

# challenging the structures

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Alcohol & Society, Denmark  
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sometimes we overlook the obvious

# power

they have too much

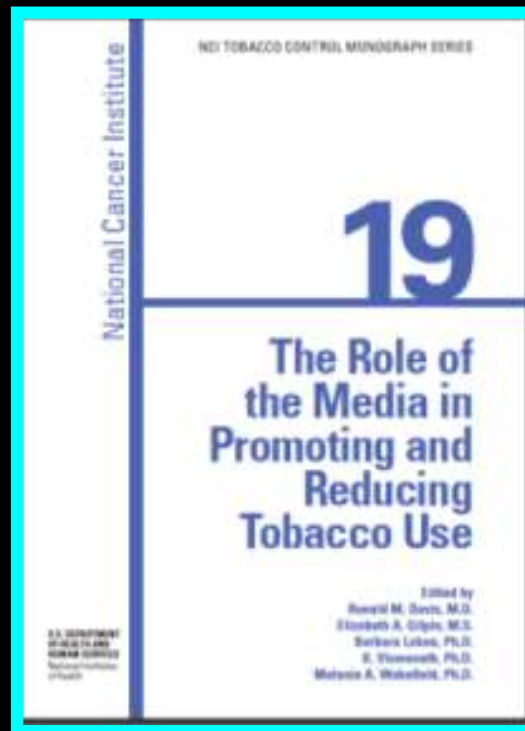
we need more

# structure

1. The evidence base
2. Why this is greatly understating the problem
3. Fighting back
4. Conclusion

# The evidence base

- Unhealthy promotion harms to children:
  - Energy dense food, tobacco and alcohol



# The evidence base

*“it is undeniable that alcohol advertising acts as an encouragement to consumption”*

*(European Court of Justice ruling – C152/78 (2002))*

*There is conclusive evidence of a small but consistent association of advertising with consumption at a population level. There is also evidence of small but consistent effects of advertising on consumption of alcohol by young people at an individual level. (UK Gvt Review (2008))*

*“alcohol advertising increases both the uptake of drinking and consumption in young people”*

*(Science Committee of the EU Commission Alcohol Forum 2009)*

*“Longitudinal studies consistently suggest that exposure to media and commercial communications on alcohol is associated with the likelihood that adolescents will start to drink alcohol, and with increased drinking amongst baseline drinkers.”*

*(Alcohol and Alcoholism 2009)*

# The evidence base

Subtle: artful association not an overt sales pitch

*‘Substantial evidence now shows that judgements and behaviours, including those relating to consumption, can be strongly influenced by implicitly acquired affective associations, rather than via consciously mediated persuasive information. Contemporary advertising formats typically targeted at children are particularly likely to ‘implicitly persuade’ in this way’*

(Nairn A and Fine C 2008)

# The evidence base

Subtle: artful association not an overt sales pitch

Increasingly not even recognisable as advertising: sponsorship, advergames and especially digital

## The rules

One of the most common concerns we hear about online ads is that the content of an ad was misleading, and sometimes that includes uncertainty as to whether the content you've seen online is advertising or not. The rules in this area state:

- Ads must be obviously identifiable as such
- Ads must not materially mislead or be likely to do so

<http://www.asa.org.uk/~media/Files/ASA/Hot%20Topics/Spotting%20Online%20Ads.ashx>

Advertisers are allowed to make their ads appealing, including by making the content more similar to interesting editorial content, but advertisers must be cautious that, in seeking to make ads more inviting they do not camouflage their advertisements.

## Facebook and You

If you're not paying for it, you're not the customer. You're the product being sold

**With digital engagement brings power** (Kenny 2014)



# The evidence base

Subtle: artful association not an overt sales pitch

Increasingly not even recognisable as advertising

Engagement brings power – nb digital (Kenny 2014)

Multifaceted; a 'marketing communications' mix of channels designed to maximise coverage

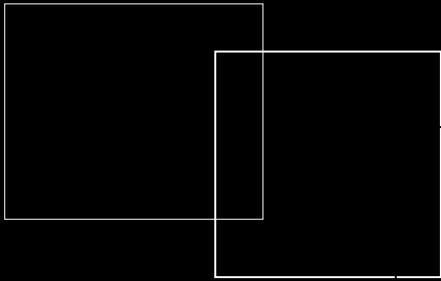
**Football Sponsorship**

**Electronic Gig Guide**

**Mass Media Advertising**

**Festival Sponsorship**

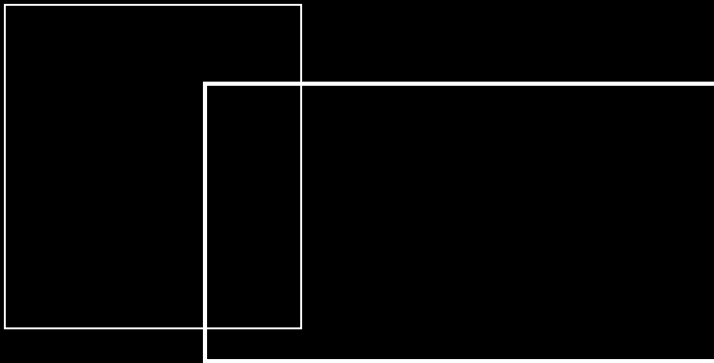
## Case 1: conventional advertising



The power to capture emotions

The power normalise drinking

## Case 2: sponsorship



The power to buy my dreams

The power to ignore the rules

[ads must not be '*associated with youth culture*' or '*sporting achievements*' (ASA)]

## Case 3: digital marketing



The power to become my mate

The power to get me marketing

The power to create my realities

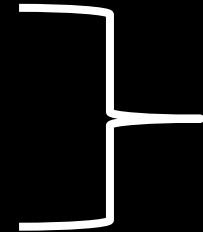
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# understating the problem

Promotion is only one small part of marketing

promotion



the obvious target

icebergs

promotion

strategic

remorseless

the fiduciary imperative  
ensures it is utterly  
focused on profits

the obvious  
target

consumer  
marketing

stakeholder  
marketing

The public health response has to  
be equally strategic and determined

not about marketing or business

power



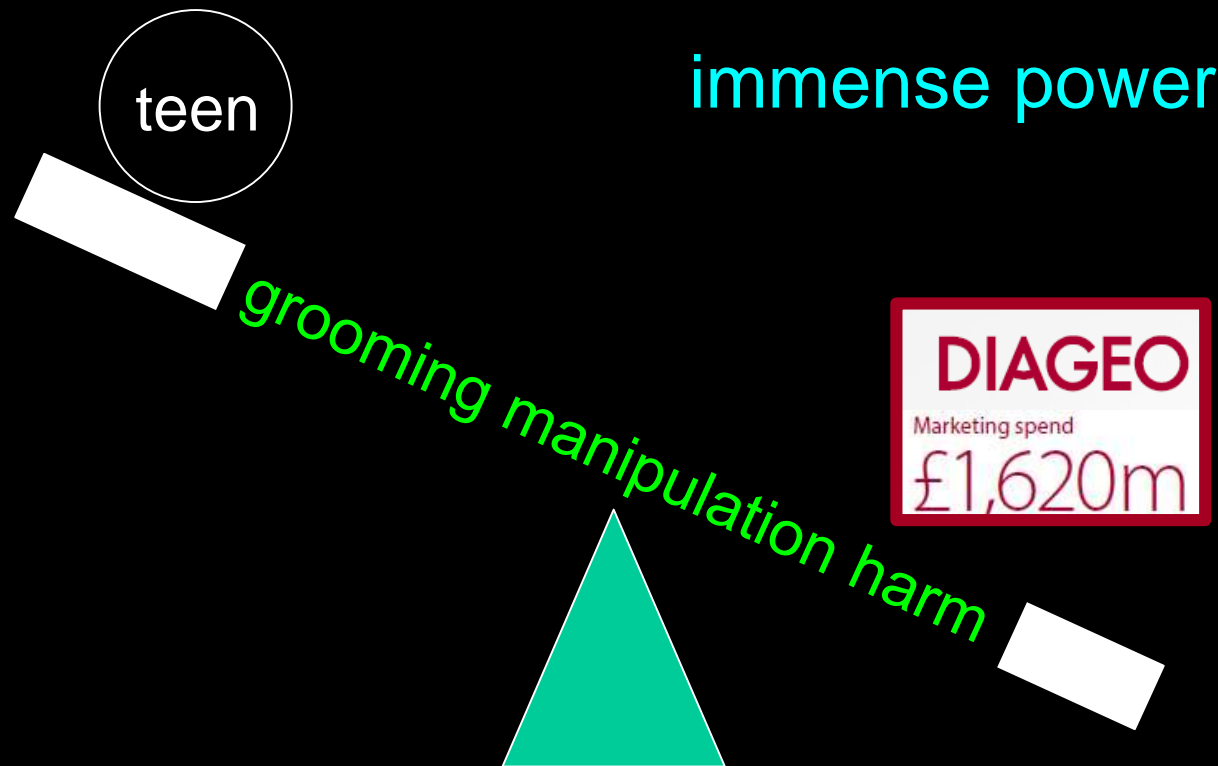
marketing is as old as human society:  
doing deals



marketing is as old as human society:  
doing deals



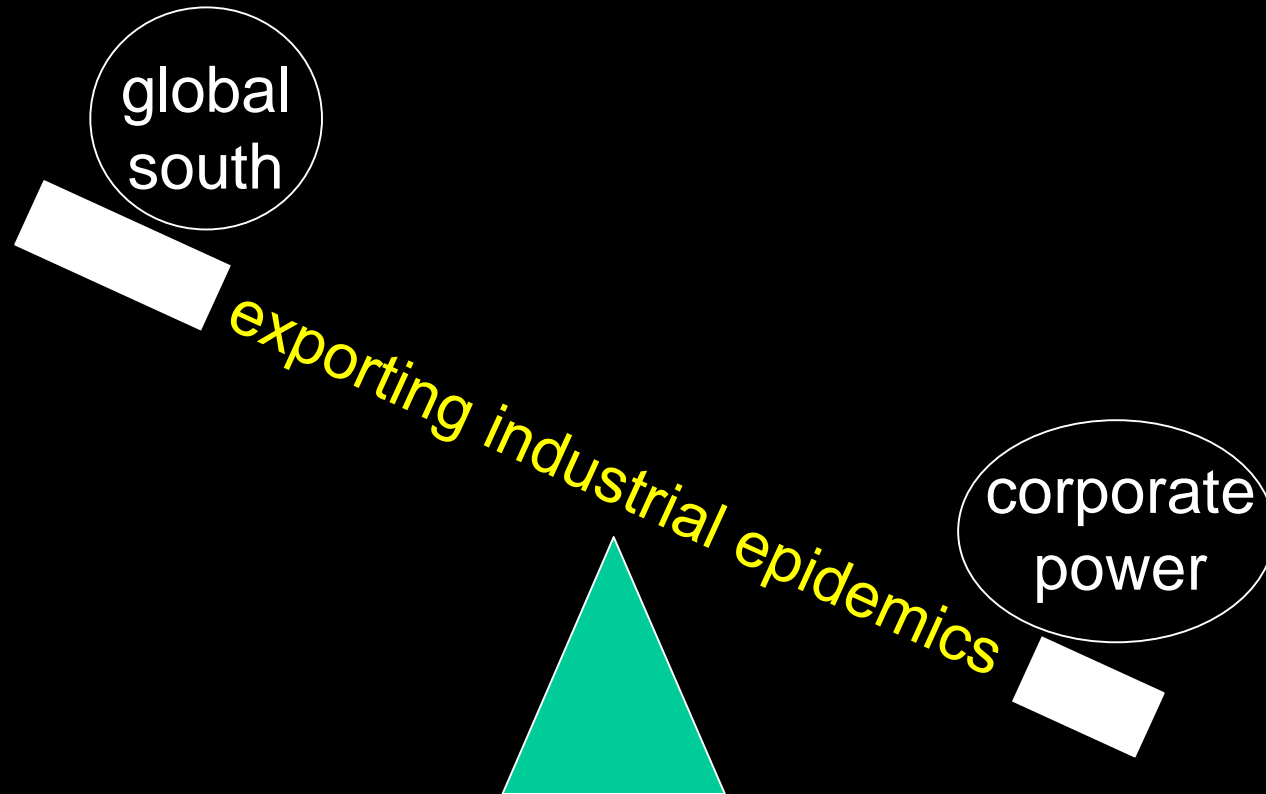
marketing is as old as human society:  
doing deals



This marketing muscle has given Big Alcohol global reach, and it is using it:

- *Carlsberg bets on Asian growth* (Telegraph)
- *Heineken boosted by emerging markets* (Wall St Jnl)
- *Ambev to launch bars across Brazil* (Financial Times)
- *Diageo India targets young and women* (WARC)
- *SABMiller opens fourth brewery in Nigeria* (Marketing Watch)
- *Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev) and SABMiller, have agreed in principle to merge.... The new company will produce and estimated one third of all beer sold worldwide, the merger is driven by prospects for expansion in developing countries.* (BMJ)

# corporate power



Commercial imperialism: 'second grab for Africa'

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## There are three logical public health responses:

- a) Containment of the pathogen  
(by regulation)
- b) Counteracting its spread  
(eg by counter advertising)
- c) Critical capacity building in  
the population  
(eg with media literacy)

## Key conditions:

- these are not alternatives, but mutually reinforcing pillars of a strategic response guided by clear targets and continuous monitoring
- each is a product of ongoing partnership working between citizens, public health professionals and civil society. AB In-Bev's power has been a century in the making; the public health response has to be equally long term
- each can take many forms and needs to be deployed strategically.
- The next three slides discuss each in more detail.



# Containment

- Yes we should control promotion, and the key requirement is to reduce exposure.
- Yes measures have to be comprehensive, taking in all forms of marcomms & the marketing mix
- When tobacco presented similar threats the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control resulted

# Containment



An international treaty to protect people from the predations of the tobacco industry

Comprehensive strategy

Massively popular

# Containment

## **A vision for the future**

*Professor V.S. Mihajlov (former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)*

“Although this might be unrealistic at the present time, and indeed even ridiculous, I for my part am convinced that the day will come when international health law will contain rules at eliminating drunkenness, alcoholism and tobacco use, all of which cause enormous damage to health.

Certain actions could indeed be carried out forthwith, examples being the development of conventions prohibiting advertising of tobacco products or strengthening international cooperation in efforts to combat the smuggling of alcohol beverages.”

# Containment

## A Framework Convention on Alcohol Control

International conventions exist to control narcotics, psychotropic substances, tobacco, and doping in sport. But when it comes to alcohol—the drug that causes

4% of global tobacco (4.1%) no similar leg

In many countries a more salub

drugs. This attitude might be because of the putative health benefits associated with moderate drinking. Or

perhaps it is due to socioeconom

likely to drink lower socioec

Public-health advocates have also been lenient on the alcoholic beverage industry compared with big tobacco.

These lax attitudes along with free trade and competition rules, which treat alcohol as any other commodity, have undermined effective alcohol control measures, such as increasing taxes or restricting the hours or days of sale. Instead, at country level, ineffective control

strategies (warning labels, education in schools) have been adopted. Internationally, resolutions on alcohol control exist but are non-binding and easily flouted.

more seriously modelled on the

control (FCTC) is

consumption by

making it a legal requirement for countries to introduce certain tobacco-control strategies.

a Framework

. In the past

ation and the

been among

those who have voiced their support for such a move. From its initial inception, the FCTC took 10 years to become a reality. The road to an FCAC is likely to be similarly long. Next year's World Health Assembly provides a crucial opportunity for WHO and member states to make those first steps towards a global treaty to reduce alcohol-related harm. ■ *The Lancet* 2007

The first step is for member states to call on WHO to act

Could Denmark lead this initiative?

# Counteraction

- Pro health counter-marketing has been shown to be effective. The Truth campaign in the US for example, significantly reduced teen smoking <sup>(3)</sup>. Importantly it focussed on uncovering industry malpractice
- There is a powerful story to tell about human rights – the child's right to good health. This will resonate with parents.
- Counteraction can also involve direct attack on commercial marketing. This type of guerrilla activity is alive and well in a digital world...

The vulnerability of  
the brand

There is a massive  
opportunity to  
capitalise on  
increasing public  
cynicism about  
corporate  
malfeasance – from  
dishonest bankers,  
through VW's dirty big  
secret to Big Alcohol's  
predations



## Critical capacity

Citizens need to be engaged in the process of change that will bring about healthier societies. This means they need to know more about the methods of big business

This includes media literacy campaigns to explain the process of advertising and how to fight against it

But, as for containment and counteraction, should go further and explain the whole marketing mix ('marketing literacy')

More widely still, people need to be taught about the fiduciary imperative which requires corporations to put stockholder returns ahead of all other concerns

*'military industrial complex'*

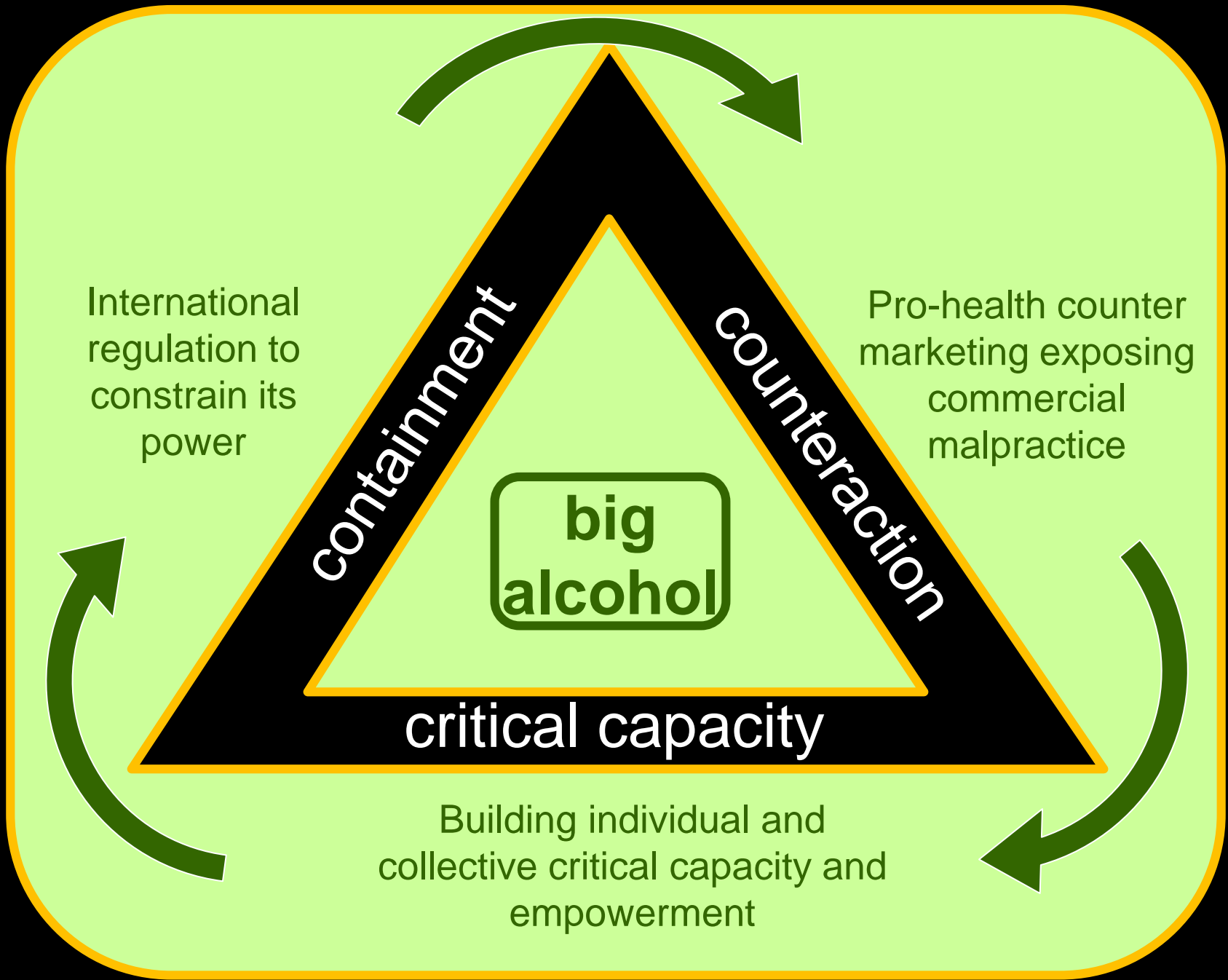
(Dwight D Eisenhower 1961)

*'unwarranted influence - economic, political, even spiritual'  
'felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the  
Federal government', 'we must not fail to comprehend its  
grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all  
involved. So is the very structure of our society.'*

*'only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry'*



this thinking can be  
summarised in a diagram <sup>(7)</sup>



International regulation to constrain its power

containment

big alcohol

counteraction

Pro-health counter marketing exposing commercial malpractice

critical capacity

Building individual and collective critical capacity and empowerment

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# conclusion

This is about power

They have too much

We need more

Containment, counteraction and popular  
critical engagement can provide it

- Evidence on our side
- Right on our side
- The people on our side



we will  
overcome

it's obvious