Some show a level of acceptance more consistent with a paternalistic stereotype. A clear predictor of whether obese people are perceived with hostility is the degree to which obesity causation is attributed to internal controllable factors or a broader mix of causes:

People are overweight for many different reasons not just lazy people. Think before you verbally abuse someone when you don't know what they are going through. One day it could be you going through something awful.



Many responders to the ‘obesity is a disability’ article drew a strong distinction between disability and obesity. Obesity was rejected as a disability, not because obese individuals lack functional capacity, but because it was perceived to be self-inflicted

A few readers described obese individuals in line with the paternalistic (Cuddy et al., 2006) stereotype:

God people are nasty on here! All of the nasty ones are sat at home hiding behind the anonymity of social media. I wonder how rude they would be face to face? No matter if someone is fat or thin they are our fellow humans and deserve kindness.

A large number of responders justified their negativity towards obese individuals by claiming that mocking or shaming is beneficial. Often coming from personal experience, they suggested such attitudes are necessary to motivate obese individuals lose weight:

Mocking the overweight should be a requirement. If I hadn't been relentlessly teased for being fat and lazy I wouldn't have got angry enough to lose 8 stone. Ridicule and mock I say. It worked for me.

Two further themes emerged. In disagreeing with the views of the article supporting obese individuals, many responders resorted to derogatory personal attacks, such as:

Oh shut up!! Who the hell are these people to tell us what to say and think...the bloody thought police are alive and well in this PC-mad country

In addition some responders supported the view that obesity is a disability:

I totally agree with this article. Bullying plain and simple.

These received some of the highest levels of ‘disliked’ by fellow responders. Thus, it seems that people who challenge stigmatising stereotypes, end up being stereotyped in the same way.

Many responders to the ‘obesity is a disability’ article drew a strong distinction between disability (typically perceived as warm and incompetent in the Stereotype Content Model) and obesity (viewed as lacking in both warmth and competence). Obesity was rejected as a disability, not because obese individuals lack functional capacity, but because it was perceived to be self-inflicted.



Discussion

From both a medical and legal perspective, disability is defined in purely functional terms (The Free Medical Dictionary). From this perspective one would expect obese individuals to be stereotyped alongside disabled individuals in a paternalistic way. However, a majority of responders to the *Daily Mail* article linking obesity with disability, perceived obese individuals in a very negative light, blaming them for their circumstances, shaming them, and generally responding with contempt and disgust.

Can this initially surprising phenomena be explained by the Stereotype Content Model? The model predicts low competence groups will be seen as an 'evolutionary threat' (low in warmth) when they are perceived to be competing for resources (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2006). Certainly a perception of a number of responders is that obesity prevents individuals from being effective in the workplace and that the obese are a greater drain upon NHS resources. Obese individuals are seen as being fully in control of their weight and therefore making poor or even 'immoral' choices, while the disabled are seen as victims of their circumstances. The very limited number of reader responses that considered multiple causes for obesity showed greater understanding and sympathy.

This is the strongest theme to emerge from this study and is consistent with the findings of a thorough review of obesity stigma by Puhl and Heuer (2010). They conclude that stigma occurs when groups are seen as immoral, lazy and incompetent, and therefore responsible for their condition. Stigma is therefore justified as a deterrent to others and as an incentive to weight loss. However these stereotypical beliefs are at complete odds with the consensus of scientific evidence (Puhl and Heuer, 2010). Many of the causes of obesity are outside the control of the individual, and far from helping individuals lose weight, stigma results in a host of psychologically damaging outcomes, together with an increased probability of further weight gain (Jackson, Steptoe, Beeken, Croker and Wardle 2015). While Puhl and Heuer's (2010) paper provides a clear description of obesity stigmatisation, it provides limited explanation of the deeper causes.



Stigma is therefore justified as a deterrent to others and as an incentive to weight loss. However these stereotypical beliefs are at complete odds with the consensus of scientific evidence





One of the study's strength lies in the fact that people who respond to articles anonymously are generally quite emotionally uninhibited in their responses. This gives a richness and honesty to the content, which could not be obtained through questionnaire surveys.

Conclusion

This study has several limitations. First, reader responses are selected from people who both read and then respond to articles published by the *Daily Mail*, and hence are representative of only a specific profile of people, and does introduce bias – although their views may be presented as illustrative of this group of readers. Second, while the study showed that the majority of responses supported the contemptuous stereotype over the paternalistic stereotype, this ought to be investigated in greater depth through a larger sample, or through quantitative content analysis examining the ratio of paternalistic to contemptuous stereotypes.

One of the study's strength, however, lies in the fact that people who respond to articles anonymously are generally quite emotionally uninhibited in their responses. This gives a richness and honesty to the content, which could not be obtained through questionnaire surveys.

Although not representative of society as a whole, the sample involved in this study shows that a significant number of people have strongly prejudicial and detrimental attitudes towards obese individuals. Their beliefs are based on the fundamental error that obesity is entirely internally controlled. Changing such entrenched attitudes is the next challenge. Hopefully the efforts of educational organisations can work towards changing this state of affairs. The study of obesity needs to emphasise its medical nature to help quash the stereotypes that surround this topic.

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About the authors

About the authors: Tony Searby is an alumnus of the University of West London and Dr Goerzig is a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of West London

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Obesity, stereotyping, stigmatisation

Michelle Henning | University of West London, UK

UNFIXING THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

Towards a new history of photography

Over the past few years I have been engaged in writing a cultural history of photography, to be published by Routledge. You may wonder why such a history is needed, when there are excellent books on the subject already. Here, I set out the difference between my approach and existing ones, in particular my emphasis on media, mobility and transience, and some of the ways in which I am exploring this through archival research.

The established histories of photography are hybrid affairs. Most combine a technical account, which addresses the impact of various technical innovations, with an art history that attends to artistic movements and key aesthetic and stylistic changes, highlighting significant individual photographers and works. Added to this mix is a social history of vernacular photography, especially portraiture and family photography; and, since the 1970s, an institutional history that considers the role of photography in policing, colonialism, and commodity culture, in the construction of deviancy and madness, and in the production and reproduction of norms of sexuality and gender.

Such histories are useful and have much to teach us, but if there is a need to write the history of photography once more, and differently, it is because they fail to account for certain aspects of photographic practice that have long existed, but which have only recently become particularly vivid or noticeable. These aspects include photography's mobility, by which I mean the ability of a photograph to be transmitted, projected, and transported, and to make other kinds of image mobile through reproduction. This ability has been highlighted by recent developments in digital networked photography, as has the transience of certain kinds of photographic images, which appear not as frozen moments, but as snatched glimpses, that fade away almost as soon as they are seen.





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The notion that to take a photograph is to capture a moment is an idea that derives from French humanist photography, especially from Henri Cartier-Bresson's 'decisive moment' (1999), but it has been extended and applied to photography as such. Another central tenet of photography theory (exemplified in Susan Sontag's *On Photography* and Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*) is the idea that while we submit ourselves to the camera in an attempt at immortality, we find ourselves frozen in images eerily predictive of death. This deathly quality is often seen as an essential characteristic of photography as a medium. Yet, my research shows that this way of understanding photography also has narrow origins, emerging first in the late 1920s in the very specific social and cultural climate of inter-war Germany. Similarly, photography's fleeting, mobile and communicative qualities have become more vivid in our own specific historical context: it is, above all, the development of the smartphone camera and of visual communication apps such as Instagram and Snapchat that has brought these qualities to the fore. Commentators often assume this is a dramatic shift in the uses and practice of photography or a change in the nature of photography but in fact we can trace these qualities back to the various moments of the medium's invention in the nineteenth century.

One way to establish this alternative history is through archival research. My own recent research in the British Library and at the Center for Creative Photography in Tucson, Arizona, has been partly about finding neglected or unusual examples of photographic practice and re-reading early histories and textbooks on photography, including early editions of some of the most canonical and influential texts. I wanted to track the point at which a certain dominant way of explaining photography becomes embedded and unquestioned and also to find out how photography was conceptualised at different moments: what Thomas Skaife meant by 'instantaneous photography' in the 1860s, for instance, and how this concept linked photography to telegraphy, or what we can learn about photography as a medium by examining René Dagron's use of microfilm and carrier pigeons in the early 1870s (Skaife, 1860). This is significant because photography is so frequently excluded from histories of the media, being neither electrical nor a broadcast medium in its early incarnations, yet photography was central to what the Victorians themselves frequently referred to as the annihilation of time and space produced by modern media and transport systems (it was a cliché of nineteenth century journalism: on May 31 1844, for example, a writer in the *Baltimore Sun* commented on Morse's telegraph that 'time and space has been



completely annihilated'; earlier, in 1830, another journalist in the *Charleston Courier* described a railroad trip in the same terms).

Just as existing histories neglect this mobile quality of photography, so photography theory ignores or devalues it. In particular, theorists have been suspicious of the facility by which photographs become detached from contexts and captions, the ease by which they become ambiguous or can be given new meanings with new captions, new interpretations. This is no coincidence, I think, given that many theorists of photography come from literary, text-based disciplines rather than from art history or visual culture. Photography theory also identifies an inevitable and essential tendency in photography towards the static through processes of objectifying and freezing. The photograph objectifies the person depicted, and this is exacerbated in the case of images of women, since women are already culturally constructed as objects for a male gaze (Solomon-Godeau, 1991). Photographs are understood as putting things (and people) on display, turning them into spectacle. Spectators, the theory goes, collude with this objectifying process and the apparently static character of the photograph intensifies this, allowing for a sustained and unflinching gaze upon a subject that can neither return the gaze nor move out of sight.

Yet the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (2005) suggests that images are as much about absence as presence, meaning they are as much about withdrawal as bring forth, or showing. For every photograph that seems to put objects or people explicitly on display, we can find examples



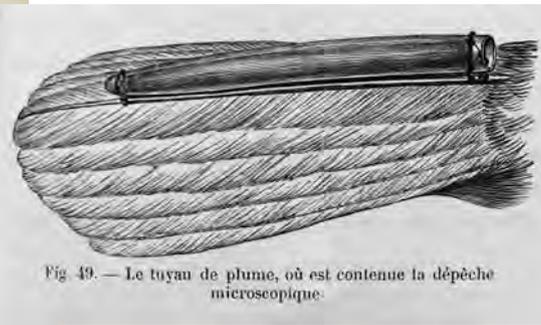


Fig. 49. — Le tuyau de plume, où est contenue la dépêche microscopique.

Photography's fleeting, mobile and communicative qualities have become more vivid in our own specific historical context: it is, above all, the development of the smartphone camera and of visual communication apps such as Instagram and Snapchat that has brought these qualities to the fore

that hint at the pulling away of the visible into invisibility. Think of Robert Frank's famous image of an elevator operator caught between other, blurred figures. Her bored gaze suggests a slowing down of time, a frozen moment perhaps, but also a caught glimpse, something that is by its nature transient and chanced upon, about to be occluded by a passenger exiting the elevator, and yet is the very antithesis of the decisive moment (Frank, 1959). Or, differently, think of one of the most famous images of Greta Garbo taken by MGM staff photographer Clarence Sinclair Bull in 1939 [neither image is reproducible here for copyright reasons]. In this image, her head and hand are isolated and seem to float in an eternal darkness. All signs of specific fashion (the details of clothing and hairstyle) are swept away. Even Garbo's plucked eyebrows and sharply defined lips do not betray the era, but link her more closely to an archetype such as Pierrot. No wonder Roland Barthes described her face as 'at once perfect and ephemeral' (Barthes, 1973: 56). Garbo's disembodied face is on display, for us to inspect, yet at the same time she withdraws from view: her eyes are cast down, her lips firmly closed, she looks pensive but it is impossible to read her ambiguous expression. The photograph has the peculiar quality that Nancy (2005) sees as characteristic of images and that Walter Benjamin called 'aura', a proximity that is at the same time a distance, and an intimacy that reveals nothing but pulls away (Benjamin, 1999: 83).

At the Center for Creative Photography, I looked through the archives of two photographers working in the mid-twentieth century. One, John Gutmann, was a German-Jewish émigré who arrived in San Francisco in 1933, after wrangling a job as a press photographer

for the Berlin agency Photo-Press. What he had not told the agency was that he had shot only two films, and had no idea how to develop them, having only just bought the camera as a means to finance his escape from Germany. Between photographing typically American sights for the agency, he also photographed graffiti. The graffiti is particularly poignant because it marks not where people are, but where they have been, in a time of the massive and tragic displacement of people, of uprooted sharecroppers, drifters and emigrants. These photographs speak of absence and loss as much as presence: 'we are here but where are you?' reads one.

The second photographer whose archive I researched was an American fashion photographer, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, whose photographic work began in the late 1920s. Alongside her fashion photographs she took travel photographs, repeatedly picturing what she called 'holes': the empty spaces and shapes created by architecture, ruins and caves. An interest in negative space informs her fashion photographs too, where she shows herself highly aware of the shapes created by a bent elbow or knee. Yet where the fashion photographs are all about explicit and legible display (no limbs are ambiguously concealed, every gesture is expressive) the 'holes' photographs are about absence and what cannot be seen. In the archive, I discovered that on the same journeys as she shot the 'holes' (Algeria in the 1920s, Guatemala in the 1950s) she was also photographing veiled women in the street as shadowy, ambiguous presences, or friends behind mosquito nets, or figures silhouetted in archways and in the shadows of alleyways. The camera must be carefully controlled to produce a readable image, and can just as easily be used to





conceal or obscure, or to draw attention to what is concealed, obscured, to absences and holes (not least in the Western traveller's ability to grasp the world).

Yet the history of photography repeatedly emphasises the ability of the camera to see and to pin down reality. Traditionally, the story of its invention is told as a story of fixing the image, in particular the moving, evanescent pictures produced by the *camera obscura*. My ambition is, instead, to tell the history of photography as one of letting loose or liberating the image; that is, photography as a set of technologies that facilitate reproduction, projection, transportation and accelerate the movement of images. This accelerated movement of images was described in the 1940s by André Malraux in his famous *Musée Imaginaire*. Translated into English as *Museum without Walls*, the original French title is more evocative of Malraux's argument that photography extends not just the reach of an image, but the mental image repertoire available to people (Malraux, 1967). In particular, Malraux was interested in its impact on the imaginations of artists, who now had more visual resources, more examples of past art and more access to other, non-Western visual cultures. The result, he argued, was an ever-accelerating process of stylistic innovation.

More recent studies from art history, visual studies and anthropology also pay attention to the mobility of images, though not necessarily in relation to, or with specific interest in, photography. Art historian Hans Belting (2011) describes the movement of images not just from screen to screen, or screen to print, or from slide to projection, but also between a picture in the world and an image in the imagination. In a recent study, Pasi Valiäho describes images as 'biotechnical': embodied and mediated through us as well as through technological media (Valiäho 2014). This he sees as a particular quality of present day image culture in which television, video and computer games compete for the attention of users and audiences and in doing so populate our imaginations with imagery designed to tie us ever more tightly to a culture of consumption. While Valiäho is interested in the role of images in cementing relations of power, in surveillance and control, I am interested in exploring the side of photographic culture that undermines this control: the slippery, ungraspable, and transient photographic image.

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About the author

Michelle Henning is Associate Professor in Photography and Cultural History at the University of West London

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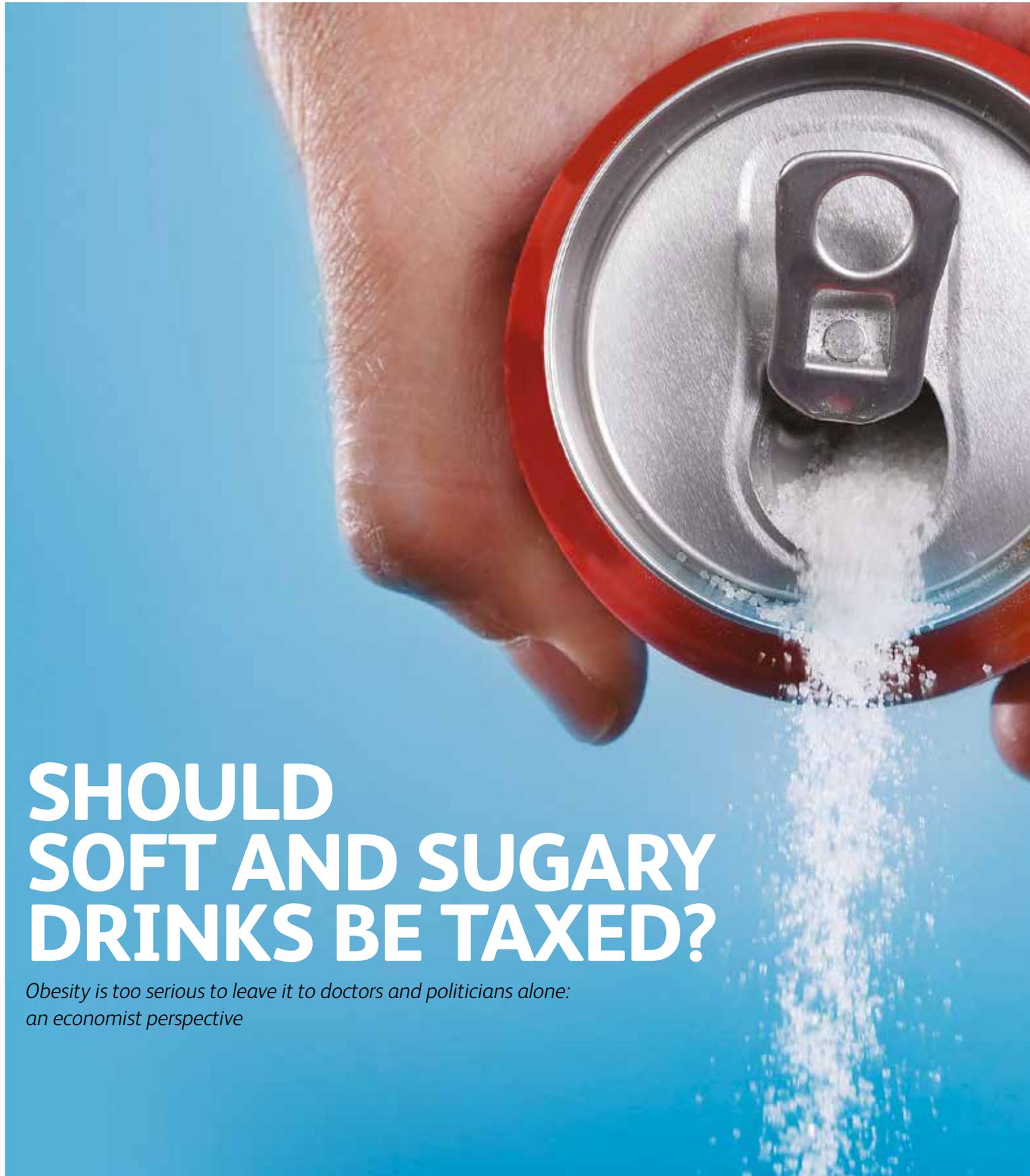
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SHOULD SOFT AND SUGARY DRINKS BE TAXED?

*Obesity is too serious to leave it to doctors and politicians alone:
an economist perspective*



A new tax on sugary drinks in the UK

In 2018, a new sugar tax on the soft drinks industry will be introduced in the UK, the government has announced in the 2016 budget. It will be imposed on companies according to the volume of the sugar-sweetened drinks they produce or import. There will be two bands – one for total sugar content above 5g per 100 millilitres and a second, higher band for the most sugary drinks with more than 8g per 100 millilitres. Analysis by the Office for Budgetary Responsibility suggests they will be levied at 18 pence and 24 pence per litre of marketed product (Triggle, 2016).

The tax will come into force in 2018 and will cost £1bn to implement. The government has predicted the tax will raise £520m in its first year (Ruddick, 2016). The government's aim with the new tax is to promote a change in eating habits, not to raise revenue. The tax receipts are earmarked for:

1. Doubling of dedicated sport funding for every primary school in the country,
2. Expansion of breakfast clubs, and
3. New funding for a longer school day.

The new levy will not be introduced until 2018, giving companies plenty of time to change product mix and reduce sugar content (Triggle, 2016).

This tax increase has been hailed by campaigners as a significant step in the fight against obesity. One of the most high-profile supporters of this campaign has been television chef Jamie Oliver, who has introduced a sugar levy in his restaurants from July 2015. Until March 2016 this levy collected £50,000. The money has been transferred to a Charity installing water fountains in schools (see jamieoliver.com). There is no information available, however, as to whether this levy actually reduced sugary drinks consumption at restaurants where it was introduced.

At the same time, however, Gavin Partington, director-general of the British Soft Drinks Association, an industry body, stated that the tax is ill-conceived as the taxpayers and consumers will pay more to introduce and run the scheme than the government will receive as revenue. He also mentioned a possible shift in consumption pattern as milk-based sugary drinks will not be included in the new tax (Conroy, 2016).

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Obesity in the UK

It is true that obesity is an important, expensive problem. There is a wide body of medical literature indicating that obesity can have a severe impact on people's health, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and heart and liver disease. From the financial point of view, obesity is a greater burden on the UK's economy than armed violence, war and terrorism, costing the country \$73 billion a year – in fact obesity has the second-largest economic impact on the UK behind smoking, generating an annual loss equivalent to 3% of GDP (Dodds, 2014). Figure 1 (overleaf, top) shows a continuous increase in obesity rates in England.

Overweight and obesity are terms that refer to an excess of body fat and they usually relate to increased weight-for-height. The most common method of measuring obesity is the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is calculated by dividing a person's weight measurement (in kilograms) by the square of their height (in metres). BMI is the most effective way to measure the prevalence of obesity at the population level. No specialised equipment is needed and therefore it is easy to measure accurately and consistently across large populations. BMI is also widely used around the world which enables comparisons between countries, regions and population sub-groups. In adults, a BMI of 25kg/m² to 29.9kg/m² means that a person is considered to be overweight, and a BMI of 30kg/m² or above means that a person is considered to be obese.

Obesity is a complex issue which does not respond to simplistic explanations. The proposed tax addresses only one cause – sugar consumption in selected drinks, while ignoring other factors, such as total amount and structure of calories consumed, level of physical activity, types of food consumed (processed vs fresh) and many others.

How the new tax should work?

The government's intention is clear: by increasing the price of sugary drinks, it hopes that the customers will buy less of them and this would reduce the calorie intake to finally lead to a reduction in obesity.

However, economics is never that simple. The chart overleaf (Figure 2) is based on several assumptions and it does not seem that the UK government thoroughly analysed the complexity of the issue (or at least such analysis was not presented to the public). The first assumption is that producers will pass the tax to consumers, thus increasing the price of the product. While this assumption is in perfect accordance with classic economic theory, it does not address the issue of *when* producers will pass the price increase. For reasons related to maintaining market share or the volume of sales, manufacturers may decide to absorb the tax rather than pass it on to customers in the form of higher

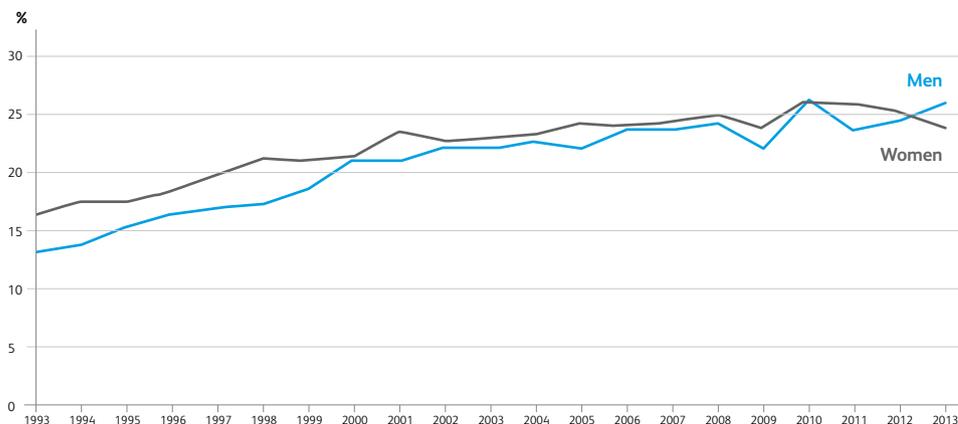


FIGURE 1: Obesity (BMI 30+) prevalence among adults (16+) in England 1993 – 2013. Source: Niblett, 2015: 12; Copyright © 2016, Re-used with the permission of the Health and Social Care Information Centre. All rights reserved



prices. If this happens, industry profits will decline but sales would not be expected to fall. When Berkeley, California introduced a soda tax in 2015, researchers found that retail prices rose by less than half of the amount of the tax.

Another assumption is that normal price elasticity of demand, i.e. that the demand will go down in line with price increases. However, even if prices do increase, consumers may value the product enough to absorb higher prices by making cuts in other parts of their household budget. This is a basic concept of price elasticity of demand which is taught in every Introductory Economics course. The UK government did not present any research on price elasticity of demand for sugary drinks. We have, however, some data from other countries. In Finland, when the price of soft drinks rose by 7.3 per cent for two years running, consumption fell by less than one per cent in the first year and by 3.1 per cent in the second year (ECSIP, 2014).

Learning from Denmark

I now turn to the Danish experience to examine the complexities related to the food taxes. An important potential problem with 'sugar tax' is the *substitution effect*. Consumers respond to the tax by switching to cheaper brands of the product or shopping in cheaper shops. If the tax is levied at a very high rate it might even drive consumers towards the black market. Consumers who downshift to cheaper brands will suffer a welfare loss from the consumption of inferior goods but will not consume fewer calories and therefore will be no less likely to be obese. Alternatively, consumers may buy less of the targeted product but buy more of other high-calorie products. For example, they might consume less lemonade but buy more beer, or they might purchase less cola but buy more chocolate. As a result of these *substitution effects*, the tax leads to fewer sales of one product without reducing calorie consumption as it is compensated by a higher consumption of another products.

The Danish National Health and Medicines Authority reports that only 13.4% of the Danes are obese which compares with 23% of the UK residents and the OECD average of 16.9% (Sassi, 2012). As a proof that sugary drinks are not the



An important potential problem with 'sugar tax' is the *substitution effect*. Consumers respond to the tax by switching to cheaper brands of the product or shopping in cheaper shops. If the tax is levied at a very high rate it might even drive consumers towards the black market



FIGURE 2: Intended effect of sugary drinks tax

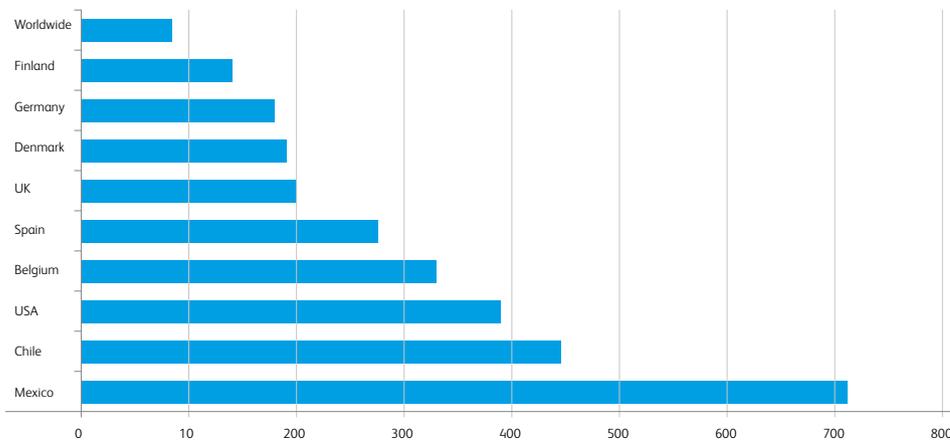


FIGURE 3: 2011 Per Capita Consumption of Coca Cola Products (Selected Countries, based on U.S. 8 fluid ounces of a finished beverage)

however, unclear, to what extent this drop is a direct result of the 'fat tax'. This figure comes from a study which looked at the first three months of the new tax regime when consumers were using up the large number of products they had hoarded in the days before prices rose (Jensen and Smed, 2013). Researchers who have looked at the whole timeframe have found that the decline in sales was much lower than 10-15 per cent (ECSIP, 2014). Moreover, such data must be seen in a wider context of consumer trends. The vice president of the Danish Grocers' Trade Organisation (DSK) Claus Bøgelund Nielsen stated in ECSIP (2014: 36), that the fall in butter consumption had nothing to do with the fat tax but there has been a small annual decrease in butter consumption for years due to healthier lifestyles. He compared it to a decrease of full milk consumption (fully-taxed) which has been substituted by skimmed, semi-skimmed milk or sweetened yoghurt or milk-based drinks (not affected by 'fat tax').

By far the biggest change in customer behaviour was an impact on shopping patterns. Due to geography of the country, Danes have a strong propensity to search for lower cost products in Germany and Sweden. Cross-border purchases had been declining before the 'fat tax' was enacted. They peaked at 15.6 billion kroner (£1.8 billion) in 2005 before steadily falling to 9.6 billion kroner (£1.1 billion) in 2011. The Danish Ministry of Taxation estimated that the overall border trade rose in 2012 to 10.5 billion kroner. Preliminary evidence suggested that the fat tax led to cross-border sales rising by the equivalent of 100 million kroner (£12 million) per year and rose thereafter (Smed and Robertson, 2012). The Danish Government withdrew the tax in January 2013.

A behavioural economics perspective

It has been suggested that possibly the best solution is to leave people in peace to enjoy their own little indulgences, including the amount of fat or sugar consumed. After all, sugary drinks are already taxed at the top VAT rate. It is, however, likely that this solution will result in ever-growing waist-lines and costs to the tax payer. The opinion that the best solution is to leave a purchasing decision to a customer, is based on an established view in classical economics, that people can take rational decisions.

only factor contributing to increased obesity, it is interesting to compare the consumption of soft drinks between Denmark and the UK. As the below figure shows, the per capita consumption of Coca-Cola products (i.e. mostly carbonated, sugary drinks) was very similar in both countries, yet the obesity rates are markedly different.

In October 2011, following an intensive public debate and a medical research programme which identified fat content as a main health concern in the country, Denmark became the first country in the world to introduce a 'fat tax' on meat, dairy products and cooking oil. It was an excise duty of 16 kroner (equivalent to 2.1 Euros or £1.81) per kilogram of meat, dairy products or cooking oils containing more than 2.3 per cent of saturated fat (Trovato and Quaglino, 2013). The 'fat tax' was portrayed as a levy designed to discourage unhealthy eating habits and help pay towards the putative costs of obesity. The money raised was originally earmarked for the health service, although this was dropped within weeks of its introduction on the grounds that such taxes are an unstable and fluctuating source of income.

During the first three months after the tax was introduced, the sale of butter, butter mixes and margarine fell 10-15% in Denmark with butter being the only statistically significant observation. It is,

For a tax to achieve its aims, it must be significant enough so that it will lead to retail price increases which will be felt by customers. A large tax would simply prompt people to switch to other sugary drinks that are not taxed

In contrast the new field of behavioural economics proposes an alternative to the rational model of traditional economics. A number of books, journal articles and empirical studies have been published exploring human irrationality in decision-making, beliefs and actions. One of the observations of this new branch of economics is that people are susceptible to cues in the environment that affect their behaviour – a fact that governments and businesses can use to frame and promote healthy behaviour and wiser choices.

Obesity in New York

I turn to the USA to examine the case of obesity from this new perspective. In the USA, over half of the New York City's adults, and close to 40% of the City's public elementary and middle school students, are obese. Thomas Farley, Commissioner of New York City's Health Department, indicated that 'obesity leads to the deaths of nearly 6,000 New Yorkers a year, more than any health problem except smoking, according to our best estimates' (Arumungan, 2012).

To address this issue, a large scale experiment in framing principle was planned to take place in New York in March 2012, as Mayor Bloomberg's administration tried to impose a ban on selling sugary drinks in servings larger than 16 oz servings (about 0.5 litre) in cinemas, restaurants, sports venues and mobile food carts. If a customer wanted to drink more of their favourite drink, they would have to order two (or more) servings (Arumungan, 2012). Bloomberg's plans fell through due to invalidation of the regulation by New York Supreme Court on 11 March, 2013. The legal battle ended on 26 June 2014, when the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, ruled that the New York City Board of Health, in adopting the Sugary Drinks Portion Cap Rule, exceeded the scope of its regulatory authority.

The initial acceptance of this proposal by the New York's Health City Board, in a rare unanimous vote, may be seen as a victory for the paternalistic approach of Mayor Bloomberg, but also as a victory for sound economics. Bloomberg's proposal applies the economic concept of *default bias* and *framing*: if you offer a choice in which one option is seen as a default, most people go for that 'default' as it is simpler, requires less effort from people and links to what is commonly known as people's 'herd' instincts. The new regulation limiting the maximum size for the drink simply frames the 16oz size differently for customers; if they want more, they'll have to make an extra effort and dare to be different.

The research shows that humans do not hold opinions of their own on such matters and will look for hints and suggestions - like the size of a cup – to instruct them. In Tversky and Simonson's (1993) classic experiment, people were first offered two cameras: one basic and one with more features. Initially the choice was more or less equally divided between the two cameras. Then a third choice was added – a very expensive and sophisticated camera. This led to about 50% of people choosing the mid-range camera (the remaining 50% was almost equally split between basic and sophisticated cameras). The mid-range simply looked less extravagant. We can infer that if a super-size (32oz) is no longer available and now is replaced by 16 oz, maybe a standard size (12oz) will now be seen as the most desirable option. The thinking in this case is as follows: if a consumer has a choice of 12, 16 or 32 oz servings, the majority of consumers will select 16oz, while the rest will be equally split between 12 and 32oz. If, however, we reduce the choice and offer instead to only 12 or 16oz, then customers will split their choices equally between the serving sizes, reducing therefore the total consumption of soda, even if we account for repeat purchases by some customers (note that it would take 3 purchases of 12oz serving to match just one super-size of 36 oz), so it would take three times the customer's effort in case of 12 oz to consume the same amount of sugary drink.

Although the legal battle in New York has been lost, it has already created a welcomed effect. In September 2014, at the Clinton Global Initiative's annual conference in Manhattan, several beverages manufacturers, including Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and the Dr Pepper Snapple Group voluntarily pledged to reduce US calorie consumption in sugary drinks by an average of 20% by 2025 (Saul, 2015).

Where from here?

Going back to the proposed UK bill on sugary drinks, I propose that this is the wrong answer to a very real problem. First, as admitted by the government and supported by evidence from Denmark, the tax initially will cost more than it will bring in as the annual revenue. Even in later years, the actual cost of this tax would be high in proportion to revenue raised. Based on discussed examples, the tax will not work because of price elasticity of demand and substitutions issues. For a tax to achieve its aims, it must be significant enough so that it will lead to retail price increases which will be felt by customers. The current average





retail price of a 2 liters bottle of Coca Cola in London is £1.84 (based on Internet comparison prices), so the new tax, if passed fully to consumers, would result in a price of £ 2.32, a 26 % increase. Without a data on price elasticity, it is impossible to assess whether this change will lead to reduced purchases. A large tax, the Danish example shows, would simply prompt people to switch to other sugary drinks that are not taxed. In the proposed regulation the government clearly leaves the gates wide-open for a switch described above by not taxing milk-based drinks (smoothies) and fruit juices.

On the other hand, however, it is difficult to ignore the expanding waistlines and associated cost to the taxpayer. I suggest that a behavioural approach to dealing with obesity offers the acceptable mid-way solution – the individual's rights to select what he/she eats and drinks are not affected. This approach would involve reducing the available bottle size for sugar-based drinks, i.e. elimination of large size, 2 litre bottles and a ban on selling bulk packaging, such as sets of 8 cans, offering instead only sets of four. Customers retain their right to choose, yet they have to make more effort to do so, thus hopefully reducing their consumption of sugary drinks and, possibly, lowering the burden on health finances.

It may be advisable in this perspective, to convince a new Mayor of London to start an experiment and reduce the size of drinks served in London's restaurants and other food establishments – simply following the New York's attempt. Can we survive without unlimited soda fountain at some restaurants such as Nandos? Should we have 1 litre maximum bottle size of any sugary soft drink sold in our supermarkets? The time is ripe to take such measures to inform and influence consumers about obesity. The government should also involve the industry in this debate – and, based on the discussed voluntary pledge within Clinton Global Initiative, major companies are willing to engage in a meaningful conversation. They have undertaken a major commitment in the US, so why not ask them to do the same in the UK?

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About the author

Dr Piotr Konwicky is a Senior Lecturer in Finance at the Claude Littner Business School, University of West London. He has extensive practical corporate finance experience from Lazard, Deutsche Bank, Metsa Tissue and Intercontinental Hotels.

Keywords

UK taxation, behavioural economics, obesity, Danish 'fat tax'

Caroline Lafarge | University of West London, UK

STUDENT PROFILE



Caroline Lafarge

Course
PhD Psychology

Year completed
2016

Title of thesis
Women's experience of coping with termination of pregnancy for fetal abnormality: coping strategies, perinatal grief and posttraumatic growth

In her thesis, Caroline examined women's experiences of coping with termination of pregnancy for fetal abnormality (TFA). Research had shown that TFA can have negative psychological consequences for women. However, little is known about the way women cope with TFA, the potential for growth following TFA or health professionals' understanding of women's coping with this event. This is despite research pointing to the potential relevance of these concepts in the context of TFA. Caroline's thesis aimed to further our understanding of women's experience of coping with TFA by: 1) exploring women's coping strategies when dealing with TFA, 2) examining the relationship between coping and psychological outcomes (defined as perinatal grief and posttraumatic growth; and 3) investigating health professionals' perceptions of women's coping to identify any discrepancies between health professional's perceptions and women's experiences.

The research indicates that despite using mainly 'adaptive' coping strategies (support, acceptance and meaning attribution) women's levels of grief were high. Moderate growth was observed in several areas: 'relating to others,' 'personal strengths' and 'appreciation of others'. Several coping strategies were associated with better psychological adjustment. In particular 'acceptance' and 'positive reframing' predicted lower levels of grief and 'positive reframing' predicted higher levels of growth. The research also shows that health professionals have a valid understanding of women's short-term coping strategies but limited insights into their long-term coping processes. This points to a deficit in aftercare, an issue raised by women participants.

The research makes a number of contributions to the body of knowledge on coping with TFA and how coping relates to women's psychological adjustment. It also gives an empirical basis to the potential for growth following TFA. Lastly, it provides insights into health professionals' understanding of what coping with TFA may involve for women and its limitation. The research also has important practical implications as the findings provide an evidence base to support the optimisation of care that women receive when undergoing TFA. In particular, the research calls for the development and implementation of a psychological intervention to support women post-TFA, underpinned by the deficiency in aftercare and the high levels of distress evidenced in the research. A psychological intervention based on cognitive behavioural techniques, which aims to promote acceptance and event reframing, may be beneficial for women. It may help minimising women's levels of distress whilst promoting the experience of growth.

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The research also has important practical implications as the findings provide an evidence base to support the optimisation of care that women receive when undergoing TFA

Supervisors:

Professor Kathryn Mitchell and Pauline Fox

Professor Kathryn Mitchell is Vice-Chancellor at the University of Derby

Dr Pauline Fox is an Emeritus Associate Professor at the University of West London

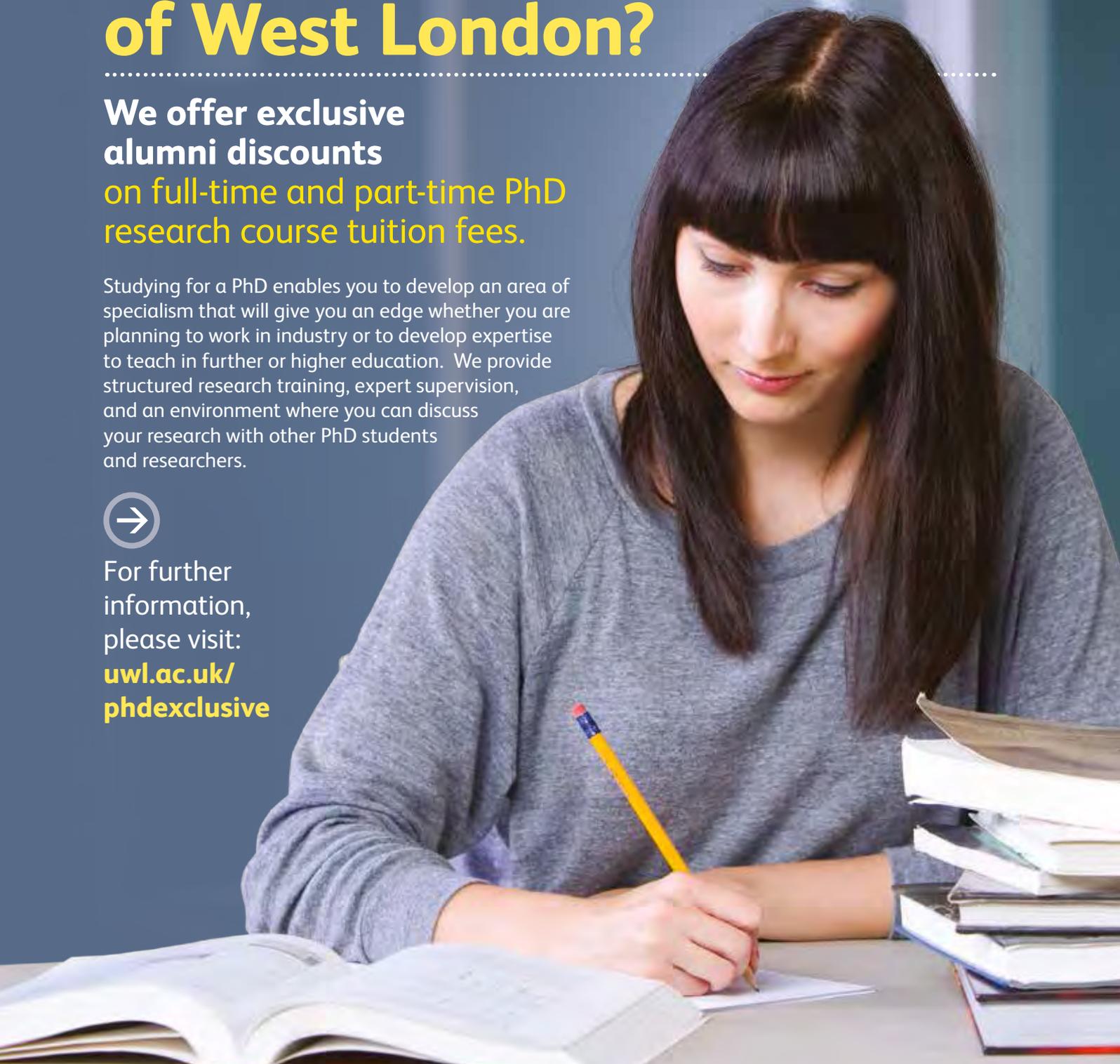
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