Marketing and the Cold War

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper situates the contents of the special issue in historical context. It reviews each manuscript, highlighting pertinent interconnections.

Design/methodology/approach – This is a review paper.

Findings – The content of the special issue challenges and deflates many key assumptions in the literature on marketing and the Cold War.

Originality/value – This special issue explores Cold War rivalries in a geopolitical context. It traces the ways in which political and economic contestation have impacted consumers and discusses how they have negotiated these challenges.

Keywords – Cold War; Geopolitics; Marketing; Soviet Marketing; United States; Russia; Communist Satellites.

Introduction

Over the past ten years our knowledge about the relationship between marketing and the Cold War has increased markedly (e.g. Amerian, 2015; Fox, 2016; Fox et al., 2005; Reid, 2002; Tadajewski, 2006a, 2009a, 2013). Nevertheless, there is a great deal of room for further research. With this in mind, the *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* has sought to solicit contributions that deepen and extend our understanding of this important topic. This introductory article surveys the contents of the special issue, weaving the information and arguments to follow into a narrative that illuminates their unique connections. We do not stick rigidly to the table of contents in the main. In preference, we seek to engage with each contribution as the opportunity presents itself.

Arguably, what the scholarship that has been conducted on the Cold War highlights vividly is one of the major contributions of historical analysis and research for our discipline more generally. It pluralises the way we reflect on any given subject, adding nuance where there was little before, and encourages us to reconsider assumptions that we have previously taken-for-granted. Specifically in terms of our focus, it fosters a sceptical stance towards the prevalence of Americanization, cultural imperialism, the empirical validity of Cold War binaries, and focuses our attention on the growth of overt marketing and black-market activities within communist countries and the willingness of the Soviet state to ignore them in preference for securing its legitimacy (e.g. Amerian, 2015; Castillo, 2005; McDonald, 2010; Millar, 1985; Reid, 2002, 2016).

At the risk of making a very complicated subject overly simple, we can trace the foundations of the Cold War to the period immediately after World War II. The war had brought otherwise ideologically incompatible groups together to face Nazi aggression but the united front did not last very long. In the aftermath of the war, the allies sought to cement their positions in the new world order, claiming territory and reparations to help compensate for the military and manpower losses incurred in the conflict. This, at least initially, placed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in a powerful position. The latter held major claims to reparations based on the destruction caused to its industrial infrastructure and the massive losses to its armed forces and civilian population. What might surprise scholars looking back at WWII is that this was an environment in which the ideological appeal of communism was still reasonably ascendant among certain groups.

Communist party members had been active in the resistance during the war and this led to considerable respect among European populations for the ideas and ideals they espoused (Gaddis, 2005). This respect played a part in ensuring that the Soviets would have the opportunity to voice their views on what the post war world would look like. The activities of the Red Army at the end of the war and the years that followed served to indicate that communist control did not necessarily bring freedom and security. Stalin's increasing paranoia, intolerance, and messianic positioning exacerbated the deep concern that many felt, leading to extensive scholarly and political reflection on the factors that led to the growth of totalitarian political groups and theories on how they might be contained (Arendt, 1969).

Repeated military aggression and vocal threats served to pattern an impression of the USSR as intent on imposing its political-economic vision on those countries they wanted to bring into their orbit (Schwartz, 1997). But all of these pressures were compounded by the development of nuclear and atomic weapons. Within this climate of fear, suspicion and mutual distrust, the seeds of the Cold War were sown. Gaddis (2005) astutely registers that the conditions leading up to the Cold War were manifold and that it is actually very difficult to establish a firm date for its commencement. Even so, it is generally conceded that 1947 represents its origin, with 1990 marking the end point (Schwartz, 1997). By 1947, the idea that communism should be contained through economic mechanisms and cultural vehicles, that is, through the financial support of capitalist values and the promotion of an ideology that articulated the benefits of free markets, democracy, consumerism and consumer choice (Schwartz, 1997), was fused within political circles and public consciousness.

Many of the articles in this issue explore the economic mechanisms and cultural techniques that assisted in the marketing of U.S. values. One of the major forces that shaped the cultural climate and eased American access to European markets was the European Recovery Programme (ERP), also known as the Marshall Plan (Amerian, 2015). Implemented in 1948, the ERP served to contain the communist system and offered a benchmark against which the advantages of each system – capitalist and communist – could be easily visualised, with the case of Germany heliographically directing attention on this front.

It is fair to say that this timeframe (1947-1990) represents the key period in which these values – free markets, democracy and consumer choice – were used to convey very specific messages to populations across the globe. They were frequently juxtaposed with the style of existence said to characterise the communist world. The latter was painted in drab colours, exemplified by queues, shortages, and the totalitarian control of everyday life (Goldman, 1963). Everything from public debate to aesthetics were depicted as under the control of the political classes and their secret police and deviations from the norm were communicated by members of the public trying to secure privileges from the state. Although not without some truth, the distinctions still lack nuance; nuance that historiography has the power to identify and bring to our attention.

Through pioneering research efforts it has become progressively more apparent that the dichotomous thinking which parsed the capitalist and communist worlds elides far more than it reveals. We are prone to associate the former with marketing, consumption, maintaining freedom of speech, and political tolerance whilst the latter is framed through an equally stereotypical lens as cultivating an anti-marketing, anti-advertising, anti-consumer climate, and riven with political constraints and intellectual control. As with so much in life, the reality is far more complex.

Evidently, Soviet industrial policy was not as receptive to marketing, particularly American interpretations of marketing practice. This was not simply a Cold War policy and strategy. Economic policy in the communist system had focused on the development of large-scale, heavy industry since the late 1920s. With resources being directed towards heavy industry, any remaining attention that was given to the sphere of consumption was strictly limited. This was compounded by the provision of quantitative targets that each manufacturer and factory had to attain. Quantity was the axis of production attention, not consumer satisfaction.

Put slightly differently, changes in style, fashion and sizing were discouraged. They rendered production processes more inefficient and incurred costs. Standardisation was the order of the day in many industries. To enable this, small industry was nationalised or brought under cooperative control (Goldman, 1963). In this context, the consumer and their needs were not at the forefront of manufacturer, factory or retailer attention. Not surprisingly, for Western observers used to conspicuous variety in terms of colour, fit and styles of clothing, Soviet fashion and consumption options were not especially attractive. The lack of choice on this front was used as a proxy to make the case that the Soviet system was not responsive to the needs of its citizens. This was an important marketing tool in a tense environment in which some countries were perceived to be floating between geopolitical affiliations.

While industrial progress and scientific achievements certainly have their place, governments have found to their cost that they cannot proceed in their day-to-day activities with minimal attention directed to the material requirements of their populations. Fairly soon, people in the Soviet Union were focusing their energies towards consumption, stimulated by the various trade shows and exhibitions that travelled the world as vehicles for “soft power” (Kushner, 2002; McDonald, 2010; Neuburger, 2012; Siegelbaum, 2012). This is an interesting Cold War inflected concept. Soft power is basically a short-hand means of summarising the tactics used by governments that resembled those articulated in fictional terms by David Riesman (1951/1964) in “The Nylon War”.

Riesman depicted a type of consumption oriented engagement between the United States and Soviet Union, whereby desirable consumer products and catalogues were distributed to targeted populations in the hope of promoting discontent with the Russian status quo. “Operation Abundance” basically flipped the critiques of the marketing and advertising system that were prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s. These had argued that mass marketing served to stimulate desire among those who did not have the discretionary income to support such personal consumption constellations. For Riesman and many other thinkers and government officials, the desire for consumption, particularly if it could not be satisfied, was a useful tool in the armament of those promoting the capitalist project. Market-produced commodities would foster reflection on the provisioning abilities of the respective governments. The failure to meet appropriate consumption benchmarks, so the idea went, could be a trigger for a rethinking of political commitments and, not entirely unrealistically, revolutionary activity.

As a number of the papers in this issue highlight, there were some very famous instances of this engagement with soft power, most notably the infamous Kitchen Debate between Nixon and Khrushchev in the late 1950s, where the two world leaders argued about whose economic system successfully met the needs of their citizens. In its own way, soft power underscores the triumph of marketing related ideas in helping sell entire economic systems to domestic and international populations. It was part and parcel of wider attempts to manipulate and cajole many different audiences to embrace particular value systems, with consumption, standards of living and the satisfactions of material rich lifestyles playing an important role.

Selling social and political values is not an easy task. In spite of the fact that the Cold War was a climate in which many people were deeply disconcerted by the possibility that they could be manipulated by external forces, social interaction does not reflect simple communications theory and models. Inger Stole (2016) provides us with an entrée into these issues. She accentuates the problems that accompany cultural shaping and brand production in the first instance by citing the comparatively recent attempt to communicate "America" as a brand to Asia and the Middle East in the post 9/11 period. Where audiences are not receptive, where the message is complex and contradicted by other factors, such messages might garner some very limited attention. But they do not persuade already sceptical audiences. As such, the campaign was unsuccessful. Stole argues that a turn to the historical record might have been valuable in this instance. The State Department had historical experience of trying to sell complex messages to our European cousins in the aftermath of World War II. This campaign, she suggests, allows us to examine in detail how soft power is mobilised, promoted and fails to achieve the objectives it sets itself. Soft power is not always successful. To assume otherwise smacks of government hubris that stands a good chance of being punctured.

Stole provides considerable detail about a campaign launched by the State Department using the skills and knowledge of the Advertising Council to promote free enterprise and the American way of life to a war devastated Europe (see also Castillo, 2005). The Advertising Council was an interesting community of practice in its own right: part public relations project, this group was tasked with securing the cooperation of the advertising community to work on government and related projects. What is highly unusual about the case study that Stole provides is the fact that it was not intended to enrol actors likely to raise objections to the messages being relayed; it wanted to mobilise the activities of U.S. allies in Europe to help sell American geopolitical and economic values to potentially vulnerable populations.

She studies the various institutional bodies that sought to forward this agenda – initially the Office of War Information, later the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs, subsequently the Office of Information and Education Exchange – groups which, despite the name changes, had one core focus: the dissemination of information about the political organisation of the U.S. and the lifestyles enjoyed by its citizens. Their methods of communicating these ideas were multifaceted and used all the various marketing communications vehicles available in conjunction with the financial provisions, knowledge and skills made available via the Marshall Plan. The U.S. was well aware that merely providing financial support to kick-start war ravaged economies was not enough. The recipients needed to fully appreciate the merits of the American way of life above and beyond the totalitarian excesses of the Soviet Union. This was important given that the target audience for these campaigns were countries, communities and groups oriented towards the left of the political spectrum who might otherwise be won over by the promises being made by communist ideologues.

The State Department attempted to cultivate these relationships by involving the advertising community, export marketing trade groups, very large manufacturers and exporters who were encouraged to produce communications campaigns replete with "Americanism". The U.S. government stressed the win-win nature of this exercise. The government would receive help in its propaganda efforts and the producers and exporters could tap into consumer goodwill. Initial brainstorming forays culminated in the "Saving America Overseas" campaign through which the Advertising Council connected the promotion of the Marshall Plan and the quality of the products produced by those involved in the communications blitz to literally widen the market for American products: ideological as well as material (see also Amerian, 2015).

That, at least, was the way it was conceived in the abstract. The reality, as Stole elucidates, was more complicated: producers, manufacturers and advertisers were not necessarily as quick to act in the manner desired by the government and State Department (cf. Castillo, 2005). The latter undertook considerable efforts to facilitate European communications campaigns by noting that they were tax deductible. This financial stimulus was supported on pragmatic and functional grounds by the Advertising Council who offered instruction about marketing communications techniques.

An issue that derailed the aims of this project was the relationship between the State Department and Advertising Council: it was fractious. The Advertising Council was frustrated at the cost implications they faced, effort involved, and lack of participation they received from industry. The State Department had serious reservations about the ability of the Advertising Council to manage a project on this scale. These reservations did not dissipate. In spite of the evidence that Council activities were having a limited effect, neither party was happy with the continuance of their promotional arrangement. In the end, the project to communicate the American way of life, the free enterprise system and the merits of the U.S. political system, ground to a halt. Stole unravels why this specific campaign was unsuccessful in light of the previous experiences and later successes of the State Department and Advertising Council. Lessons were learned and applied in the war of ideas between West and East.

The role of soft power is a dominant theme in Stephanie Amerian’s article as well (Amerian, 2016). Fashion, as Marshall Goldman (1963) observes, took on important ideological value during the Cold War era and represented an arena in which Soviet consumers experienced a degree of privation. This was a feature that was frequently noticed by visitors to the Soviet Union (Tadajewski, 2009a). Although the Soviet government started to import western fashions and designs to improve the assortment that was available to their citizens during the late 1950s, early 1960s, it was a practice imbued with contradictions. Fashion, which had long held ideological and propaganda value within the United States, was invoked in Cold War cultural contestation to further American interests.

Amerian describes how fashion was a major channel through which the plenty that characterised the U.S. economy could be highlighted, demonstrated and used as a means to trigger desire and dissatisfaction at the same time. She provides an overview of the history of the marketing of fashion during the 1950s and unpacks the ways in which this industry participated in a major exhibit intended to help sell the American “look” behind the Iron Curtain at the American National Exhibition in Moscow. Irrespective of the messages that the American government sought to encode within this communications event, it certainly did not mean that the audience – the Russian government and its citizens – necessarily decoded it in the same way.

To be sure, some consumers appreciated the items, some disliked them, or perhaps more accurately displayed their dislike in a public forum. Similarly, the government attempted to undermine the multicultural message being employed by the organisers of the fashion show. The shows themselves featured a number of models whose ethnic background was used to present a pluralistic representation of American society, thereby eliding the problematic race-relations of the period. The Russians were not alone in detecting the hypocrisy. Amerian’s careful analysis shows how members of the U.S. fashion industry were equally concerned, maintaining that the use of ethnically diverse fashion models did not reflect the brute empirical realism of American society at the time. Others, most notably the black community, refused to view the effort as a U.S. publicity stunt and instead responded warmly to the inclusive narrative by stressing that excluding their participation would serve to further underline the persistence of racist beliefs and practices in U.S. society. In short, and as Amerian reminds us, the Cold War ideological climate was intersected by multiple points of contestation.

With such prominent engagements of the marketing, advertising and cultural industries in government directed activities, there was a concomitant rise in concern about the degree to which public perception could be manipulated. For many outside of communist controlled zones and countries, the spectre of communism called forth the idea that entire populations could be brainwashed, that people were controlled by the state, with their agents waiting quietly, biding their time in influential positions within government, army, teaching and related posts, for the moment when they were able to use their power to shape the political and cultural agenda in countries whose governments they intended to topple.

Lawrence Samuel's (2016) paper tackles issues of Cold War paranoia, mind control, and manipulation via a very famous case study, the promotion and utilisation of subliminal advertising. Samuel's work is fascinating because he draws upon popular and business periodicals of the 1950s and 1960s to trace the reception of subliminal advertising. He provides an excellent historical introduction to the debate. Within the marketing and advertising communities, the attention given to the subliminal patterning of beliefs and behaviour was mixed. Some were interested, some were profoundly disconcerted, yet still piqued by the possibilities that the manipulation of the brain without our recognition could offer to manufacturers and marketers. Soon, rumours started to circulate that attempts had been made to subliminally influence the consumer. These whispers reached a crescendo via the activities of Subliminal Projection, a company partly owned and operated by James Vicary, a name that is now inextricably tied to subliminal advertising.

It is probably not spoiling the story too much to note that the idea that people can be manipulated by subliminal advertising had powerful performative effects – effects far beyond the Machiavellian capabilities that this process warranted at the time. Public and legislative concern led to the introduction of laws designed to prevent the stimulation of people without their conscious awareness. The public at large, to put it mildly, were very afraid that marketing and advertising professionals could make them buy or consume things that they did not actually want until they were primed to need, want and yearn for them. The fear that persuasion strategies might be used for political purposes and placed in the wrong hands was an equally strong concern (Miller, 2007). However, Vicary's career came to a juddering halt. It was eventually determined that there was no actual cognitive or behavioural change induced by subliminal advertising. The sales figures from the cinema where he claimed he had undertaken the experiment were not consistent with the alleged increases in the consumption of Coca Cola and popcorn that were apparently caused by subliminal persuasion. Claiming behavioural modification was, to make a complicated narrative very simple, a public relations exercise intended to launch a fledgling consultancy business.

Notwithstanding this, Vicary placed subliminal advertising firmly within the cultural climate and it still concerns many observers today. It is for these reasons (among others) that subliminally oriented research halted during the latter half of the twentieth century despite the fertile grounds for research it promised. More recently, Bargh (2002) has submitted that there is merit in the idea that we can be primed, that our behaviour and thought processes can be shaped in ways that we either do not register or register very dimly. In a disconcerting turn, Bargh asserts that in actuality the public have far more reason to be worried today than they did during the time when Vicary was rising to public infamy. Socio-cognitive theory with its interest in the priming of consumer action without the conscious awareness of the individual being targeted has demonstrated some empirical success in the laboratory and retail setting. So, the ghost of Vicary is alive and well, but framing what he fantasised about in terms of "priming" and other scientifically neutral sounding turns of phrase.

Stalin's demise in the mid-1950s marked a major turning point for the Soviet marketing system, its satellites, and the customer (Amerian, 2016; Pence, 2001; Reid, 2016). It was appreciated that heavy industry could not continue to receive disproportionate attention whilst the citizenry were ignored. As Goldman explains, "Although fashion houses were not suddenly opened on all Moscow street corners, nor were Russian consumers inundated with modish goods, a distinct improvement was nonetheless noticeable" (Goldman, 1963, p. 84). People wanted consumer goods, he submitted, not just the satisfactions that came from knowing the Soviet Union was technologically advanced in the wake of the Sputnik launches. Food, shoes, and a better standard of living were familiar refrains being echoed in many quarters (e.g. Reid, 2002, p. 230).

Certainly, the consumer would eventually secure more attention from the political classes, but this was slow to materialise. We have to remember that the Russian industrial system was not set up to create satisfied patrons. It is at this point that Goldman (1963) and Reid's (2016) narratives intersect. Goldman traces the movement from the Russian revolution to the 1960s when people had started to have their basic needs met. At this moment, consumer attention turns from essential needs to less immediately pressing desires. Here we see the potential for considerable agency in terms of choice-processes. Products and services might have been scarce, but this does not logically entail that people have no power in the marketplace. If they were not happy with what was on offer, they could withdraw their engagement and participation. The ramifications of this were quickly felt by the government.

Despite the surface level efficiency of quantitatively measured production processes, if the items being produced did not meet with consumer requirements and were not immediately essential items, people would simply stop buying them. And they did, in very large numbers: "The consumer…now that his basic needs had been satisfied, began to balk…For the first time in his life, he found that he could exercise discretion in the spending of his income. Inevitably the overflow piled up in the warehouse" (Goldman, 1963, p. 87). There were various responses to this: Goldman cites the distribution of items, especially textiles and shoes, which had been produced in the west to make-up for Soviet shortfalls. Connected to this, the government and industry sourced clothing pattern designs that were popular elsewhere in the world, distributing these through a variety of conduits to local consumers who could use the skills of their neighbourhood dressmaker to manufacture sartorial items that were more consistent with their requirements than the garments churned out by the mass production system.

For the Soviet consumer, a production mentality was spliced with sensitivity to fashion and aesthetics (Reid, 2002). As Susan Reid (2016) points out, sometimes people took whatever offerings were on the market until there were better products or services available. Still, functionalist product choice certainly did not characterise all consumption decisions. Although there was not a profusion of options available to the ultimate customer, this did not mean they were insensitive to fashion, trends and design. As Reid documents in her oral historical study, the depiction of the Soviet Union as marked by austerity, a political will to deny consumerism and its seductions, long queues, waiting lists, and lack of access to appropriate provisions is not a totally accurate picture of day-to-day consumer existence. After Stalin's demise, consumption figured more prominently in the calculations of politicians and bureaucrats: “The post-Stalin regime…undertook to raise mass living standards…Consumer goods were granted greater priority in economic planning” (Reid, 2016). While this movement would ebb and flow, later governments did pursue a consumerist oriented policy with more vigour and success than was the case previously.

They sought to shape the subjectivity of their populations through many of the same methods applied within capitalist countries. Naturally, of course, they depicted their activities in socialist terms. The Soviet citizen-consumer was expected to engage in considered decision-making (e.g. Amerian, 2016), with the government helping to structure the macro-level distribution of goods and services in ways congruent with their ideological vision (Crowley, 1998). Advertising was employed as a source of information provision to help inform cultured consumption (e.g. Castillo, 2005, p. 284; Reid, 2002, p. 218). This was buttressed by government advice manuals and social events that sought to proffer appropriate buying behaviour (e.g. Reid, 2002, p. 245; Yankovskaya and Mitchell, 2006, p. 777-778, 774, 779, 781). Even shop assistants were required to rethink their stance vis-à-vis the customer. They had to improve their service skills, provide guidance to the client, and effectively become a conduit for government policy about “exemplary” consumption (Greene, 2014, p. 123; Reid, 2002, p. 233). This entailed consumption driven by communist values, that is, it avoided competitive individualism.

All stakeholders in society had to profit from socialist marketing practice: the country, the manufacturer, the retailer and the consumer (Greene, 2014, p. 131). This image of government-retailer-advertising-customer engagement is far removed from relations in the U.S. marketing system and the less rational, more emotional individual stalking the American marketplace (Tadajewski, 2006b). While there were points of difference, there were also points of similarity between the United States, the Soviet Union and its satellites which are not often noted (e.g. Greene, 2014).

Patrick Patterson (2016), for example, offers substantive insights into Czechoslovakia’s use of Western marketing strategies. He debunks the notion that marketing played no role in day-to-day socialist commerce prior to 1989. The period between 1965 and 1968 saw a distinctive “marketing moment”. This does not mean that the application of Western marketing techniques was easy:

> “For the Czechoslovak enterprise under centralized planning, connection with end users remained a post-hoc, sales oriented operation intended to move the existing, planned output of the producer through the marketplace rather than [as] part of a holistic marketing approach dependent on multi-directional information flows and aimed to orient production towards the needs and wishes of consumers.” (Patterson, 2016)

Even so, socialist production which failed to satisfy market demand was deemed wasteful and antithetical to the Marxist directives of meeting the needs of ordinary citizens. Thus, Czechoslovakian leaders believed that marketing tools and techniques might help improve distribution efficiency. Trade journals and seminars offered advice and research, introducing new concepts like advertising, retailing and public relations to their audience. These practices drew criticism and after the 1968 “Prague Spring”, Czechoslovakian interest in marketing ended abruptly.

Margaret Peacock (2016) identifies a commensurate pattern of legitimation being employed on both sides of the Iron Curtain by those working in the culture industries (i.e. marketing and advertising) (see also Neuburger, 2012). Summarising her nuanced analysis in succinct terms, we can say that it involved the marketing of the idea that each system was capable of providing the kind of life opportunities that parents desired for their offspring. This was a rhetorical tactic that had been used since at least the 1920s. It was underpinned by a belief that the success of a given political-economic system hinged on whether they could deliver the good life, although how the good life was conceptualised differed depending on whether this question was examined from a capitalist or socialist perspective (Reid, 2002).

What did not differ was the fact that consumption was the means by which each geopolitical combatant attempted to achieve its economic pre-eminence. They linked patriotism with the consumption of home-produced goods in order to further their political agendas. As Peacock registers, there were a number of psychological and consumption oriented moves in play here. For starters, people had to buy into the status quo. They had to register the Cold War as an important political phenomenon in which they needed to choose a relevant side. Equally, though, they needed to frame their engagement through consumption. Both elements came together to affirm the idea that continued consumer satisfaction could only be achieved through active participation in acts of consumption today, since without consuming in a socially designated and desirable fashion, the economic system that supported the chosen geopolitical actor would likely disappear. Consume now for a secure life in the future was the message.

Marketing and advertising professionals in both countries keyed into these ideas, using the image of the child to assist in the promotion of views, values and concerns that helped meet geopolitical objectives. In the U.S., marketers focused on using pertinent imagery to sell goods, services and government bonds. In the Soviet Union, fear appeals were prominent, seeking to structure emotional reactions that also resulted in appropriate purchasing patterns. While consumption opportunities were different in the Soviet Union to the United States, the former did appreciate that the long-term health, vitality and acceptance of its political system was contingent on providing children with access to decent standards of living. It was important in terms of the immediate satisfaction of the child, their parents, as well as possessing excellent public relations utility in promoting the ability of the communist system to meet the provisioning needs of its entire population, not just the elites possessed of wealth, cultural capital and the advantages of birth.

“Cultured living” was the axiology guiding consumption values in Russia. People were encouraged to select those items that would facilitate self-development. Crass consumption and the accumulation of possessions for the sake of competition was not encouraged or enabled. Clearly, the public relations activities of both countries were not necessarily reflective of the empirical reality facing the average consumer. Peacock is forthright on this point, stating that the bountiful imagery that both sides promoted jarred considerably with the large numbers of children and adults suffering privation, discrimination and a precarious social status in both societies.

With respect to the people interviewed by Reid (2016) and their consumption choices during the 1960s and 1970s, there are instances of resource constriction, the performance of subscription to functionalist, utilitarian metrics, but also evidence of emotion, fashion and attention to trends demarcating their buying behaviour. Despite the respondents’ references to purchasing as and when the market contained products that roughly conformed to their needs, Reid notes that there is evidence that people did not just buy any product because it was available. Scarcity did not motivate compulsive consumption of any and all available merchandise. They were selective.

This is illuminated by Reid's exploration of the domestic consumption habits and arrangements of respondents in multiple cities in the former Soviet Union. Their backgrounds differed markedly. But they were united in one aspect of their existence: each lived in one of the apartments that were built on a huge scale during the Khrushchev era. Commonality in living accommodation served as the backdrop against which each wove the aesthetic tapestry of their home. Reid pays particular attention to the types of furniture each purchased. Her account details how the consumption plans of these consumers were sometimes delayed, but how they were still focused upon meeting their needs in ways that reflected their personal preferences and choices (even if they were sometimes reluctant to admit that their choice processes were shaped by fashion and lifestyle considerations).

So, while certain goods were occasionally difficult to obtain, this does not mean that the economy was actually marked by a fundamental scarcity or that Russian citizens had no choice about their consumption patterns. Far from it. They had access to considerable amounts of furniture; it was just not the type of household furnishing they desired. Street corners, rubbish dumps, and related locations were the reserves where discarded furniture that did not fit with contemporary aesthetics could be found. Recognising these points is a major contribution and serves to rethink how scholars have historically viewed the Russian economy. We have been too quick to invoke labels of scarcity, limited product offerings and so forth, without actually asking how people engaged with the marketplace in concrete, tangible ways.

Remarkably, key stakeholders in industry registered some of the problems that accompanied encouraging people to modify their historically sedimented consumption habits (e.g. passing handmade furniture to the next generation). Nudging people to dispose of their old furniture meant that the second-hand market would be flooded with discards. Prices realised through the sale of such offerings would be minimal. This had ramifications for their ability to procure new furniture. As such, replacement fixtures and fittings had to cost very little to attract a mass audience who had neither the savings nor disposable income to immediately fund their modern lives. This was exacerbated by the fact that single pieces of furniture were not being marketed. Rather "taste regimes" (Arsel and Bean, 2013), that is, ensembles of items that helped constitute a lifestyle were being sold. Buying multiple items was consequently even more expensive for the cash poor shopper.

While Reid (2016) deservedly emphasises the role of choice and agency in consumer decision-making, the fact that the communist system did not necessarily deliver all the goods and services that their citizens required led to a number of interesting practices. We have already mentioned the fact that importation was one avenue to satisfy consumer needs. Another method was to ensure that people had access to items that could be produced in substantial quantities irrespective of the harm they might cause: cigarettes being the exemplar that Mary Neuburger (2016) explores in considerable detail.

She examines the production, marketing, and distribution policies enacted in Bulgaria – a context that remains comparatively underexplored by Cold War commentators. What is truly remarkable about her study is that it firmly reveals how extensive marketing, advertising and branding systems were in communist countries. She takes the state tobacco monopoly as her focus. This was an active marketer and more than willing to enter into international exchanges that enabled their access to desirable technology and tobacco recipes, including exchanges with those situated in the United States who were desperate to break into the large market behind the Iron Curtain.

This market was attractive to United States tobacco manufacturers in the face of the changing medical and social climate for tobacco in the West, where the reality of the cancer-causing nature of tobacco consumption was gaining considerable medical, governmental and consumer attention. Legislation was soon to follow. Not, however, in the communist marketplace where government was reluctant to control a product offering that helped to shore up the fragile economic system at the same time as it provided people with an item they were both addicted to, found desirable and relaxing, and whose restriction might have been the tipping point for public criticism and potential unrest.

Such views were not unrealistic given the serious problems that had confronted the East German government in the early 1950s (Pence, 2001). Government policy was redirected towards heavy industry, taxes were raised, increased workloads mandated, there was the removal of social benefits (e.g. insurance), and greater use of rationing – all of which led to national protests. These were only supressed through the intervention of the Soviet army. Constraining consumption and demanding more work had the potential to destabilise unpopular regimes and this was something that the Soviet Union and its satellites had to register (Pence, 2001).

The final full paper in this issue is by Luminita Gatejel (2016). Her research focus is on the automobile industry and the market creation efforts of the East German government to sell their cars to the rest of the union of communist countries and – in a decidedly hopeful moment – the rest of the world. Directing attention to the activities of the East German government in promoting their industry makes this a highly useful contribution to the literature, complementing the traditional Soviet focus of the extant material available (cf. Crowley, 1998; Greene, 2014; Pellandini-Simanyi, forthcoming; Pence, 2001). These marketing efforts were part and parcel of soft power practices designed to demonstrate to the rest of the world that the communist system could produce goods that were functionally and symbolically competitive with those emanating from the U.S. and other auto-producing countries. These products were promoted through the international exhibitions where producers, retailers and consumers from capitalist and communist countries alike could meet and examine the offerings of the competition.

Gatejel provides a comprehensive review of the use of trade exhibitions before exploring the East German automobile industry, concentrating on their endeavours at the Leipzig Trade Fair during the 1950s and 1960s. She devotes attention to the reception of these vehicles, citing initial interest progressing into comparative disinterest due to the lack of product development. In a fascinating discussion, Gatejel reflects that if the East German government and producers had used the marketing intelligence that these trade fairs generated to revisit their product development tactics and marketing communications methods, then their participation might have brought benefits. Unfortunately, this information was largely ignored. This firmly illuminates the problems that faced the planning mechanisms operating in communist controlled locations and their failure – in some cases – to pay due attention to the shifting nature of the market.

The next contribution is a “Forgotten Classic” review. Andrew Pressey (2016) provides an extremely detailed exegesis of a book that very few marketing historians will have read. Arguing that Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon’s *Advertising in a Free Society* represents a forgotten classic, Pressey places this book in its Cold War context. As becomes clear, Harris and Seldon are supporters of free markets over the centralised control associated with communist economies. They aver that the producer is subservient to the consumer; that the latter is the powerful figure in the marketplace. Their gestures in this regard are a response to the arguments against consumer sovereignty made by J. K. Galbraith around the same time or the vision of behavioural modification popularised by Vance Packard.

Harris and Seldon are passionate advocates of consumer sovereignty. Being sovereign, they argue, provides many benefits, but can come with costs as well. What we should appreciate is that they make the argument that the consumer is exposed to multiple influences from a variety of marketplace actors. This plurality of messages means we have the opportunity to select the product or service that best meets our needs. More than this, engagement with marketing communications performs an educational function. Through the market, we learn to make better decisions. This was an important element of their thought: people need to be left to make decisions within the marketplace without government involvement. We learn through our mistakes and this has to be accepted within a free market. With choice comes responsibility.

The active involvement of government in the market, they explain, reeks of paternalism and is fundamentally problematic. They seem to suggest that few people – including the working class or less affluent – need protection from the marketing and advertising system. This demarcated their writing from commentators in the early twentieth century or the 1930s consumer movement which believed that manufacturers, marketers and advertisers could not be left to self-regulate in the consumer's interest. People needed to be protected. And this was especially true of those on lower incomes for whom consumption errors could be seriously detrimental, affecting their lives in a disproportionately negative fashion compared to the wealthy.

This book is interesting in many ways. Pressey makes the case that it provides an extremely comprehensive review of the literature engaging with and often critiquing advertising from the late nineteenth century through to the time of publication (i.e. late 1950s). Obviously, Harris and Seldon provide a counterpoint to this literature. Moreover, they were influential. Their work was used to inform government decision-making in the United Kingdom. And the fact that both were rewarded with honours within the U.K. system hints at their centrality within status quo circles.

What stands out to the reader consulting this text today is that their defence of advertising has an historical *and* contemporary ring about it, combining elements of the "rationalistic" school of advertising thought that was prominent in the early twentieth century which stressed the consumer of advertising as fairly sceptical and willing to challenge the arguments proposed by advertisers (Kuna, 1976). To link it to recent literature, there are similarities to the ideas associated with Andrew Ehrenberg on awareness-trial-reinforcement-nudging models of advertising effects (e.g. Barnard and Ehrenberg, 1997; Ehrenberg, 2000). Harris and Seldon do not claim that advertising necessarily provides highly useful sources of information (this differentiates their work from the rationalistic school), but do posit that it is a useful tool in enhancing the performance of free markets. For these authors, advertising does not persuade (this links them to Ehrenberg). People cannot be forced to purchase goods that merit no personal interest. We do not shift from being "cold" to a product to the "warm" or "hot" feelings associated with the fanning of desire (Belk et al., 2003), mere exposure effects notwithstanding. As such, advertising is not the manipulative tool that corporate critics often allege. Their account is thus far removed from "strong" theories of advertising effectiveness. For Harris and Seldon, advertising serves to remind and reinforce consumer behaviour and brand engagement.

The final piece of scholarship is an Explorations & Insights paper. These papers typically introduce new empirical research or commentary that is intended to further develop an emergent area. In this case, Stefan Schwarzkopf provides a commentary on the McCarthyite and Cold War era, unpacking how this climate had an influence – both positive and negative – on scholarship and the personal lives of a number of figures associated with the marketing discipline. His specific focus is Paul Felix Lazarsfeld who was one of the most skilled qualitative and quantitative researchers in the social sciences working during the twentieth century (e.g. Fullerton, 1990; Tadajewski, 2016).

In his paper, Schwarzkopf adopts a methodological strategy that has been employed previously to some success, using the files that the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) kept to document an individual's activities to illuminate a facet of that person's life. In other examples, these files are used to flesh out our understanding of the impact of the cultural climate on the personal and intellectual commitments of various scholars to chart how it influenced their ideas, arguments and publications (e.g. Tadajewski, 2009a, 2013) or how the climate was used to advance scholarly positions, access funding for research and cement their position within the scholarly hierarchy (e.g. Tadajewski, 2009b). Alternatively, they can function to reveal the dark-side of organisational practice (e.g. Tadajewski, 2010). Schwarzkopf's approach is slightly different to the extant literature. He describes the FBI's mapping of Lazarsfeld's personal relationships and how scholars he had managed to alienate sought to return the favour by painting him in less than positive colours with the federal authorities. This can make uncomfortable reading for those who hold this scholar in high regard, but serves to remind us that even the best academics are human, with all the fallibility that accompanies this status.

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