

“Don’t Blame the Shopkeeper!!”: Food, Drink and Confectionery Advertising and British Government Market Controls During the Second World War

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the impact of zoning and pooling on brands, something not covered in depth in the historical literature. Also the paper is intended to present research into how brands in the food, drink and confectionery industries during the Second World War advertising utilised advertising in response to government control of the market.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper is based on a close reading and interpretation of food, drink and confectionery brands advertisements from the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror* newspapers across the Second World War. Building on work by Burridge (2008) it explores different message strategies used by brands in response to shortages, zoning and pooling.

Findings – While rationing has been discussed at length in the historical literature, zoning and pooling, have not. While brands provided information to their customers about rationing, shortages, zoning and pooling, the latter three also caused brands to apologise, look to the future and urge patience.

Research limitations/implications – This study is based on the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror* from August 1939 to September 1945. Further research could explore other publications or the period after the war as control continued. Exploration of brand and agency archives could also provide more background into brands’ objectives and decision making.

Originality/value – This is the first research to explore the impact of forms of control other than rationing on advertising during the Second World War.

Keywords – Advertising history, Marketing history, Second World War, Britain, Rationing, Zoning, Pooling, Shortages

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

The Second World War saw extensive intervention in the food, drink and confectionery markets by the British Government, as they attempted to influence both the demand for, and the supply of, food available to British consumers. Much of the discussion of food on the home front in the historical literature focuses on rationing. An analysis of food, drink and confectionery advertising, in the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror* across the war however, illustrates that government control was more extensive than this. As well as controlling demand through rationing, the government also instituted measures that controlled the supply of goods. Even though they operated on the same markets, the objectives of these controls was different, rationing was designed to distribute a limited supply fairly while zoning and pooling attempted to ensure that the resources used to produce and distribute that supply were used as efficiently as possible. The purpose of this paper is first to illustrate that zoning and pooling had an important impact on brands in these sectors and secondly to demonstrate how this affected the advertising for these brands.

This paper will explore how advertising dealt with zoning and pooling, both from the point of view of brands which were themselves in short supply or absent, or those which were offered as alternatives to brands in short supply. The exploration of these different types of control will expand the historical literature beyond the current concentration on rationing and allow a more nuanced discussion of government control generally during the war and its impact on advertising in particular.

The examination of newspaper advertising, contemporary government documents and the historical literature indicates that zoning and pooling were widespread across British industry. Throughout the paper, different positioning strategies used by advertisers in response to shortages or absences will be discussed and tabulated, building on and extending the work done by Burrige (2008). Finally, these strategies will be tabulated to highlight how these issues impacted on advertising.

The food, drink and confectionery sectors were chosen because they represent all of the main forms of government market interference experienced during the war, with the exception of utility, giving a good illustration of most of the ways this interference affected advertising. Also as will be shown, the impact of zoning and pooling on these sectors was much greater than the average. The Daily Express and Daily Mirror were chosen due to their high level of circulation. According to Pugh (1998, citing Jenkins, 1986), in 1945 their circulation was 3.23 million and 2 million respectively.

The paper begins, however, by discussing the literature related to food rationing and control and providing context through a discussion of advertisements which specifically mention rationing, or some element of it such as ration coupons.

Rationing

Food rationing was planned before the start of the Second World War based on “the experience of rationing in 1918” (Knight, 2011, p. 21). It was intended as a way to prevent the social unrest which resulted from food shortages and inflation in Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1917, as well as in Britain in 1916 (Mackay, 2003). There was also a concern for the health of the population (Knight, 2011, Woolton, 1959), which was seen as an ethical and morale concern (Woolton, 1959), as well as having practical implications for Britain’s ability to win the war (Sitwell, 2017). A contemporary account (Keezer, 1943, p. 266), writing for an American academic journal, noted that the Ministry of Food saw its role as “seeing that the people of Great Britain are properly nourished” and doing so “with a minimum of labor and materials is a basic objective”. According to Sitwell (2017, p. 73), there was a belief that “shortages meant that without rationing, there would not be sufficient food to go around”. However, due to public concerns about government interference, food rationing was not introduced immediately after the war began (Longmate, 1971). Instead there were what Mackay (2003, p. 53) describes as “four months of free-for-all” before rationing began in January 1940 (Longmate, 1971), in response to the end of “imports of butter and bacon from Denmark” (Alcock, 2008, p. 11). A detailed list of “the main commodities” rationed as of the beginning of 1942 is given by Richardson (1942).

Rationing is dealt with at length in the historical literature of the British Home Front in the Second World War. As Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2000, p.1) states “Rationing, austerity, and fair shares occupy a central place in British history during and after the Second World War”. This is unsurprising, given its impact on the everyday lives of the people of Britain, it was according to Minns (1980, p. 86) “a way of life”. Zweiniger-Bargielowska (2000, p.2) gives another reason for this concentration when she describes “a growing interest in consumption among historians” compared to the “the traditional emphasis on production and the social relations of production”.

As stated above, food rationing was an attempt to control demand for various products in short supply, in order to maintain social order and to reduce price inflation (Longmate, 1971; Jobling, 2005). Other official efforts to interfere in the food, drink and confectionery markets were made on the supply side, on the firms producing these products, in an attempt to control production and transport. The two supply side activities which most visibly impacted on the advertising for food, drink and confectionery brands were zoning and pooling. As will be shown, these had major impacts on both these industries and the war effort, but they are largely absent from the historical literature. A major contribution of this paper will be to address this gap.

Zoning and Pooling

Zoning and pooling, were related but different solutions to the same problem; how to make most efficient use of the resources available to produce enough food for the British population, while freeing up resources to support the rest of the war effort (Felton, 1945). As far as the food, drink and confectionery industries were concerned, the process was managed by the Ministry of Food. In each case the Ministry set up bodies to administer the process, which firms in the industry were required to join, for example, The Cake and Biscuit Manufacturers' War Time Alliance. Drawing on contemporary papers held in the National Archives (TNA) and post war reflections on these schemes, zoning and pooling will now be discussed in a little more detail.

The first step to zoning or pooling was the same, concentration of production, which involved limiting the number of factories in an industry, while at the same time attempting to balance labour requirements across the country (Felton, 1945). Felton (1945) in fact discussed concentration, zoning and pooling as the precursor to rationing. Concentration involved closing some factories and creating nucleus factories for each area, in order to make the most efficient use of the available factories, workers and transport. According to Allen (1972, p.167), this "policy made an important contribution to the task of transferring resources from peacetime to wartime purposes". Allen (1972, pp. 172-3) goes on to say that through concentration, "about 3,500 establishments" across approximately 70 "branches of industry" had been closed by July 1943. By the same time, it was estimated, 257,000 workers had been released, by concentration and other schemes, such as zoning and pooling.

Once concentration was complete, a decision was made by the Ministry as to whether more savings could be made, both from closing factories and limiting the areas in which their output could be sold. In some cases it was limited, for example the soap industry (also administered by the Ministry of Food) was considered to already be sufficiently efficient that no more savings could be made, beyond ending the production of some brands (Davis, 1942). The choice between zoning and pooling appears to have been driven by a trade-off between limiting the use of resources and maintaining customer choice. Pooling was chosen for industries such as soft drinks where the choice between brands was limited, in that standard flavours were produced and where the government wanted to further limit this choice (Felton, 1945). Also in the margarine industry, the product was relatively standardised, and was also impacted by the inclusion of vitamins to make it as healthy as butter (Felton, 1945) pooling made sense. These pooled industries were also zoned (Forrest, 1942), though this is less obvious as the nucleus factories produced the same 'brands', so consumers would not know who produced it or where.

A pamphlet issued by The Cake and Biscuit Manufacturers' War Time Alliance in June 1943, held by TNA stated that "'Zoning' means the total exclusion of a manufacturer from every part of the United Kingdom except that area officially allocated to him as his zone" ("The Zoning of ...", 1943). The same document also indicated that "the purpose of Zoning is to save fuel, vehicles, man-power and rail haulage" ("The Zoning of ...", 1943). In essence, the objective is the same as the concentration scheme, of which this is an evolution. The effectiveness of zoning can be seen in the biscuit industry, in which by August 1943 the average miles travelled by each ton of biscuits had reduced "from 158.5 to 108.5 from the period before [zoning]" ("Minutes of the 40th.....", 1943, p. 4). The zones were created by combining Divisional Food Areas (DFAs), the same ones that provided the basis for the administration of rationing, based on the number of firms in the industry. For example, there were only three zones in the crispbread zoning scheme due to "the small number of firms involved" (Bailey, 1942). As far as possible an element of choice was left, albeit more limited than before.

As well as the documents held in TNA, zoning and pooling are mentioned in other primary sources, albeit in a limited manner. For example, within Mass Observation (MO) there are some mentions in both diaries and reports, which illustrate how they affected the public. For example, the

MO report “Miscellaneous Morale Material ...” (1943, p. 3) illustrates how one female respondent believed that the shortage of biscuits are due to zoning. Another quite negative reference was in the published MO diary of Kathleen Hey, a shop worker, who relays a story told by travelling salesman that multiple retailers were able to get around zoning for “salmon and other things” by buying in one zone and distributing the goods across their own network. On a more positive note, the “Coal Shortage Report: Chelsea” (1945) contained a quote suggesting coal deliveries should be zoned like milk. Mant’s (2009) history of the Women’s Land Army in the Second World War contains a joke told by one former Land Girl about the lack of a milk zoning scheme in her village. For this joke to be told in an oral history, decades after the war, in an expectation it would be understood by its audience implies that zoning was well know and remembered. Overall however, there are few references to zoning and pooling in diaries, and those references are generally short. The implication is that despite the impact on the war effort the public did not see zoning and pooling as important, if they noticed it at all. Rationing was a much bigger, more obvious presence in the lives of the British people and their writing reflects this. It is likely that this has played a part in the limited discussion of zoning and pooling in the historical literature. A more nuanced reading of these sources is required to determine the extent to which discussions of rationing or shortages are actually related to zoning and pooling.

Zoning and Pooling in the Historical Literature.

While rationing has been the subject of numerous academic studies and even cookbooks, zoning and pooling have not been studied in any depth, despite their impact on the war effort. The closest to an in-depth analysis came soon after the war. Felton’s (1945) very positive discussion of how the Home Front was supplied discussed both zoning and pooling. “Lessons of the British War Economy” originally published in 1954 (Allen, 1972) contains a discussion of concentration (but not zoning). Later, however, the only mentions of zoning and pooling in the literature are small parts of bigger discussions on other aspects of the war. For example, Edgerton (2012) in his re-examining of Britain’s strength during the war mentions concentration in relation to slaughterhouses and cheese. Burrige (2008, p.397) refers to a “voluntary de-branding” in the margarine industry, however, he frames it as an aspect of rationing. Brayley and McGregor’s (2005) short popular history of the home front mentions the zoning of chocolate and confectionery. The most recent mention by Clampin (2014) is more extensive as he discusses the impact of pooling, though not zoning, on advertising generally, using Stork margarine as an example.

Even those sources related to food or its control during the war only briefly deal with zoning and pooling, concentrating as they do on rationing, though again the earliest ones are most detailed. Brady (1950) discusses the pooling of margarine while Hammond (1954), discusses the objectives of zoning. One surprising exception to the relatively good coverage in early literature, is the memoir of Lord Woolton, the Minister of Food from 1940-43 (Woolton, 1959) which does not mention either pooling or zoning. This is reflected in Sitwell’s (2017) biography of Woolton, which draws heavily on Woolton’s memoir does not mention zoning at all. The only mention of the impact of concentration is a caption to a photograph discussing the pooling of cheese production, which prohibited the production of all cheeses except cheddar (Sitwell, 2017). Zweiniger-Bargielowska’s (2000) book about control mentions zoning only in relation to its end and does not discuss concentration at all. Just as there might be in diaries, there can also be misidentification of zoning and pooling in the historical literature. Burrige (2008, p.397), for example, refers to concentration in the margarine industry as “voluntary de-branding”, however he actually discusses this as a form of rationing. Overall this lack of detailed analysis leaves a gap in the historical literature and in understanding of how industry was organised in Britain during the war and how the home front was fed.

Methodology

This research draws on a study of advertisements drawn from the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mirror* across the Second World War. This research, which is part of a PhD into newspaper advertising is

based on a content analysis of 11,512 general advertisements which include 2,047 advertisements for food, drink and confectionery brands. These advertisements have been sampled from the first full week of each month across the first two and last two years of the war. This sample was decided on upon to allow the difference in advertising between the beginning of the war and the end, along with any seasonal variations across each year, to be explored.

However, while this coding was being carried out, it was noted that a number of these advertisements towards the end of the war specifically mentioned zoning. An analysis of the completed coding indicated that 4.2% of advertisements coded between August 1943 and September 1945 specifically mentioned zoning. Further analysis identified that across the same time period 21.51% of food, drink and confectionery advertisements specifically mentioned zoning. While very few advertisements mentioned pooling specifically (less than 0.18%) again the percentage for food and drink advertisements was higher (0.89%) though no confectionery brands mentioned pooling (which is not surprising as they were zoned rather than pooled). Further reading, however, indicated that there were a number of advertisements did appear to be affected by pooling, even if it was no mentioned. As a result of this discovery, a deep reading of food, drink and confectionery brand advertisements, from both newspapers across the war was carried out.

Rationing in Advertising

As Burrige (2008, p. 392) states “As well as being a problem, rationing was also a *resource* for advertisers – it was something that could be invoked and used in various ways” (emphasis in original). Therefore, the response to the introduction of rationing differed between industry sectors and brands, although most of the advertisements mentioning rationing in January, February, March and April 1940 were from brands in the food and drink sector.

The research shows that a number of brands, as early as October and November 1939, anticipated the beginning of rationing of food through to early January. Many of these early advertisements, featured positioning strategies, i.e., attempts to influence how consumers perceived the brand, and messages for the brands which would be repeated throughout the war. The idea that different positioning strategies might be used was proposed by Burrige (2008) who identified seven strategies in advertisements in women’s magazines across the whole period of rationing (Table I).

	Woman’s Own	Woman & Home	Total
Product is available and a solution or substitute for rationed goods	35	6	41
Product is available, because it is “essential”	2	1	3
Product is the same as pre-war, or, better now	4	0	4
Product is scarce _ but worth it when you get it	7	0	7
Product is currently unavailable _ provision of a substitute service	3	3	6
Product is currently unavailable _ it will be back soon	8	3	11
The product is back now or available again	9	3	12
Total	68	16	84

Table I Incidence of positioning strategies by magazine, 1940-1955 (Burrige, 2008, p. 323)

Overall Burrige's (2008) typology is a very useful beginning to exploring the nature of advertising in the Second World War. However, by failing to differentiate the impact of rationing (designed to ensure equal shares of a limited supply by limiting demand) from the impact of the measures that controlled supply, a good deal of nuance is lost. This is particularly true in cases where influences on both demand and supply were present. Therefore this paper will explore the extent to which specific message strategies can be identified related specifically to zoning and pooling. First however, Burrige's strategies will be briefly described.

Messages Relating to Rationing

One of the earliest advertisements relating to rationing, a Bovril advertisement from October 1939, which predated the rationing of food, in January 1940 (Minns, 1980) contains the explicit statement that "Bovril isn't rationed!" As Clampin (2009) indicates, the positioning strategy of offering 'a solution or substitute for rationed goods', in particular by making them go further was followed through the war by "the producers of sauces, meat extracts, condiments and soups". The further claim that Bovril helped to get "more good from all your food" supports the view that the advertisement was intended to position Bovril as something consumers needed "now more than ever". This matched closely the stance of the Ministry of Food which revolved around making the best use of the available food, however unusual or unappetising (Minns, 1980). Chivers took a similar approach, suggesting in an advertisement in the Daily Express in January 1940, that "in these days of food rationing" their range of jellies meant that "hospitality need not make demands upon your family sugar allowance". One of a variety of messages around rationing and shortages was a similar approach taken by Weetabix, based on the pre-war habit of having bacon for breakfast and positioning the brand as a replacement meal (Clampin, 2014, p. 83).

This approach was also aimed, by a number of different brands, at parents who were worried about the impact of rationing and shortages on the health of their children. This began very early in the war by brands such as Virol and continued throughout the war by a number of other brands. This Virol advertisement, takes both an informative and emotional approach, comparing the brand to 'other "extras"' in its positive impact on children's growth. Virol positioned themselves to replace the benefits of products no longer available, as a 'solution', even though they might not be able to fulfil the role of the product in consumers' diets. In February 1940, Walters' Palm Toffee took a similar position, as a way to replace the sugar that was now missing from children's diets. This was a position which would be taken by other confectionery brands as the war progressed, in relation to shortages generally, rather than rationing in particular.

The final approach taken in relation to the 'solution or substitute' positioning, could be called 'doing without', in which the brand claims that using it would allow consumers to do without the rationed product, when their ration ran out. For example, this was the approach taken by Ryvita in March 1940, claiming that their brand was so good that it meant butter was not necessary. A similar approach was taken by Hovis and Creamola Custard Pudding in relation to butter and eggs respectively, both in 1940.

One strategy not mentioned by Burrige is providing information. The provision of information is a role of advertising, particularly in the case of high involvement purchase decisions, where the consumer has more incentive to seek and take in information (Petty, Cacioppo and Schumann, 1983). While food would normally be considered a low involvement decision, it could be argued that during the Second World War, this changed. For example, according to Minns (1980, p. 89) "for women war workers, shopping was usually a nightmare" due to the need to fit shopping around shifts. Adding to this, the complexities of the rationing and control system and shortages of familiar foods or absence of favoured brands, it all meant that more thought and planning was needed by (mainly) women, than in

the pre-war period. This point was made by Gardiner (2005, p. 181) who stated that “rationing was essentially something that women organised and mediated”.

There is a degree of overlap between certain positioning strategies and the provision of information. For example, between the making things go further aspect of the ‘solution or substitute’ positioning and the provision of information. While the first makes a claim that the brand can make other goods go further, the second shows how. This will however, be more relevant, particularly in the early years of the war, for advertisements relating to shortages generally, rather than rationing specifically. This is in part because rationing of the product was not often explicitly mentioned, instead the shortage of the brand would be.

The provision of information, therefore can be seen as an important message style adopted by brands in response to rationing and to other aspects of control and shortages generally, as will be seen later in this paper. This information took a number of forms, though specifically in relation to rationing, it often centred on the administration of the process. In the context of this research, the information message does not mean ‘general’ information, such as brand names or addresses, but instead only information specifically relevant to rationing, zoning, pooling, shortages or absent brands. As will be seen, beyond the area of rationing, quite complex information could be provided by advertising brands in response to zoning, pooling, shortages and absent brands. In some cases, for example, brands provided detailed information in the form of recipes, or even recipe books and services, as in the case of Stork Margarine (Clampin, 2014).

Zoning in Advertising

For brands, zoning presented a quite complex situation for their advertising to deal with. First, brands had to explain a new and complex system to their customers as well as how it affected the brand. Second, they had to try to sell their brand to one group of consumers who may still be able to purchase it, albeit in limited quantities, while trying to maintain brand awareness and keep a good image with another, larger group who could not obtain the brand. Compared to brands which were simply rationed, the need for information was therefore much greater. As Figure 1 demonstrates, in some cases part of the burden of educating consumers was taken on by the temporary industry bodies, such as the Chocolate and Sugar Confectionery (War-Time) Association, created by the Ministry of Food to administer the control of industry during the war.



Figure 1 Chocolate and Sugar Confectionery (War-Time) Association Advertisement, June 1943 (Daily Mirror, 28 June 1943)

The use of a map to illustrate the zones by brands continued at least into 1944, as shown in Figure 2. This illustrates that even once the initial scheme was in place, and had been for a while, brands still felt the need to explain where they were, and hence were not, available. In part this need could be a result of inconsistency between the schemes. For example, as discussed in the literature review and illustrated in Figure 2, the crispbread industry had three zones, while the confectionery industry was split into four, Figure 1. It is likely that this would have caused some confusion for consumers, particularly if the zones for other products were different. This confusion is likely to be greater for consumers living in those DFAs that were in different zones for different products. For example consumers living in the West Midlands would be in the Southern Zone for crispbreads, but the Western Zone for chocolates and sweets. The use of the phrase “Vita-Weat is playing ‘hide and seek’ in the Vita-Weat advertisement implies that some consumers at least were confused by the combination of zoning and shortages.

Said MR. PEEK to
MR. FREAN
"Pray tell me what this
map may mean?"

Said MR. FREAN to MR. PEEK
"Vita-Weat's playing 'hide and seek'"

It's quite simple really. Vita-Weat is affected by the Government zoning scheme and is no longer obtainable in the North. Limited supplies are still available in the South, but although they are distributed with the utmost fairness, they often require a little 'seeking out'! Of course, Mr. Peek and Mr. Frean will be all over the map again as soon as the war is won.

Vita-Weat WEND. PEEK FREAN'S CRISP BREAD
Made by Peek Frean & Co. Ltd., makers of famous biscuits.

Figure 2 Vita-Weat Advertisement. (Daily Express, 22 April 1944)

As well as explaining and offering information, some brands, also used some of their advertisements to apologise to their customers in the zones where they were not available. It is important to note that the apologies in these advertisements were used in relation to zoning, but not in relation to rationing, even though chocolates and sweets were also rationed. As will be seen, apologies were used in relation to other causes of brand shortages or absence but not rationing. The implication is that brands did not feel the need to apologise for rationing, implying that rationing was not a brand issue and consumers did not blame the brand for any rationing problems.



Figure 3 Fox's Glacier Mints Advertisement. (Daily Mirror, 28 August 1943)

Figures 2 and 3 also both contain another message strategy used in relation to zoning and pooling, linking the return of the brand to the end of the war. Fox's Glacier Mints went further than Vita-Weat, by indicating that the zoning of the brand was playing a part in ending the war, while Vita-Weat merely referred to the return of the brand to the whole country after victory. The mention of victory, rather than the end of the war, is possibly because the Vita-Weat advertisement appears later in the war victory seemed certain. Looking to the future like this, was important for brands in order attempt to maintain loyalty. This is important for brands which for one reason or another were not available to some or all of their consumers.

While shortages of a brand meant that supplies may be limited or intermittent, it was still reasonable for brands to advise customers to seek out the brand or wait for it to come into stock (as indicated by Burrige's, 2008, positioning strategies). The need to maintain loyalty and brand awareness was important, but could be reinforced by at least occasional use and some degree of visibility. For brands which were zoned, however, most consumers would not be able to get the brand at all until the end of war. This leads to one of the main roles of advertising during the Second World War, helping brands attempt "to keep their names before the public, even though their goods might not be available" (Nevett, 1982, p.169). The MO "Interim Report on Biscuits" (1945) supports this mentioning that "prestige advertising outside the zoning areas has kept the makers name in mind". In these cases mentions of the return of the brand, gave consumers a reason to remember it. Alongside this the use of the brand characters, such as Mr Peek and Mr Frean or Fox's bear was linked to the need to ensure that the brand "remains at the forefront of the audience's thoughts" (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010, p. 21). Arguably this was even more important in the absolute absence of those brands in industries which had been pooled.

Pooling

Pooling impacted on advertising in two main ways. First through advertisements for the original brands and second for the newly created 'national brand'. The most common advertiser among the 'de-branded' brands, was Stork Margarine, which along with the other margarine brands, was subsumed into Marcom. Stork continued to advertise across the whole war (and in the period after the war when rationing and pooling continued). In August 1940, "in order to keep the name alive" (Harvey, 1991, p. 12) and "in an effort to add value to the Stork brand" (Clampin, 2014, p. 52), Stork introduced the Stork Margarine Cookery Service. The announcement was made through "a modest press campaign" (Harvey, 1991, p.12), such as Figure 4 below. The language used, stating that the brand "joins up" along with the imagery of the Stork brand character standing in a military manner with a rifle and helmet, gives a clear implication that the disappearance of the brand was intended to aid the war effort. This is language and imagery that would have been familiar to consumers at the time, both from the First and Second World Wars. This, similar to the use of Bertie Bassett discussed earlier, is a clear attempt to position the disappearance of the brand as a positive thing, a necessary sacrifice to win the war. Stork's use of their character in this way however, was only temporary, as can be seen in Figure 8b, as opposed to Bassett's more consistent portrayal of Bertie Bassett as a British soldier.

What Stork also did was begin to make use of another positioning strategy outlined by Burrige (2008) (see Table I), specifically 'brand is currently unavailable - provision of a substitute service'. Indeed, Burrige uses Stork as an example of this positioning strategy. However, as mentioned earlier, Burrige discusses this in relation to the rationing of margarine and other products, more than the disappearance of Stork. Stork itself was absent due to pooling so could not itself serve as a solution or a substitute for rationed products. However, by providing expertise to consumers, in the form of 'a substitute service', the brand provided a solution to the problems caused by control and shortages. The hope being that as the war progressed and the service solved more of the consumers' problems the name would be associated with expertise and gain other positive associations of helpfulness at a time of need. While the associations actually made are impossible to judge so many years after the war, it is clear that the number of consumers seeking help from the service increased, from 10,000 in 1940 "to 1 million by 1947" (Harvey, 1991, p. 12). In part this success is likely to have resulted from the flexibility of the service, adapting to different seasons, different levels of food supply and a variety of food types, both rationed and not (Harvey, 1991).

**STORK
MARGARINE
JOINS UP**

As a contribution to National Service the makers of STORK MARGARINE have agreed with all other manufacturers of Margarine and Cooking Fats to pool their resources, and to cease the marketing of branded Margarine and Cooking Fats for the duration of the war. This scheme will achieve economy in distribution and transport, and will contribute to the greater efficiency of the national war effort. N.B.—Your favourite Stork brand will not be on sale until victory has been finally achieved,



but the
**STORK
COOKERY SERVICE**

is still available to you



Housewives are invited to use the Stork Margarine Cookery Service as their advice bureau on all problems connected with food and cookery. The Service will also use these columns to give recipes and practical detailed information on how best to use the food available in war time. All inquiries will be replied to personally if you will kindly address them to The Stork Margarine Cookery Service, Unilever House, Blackfriars, London, E.C.4.

LOOK OUT FOR FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

ZBC 14-452

Figure 4 Stork Margarine Cookery Service Advertisement. (Daily Mirror, 1 August 1940)

This approach of promoting the individual brand outside of the pooled product was not unique to Stork, although Stork were the only pooled brand in the two newspapers to advertise consistently over the course of the war. Other brands began to advertise in the later years of the war, anticipating their return, when victory began to seem more certain. Kraft Cheese (1943) for example, advertised in late 1943, apologising that “there’s no Kraft Cheese now being made!”, using a similar approach to Stork of providing a recipe for consumers, without explicitly mentioning pooling. In this case though, Kraft implies pooling, stating that “Kraft plants [are] making cheeses, but not Kraft”. In fact, cheese was pooled under an organisation called BACAL as margarine was under MARCOM (Nicol, 2009). Kraft’s approach differs slightly from the Stork Cookery Service by concentrating on recipes that use the product (if not the specific brand) being advertised. This was likely an attempt to reposition cheese as “a main dish”, which would be likely to increase sales of cheese after the war.

Pooling also effected the advertising messages used by the new industry bodies. As these new entities did not have any direct competition, their only purpose in advertising would be to inform consumers of the new situation and persuade them that the new brand was worth buying. As J. W. Fletcher of the Co-operative Society (cited by Harrison and Madge, 1940, p. 371) noted in 1940, in relation to the pooling of margarine, consumers had “no confidence” in the pooled brand and viewed it as “a poor substitute, not only for butter, but for the brand of margarine with which she has been

satisfied for many years". As this was written in 1940, it is likely that the government had noted this problem by the time other industries were pooled, hence the efforts of the industry bodies to promote the pooled brand.

Figure 5 illustrates how the pooled Soft Drink Industry (S.D.I.) used advertising to persuade consumers of the value of the new pooled brand. Figure 5 also indicates that as well as being pooled, soft drinks were also zoned and points out, in a simple, informative advertisement the benefits of the system.

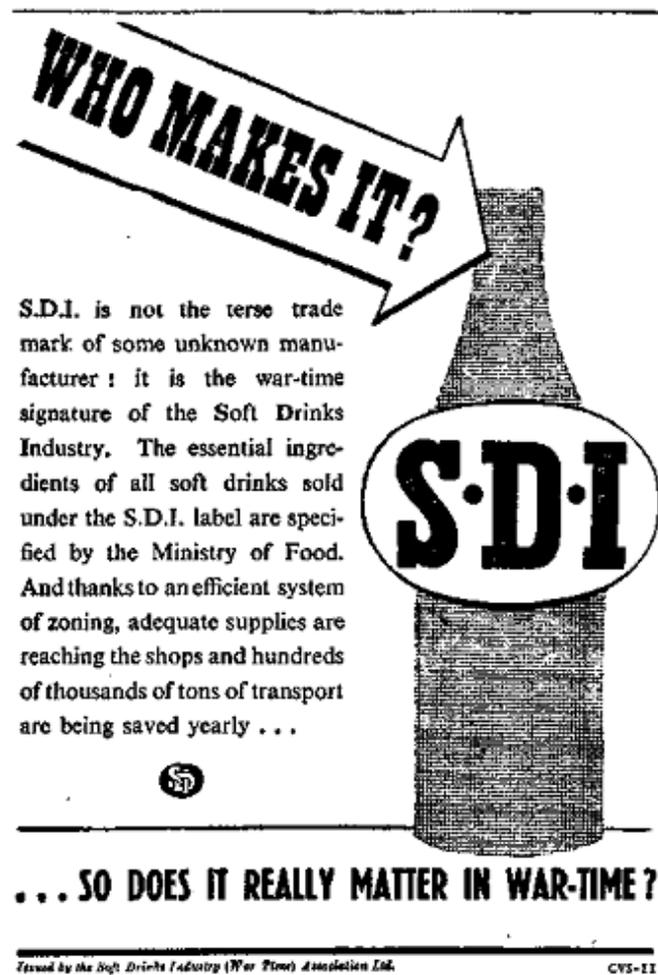


Figure 5 Soft Drinks Industry Advertisement, (Daily Mirror, 1 April 1944)

The importance of rationing to Second World War advertising is clear, and while the other elements of control, zoning and pooling arguably have less influence, they still have a major impact. For example, as this paper shows, zoning and pooling both required explanation and apologies. Perhaps however, shortages had a greater influence than both.

Shortages

As Gardiner (2005, p. 22) points out "just because something was not rationed, it did not mean it was in plentiful supply – quite the reverse", in fact as Longmate (1971, p.22) states, "there was a great deal of nothing about". In fact, more advertisements mentioned some aspect of shortages than mentioned rationing.

There are two issues that need to be noted about this difference. Firstly, there is some degree of overlap between mentions of rationing and shortages, as some advertisements will mention both. For example, Palm Toffee, which was discussed earlier had positioned itself as a way to replace sugar in children's diets, was one of the few brands to specifically announce it was rationed. The explicit positioning of the brand as a replacement for sugar had been replaced, once sweets were rationed, with a more oblique link that the brand "strengthens, sustains", as Figure 6 shows. This Palm Toffee advertisement specifically mentioned they were rationed, but also requests that disappointed customers "Don't blame the shopkeeper", a sub-set of the 'Be patient and wait for supplies' message, illustrated in Table II, below. Secondly, quite often advertisements for products which were rationed, would quite often not mention rationing, but rather say that the brand was in short supply. This seems at first glance to be odd, however it does fit with the discussion of Burrige's (2008) positioning strategies listed in Table I. Most of the advertisements discussed in his study which mentioned rationing adopted the Burrige (2008) strategy of 'the product is available and a solution or substitute for a rationed good' position. Therefore, it was mainly brands which were not rationed products which mentioned rationing. For the rationed products themselves, the rationing was not mentioned, possibly because it was imposed at product level and on the consumers rather than impacting the brand particularly. In fact, as previously shown, brands which were rationed were also often zoned or pooled as well and this played a much bigger part in their advertising.

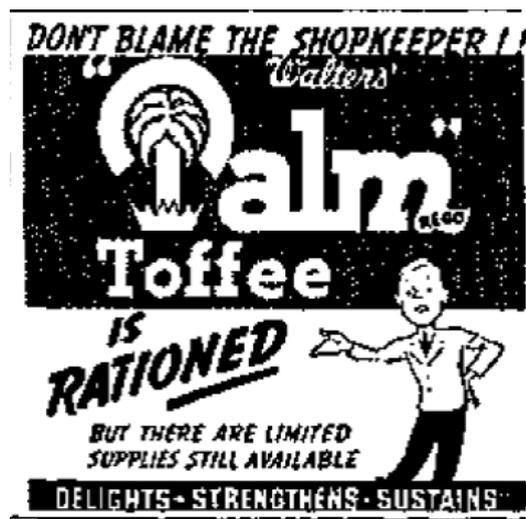


Figure 6 Palm Toffee Advertisement. (Daily Mirror, 10 May 1941)

A number of different messages relating to shortages appeared across the war, the most consistent message was related to 'Making things go further / make do and mend'. However, before more detailed discussion of some of the messages which appeared, it is also important to note that as Burrige (2008, p. 391) states, "an advert can do more than one thing at a time" and so, as will be shown, quite often advertisements carried more than one message about shortages at a time.

The messages related to shortages are different from Burrige's positioning strategies and represent a contribution to the historical literature. Extrapolated from Burrige's strategies, the messages in Table II represent a number of different responses to various forms of market control and causes of shortages. The rest of the paper will explore these messages and indicate which aspects of control and shortages they were used in response to.

Message
Brand is not rationed
Doing without
Information
Explanation
Apology
After the war / victory
Be patient and wait for supplies
Be patient with the shopkeeper
Making products last / go further
Make do and mend

Table II Advertising Messages Relating to Market Control and Shortages

Make Things Go Further / Make Do and Mend

The most common rationing and shortages related messages concerned making things go further or to make do and mend. There is an overlap here with the ‘solution or substitute’ positioning strategy identified by Burrige (2008), in that some of these messages relate to the brands used to support other products that are rationed. As discussed earlier, this included “the producers of sauces, meat extracts, condiments and soups” (Clampin, 2009, p. 60) who positioned their brands as being useful in making wartime diets more interesting and making the limited available food go further. An example of this is Bisto explicitly claiming to “make the most of your ration” or saying that with Bisto “your meat ration will go much further and taste better”. Rowntree’s Cocoa’s approach included the claim that their brand made “every meal go further” soon after the war began. This was an evolution from their pre-war claim which was about stretching housewives’ budgets.

Other brands used the approach of positioning themselves as alternatives to products in short supply, similar to Burrige’s (2008) first positioning strategy, throughout the war, for example Weetabix (Figure 7) and Kellogg’s Corn Flakes, positioned themselves as a way to save both fuel and bacon, since they could replace the traditional British breakfast choice of bacon and eggs (Clampin, 2014, citing the Statistical Review of Press Advertising). Also Clampin (2014 p. 83, citing the Statistical Review of Press Advertising) indicates that Kellogg’s Corn Flakes had the biggest increase in advertising spend in late 1939, “from £15 in October to £3,009 in November 1939”, in response to the announcement of the rationing of bacon on 1 November 1939. The positioning of cereals as an alternative to traditional cooked breakfasts continued throughout the war, even after cereals were themselves rationed in 1942 (Mackay, 2003). The Kellogg’s Corn Flakes advertisement, from January 1943, includes another tactic used by many advertisers, to help consumers deal with shortages, providing instructions on how to make up for shortages in other products or how to make the brand either last longer or be more useful. As discussed earlier, the provision of information is common in advertising for high involvement purchasing decisions.

Rather than make suggestions about other products, some brands in short supply actually suggested that consumers make the brand itself last or use it sparingly and sometimes gave advice on how to do that. This ‘make the brand last / use sparingly’ message begins to become relatively common at the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941. From the point of view of the brand this served a double purpose, firstly it portrayed a patriotic message of self-denial and secondly it reduced the risk of consumers trying (and perhaps liking) competitor brands. In some cases the advice was fairly straightforward, for example, a Mars Bar and Starry Way campaign in 1942 suggested cutting the bars into sections to make them last longer. Other brands offered more complex instructions often

in the form of recipes, frequently including ways for brands, such as Weetabix, to be used in unfamiliar ways to extend food supplies. In some cases the brand simply suggested that consumers use less of the brand, for example a number of chocolate brands beginning in 1941 asked consumers to “leave it for the children”.

**You'll be better off
with a little less meat
if you eat more
Weetabix**

Cutting down the meat ration won't matter a lot if you eat plenty of Weetabix, the double-touted whole wheat cereal. Housewives everywhere are using Weetabix as the wartime food stand-by. It's so handy, so easy to take straight from the carton and be free from all cooking. Think of the time Weetabix saves when you use it instead of bacon for breakfast, with a little hot or cold milk. Think how it saves your butter because it's so useful with marmalade, jam, honey, cheese, paste, etc. Weetabix is the time-saving, marvellously sustaining, whole wheat Food for all war-time occasions. Get a carton from your Grocer today.

SEND US 1 1/2 IN STAMPS FOR A GENEROUS SAMPLE

Weetabix
The Sustaining Cereal
NO INCREASE IN PRICE **6D & 10 1/2D**
FROM ALL GROCERY STORES

Weetabix Limited
(Dept. D.E.4),
Weetabix Mills,
Burton Latimer,
Near Kettering,
Northants.

Figure 7 Weetabix Advertisement (Daily Express, 4 April 1940)

Finally some advertisements simply referred to the ‘Make do and Mend’ campaign. In some cases these were actually quite general branding advertisements, seeking to associate a brand that was absent or in short supply with a patriotic campaign, as in the case of a Quick Quaker Oats advertisement from February 1944 (Figure 8). In some advertisements using the ‘make do and mend’ message, there was little direct relevance to the brand, as in the case of Quick Quaker Oats, although the comparison to “cheerfully accepting the ‘next best’” does create a link. This is an attempt by the brand to prevent consumers permanently switching to the new brands they were forced to try by the absence of Quick Quaker Oats.

MAKE DO AND MEND!

Make do and mend! That's our motto for today—just one of those things we expect to face in war-time—and make do we must in many ways, cheerfully accepting the “next best” in most things—until once again we can enjoy the “very best” in all that we relish most—including Quaker Oats.

“I'll be back ready to help start the new day right, with QUICK QUAKER OATS”

the very best the world provides, rich in vital health elements (including tonic Vitamin B₁) famous for their inimitable creamy flavour, their economy and quick preparation.”



Figure 8 Quick Quaker Oats Advertisement, (Daily Express, 4 February 1944)

While the ‘making products go further / make do and mend’ message was the most common at the beginning of the war, by the beginning of 1941, this had changed. Messages relating to patience and to explanations for shortages began to become more prevalent.

Wait For Supplies / Be Patient / Be Patient with Retailers

As with the Quaker advertisement, it is likely that part of the reason for brands asking for patience from consumers in this way, is an attempt to prevent brand switching. As will be seen however, most of the ‘be patient’ messages do not mention explicitly that the brand will be back soon, simply that patience is needed.

The confectionery sector made most use of the ‘patience with shopkeepers’ message from December 1940 and the first few months of 1941. In part this is because of the large number of individual brands owned by single organisations in the confectionery sector. In particular Rowntree, produced a number of different brands, each of which asked customers to be patient with shopkeepers when stocks were short, and each of whose advertisements appeared in both papers. Mass Observation (MO) diaries and publications give an indication why these messages were considered necessary. For example, shopkeeper S.J. Cartey’s MO diary for 5 and 8 February 1941 indicates that on both these days he was “unable to supply” “nearly every other person who comes into the shop” (Cartey, 1941). That these problems could lead to confrontations between customers and retailer is illustrated by Kathleen Hey’s published MO diary (Hey, 2016), which indicates the level of abuse some shopkeepers were subject to from customers frustrated at not being able to get the products they want. According to “one girl observer who serves in her father’s shop” this could even sometimes escalate to violence (Harrison and Madge, 1940, p. 128).



Figure 9 Rowntree's Fruit Clear Gums Advertisement. (Daily Mirror, 6 February 1941)

It can be seen, however, that these messages of patience from Rowntree are much more low-key than that from Palm Toffee in Figure 6. Rather than being a central part of the message, the request for 'patience with shopkeepers' appears only at the bottom of each advertisement, using almost identical language. The request, "don't blame the shopkeeper" is followed by a claim that both the shopkeeper and the brand "do their best to keep a fair supply all over the country with the materials available". It is likely that this difference is because the Palm Toffee advertisements were from an individual brand's campaign, with its own message, relating to the patience message. However, the Rowntree's advertisement, were from different brands within the same organisation, with different main messages that are not about patience. Whatever the reason, it seems that these discreet messages would be more likely to be missed by consumers, though the repetition of the messages in different advertisements, would have compensated for that a little by increasing the opportunities to see the message.

Explanation for Shortages

The final major message to appear in advertisements in relation to shortages, concerned explanations for shortages and to a related but lesser extent apologies. While a variety of industry sectors included explanations for shortages in their messages, it was the confectionery and the food and drink sectors that both made the most use of explanations and used them most consistently.

The use of explanations began in earnest in September 1940, and took a variety of different forms. For example the Cadbury's advertisement in Figure 10 illustrates two different explanations in that it mentions supplies for the military, using the example of 'paratroops' and other government orders as well as reserves being held "to give vitamins to the starving children of liberated Europe". Other brands, also used the 'government work' explanation, such as Shredded Wheat. These were messages

which were used throughout the war, linking the shortage of the brand to the war effort, and hence acceptance of the shortages becomes a patriotic duty. However, the linkage to 'government work' evolved as the end of the war came closer to become more specific about the use to which the government was putting the brand. Other advertisements such as those for 'Camp' Coffee, mentioned the limited supplies of raw materials.

CHOCOLATE TAKES THE AIR WITH PARATROOPS

The emergency ration issued to British paratroops is sufficient to keep a soldier fighting fit for 48 hours after landing. All the foods included in this ration have been specially chosen for their nourishing and sustaining properties. That is why chocolate has been included, since its qualities as a 'stand-by' have long been known.

Besides the large quantities which go to the Forces there are many other Government demands on the nation's chocolate supply. For instance, the Government has requisitioned many tons of chocolate from the Bournville output to give vitamins to the starving children of liberated Europe.

That is why chocolate will be scarcer here.



CADBURY means QUALITY

Figure 10 Cadbury Advertisement (Daily Express, 1 September 1943)

Absent Brands

The government control of the market resulted in either the total or partial absence (either in certain parts of Britain or for a short period of time) of some brands. Pooling for example, meant, as discussed above, that brands in several industries such as margarine and soft drinks disappeared completely. In zoned industries, brands would be absent from most of Britain. Other brands disappeared as ingredients disappeared.

As discussed earlier, some absent brands, such as Stork and Quick Quaker Oats, attempted to maintain a presence in the consumers' lives during the brand's absence, while other brands which were absent simply stopped advertising, either for the duration or until close to the end. Some absent brands, such as Meltis "New Berry" Fruits simply looked ahead to the end of the war for their return as early as 1941, while others used military imagery to explain where the brand was. As has been mentioned, this was an attempt to position the brand with the war effort to remind consumers about its existence and maintain positive feelings about it for when it returned.

For some brands as the war developed their absence was a deliberate strategy to avoid negative brand associations, by changing their name and branding rather than produce an inferior product, as a result of shortages of raw materials. An example of this was when Cadbury produced Ration Chocolate once the government banned the use of whole milk in chocolate (Figure 11). In cases like these advertising was needed to announce the change and simultaneously link the new brand to the old, while at the same differentiating them. The hope would be that customers of the original brand would transfer to

the new, but would also recognise that it would not be up to the same standard as the original, so no negative associations would transfer back.

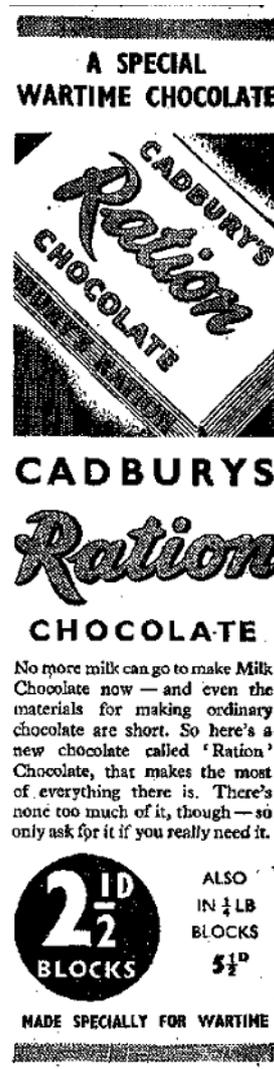


Figure 11 Cadburys Ration Chocolate Advertisement (Daily Mirror, 29 October 1941)

A number of confectionery brands took this approach, including Cadbury, launching the new Ration Chocolate and KitKat Chocolate Crisp which became Kit Kat, a name which has survived, albeit slightly adapted (to KitKat), to this day. The Ration Chocolate advertisement points out that “there’s none too much of it” and requests self-restraint on the part of customers, to “only ask for it if you need it”, again demonstrating how two messages can appear in the same advertisement.

Advertising Message Framework

This paper has explored the various ways in which advertising was impacted by government control of the food, drink and confectionery industries. From this a framework of messages relating to each form of control, along with shortages can be devised. Table III illustrates this Advertising Message Framework.

Message	Rationing	Zoning	Pooling	Shortages	Absent Brands
Brand is not rationed	X				
Doing without	X		X		X
Information	X	X	X	X	X
Explanation		X	X	X	X
Apology		X	X	X	X
After the war / victory		X	X	X	X
Be patient and wait for supplies		X		X	
Be patient with the shopkeeper	X			X	
Making products last / go further	X			X	
Make do and mend	X			X	X

Table III Advertising Message Framework

Table III indicates that while the provision of information is consistent across all forms of control as well as shortages, no other message is consistently used. This indicates that there was a difference, or at that brands perceived a difference, in the way that different forms of control impacted on consumers. One major difference that affected the message choice appears to have been whether the brand available at all (rationed, zoned or in short supply) or completely absent (pooled or absent for other reasons). This combined with the cause of the limited supply or absence of the brand meant there were a variety of options open to brands, many of which could have, and often did, use more than one message at a time.

The framework clearly indicates that rationing had a very different effect on brands than zoning, pooling or shortages. As discussed earlier, this is because rationing impacted on demand for products, while zoning, pooling and shortages affected the supply of brands. Supply can be seen to be under the control of the brands, or the shopkeeper, while issues that impact on demand could not. The very clear implication is that consumers expected brands to maintain a supply and could respond negatively if they did not. When there were limitations on supply, brands felt the need to manage both consumers' expectations and responses. The former was done by providing explanations and information and the latter, through apologising and asking for patience.

Overall this Framework provides evidence that the government control of industry and of markets is much more complex and nuanced than the literature often indicates. There is no denying that rationing played a major role in ensuring that the British population got enough to eat and keep producing the supplies needed to fight a World War. It is also undeniable that rationing played a major part in shaping the experience of those on the British Home Front. However, the role of zoning and pooling in ensuring that British industry was in the most efficient shape has been understated, possibly because it does not appear often in diaries, at least explicitly.

Conclusions

Much has been made in the historical literature of the impact of rationing on consumers on the British Home Front in the Second World War. This is understandable certainly, given that this impact looms large in primary literature. What is much less discussed however, is the control exerted by the government over the production and distribution of a large number of consumer goods, in particular zoning and pooling. This paper has been shown that the explicit mentions of this control in the diaries of the British public are few and far between, as well as being brief. Contemporary discussion of the impact of zoning and pooling were mainly limited to official government publications. While these

could be argued to be overly positive, they do indicate that zoning and pooling played a fundamental part in helping British peacetime industry to reorganise into a more efficient wartime model. Newspaper advertising, particularly of food, drink and confectionery brands, provides another primary source that illustrates the impact on individual brands, and give an indication of what these brands thought the effects on consumers were. For example, the provision of information and apologising, imply that zoning and pooling created at least some confusion and negative feelings among consumers.

The Advertising Message Framework indicates that the widest variety of messages were used in relation to both rationing and shortages. However, zoning, pooling and the simple absence of brands all prompted a variety of advertising messages designed to keep consumers informed about, reminded of and interested in, brands. These messages, which were mostly different to those used in relation to rationing, are an indication that these forms of control had a major impact on British industry and on British consumers and that this impact was broader than the impact of rationing and shortages alone. This research therefore finally, provides a strong argument that zoning and pooling should be included in any discussion of government control of markets during the Second World War.

This paper takes the historical literature, both in relation to advertising in the Second World War and government control of industry, further. This is done by illustrating firstly that advertising was very responsive to external influences on the market, and that it can be used to explore the nature of those influences. Secondly, it has been shown that existing historical literature has failed to explore in detail a major part of the British government's response to war and its impact on industry and consumers.

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