



# *The kids are alright*

Halting the intergenerational reproduction of smoking means helping older adults to quit

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**Science, Regulation & Public Health**  
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CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK



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*of York*

# About me

- University of York Research Fellow  
funded by Cancer Research UK 2017/19
- Research:
  - health inequalities
  - class and culture divides
  - smoking cessation & e-cigarettes
- Methods: qualitative, long-term, relational, comparative
- No industry funding (tobacco, e-cigarette, other)



# Moral panics about young people

Young people take up the stigmatised practices of a classed or racial 'other' (e.g. drugs, smoking):

Once a substance is connected with a non-mainstream group, further discussion embodies a distancing and fear of 'the other'<sup>1</sup>

=fear of contamination

+ the 'spectre of downward social mobility':

Parents attempt to control children, whose possible failure embodies the threat of a working-class future<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Berridge, V. (2013) *Demons: Our changing attitudes to alcohol, tobacco, and drugs*. Oxford University Press, Oxford & New York; p. 78

<sup>2</sup>Ortner, S.B. (2006) *Anthropology and social theory: Culture, power, and the acting subject*. Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina; 2006

Quoted in Thirlway, F. (2018) *How will e-cigarettes affect health inequalities? Applying Bourdieu to smoking and cessation*. *Int J Drug Pol* 54 p. 88-105;



A young woman with a Juul. Photo by Vaping360 / Flickr

## Florida Mom Sues Juul Because Her Teenage Son Can't Stop Vaping

MEG O'CONNOR | OCTOBER 16, 2018 | 8:30AM

 104 Like many American teens, J.Y. started vaping after he saw other kids at his high school doing it. When he was 15, the Saint Lucie youth started buying

<https://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/florida-mom-sues-juul-because-her-teenage-son-cant-stop-vaping-10824862>

# But we turn into our parents...

Some middle-class kids might smoke as rebellion, but we reproduce the social gradient in smoking in the end:  
= the poorer you are, the more likely you are to smoke, and to remain a smoker<sup>3</sup>

This has been true in most high-income countries for at least 40 years

<sup>3</sup>Hiscock, R., Bauld, L., Amos, A., & Platt, S. (2012). Smoking and socioeconomic status in England: the rise of the never smoker and the disadvantaged smoker. *Journal of Public Health*, 34, 390-396.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBPyaI4RFGc>

# Why don't working class kids stop smoking?

- symbolic meanings of smoking differ by class (also gender and race, but I focus on class)
- middle-class smoking used to be about cool and glamour (Marlboro, Camel, Silk Cut)
- (some) working-class smoking was/is about belonging



<http://www.freshne.com/what-we-do/our-campaigns/keep-it-out/overview>

# Smoking as belonging



Bourdieu argues that class is relational:

- the middle-class seeks to distinguish itself from stigmatised working-class
- the working-class takes pride in avoiding pretention/posing of middle-class

This translates into smoking having different symbolic meanings across classes – I will use Embassy Regal advertising materials to demonstrate this.

# Embassy Regal: a case study

- one of the strongest post-war brands in the North, Scotland & N Ireland until the rise of economy brands<sup>4</sup>
- a working-class brand with advertising aimed at working-class smokers
- selected documents from 1990s advertising companies illustrate my point
- all the following quotes are from documents available at [tobaccopapers.com](http://tobaccopapers.com), copyright NHS Health Scotland



<sup>4</sup>Gilmore, A.B., Tavakoly, B., Hiscock, R., & Taylor, G. (2015). Smoking patterns in Great Britain: the rise of cheap cigarette brands and roll your own (RYO) tobacco. *Journal of Public Health*, 37, 78-88.

[http://www.weirduniverse.net/blog/comments/reg\\_on\\_smoking](http://www.weirduniverse.net/blog/comments/reg_on_smoking)

*Reg on race relations: 'My Uncle Nobby used to own a bookies'*

*“Regal & Blackpool are both about having a good time with your mates and being proud of your roots”*

CLIENT	IMPERIAL TOBACCO LTD	JOB NO	
PRODUCT	REGAL		MT/03/09
DESCRIPTION	BLACKPOOL 48s		
REQUIREMENT	48sheet Poster	AIRDATE / INSERTION DATE	July 1995

Why are we advertising?

To consolidate the traditional links between Regal and Blackpool

Regal is the favourite smoke of the Blackpool Summer Season, (July - November). In the past we have advertised heavily around town during the Season picking on the themes in Blackpool Council's Summer promotions, eg Tower Centenary. Unfortunately, there is no clear/useable theme this year but we still need an execution which capitalises on Regal's associations with Blackpool.

Who are we advertising to?

Current Regal smokers visiting Blackpool from the North with their mates who are used to seeing Regal around town and at home. They are primarily skilled manual workers, under 35.

What must the advertising say?

Regal and Blackpool go together perfectly.

Why should the consumer believe this?

- Regal & Blackpool are both about having a good time with your mates & being proud of your roots
- Regal is currently the No.1 cigarette in Blackpool - beating B&H for the first time
- 95% of Blackpool visitors come from the North (ie Regal territory)
- Extensive promotional activity also makes Regal very visible.

*Reg on the meaning of life:  
'Depends if you get time off  
for good behaviour'*

*‘Smoking it immediately identifies you as part of a big, sociable crowd (rather than too flash...)*

*Target audience:*

*Lads/lasses of Northern/Scottish Drinking Classes - broke, bugged about and proud can still have a drink and a laugh’*

CLIENT	Imperial Tobacco Ltd	JOB NO	117   03   6
PRODUCT	REGAL		
DESCRIPTION	'Blue' Campaign		117   03   P
REQUIREMENT	7 x 48s + 2 x Press adapts	AIRDATE / INSERTION DATE	Nov 96 - A

#### Background

In Scotland and the North, Regal is the premium-priced brand leader and smoking it immediately identifies you as part of a big, sociable crowd, (rather than too flash or, stingy in the case of B&H or Economy brands). Two years ago we had to find a replacement for 'Reg' who was accused of becoming a youth cult and consequently faced a ban. The 'Something Old/New/Borrowed Blue' campaign was developed and as "a big well-known saying for a big well-known brand", was seen as a perfect fit.

We now need more executions in the campaign - taking into account what we've learnt about it from inception to date (see Learning/Guidelines)

#### Advertising Objective

To keep reminding people of Regal's popularity and everydayness

#### Target Audience

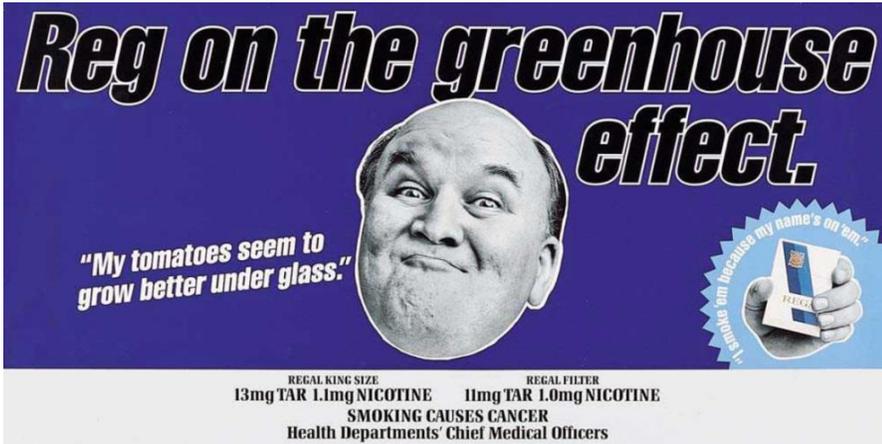
Lads/lasses of Northern/Scottish Drinking Classes - broke, bugged about and proud can still have a drink and a laugh - which Regal goes hand in hand with.

#### Proposition

You've always got your Regal (the smoker's mate)

*Reg on the Stock Exchange:*

*'I'd never swap my cubes for gravy granules'*



# Brand review 1998

*no airs & graces  
old friend  
symbolises Geordie pride*

versus:

*Silk Cut – wimpish  
Marlboro - posing*

*Reg on party politics: 'If you drop ash on the carpet you won't get invited again'*

## EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

*Embassy No1 & Regal*

- currency role
  - social acceptability    social conformity    participation
- popularity
- down-to-earth straightforwardness
  - for everyman    people like me (ordinary)    no airs & graces
- reassurance
  - quality    reliability    reputation    tradition    longevity
- nostalgic connection (early loyalists)
  - personalisation    "old friend"    pride in choice (generic?)
- not other brands
  - B&H - becoming passé    S Cut - wimpish    M'boro - posing    Regal - old brand
  - NB context of rather macho attitude to smoking

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*Two pages from advertising agency's Brand Review presentation notes 1998*

*Regal only*

- badge value
  - in work    "real" traditional/manufacturing work
- irreverence
  - sourced from advertising campaigns ??
- confirmation of regional identity (Newcastle)
  - symbolises Geordie pride

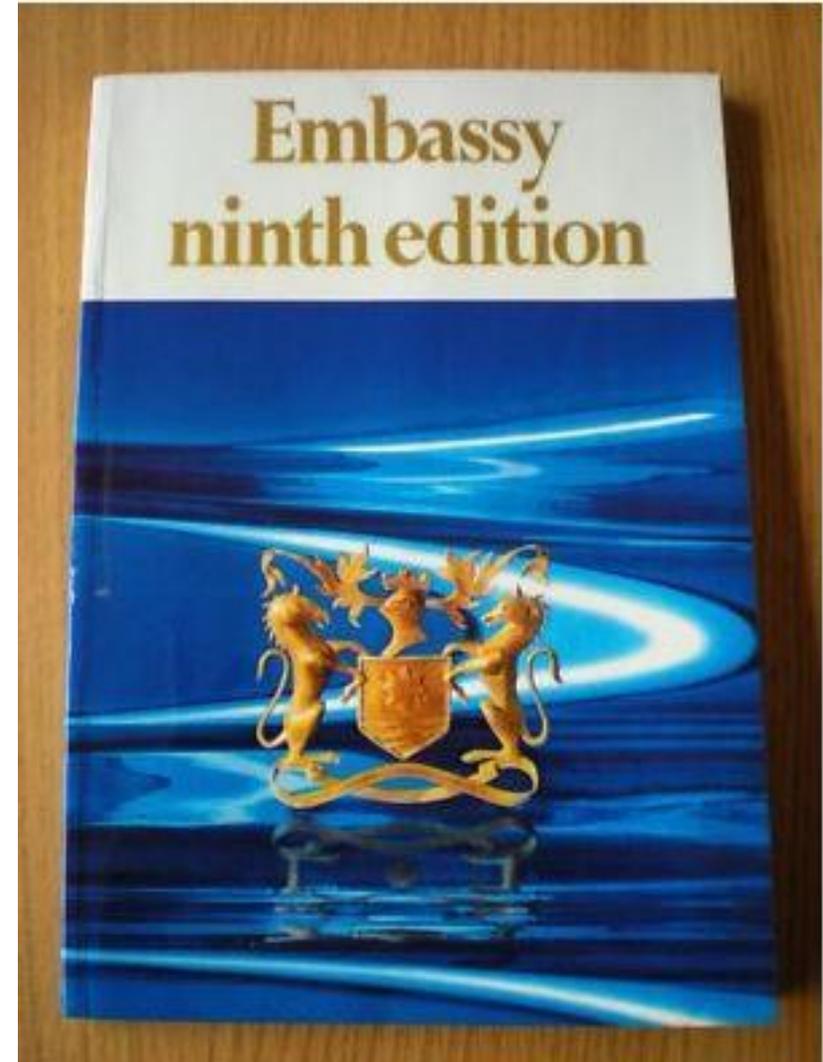
# Smoking as family 1: cigarette coupons

*“Got my first microwave with Embassy Regal cigarette coupons, I had the world and their wives saving them up for me”*

*“My father smoked for most of his life, I can remember him saving the coupons for a new electric kettle”*

*“I remember my Mum smoking Embassy and getting loads of gifts with the coupons, I still have Nescafe coffee set she got in the 80s“*

<http://www.belfastforum.co.uk/index.php?topic=29660.0>



Embassy coupon catalogue 1970

<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/embassy-cigarette-coupons-household-247983111>

# Smoking as family 2: holiday camps

*“When I went to Pontins in the 70s as a child I was allocated a dining spot and house, you could either be in Embassy Regal house or Benson & Hedges house”*

*“We would hang around the arcade and question other kids... quotes of "you Benson and Hedges b\*stards" would go around and a few fights and attacks would take place all in the name of our respective cigarette house.”*

*“I was in the Embassy Blue house at Pontins Blackpool 1973, oh happy days!”*

*“The staff used to come around the club house giving cigs out to the customers... I remember them giving out free ciggys in dinning hall, or giving out extra cigs and goodies for exchanging in competitors ciggys.”*



Detail from: Pontins Osmington Bay 1966 by trainsandstuff (Flickr)

<https://hiveminer.com/Tags/pontins/Timeline>

# Brand as belonging

*“I think you want to smoke what your pals are smoking.” (Girl aged 12-13, smoker.)*

*“See the people we hang around with, see what they smoke. Everybody smokes the same.” (Boy aged 14-15, smoker.)*

*“See at my school, they all smoke them [Regal and (Kensitas) Club]. Well see if you smoke something different like Dunhill you would get a slagging, ‘imagine smoking them.’” (Girl aged 12-13, smoker.)*

Quotes from:

Hastings, G., Ryan, H., Teer, P., & MacKintosh, A. (1994). Cigarette advertising and children's smoking: why Reg was withdrawn. *BMJ*, 309, 933-937.



**Lulu opens the Kensitas Coupon Redemption Centre in Glasgow in 1971.**

As one Glaswegian recently recalled: *“My mother smoked like a beagle in a laboratory to get the 1,000 coupons she needed for a toaster.”* - The Herald, Scotland, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017

<https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/15279659.when-lulu-had-no-doubts-about-opening-this-store-in-glasgow/>

# Has this changed with the advertising ban?

NO

- advertising exploits existing culture rather than creating it
- advertising documents demonstrate classed symbolic meanings of smoking which are often overlooked
- working-class smoking continues to be associated with belonging<sup>5</sup>
- this is a stronger, more emotional connection than 'social context' or 'normative smoking'

<sup>5</sup>Thirlway, F. (2015) *The persistence of memory: history, family and smoking in a Durham coalfield village*. PhD, Durham University

## New RSP sets Kensitas Club sales alight

SHARE ON: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#)



4 April 2018

*'The brand has long been among the icons of the category in Scotland... awareness of the brand has remained high'*

*'We overnight slashed the price of the brand from £10.55 all the way down to £7.65... the fact that the lines are the cheapest on the gantry helped drive trial and sales. "What's the cheapest fags you've got?" must be the commonest question we get from customers buying cigarettes.'*

<https://www.slrmag.co.uk/kensitas-club-new-rsp/>

# Quitting as betrayal of class

- attention to health as feminized and middle-class
- smoking cessation as pretentious = closely associated with social aspirations/social mobility<sup>6</sup>
- sociality may be enforced: several people described being bullied into smoking relapse during the course of a night out with friends<sup>7</sup>

‘Not the slightest deviation is permitted to those who belong to the same class (or originate from it), because in this case difference could only arise from the desire to distinguish oneself, that is, from refusal or repudiation of the group’<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Thirlway, F. (under review) *Explaining the social gradient: smoking and quitting as symbolic practices*

<sup>7</sup>Thirlway, F. (2016) *Everyday tactics in local moral worlds: E-cigarette practices in a working-class area of the UK*; *Soc Sci Med* 170 p. 106-113

<sup>8</sup>Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.), p. 381, Routledge, London. Quoted in Thirlway, F. (2018) *op. cit.*

Like 831K

## Man who quit drinking and smoking now addicted to judging people

8th July 2017



**A MAN who adopted a ‘clean living’ lifestyle is now getting ‘high’ on being incredibly sanctimonious.**

Nathan Muir, 32, quit alcohol and tobacco at New Year but found the only thing that replicates the warm, fuzzy feeling of a large glass of red wine is making judgements about other people’s drinking habits.

<https://www.thedailymash.co.uk/news/health/man-who-quit-drinking-and-smoking-now-addicted-to-judging-people-20170708131420>

# Quitting as betrayal of family

Nicholas (57) had stopped for four years when his smoking mother 'forgot' he had given up and bought him a new pipe and tobacco for Christmas.

*'I said to [partner] a couple of weeks ago I really am going to stop, but then I had spoken to my mum and she said I've brought you some cigarettes, and I said I told you not to buy any while you were away, and she said oh, well I've got them, I know you'll smoke them.'* (Joanne, 50)

People born into working-class families who later moved into middle-class work almost invariably gave up smoking and moved away: smoking status operated as a symbol of social differentiation and was linked to physical separation; parents I talked to showed understandable ambivalence about this<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Thirlway, F. (under review) *op. cit.*



Miners' wives at Hatfield pit in Yorkshire.

Photograph: Don Mcphee for the Guardian

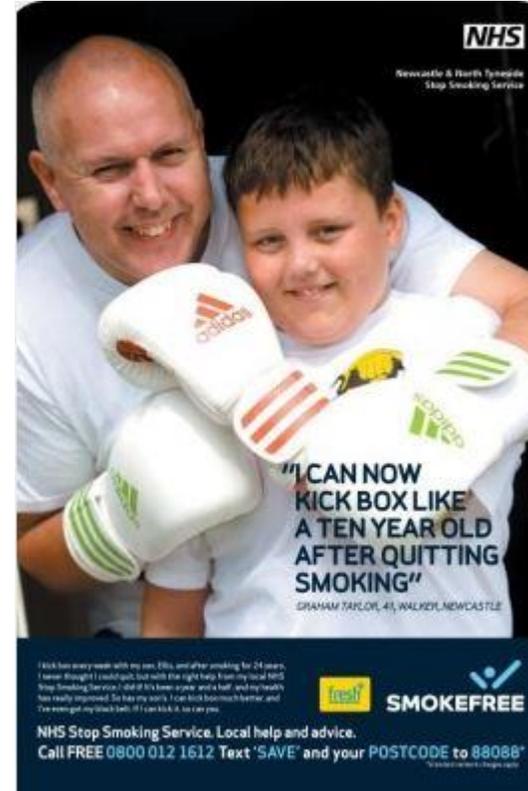
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/12/margaret-thatcher-miners-wives-politicised-strike>

# Family and community are key to sustained quitting

- individual health is not a 'moral imperative' as it is for the middle-class
- but other working-class values support smoking cessation, especially quitting for the sake of family
- stop smoking messages may be more effective with working-class smokers if they deliver family-centred rather than individualistic messages<sup>10,11</sup>
- Working alongside older generations and whole communities to change smoking norms is likely to be more effective than targeting young people

<sup>10</sup>Thirlway, F. (under review) op.cit

<sup>11</sup>Johnston, V. & Thomas, D. (2008) Smoking behaviours in a remote Australian Indigenous community: The influence of family and other factors. *Social Science and Medicine*, 67, 1708-1716.



FRESH (North East England regional tobacco control programme)  
'People like me' campaign 2009

<http://www.freshne.com/what-we-do/our-campaigns/people-like-me/overview>

# Conclusions

- middle-class kids' fads are not the issue, Juul is not the issue
- the reproduction of working-class smoking IS the issue
- if we want the kids to be alright, their parents and grandparents need to stop smoking
- this is where e-cigarettes can help



juulboyz

Countless Instagram accounts dedicated to Juul have appeared over the past year. While I know Juul is also prevalent among public schools, I cannot speak towards the extent of its use there. I can, however, describe the omnipresence this device possesses within the private school system. My peers have the tendency to mingle with other kids from many other schools,

<https://www.trueself.com/juul-teens-2457492025.html>

# Thank you