

# Food Marketing and Policy Collision or Collaboration?

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April 2009

# Structure

1. The rough and tumble of systematic reviews
2. The nature of marketing
3. Squeezing balloons
4. Future directions

# Systematic review of food advertising and childhood obesity\*

- The review was heavily challenged by industry. The most sustained attack came from the Food Advertising Unit (FAU) of the Advertising Association, who commissioned both a rival review, which argued that commercial promotion of foods does *not* influence children (Young 2003) , and a critique of our review (Paliwoda & Crawford 2003).
- The FSA assembled a Seminar of leading academics under the chairmanship of Professor Nicholas Mackintosh of Cambridge University to discuss the conflicting assessments (FSA 2003)

\*Hastings et al 2003

# Systematic review of food advertising and childhood obesity

- The limited coverage of the FAU review was noted, as well as its contradiction of a review conducted by the same author in 1996, and its rejection of virtually all social science research as either too artificial (experimental studies) or having too little control (observational studies)
- The Seminar concluded: *“it was not felt that further research was necessarily required as, on the balance of evidence, the Hastings review had provided sufficient evidence to indicate a causal link between promotional activity and children's food knowledge, preferences and behaviours.”* (FSA 2003a)

# Systematic review of food advertising and childhood obesity

- The criticisms of the ISM review by Paliwoda and Crawford were also considered by the Academic Seminar (FSA 2003b) and were not felt to be substantiated. It was concluded that the review was *“honest to the reality of the research landscape”* and that the critique *“did not make a sufficiently strong case to warrant re-examination of the conclusions”*.

# conclusions

- Collaboration is not an automatic response

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# what is marketing

## mass media advertising

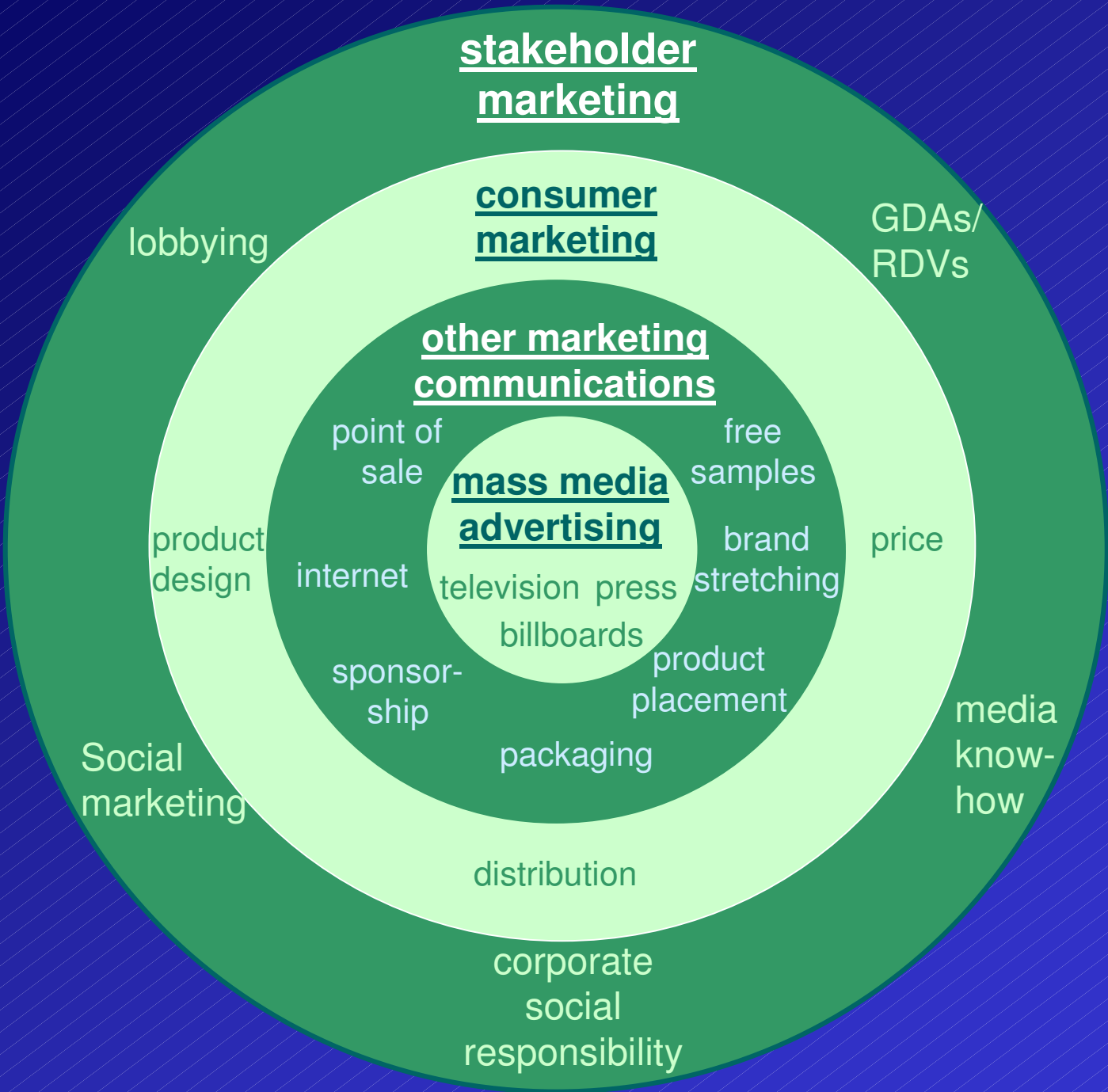
television press  
billboards

20% of all food  
promotion

(McGinnis et al 2006)







# conclusions

- Collaboration is not an automatic response
- Marketing is multifaceted: much more than communications
- Policy makers and public health are themselves target markets and collaboration fulfils marketing objectives

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# Ofcom (broadcast) rules

No advertising of HFSS foods:

- in children's programmes
- on dedicated children's channels
- in programmes of particular appeal to under 16s

HFSS ads aimed at primary aged children must not include :

- nutritional or health claims
- promotional offers
- celebrities or licensed characters

## Non-broadcast rules

No rules on the volume or placement of ads

Voluntary code stating ads must not encourage:

- excessive consumption of food or drink products
- purchase of food or soft drinks using licensed characters, celebrities or promotional offers in ads intended for pre-school or primary aged children
- the pestering of parents
- consumption purely to get a promotional offer
- give a misleading impression of the nutritional or health benefits of the product

Applies to all ads aimed at children (except F & V)

# Current regulations

DH evaluation by adspend (Oct 08)

- All media spend on child oriented\* advertising down 41% 2003 to 2007
- But driven by TV (down year on year)  
Other (unregulated) media actually gone up:
  - Press up 42%
  - Radio/Cinema/Internet up 11%

\*advertises using licensed characters, children's media connection, free gifts or novelty food design

# conclusions

- Collaboration is not an automatic response
- Marketing is multifaceted: much more than communications
- Policy makers and public health are targets and collaboration fulfils marketing objectives
- Statutory works, voluntary does not
- Restricting certain channels is like squeezing a balloon

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# Policy Priorities

Partnerships need to:

- Recognise commercial truths & differing objectives
- Recognise limitations of voluntary and partial steps
- Have teeth: transgressions will be identified and punished
- Commit to pre-determined goals and milestones and independent oversight.

international  
influences

culture

government

statutory  
regulation

social  
norms

leadership

democratic  
accountability

climate

technology

international influences

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statutory regulation

social norms

business

public health

voluntary schemes

eating less

eat more (of certain foods)

adbans

part of the solution

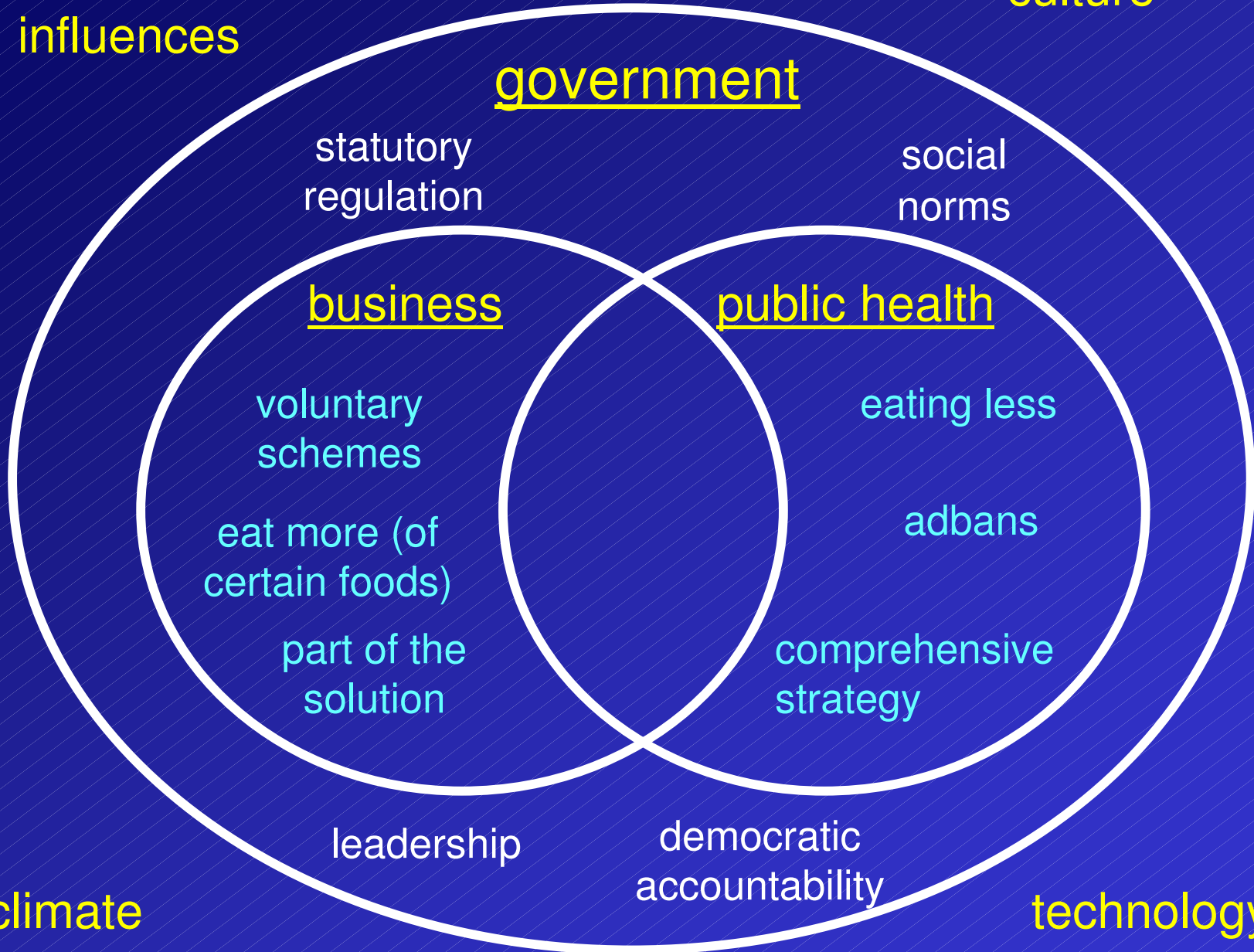
comprehensive strategy

leadership

democratic accountability

climate

technology



international influences

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part of the solution

what can we get into here?  
how do we do it?

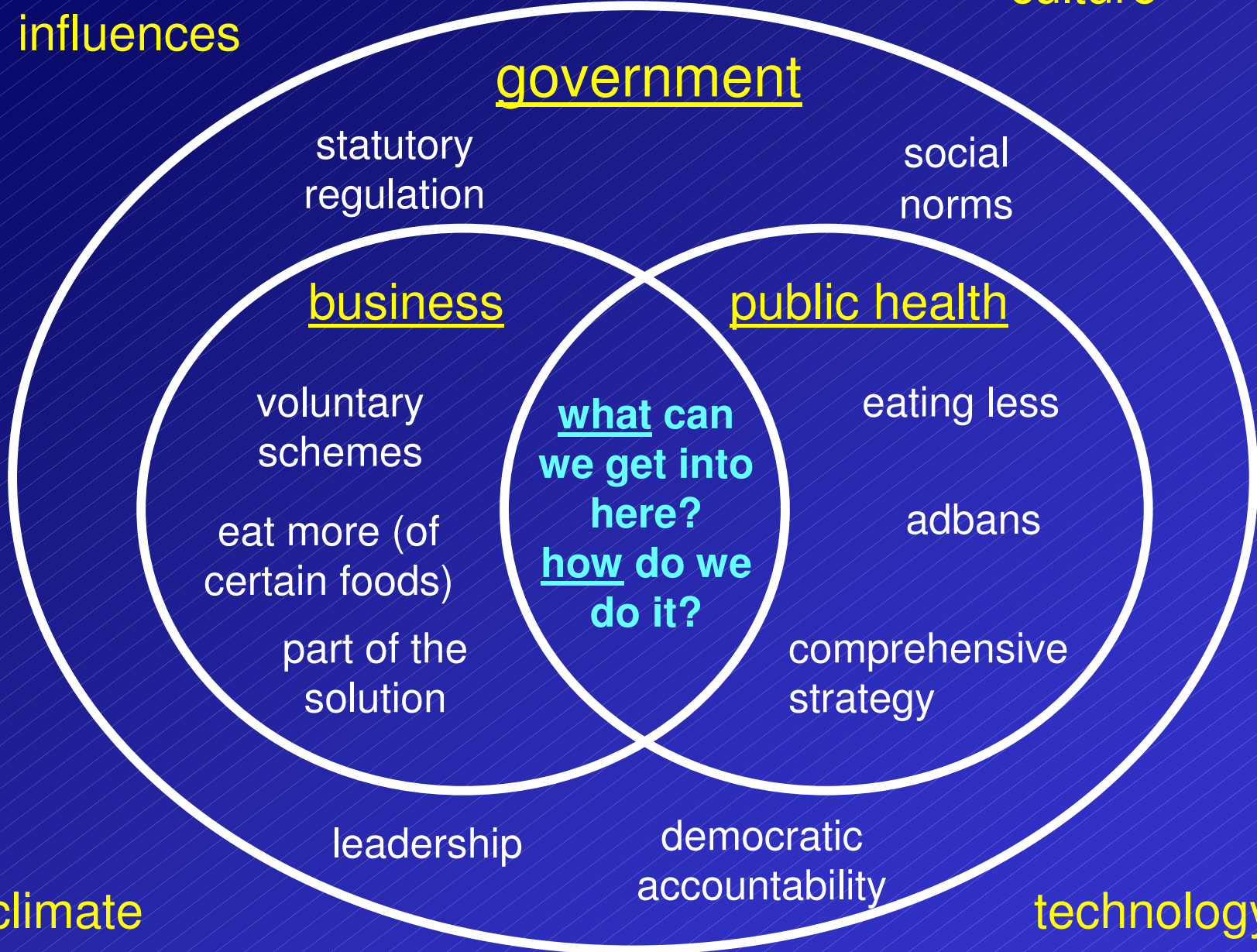
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