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Modernity in British advertising: selling cocoa and chocolate in the 1930s

Advertising was pervasive in interwar Britain, utilised by public and private organisations in pursuit of their commercial, social and political objectives. It conveyed specific information about goods or services as well as broader messages. In seeking relevance and appeal, advertisers located products within modern lifestyles and identities that consumers might aspire to. Often they depicted commodities as solutions to counter personal anxieties or social problems, real or imagined.

Through purposeful use of contemporary images and issues, advertisements reflected economic, social and cultural transformations and promoted ways of thinking and behaving that linked consumption and modernity. Advertising agencies developed their professional identity as agents of modernity by claiming to understand and influence consumer behaviour. Their role addressed commercial, social or political imperatives to reduce the unpredictability of consumers.

The evolution of advertising was part of broader social transformations. Frank Trentmann identified a transition after 1913 from white bread to milk as the embodiment of equality and consumer welfare. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, various social and political groups coalesced around the ideology of Free Trade. Cheap white bread came to symbolise fairness for citizen-consumers. However, this coalition fractured after 1913 due to war, protectionism and economic dislocations. Politically Liberalism fragmented; the Labour movement gained strength; and within the Conservative party proponents of imperial trade gained ground. In this context,

Trentmann argued that milk ('liquid successor to the cheap white loaf') became the new emblem of consumers' status. Previously routinely adulterated and a common source of infections, milk's new status resulted from a confluence of influences. Reformers, politicians and leading dairy firms finally overcame farming interests' opposition to compulsory pasteurisation. From 1927, the new Milk Marketing Board ran campaigns based on the health value of drinking milk. Success drew on new scientific knowledge about nutrition and on state concerns about the health of mothers and children. Public health campaigns promoted milk intensively as an essential food as did leading

dairies. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska traced similar dynamics in approaches to health education between 1880 and 1939. Medical professionals, welfare reformers and various other activists promoted new approaches to diet, leisure, exercise and styles of dress. Some marketed commodities directly; others saw their messages deployed in commercial advertising. Although not all were successful, their force was evident in changing social attitudes and a long-term legacy of health-related commercial advertising.

Trentmann and Zweiniger-Bargielowska both identified an emerging approach to modernity that centred on the benefits of modern science and technology. It placed 'moral and civic responsibility' on consumers, particularly housewives, to manage and promote their own health and that of their families. Such thinking linked personal actions to political and civic visions. Trentmann argued that the new 'idealised Conservative version of the empowered consumer finally drew its strength from faith in modern marketing'. Zweiniger-Bargielowska identified an interwar ideal of the good citizen as one who consumed appropriate commodities in the proper manner. She described housewives as 'inundated by a veritable flood of nutrition information and advice on domestic hygiene'. vi The effects were not clear-cut. Trentman contrasted the ideal of the 'citizen-consumer' with the reality of class-based consuming cultures'. vii Zweiniger-Bargielowska cited evidence from 1938 that the majority of housewives had little interest in nutritional education or articles about diet and foods. Advice on feeding children and on slimming diets apparently held greater appeal. This article examines how advertisers negotiated the promise and limitations of advertising during the 1930s. It focuses on campaigns developed by the J Walter Thompson agency for Rowntree cocoa and chocolate and their use of modern themes and images. In these campaigns, the centrality of segmentation marketing testified to the importance of class, gender, and region in advertising and consumption in the 1930s.

The confectionary industry developed large-scale production and marketing from the late nineteenth century. Beverages and a variety of biscuits, chocolate bars, filled chocolate assortments,

toffees, mints and pastilles were made from cocoa, sugar and other ingredients.^{ix} New technologies allowed product innovation and volume production. Cadbury, Rowntree and Fry, three Quakerowned companies, dominated, though numerous small producers catered for local markets or specialised in a particular type of confectionery. As Robert Fitzgerald showed, Cadbury gained 'first mover' advantages through its 'production-cum-marketing' policy based on low manufacturing costs, the appeal of its dairy milk chocolate, innovative marketing and judicious price-cutting.^x

Rowntree responded in the 1930s through 'strategic differentiation' based on product innovation and advertising of 'a few, differentiated, high-quality, large-scale brands', principally Black Magic, Dairy Box, Kit Kat, Aero and Smarties.^{xi}

The leading manufacturers moderated competition through agreements on pricing, wage rates and other aspects of competition. Frequent price wars highlighted the fragility of these agreements.

Competition was also stimulated by the growing presence of the American Mars company and by smaller manufacturers and wholesalers. Rowntree's strategy relied on close working from 1931 with the London office of J Walter Thompson (JWT, in place of the SH Benson advertising agency. This switch allows evaluation of the approach taken by the leading international agency between the wars. JWT first established a British presence in 1899, but withdrew during the First World War. It re-opened its London office in 1919 in support of US clients developing their own overseas operations, but catered increasingly to British companies between the wars. JWT's reputation stemmed from its scale and knowledge of American advertising practices. As Schwarzkopf showed the agency made extensive use of market research to evaluate consumer opinions about products and about advertising. This paper examines how ideas about modernity shaped campaigns for two different commodities, cocoa and the new Aero chocolate bar in the 1930s. The aim is to identify similarities and divergences in the themes used and implementation of the two campaigns.

Marketing Cocoa

From the late nineteenth century, Elect cocoa was Rowntree's most heavily advertised product.xiii Press and poster campaigns, supported by free samples, discounts and coupons redeemable against future purchases, were concentrated in late autumn and winter when consumption rose. Rowntree relied on Bensons, a leading London advertising agency. During 1916 and 1917 Rowntree promoted 'sustaining and strength-giving properties': 'A cup of Elect cocoa makes a biscuit into a meal'.xiv The combination of nutritional value and cheapness remained standard themes. Topical and lifestyle images were common: a series of advertisements featured women as typists, factory workers, bus conductors and performing other jobs. Deidre Beddoe showed how Rowntree's cocoa advertising in 1919 portrayed a transition from women as war workers to housewives.xv Fitzgerald highlighted a new style from 1919 'in which personalities and story-lines replaced the previous, sole focus on the product itself'. Lifestyles and quality of life, especially in childhood, featured. Such advertising was already modern in using contemporary settings and presenting consumer choices as key influences on personal health and status. Rowntree experienced a fundamental challenge in 1922 when a scare over traces of arsenic forced withdrawal of all stocks of their cocoa. In the following year, a record advertising budget was allocated to rebuild consumer confidence. xvi In 1925 cocoa advertising expenditure of £120,021 constituted 42 per cent of Rowntree's total budget.xvii They drew on the broader advocacy and promotion of milk that Trentmann emphasised. References to the merits of milk and vitamins appeared along with claims about their calming qualities. These elements evolved from themes of purity and quality that had characterised advertisements for cocoa from the late nineteenth century.xviii Repeat purchasing was encouraged with coupons with each tin redeemable for gifts. Cadbury and Fry's operated similar schemes.

In 1936, JWT's publicity stressed its research as a way to understand consumers as 'warm, living, emotional human beings' and, thus, be able to sell to them. In categorising and depicting consumers into classes A-B-C-D, the agency asserted its ability to target advertising. On obtaining Rowntree's cocoa account five years earlier, JWT undertook market research that blended small-scale sampling with large-scale investigations. JWT office staff tasted the product. A 1931 study by

Lintas Inc. questioned 950 housewives, 160 retailers and 20 café-owners, all located in London. It found that adult consumption of cocoa was highest among social classes C and D, though for all classes children drank more cocoa than adults did. Supper was the most popular time for consuming cocoa; reportedly, parents of cocoa-drinking children consumed 'a considerable amount, mostly at night'. Research discovered that mothers in London and Nottingham believed cocoa to be healthy. The belief that lower class families predominantly consumed cocoa dominated JWT's approach. Indeed cocoa featured in a later 'visualisation of the C and D classes' based on Mr and Mrs Green and their family. With income of £3 per week, breakfast, though sometimes including bacon, 'often is just bread and cocoa'; the children's tea was cocoa, bread and butter though Mr Green, a factory worker, ate sausage and mash.** Cocoa then was a defining staple of working-class diet according to JWT. It implied a limited capacity to consume, though in other publicity, JWT reassured potential clients that aggregate demand was still substantial. Their approach to marketing cocoa offers a guide into how JWT advertised to classes C and D and reflected the significance of class influences on consumption.**i

The Lintas report informed Rowntree's 1931 cocoa advertising, which proclaimed 'The Children say, "Oh, It's Good'. Further research, however, found that Rowntree's cocoa was considered 'heavy' and 'indigestible'. Such opinions threatened sales, especially in comparison to Cadbury's drinking chocolate. In response, JWT recommended that Rowntree develop a 'super cocoa' that could be marketed as 'new and improved'. Rowntree and JWT commissioned research by Professor EC Dodds, a leading biochemist at University College London and Director of the Courtauld Institute of Biochemistry at Middlesex Hospital. By early 1933, he had completed three reports on the alkalising and digestion of cocoa, including comparisons with rival products. Dodds found that some elements of the protein in Rowntree's cocoa were absorbed faster than the equivalent part of Cadbury's cocoa. Its internal history of the Rowntree account recorded how JWT deployed Dodds' reports: 'He made the surprising discovery that Rowntree's cocoa was definitely beneficial to the digestion'. By mid-1933, Rowntree accepted that there was 'very strong evidence to show that our cocoa is

materially more digestible than Cadbury's'. Yet, direct comparison with Cadbury's product was 'pigeon-holed at the moment because we dare not use it'. *xxiii Rowntree feared reprisals by Cadbury through price competition. JWT, however, used the evidence that cocoa remained in the stomach longer than tea or coffee to claim that it stimulated gastric juices and, thus, digestion more efficiently. The task was to develop related advertising messages.

Rowntree insisted that Dodds approved JWT's advertising copy before the manufacturer saw it. xxiv For Rowntree, his judgement was part of translating scientific research into marketing campaigns and a source of authoritative reassurance that any claims were justified. Their concern reflected a fears about Cadbury and the associations of advertising as misleading or fraudulent. Dodds liaised with the factory over changes to the product and manufacturing processes. His surviving appointment books noted two meetings with JWT or Rowntree in late 1934, fifteen such meetings in 1934 and between five and seven annually between 1936 and 1939 including visits to York. xxv There were detailed discussions of advertising strategies, messages and text. In November 1934, DM Saunders, of JWT, asked 'what might be the story we could tell for cocoa in comparison with the various stories that are entrenched for compounded foodstuffs-Ovaltine, sleep story-Horlick's, the energy basis and the new campaign for Bournvita, cribbing our cocoa publicity; and whether we can find a want which cocoa alone can fill'. xxvi Saunders hoped 'that these altered cocoas would give us something which would not "lie heavy". During the discussions, Dodds described 'night hunger'-a slogan used by Horlicks- as 'sheer bunk'. He noted that 'if he had to choose between Ovaltine, Horlicks and Bournvita, on the one hand, and cocoa, on the other, he thought that scientifically we could make a better statement for cocoa'. xxvii

Subsequently, Rowntree agreed that JWT could devise campaigns and then consult Dodds 'if it were found necessary to substantiate any claims that the J Walter Thompson Company wanted to make'. **XXVIII Dodds' service role left a good deal of leeway for the agency to exploit. He commented on draft cocoa advertisements for the British Medical Journal and Nursing Mirror. Dodds wrote 'I am

afraid that the suggested copy will not do. Would it be possible for us to discuss this. I am terribly busy next week but I daresay we could fit in a few minutes at either of our respective offices or some conveniently situated public house'. xxix In 1938, Peter Rowntree complained that Dodds was not being shown all text. JWT countered that he had 'endorsed the story' consistently. xxx Dodds commented that 'what one might term "sound" products, such as milk products, cocoa and genuine foods, will always have much more latitude than let us say, spurious tonics and products containing alcohol in a desguised (sic) form'. He advocated separate panels in advertisements for 'scientific and indisputable facts' and for the 'interpretations of your copywriters'. This, Dodd suggested, would allow any criticisms to be addressed in terms of the accuracy of the 'indisputable panel' and then, separately, of the promotional interpretation. His own dealings with Rowntree and JWT indicated how closely scientific expertise and marketing intertwined in product development and in creating plausible advertising claims. xxxi The logic of Dodds' role as researcher and authoritative expert was extended by Rowntree's advertising in medical journals. Cocoa advertisements in the Lancet, British Medical Journal and Nursing Mirror used technical language to describe the product's nutritional value. In encouraging medical professionals to recommend cocoa to their patients, they pursued an indirect route to influencing consumers through science, expertise and health messages.

In the popular press, cocoa advertisements imitated newspaper editorials by including sections of text using the language of health and medicine. In this way, they applied Dodds' preferred style. The format further associated cocoa with dispassionate, authoritative and factual advice. The 'new and improved' and scientific themes featured in slogans such as 'From All Quarters-Praise of new food discovery' and 'Rowntrees-the Digestible Cocoa'. The appeal was reinforced by illustrations of active children and slogans such as 'New Health Secret Discovered' and 'Surprise for Mothers'. The health theme continued in 1933, but took the form of personal testimonials rather than medical opinions. Relatives, neighbours or friends featured as sources of information and recommendations, locating the product within social networks. In headlines, text and images, mothers proclaimed the virtues of Rowntree's cocoa for their children. In local newspapers, women's testimonials often

included their home address, reinforcing elements of authenticity, relevance and personal connection. This format dominated advertising campaigns in four national daily papers, three 'low class' Sunday papers, eleven local papers in Yorkshire and Lancashire and seven local papers in the north of England or Scotland plus sixteen national magazines. Further Yorkshire and Lancashire local newspapers were added in 1934, emphasising the desire to engage fully with consumers in Rowntree's region.

After the initial intensive promotion of Rowntree's cocoa as 'new', provincial newspaper advertising ceased and only one national daily paper was used. The focus shifted to popular Sunday papers (the most expensive outlets in terms of advertising space), women's magazines and children's comics, aligned with JWT's original research findings about cocoa consumption. Campaigns targeted children as the principal consumers and mothers as household managers and primary carers. "JWT was anxious to find a 'human story' through which to dramatize scientific evidence about digestion of cocoa. Cartoons allowed easy dramatization of transformations of a child's health; among the slogans used was: 'Ruby looks A1 again-since we changed to Rowntrees! Writes Mrs Greenham below'. According to JWT's history of the account, 'The simple visual appeal conveys to the class of women buying lower class products the meaning without strain'. It reflected JWT's assumptions about working-class consumers targeted as class C and D consumers. The general message was that children's health could be assured through consumer choices.

Advertising from September 1935 implied continuing innovation with the slogan 'Cocoa Improved'.

Ease of digestion, especially of milk, was emphasised along with claims that Rowntree's product was superior to others for 'certain vital parts of the body', namely building bone and muscle.

Advertisements in women's magazines showed a child tiring and then reviving after drinking cocoa.

They combined emotional appeals with statements about the cost-effectiveness of cocoa in promoting children's health. The scientific claims were popularised through personal testimonies of consumers. In November 1935, adverts appeared with statements from working-class mothers with

weekly incomes of around £3, exactly the same earnings as Mr and Mrs Green, JWT's archetypal class C and D family. The format continued in 1938. JWT combined budget evidence with identifying cocoa as an inexpensive source of nutrition. Family names and their neighbourhood again featured with brief statements of their income and weekly budget. Such authenticity could have unanticipated consequences. Soper's memoir stated that one of the housewives featured in these advertisements visited JWT's head office to complain about crusts of bread and leftover food being left on her doorstep as she was perceived to be in poverty. **Executated** The speculated that she received a 'cash sweetener'; future advertisements did not give actual addresses. With only Soper's account, the reported episode remains enigmatic, implying elements of community, personal shame and tensions over the meaning of commercial advertising.

By the late 1930s, cocoa campaigns recycled themes and formats. Humorous drawings reappeared:

irritable husbands and children appeared calmer as well as healthier after drinking cocoa. In women's magazines the character of the District Nurse was shown recommending Rowntree's cocoa. Slogans reiterated long-established themes of digestibility and nutritional value, targeting women shoppers with claims about children's health. In 1936, Rowntree sponsored a morning music programmes on Radio Luxemburg from January to April and in the autumn. This reflected JWT's advocacy of the medium for engaging mothers' interest, though Rowntree executives were sceptical. Modernity informed the advertising messages for cocoa largely in terms of the use of scientific knowledge about nutrition, partly in relation to milk and partly in terms of digestion. Dodds' involvement and the use of medical testimonials contributed to developing and marketing key messages. Extensive advertising in newspapers immediately after JWT took on the Rowntree account, drew on market research findings and used the 'new and improved' theme. After this initial phase, campaigns targeted women and children in lower income families. Advertisements featured domestic settings, offering a degree of contemporary realism. They depicted cocoa as a cheap but

healthy drink, appealing to housewives with limited incomes who wished to maximise the nutritional

value of children's diets. Other products used similar themes. For instance, Milk Marketing Board campaigns stressed the merits of the 'food of foods' for its nutritional value, cheapness, contribution to a beautiful appearance and promotion of children's health. XXXVIII A Housing and Health exhibition in Glasgow included a Milk Bar; publicity emphasised milk as a source of strength, fitness and stamina. XXXVIII Bird's Vitamin Custard advertising referred to milk as 'the nation's number 1 food'. XXXVIIII A poster for Mackeson's Milk Stout described the product as 'Two good drinks to make one better'. XXXXIX JWT's efforts had mixed results. Rowntree's cocoa sales rose from 1,725 tons to 2,211 tons between 1932 and 1938. Its market share remained around 20 per cent of sales compared to Cadbury's 41 per cent and Fry's 12 per cent. XII By December 1937, press advertising focused on London and the North and Midlands of England, reflecting the regional pattern of Rowntree's sales.

Rowntree's Aero campaign

Sweets and chocolates ranged widely in price and were largely impulse purchases. Advertising commonly included details of the weight, contents and price of chocolate bars and boxes, conveying precise information alongside images or symbols of luxury and modernity. The objective was to make consumption acceptable for products that combined the addictive qualities of sweetness with moral uncertainties about their health implications and, sometimes, cost. All Trentmann and Emma Robertson have highlighted ways in which advertising domesticated products based on exotic commodities from overseas. All Cadbury's featured its Bournville works as the 'factory in the garden', a reference to the surrounding model housing development with its sports field and sense of community. It combined modernity in the form of the technologies of large-scale manufacturing with the creation of a corporate culture. The firm's key brand, Cadbury's Dairy Milk, was promoted as a convenient way of carrying and consuming milk. The slogan and imagery of a 'glass and a half' of milk in every bar first appeared in 1928. The firm described its Bournville Plain bar as 'sunshine chocolate' based on the vitamin D content of cocoa. All The introduction of purple and red wrappers for milk and plain chocolate respectively further developed brand identities for Cadbury's leading

often made associations with luxury, romance and gift giving. Chocolates, especially in pre-Christmas campaigns, were described as ideal presents. Among Cadbury's advertising were images of a smartly dressed man bearing chocolate assortments and labelled, variously, as 'Good Husbands' or 'A Young Man With Great Gifts'. Xliv Promotions of new brands used contemporary images. In 1925, the cartoon character Mr York appeared in advertisements for Rowntree's plain chocolate bar. Xlv As well as establishing the firm's location, Mr York engaged in a variety of leisure activities and social settings as well as being shown buying the product. In the same year, the firm launched Motoring, a bar combining chocolate, fruit and nuts. It capitalised on the interwar fashion for cars and travel to position itself as a quintessentially modern commodity. Xlvi

The launch of Aero in 1935 was part of Rowntree's 'strategic differentiation' in response to the dominance of Cadbury's Dairy Milk and the recent success of the Mars Bar, which its American manufacturer had backed by opening a factory near London. Along Rather than being a solid block of chocolate, the Aero bar contained air bubbles. Developed in Rowntree's factory, it used a registered trademark purchased from Cadbury's. The initial marketing challenge was to convince consumers to try the new product. The brand's subsequent durability demonstrated the power of the 'pull' marketing that Rowntree and JWT created. Manufacturer and agency undertook extensive market research prior to the introduction of Aero, particularly consumer taste testing compared to Cadbury's Dairy Milk. The new line was initially test marketed in the north of England, where Rowntree's distribution was strongest. Nationwide promotion followed between April and June 1936. A series of weekly and fortnightly advertisements appeared in 35 newspapers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Posters showed an Aero with the slogan 'It looks different! It tastes different!' Advance guidance for Rowntree's sales representatives described Aero as the 'most unique chocolate in England today'. Compared to cocoa, Aero targeted a broader cross-section of consumers, so its advertising drew on JWT's ideas about reaching a mass market.

From the beginning, press advertisements combined health and modernity by showing heterosexual couples consuming Aero in various summer leisure settings. The first depicted a Rowntree's Aero bar, its two penny price and a drawing of a young couple wearing swimsuits. Accompanying text emphasised the distinctive texture and asserted that 'because Aero is more easily digested you get an energy pick-up sooner'. Social attributes (relationships, gift giving and peace making) were proclaimed in the couple's exchange: 'He: Don't be angry-here, have a piece of chocolate; Her-Is it Aero?' These themes featured a succession of advertisements, all featuring a young couple, during the summer of 1936. The different settings included beaches, swimming pools, a sailing boat, the deck of a liner, and a park or field. Recreation supplied a reason to seek the 'lift' of eating chocolate and made associations with healthy lifestyles and enjoyment. The close focus on the figures of the couple limited background detail, but stylish clothing, beaches and swimming pools supplied an element of glamour. Class identifications were less clear than in the cocoa advertising. Instead youth and recreation were central. These aspirational images presumably appealed to the widest possible range of consumers. In his memoir, JWT account manager, Sam Soper recalled that the campaign used 'words like "Experience the new chocolate sensation". But he asserted that 'its real strength lay in the unusually blatant sexual overtones of the illustration showing the man and girl in bathing costumes (at the lower end of modesty in her case) while "he" was about to pop an Aero section into her mouth! Innocuous and natural though the scene was, in all superficial respects, by the standards of the day, (long before Mary Whitehouse reached puberty!) the choice of bathing costumes was clearly deliberate and again one realised that sexual interest was being insinuated into the imagery of the new Aero product. Of course to see the picture now, would not cause a flutter of interest from anyone!!'xlviii Soper believed that JWT's 'creative team were pioneering the process of titillating the public, knowing how thirsty readers were for this kind of thing'. In doing so, they drew on elements of popular journalism and on the fashionable interest in health, recreation and less formal socialising that Zweiniger-Bargielowska identified. Soper recalled one complaint about an image of a couple on a beach. He believed that 'Rowntrees, with their long-standing and

much admired tradition of fostering Quaker standards of morality were not happy with the criticism.... It confirmed their worst fears and threatened their reputation both with their staff and with the public at large'. As a result, he recalled, the Aero campaign switched to featuring the bar's honeycomb texture as a way of 'majoring on the product's novelty, and USP'.

The emphasis on Aero as tasty and refreshing was typical of food and drink advertising. As in its cocoa advertising, JWT used the 'new and improved' sales pitch and drew on Dodds' research into the digestion of chocolate. Aero, copy asserted, would dissolve faster than 'old fashioned milk chocolate' by triggering enzymes that promoted digestion, providing a 'quick lift' or energy boost. As a result, it was claimed, Aero was more nourishing than any other milk chocolate. Cross-section images of Aero and standard bars illustrated their different textures. Advertiser's Weekly noted the campaign's negative portrayal of 'ordinary' chocolate. More significantly, in May 1936, Cadbury complained that Rowntree's derogatory advertising would create dissatisfaction with other milk chocolates and depress total sales. They denounced statements such as 'It digests twice as quickly as old fashioned Milk Chocolate' and criticised images of other chocolate as 'a solid mass which tends to form lumps when eaten'. Iii Cadbury and Fry demanded changes. Rowntree initially rejected the criticisms and prioritised establishing its new product in the marketplace. Inter-firm agreements on competitive practices did not govern, the firm argued, advertising copy. It cited previous comparative advertisements (featuring digestibility) for cocoa and Cadbury's Bournvita in support of its own approach. More generally, Rowntree pointed to the expansion of sales of cigarettes despite one using the slogan 'Don't harm the throat' slogan for their brand. In reply, Cadbury struck a note of business morality, stating that 'In our opinion the cigarette manufacturers have frequently overstepped the mark of good business traditions, let alone the standards which have always existed between the Five Firms'. liii

Rowntree and JWT pressed ahead with health-related claims. In line with Soper's recollections, a series of advertisements between February and May 1937 emphasised Aero's 'honeycomb'

structure, which JWT used as a unique selling point. This addressed consumer concerns about the negative effects of eating chocolate, particularly in relation to women's appearance. The emerging emphasis on nutrition, healthy lifestyles and body images compounded such anxieties. Whereas cocoa could be marketed as healthy, confectionery had associations with weight gain and was perceived as a luxury not an essential. Marketing had to overcome such perceptions and any associated personal restraint in eating chocolate. The approach taken echoed cocoa advertising: experts and health professionals were presented supporting Aero's merits and, thus, sanctioning its consumption in positive terms. In this sense, Rowntree and JWT tried to locate the product on the right side of a line between fattening and non-fattening chocolate. For instance, advertising copy asserted 'Beauty specialists and Dieticians say "Yes!" to this new chocolate'. The justification for this statement was said to be its rapid digestion (as opposed to the supposedly sustained period over which cocoa was absorbed). It was variously claimed that this prevented harm to the complexion and meant it 'will not cling to the teeth either-for it literally melts in your mouth'. The positive comparison to other chocolate served to reinforce these statements: 'Eat as much chocolate as you like, say dieticians-so long as it's Aero! Aero has a special "honey comb" texture. It cannot spoil the figure, these experts explain, because Aero is a 'balanced' chocolate, and an unbalanced diet is the chief cause of fatness.' In March, the text included 'Here at last is a chocolate that cannot possibly harm your teeth.' There were echoes of the cocoa campaign, adapted to promote the benefits of a short-term 'lift' without adverse effects on health or appearance. From this angle, sport and recreation was not only modern and popular, but a context in which calories might be used rather than stored. In these ways, the campaign countered social and cultural constraints on immediate gratification, thereby contributing to broader forces promoting consumption that Avner Offer identified. In The central claim of Aero advertising was that the product represented a healthy choice for modern people.

Promotions addressed different age and gender groups using specific associations with modernity designed to appeal to a specific audience. This segmentation strategy was possible because of the

quantity of local newspapers and specialist periodicals, augmented by the interwar proliferation of magazines aimed at women and children. By placing advertisements in different publications and evaluating subsequent sales and the results of market research, advertisers judged which campaigns were most effective. In the process, they adopted formats and contemporary images from popular magazines in order to engage readers' interest. Publishers, in turn, marketed their papers and magazines in terms of their capacity to reach consumers in a particular place or region or of a certain social class or status. This approach was evident between November 1936 and August 1937 in a 'Young Market' campaign that had five different elements.

In leading daily newspapers, the Radio Times and other general publications, the new campaign was a continuation of the original one that had featured summer recreations. Sporting themes continued with beach scenes and swimming interspersed with advertisements showing gymnastics, badminton, skating, sledging, cycling and rowing. Each text emphasised the social and physical pleasures of leisure with headings such as 'Exhilarating', 'Glorious', 'Grand' and Great', 'Thrilling', but asserted that 'you burn up energy three times faster'. It noted that the 'quick lift' of Aero could restore depleted reserves and allow the fun to continue. The product's texture was attributed to 'a sound scientific reason': namely, its special texture that 'stimulates the enzyme glands, speeds up the action of the digestive juices, making them flow more freely'. Cross-section images of Aero and of test tubes accompanied the caption 'Science Photographs Aero Flavour'. Consumers then were to be reassured by the healthy people pictured and by the science and technology in the background. Imitating biscuit promotions, advertising suggested Aero as a snack food that 'can't spoil your next meal either, it digests so quickly'. Again, this elided absorption, digestion and depletion in order to assert positive nutritional effects.

A second set of advertisements photographed couples by iconic landmarks in New York City, including the Statue of Liberty, Broadway, the Staten Island ferry and Central Park. Rather oddly, the fifth advertisement showed a couple on tiny ski run in the Fifth Avenue store of G Spalding and

Brothers. A circular for Rowntree sales representatives explained this set of advertisements in terms of the city's powerful influence on contemporary British society. It asserted that 'Nowadays, what New York says-goes. It's the effect of films of course. Whether we like it or whether we don't, America has cast a spell over the popular mind. Even our speech is coloured by trans-Atlantic slang. New York has set the seal of fashion on Aero. We've harnessed the tide of a popular trend to help sell a tip-top chocolate.' The intention may have been to counter the American origins of the Mars Bar or simply to locate Aero as part of higher status patterns of consumption. The couples featured were older and more affluent in appearance compared to those in the domestic recreation advertisements. The association with America presented self-confident people appreciating the merits of Aero.

A third part of the campaign appeared in the fourth quarter of 1936 in seven Scottish daily newspapers. It s theme was the superiority of modern goods and services. Eight different advertisements contrasted old and new technologies in terms of an old practice being good enough until modern technology appeared. By association, Aero was the new and superior chocolate bar compared to other milk chocolates. Each advertisement showed a previous technology and a new one, a format that JWT later cited as part of its house strategy: 'so simple, a child could understand them. Straightforward selling'. Ni In all cases, a man was using the old technology: longhand; oil lamp; hipbath; magic lantern, daguerreotype, town crier; a wooden ship and hansom cab. Each was elderly or old-fashioned in appearance, linking the product or practice to unappealing imagery. Conversely, women were the modern consumers, a role depicted in advertising of many consumer goods between the wars. The female figures were younger, more elegant or affluent and in modern dress as they, variously, used typewriters, electricity, a bathroom, newspaper, and taxi-cab. In the other three advertisements, men appeared again with the old technology, but the new version involved a couple. They appeared on a steel ship; in a cinema; and as a man with a modern camera photographing a woman. These three scenes echoed the general newspaper campaigns associating Aero with contemporary leisure and affluent consumers. The technology theme only appeared in

Scotland so perhaps it did not prove effective or was tailored to early launch stage of promoting Aero.

The fourth and fifth elements of the 'Young Market' campaign emphasised gender and appeared in comics and magazines for girls and boys respectively. They focused on children as a key group of consumers that Rowntree wished to attract. Gender norms were used to promote interest and to link the product to modern settings. Aero advertising in boys' comics reflected gender norms and imitated the standard content of the publications, which were themselves relatively new commodities. The campaign was based on science and engineering with no reference to relationships or romance. Rather wordplay on Aero was the basis for text about topics such as the Aerogram, Aero-engine and Aerophyte. Each separate advertisement included detailed drawings and text. Among the slogans used was: 'Science gave us the aeroplane. Now science has given us Aero'. Pictures of aircraft were alongside notes of air speed and altitude records. Associations with contemporary technologies and scientific discoveries served as markers of modernity in advertisements.

In magazines for girls, Rowntree and JWT reproduced the couple's adverts used in newspapers, suggesting that these targeted female consumers primarily. In addition, new Aero advertisements for girl's magazines deployed romantic themes via short stories in a strip format modelled on the content of the publications themselves. The narrative form contrasted with the dense information used in advertisements in boy's comics. An example was a November 1936 advertisement headed 'Jane steals a heart-the modern way'. A young couple (apparently affluent since they had a car) planned to go dancing, but the man complained of feeling tired after his day's office work. Following Jane's advice, he ate an Aero and was sufficiently rejuvenated go out. A romantic element was offered in the man's remark that 'I could dance you through life-if you'd let me.' Accompanying text stated that Aero was digested twice as fast as 'hard chocolate', maintaining the 'quick lift' and comparative themes of other campaigns. As well as the associations with romance, woman

appeared as informed consumers, choosing the appropriate commodity in response to a social situation. It echoed women's place in the new technology campaigns and as mothers in cocoa advertising, though in public rather than domestic settings. Another advertisement proclaimed that 'A man likes to take care of a girl. But sometimes it's up to you to take care of him. Little attentions count for so much between lovers.' Sometimes, the gender pattern reversed. One advertisement showed a man arranging for a maid to give Aero to a tired actress who was then able to do several more takes on a film set. The storyline, with its blend of glamour and romance, was characteristic of the content of magazines for women and of many films. It located the product within a contemporary situation that women might aspire to.

A final element of Aero marketing went further with the romance and glamour or, in Soper's terms, 'titillation'. In 1937, a campaign appeared in local newspapers in Oxford and Swindon and nine provincial newspapers in the northeast of England. When it began, JWT explained, in a circular to Rowntree sales representatives, that campaign was 'Mainly for women (but the men will read it too!)'. Each advert featured an individual fashion model (manneguin) and the central theme was that 'quick-digesting Aero cannot harm the figure or complexion'. It was the most direct and detailed rebuttal of female anxieties about the adverse effects of eating chocolate. In its account of the campaign's aims, JWT noted that 'Young women will want to compare themselves with these mannequins-will turn eagerly to the exclusive fashions they are wearing'. The advertisements were highly detailed presentations of lifestyles. The first featured Pamela, who was employed by Dilkusha, a leading Mayfair dress designer. Alongside a photograph, her dress was described as 'daringly low in front, with floor-length skirt and a draped belt'. A second photograph was accompanied by: "..Bust 34" Waist 24" Hips 34" Thighs 19 ½". Pamela was quoted saying 'My weight never varies from month to month-yet I eat lots of Aero'. The reader was informed that 'If Aero is safe for Pamela's figure, it's safe for yours too! It's an unbalanced diet that usually causes fatness-but Aero is a perfectly balanced chocolate'. A final photograph featured Pamela with a man plus text stating that 'Aero is 'okay' with the boyfriend too', says Pamela'. It continued: 'Not that he worries about his figure-I mean-it's the lovely taste he likes. He says it's the way Aero melts in your mouth-you get all the flavour'. Similar adverts with other female models (Gladys; Jeanne; Joan; and Iris) appeared between May and June 1937 before the advertisements featuring models ended. Given the brief run and lack of any wider use, it appears that this campaign proved ineffective. It may have been too detailed or not appealing to female readers or simply the end of an extended launch after which advertising that was more generic appeared.

Soper attributed the switch in advertising messages from sexuality to the honeycomb texture to Rowntree's reaction to public criticisms. However, the later style appeared influenced more by Cadbury's complaints. By early 1937, the industry trade association, the Manufacturing Confectioners' Association, had brokered a settlement. Rowntree and JWT removed explicit comparisons between Aero and milk chocolate, which was Cadbury's principal grievance. Instead, Aero identified as a quality example of the generic product. In March 1937, it was proclaimed as 'Milk chocolate in its best form' that provided 'the thrilling sensation, the prolonged enjoyment, the extra flavour that comes when you drink a chocolate milk shake'. Ivii The introduction of Aero containing nuts and one with fruit and nuts imitated Cadbury lines. Nonetheless, Paul Cadbury expressed 'appreciation of the changes made in advertising'. |Viiii During 1939 and 1940, further advertisements asserted that Aero chocolate was 'kind to the teeth. All featured a smiling young woman displaying very white teeth and dressed stylishly, a simplified version of the model campaign that appeared more ordinary. Such reassuring messages were augmented by campaigns asserting that consumers should 'Obey that Urge! In June 1938 an advertisement stated: 'Do you know that when you get an urge to at chocolate, you shouldn't resist-there is a deep physical reason for?' Abandoning restraint was, it was claimed, a rational response because 'energy reserves of your blood have fallen below the SAFE level.' This re-packaging of the 'lift' theme was exactly the type of message that James identified in late twentieth century advertising for confectionery. Subsequently smaller adverts simply pictured an Aero bar with the slogan 'Get a Quick Lift with Aero'.

Conclusion

As Fitzgerald showed, marketing based on 'pull' advertising became increasingly influential in the confectionery industry between the wars. Cadbury and Rowntree, in particular, embraced new approaches and came to rely on advice and guidance from advertising agencies. J Walter Thompson had a leading role in using market research into consumer preferences to inform advertising campaigns. The evidence from its campaigns for Rowntree's cocoa and Aero reveal the multiple ways in which modernity featured in advertising messages. The agency's 'house style' favoured contemporary settings and 'new and improved' narratives, especially in the early stages of its campaigns. These suited 'experience goods' like coco and confectionery by encouraging people to try them. A striking feature of cocoa marketing was the extent to which the advertising agency encouraged product innovation and worked closely with Rowntree executives and Professor Dodds in devising and implementing the resulting advertising messages. Promotions drew on ideas of scientific and medical expertise for practical advice and as symbols and texts designed to persuade consumers. Dodds advocated a separation of scientific evidence and promotional claims in advertising, but in reality these elements merged in his own role. In translating research findings into promotional materials, JWT and, especially, Rowntree drew on Dodds' authority. In the case of Aero, the manufacturer was responsible for product innovation; the advertising agency exploited the appearance of the chocolate bar for its 'new and improved' theme.

Ideas about health and nutrition were influential in ways that Trentmann and Zweiniger-Bargielowska have emphasised. Advertisers presented detailed information about the proclaimed advantages of consuming cocoa and Aero chocolate. The advertising messages drew on the new knowledge of nutrition, particularly vitamins, and on the widespread promotion of milk as a health promoting food. They reinforced the idea that knowledgeable and astute consumers could make positive choices. Along with these similarities, differences of emphasis were apparent. Cocoa advertising targeted low-income consumers, defined in terms of classes C and D in JWT's analysis.

Derived from their market research, these classifications indicated the significance of class for consumption and in how the agency understood demand and consumer behaviour. JWT's preference was for Rowntree to devise a new product closer to Cadbury's drinking chocolate for a broader appeal. In the absences of this radically different product, it updated 1920s advertising themes to new settings. Campaigns targeted working-class women as mothers and shoppers and presented cocoa as a cheap and efficient source of nutrition, particularly for children. It highlighted ways in which consuming cocoa promoted growth, contentment and domestic harmony. Cartoons and drawings were used to convey messages quickly. The message took the form of advice from health professionals and of personal testimonials of women. The latter advice from peers incorporated family income and expenditure data as part of creating an authentic or recognisable consumer. This style of advertising drew on social links with friends and neighbours that featured in advertisements for soap powders and other household goods. In these respects, advertising messages showed the significance of JWT's belief that class shaped consumption.

Campaigns for Aero advertising were less class based and social settings were less realistic or detailed. Instead, the emphasis was on status and general links to leisure activities of young people and couples. In recalling his work on the Aero campaign of the 1930s, Sam Soper maintained that sexuality was the central theme. As Barthel, James and others have emphasise, chocolates continued to be luxury goods promoted for their sensual pleasures. Equally, the theme of long-run nutritional benefits evident in the cocoa advertising gave way to the idea of a 'quick lift' from eating chocolate. This stimulus allowed participation in recreational activities. Aero was depicted as healthy or superior to other chocolates in order to counter consumer anxieties. Cadbury's reactions defined the acceptable boundaries of 'pull' advertising were set by the reactions of Cadbury. Cadbury's executives were furious about negative comments about rival milk chocolates that featured in Rowntree's campaigns for Aero. As a result, directly comparative statements became off limits as leading firms endeavoured to define acceptable advertising practice. As with cocoa, testimonials from health professionals featured, but also from beauticians and fashion models. Market

segmentation operated at several levels. Test campaigns evaluated the effectiveness of advertising (whether sales increased and how consumers reacted to particular images and text) by making use of the large number of local newspapers and specialist magazines as well as trade press.

Segmentation was evident in the multiple campaigns for Aero. The form and content of advertisements in women's magazines and in comics for girls and boys respectively varied greatly. Advertising messages were tailored to fit with typical lifestyles, interests and expectations, often imitating formats from the magazine or comic. This involved differing images of modernity..

ⁱ Frank Trentmann, Free Trade Nation.

[&]quot;Trentmann, Free Trade Nation, 193.

Peter J Atkins, 'Fattening children or fattening farmers? School milk in Britain, 1921-1941', Economic History Review, 58(1) 2005, 57-78; Michael French and Jim Phillips, Cheated not poisoned? Food regulation in the United Kingdom, 1875-1938, chapter 7.

iv Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Managing the Body: beauty, health and fitness in Britain, 1880-1939

^v Jane Hand, 'Marketing health education: advertising margarine and visualising health in Britain from 1964-c.2000', Contemporary British Society, 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2017.1305898

vi Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Managing the Body, 269.

vii Trentmann, Free Trade Nation, 427.

viii Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Managing the Body, 271.

ix Smith, C. et al, (1990), Reshaping work: the Cadbury experience, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Croom Helm, London. 12-21.

^x Fitzgerald, R., 'Products, firms and consumption; Cadbury and the development of marketing 1900-1939, Business History, Vol. 47(4), 2005, pp. 511-531.

xi Fitzgerald, Rowntree and the marketing revolution, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, chapter 9.

xii Stefan Schwarzkopf, 'Discovering the consumer: market research, product innovation, and the creation of brand loyalty in Britain and the United States in the interwar years', Journal of Macromarketing, 29(1) March 2009, 8-20. For JWT's London office in the 1950s, see Schwarzkopf, S. (2012), 'Mrs. Housewife and the ad men: advertising, market research, the mass consumption in post war Britain' in Berghoff, H. et al (eds), The rise of marketing and market research, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 171-192 and Sean Nixon, Hard Sell: advertising, affluence and transatlantic relations, c1951-1969, Manchester, 2013.

xiii Fitzgerald, Rowntree and the marketing revolution, 90-126.

xiv HAT, Lamb collection, Rowntree Advertising and Sales Report for Season, 1916-1917.

xv Beddoe, Back to home and duty: women between the wars, 1918-1939, 12-13.

^{xvi} Fitzgerald, Rowntree and the marketing revolution, 1862-1969, 156-157; Borthwick Institute, University of York, Rowntree Archives, R/DO/MP/2 and HAT, David Lamb collection, Rowntree Advertising Report, 1923, 6 and Advertising Report, 1924, 7.

xvii HAT, David Lamb collection, Rowntree Annual Advertising Report, 1925, 8.

French and Phillips, Cheated not poisoned? 35, 46-48; Teresa da Silva Lopes, 'Building brand reputation through third-party endorsement: fair trade in British chocolate', Business History Review, Vol. 90, Autumn 2016, pp. 457-482.

xix Advertiser's Weekly, 12 March 1936, 360-361.

xx Advertiser's Weekly, 30 April 1936, 131-132.

^{xxi} For analysis of negative associations of margarine consumption between the wars see Levene, 'The meanings of margarine in England: class, consumption and material culture from 1918 to 1953', Contemporary British History, 28(2), 2014, 145-165.

xxii HAT 50/1/158/2/1/1/1 Note of Meeting-Cocoa, 3 August 1933.

xxiii JWT archive, Note on Meeting-cocoa, 3 August 1933

xxiv HAT, JWT archive, Peter Rowntree to AP Mitchell-Innes, 6 September 1938.

xxv Notebooks and appointments, 1934-1939, Sir Edward Charles Dodds, Correspondence and papers, Royal College of Physicians of London, MSS3113. Dodds continued to provide advice to Rowntree in 1940 see Rowntree archives, R/DT/R/2 Memorandum on Sugar as a Foodstuff, December 1940 for report as part of lobbying of the Ministry of Food for the sugar confectionery industry.

with HAT, Note of Meeting with Professor EC Dodds at Walter Thompson office, 6 November 1934. Among manufacturers that proclaimed the 'stimulating and restorative powers of their products' were Ovaltine, Horlicks and breakfast cereals firms. See Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Managing the Body, 184-185.

xxvii HAT 50/1/158/2/1/1/3 Note of Meeting, 30 January 1935.

xxviii HAT, JWT client files, 50/1/158/2/1/1/3 General Grocery, Note of meeting 1 January 1935.

**** HAT, JWT client files, 50/1/158/2/1/1/3 General Grocery, EC Dodds to DM Saunders, 20 July 1935.

*** HAT 50/1/158/2/1/1/4 Memo by AP Mitchell-Innes, 12 August 1938; Peter Rowntree to AP Mitchell-Innes, 6 September 1938.

xxxi HAT 50/1/158/2/1/1/4 EC Dodds to DM Saunders, 18 October 1938

xxxiii A few advertisements tested sensationalist phrases including 'You May Be Doing Yourself Untold Harm' and 'Beware of the beginnings of digestive trouble'. However these apparently were less effective in influencing consumers.

xxxiii HAT, JWT archive, JWT/5/11/1 Guard book, Cocoa, 1931-1938.

xxxiiv JWT archive Guard book, JWT 5/11/1, Cocoa, 1931-1938; Emma Robertson, Chocolate, women and empire, 20-23.

xxxv HAT Soper memoirs, 52-58.

xxxvi Advertiser's Weekly, 20 February 1936, 264 and 23 April 1936, 46-49.

xxxvii Daily Record, 1 October 1936, 15.

xxxviii Advertiser's Weekly, 1 April 1937, 12.

xxxix Advertiser's Weekly, 26 June 1936, 432.

xl HAT 50/1/158/2/1/1/16 A Discussion of the present position of Rowntree's Cocoa, December 1937.

xii James, A., 'The good, the bad and the delicious: the role of confectionery in British society', Sociological Review, 38, 1990, pp. 666-688; James, A., 'Confections, concoctions and conceptions' in Waites, B. et al (eds), Popular culture: past and present, London, 1982.

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xliii Times, 18 March 1939, 11 and 8 July 1939, 11.

xliv Barthel's exploration of the designs used for chocolate boxes highlighted associations with extravagant consumption, sexuality and a loss of control, Diane Barthel, 'Modernism and marketing: the chocolate box revisited'. Theory, culture and society, 6, 1989, 429-438.

xlv Robertson, Chocolate, women and empire, 39-40.

xivi Fitzgerald, Rowntree and the marketing revolution, 161-167; Sean O'Connell, The car and British society: class, gender and motoring, 1896-1939, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998.

xivii Fitzgerald, Rowntree and the Marketing Revolution, 316-318. Mars launched Milky Way in 1935.

xlviii HAT, Soper memoirs, 51.

xlix HAT, Soper memoirs, 51-52.

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^{lv} Daily Record, 5 November 1936, 8, 12 November 1936, 8 and 18 November 1936, 23.

^{lvi} Advertiser's Weekly, 4 February 1937, 174-175.

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| Viii | Fitzgerald, Rowntree and the Marketing Revolution, 669, footnote 137.

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