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"Regulating Sin" Across Cultures

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“Regulating Sin” Across Cultures A Comparison of Alcohol Ads in Ukrainian and American Magazines

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Abstract: Using text analysis, this study compares the alcohol advertising strategy in Ukraine and the United States within the context of regulatory, historical, cultural, and economic factors. Results showed that Ukrainian magazine ads contained a larger number of violations than the American ads, which complied with the letter of the law, if not the spirit. The message strategies also told different cultural stories that reflect the different ideologies for the two countries, which means that specialized advertising approaches are needed for each country. American ads situate alcohol as part of normal life, whereas Ukrainian ads demonstrate conspicuous consumption and celebrate the change to a market economy. They must not only sell the product but also teach Ukrainians how to be part of the consumer culture.

An ad for Beefeater Dry Gin in *GQ* magazine shows the bottle of gin with slices of lime making a splash pattern against the tonic water in the shape of the British flag. The headline reads “Refreshingly

London,” and the signature reads “Distilled in London since 1820” (see Figure 1). There is no need to say more because everything else is understood. The American audience targeted in the ad takes for granted that gin is an alcoholic beverage commonly known if not commonly enjoyed, and that Beefeater is a well-known brand of gin. Ukrainians, on the other hand, are a different audience, and marketers of distilled beverages such as gin, whiskey, tequila, and various liqueurs—almost everything but vodka—make no assumptions that the audience is familiar with the product or the brand.

Although some of the “newer” forms of distilled spirits are becoming popular in Ukraine, they have been unknown to most Ukrainian consumers until recently (Euromonitor International 2006). Without a drinking tradition already in place for those products, marketers have had to educate Ukrainians about drinking various alcoholic beverages. Ads, magazine articles, and Web sites must not only teach Ukrainians how these drinks are prepared and consumed; they must also explain what makes certain brands authentic. They must also build new rituals that position consumption differently than for vodka, brandy, and beer, which have long drinking traditions. In essence, ads must not only teach Ukrainians what it means to be part of a consumer culture but also convince them that consumption of these “new” products offers a better way of life.

The lack of familiarity with recently introduced alcohol products and the long-standing traditions and rituals for drinking beer, cognac, and vodka are just a few of the differences between Ukraine and the United States. The approach to protecting consumers through regulation of alcohol advertising and the enforcement of the regulations also differs across the two countries. Given its inclusion of alcohol among so-called sin products—products that are legal but potentially harmful to consumers (Davidson 2003)—the study situates alcohol ads within the context of the regulatory environments for Ukraine and the United States, as well as within the alcohol advertising policies for the magazines where they appear. By noting the social, political, and economic environment in which regulation occurs as well as the general regulations for each country, including the specific restrictions on alcohol advertising and the compliance with regulation, the study provides an in-depth look at how the regulatory

environments function within a given context—an approach that other researchers have taken, including Gao's (2005) examination of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Furthermore, the study uses text analysis to provide a cross-cultural comparison of the advertising of alcoholic beverages to make sense of the different creative strategies needed to navigate the different regulatory environments.

Although investigations of cultural values and cross-cultural comparisons of advertising have drawn considerable attention from researchers, much of the research has focused on North America and the original European Union (EU) member states. Because fewer studies have investigated differences in creative strategy or regulation issues in nonmembers of the EU—particularly other former Soviet republics (Okazaki and Mueller 2007)—this study is able to address a deficit in the research. Furthermore, the study focuses on the influence of culture, which is regarded by Taylor (2005) as one of the eight most significant areas for future research in international advertising, essential for advancement to the next level.

A Comparison of the Economies of Ukraine and the United States

Ukraine is a developing East European country measuring 603,700 sq.km., making it the second-largest country in Europe. Its population numbers 46 million, 15% of the U.S. population of 301 million. As a relatively new democracy, Ukraine gained independence in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and shifted from a planned economy to a market economy; during the early years, however, the transition was a painful process that resulted in currency inflation and poverty for a significant number of people.

After 1991, many Ukrainians lost their jobs either because their profession became outdated with changes in technology or because government subsidies for employment ceased (Bobak et al. 1999; Cockerham 2000; Panarinin n.d.). From 1991 to 1995, the official unemployment rate was between 3% and 29%; however, the actual rate, including unregistered and underemployed workers, was believed to be much higher. Almost overnight, Ukraine changed from a country whose members were all of one social class to a country with distinct

upper and lower classes, with few people in the middle and no appreciable means of social mobility. Daily life became a struggle, and many Ukrainians survived by growing much of their own food, holding two or more jobs, or buying basic necessities through a barter system. A legacy of state control and corruption continued to slow the progress toward economic reform, privatization, and civil liberties.

By 1996, Ukraine achieved greater economic stability with inflation at a manageable level, and by 2000, the economy began to grow. Although some Ukrainians earned salaries that are comparable to the middle-class members in developed countries, the cost of living prevented them from enjoying the lifestyle of their middle-class cohorts elsewhere. The majority of people remained poor and were only able to afford necessities, whereas a small portion belonged to the middle class (Vyshnyak 2003). An even smaller group belonged to the upper class, most of whom had ties to government. The social changes brought about by Ukrainian independence became more visible in cities—particularly Kyiv (Kiev)—with high-end stores and a fashionable strip of contemporary art galleries and cafés.

The Orange Revolution was a peaceful mass protest in 2004 that overturned a rigged presidential election and became the impetus for change. Yet much of the expected economic and political reform (e.g., lower unemployment and higher pay) has happened slowly, leaving some Ukrainians disillusioned. Although Ukraine is regarded as the most important economic component of the former Soviet Union after Russia, the country continues to face challenges in fighting corruption, developing capital markets, and improving the legislative framework for business to correct for loopholes and ambiguities in the regulations. Ukraine's economy was buoyant until mid-2008 despite political upheaval between the prime minister and president; however, aggressive foreign borrowing lowered the growth through the remainder of 2008. Efforts for economic recovery are hampered in 2009 by political turmoil and external conditions.

Ukraine provides a distinct contrast with the United States, a much older democracy with a highly developed economic system. The contrast is evident in their levels of per capita gross domestic product: in Ukraine, \$7,400, and in the United States, \$46,900 (*CIA World*

Factbook 2009). Furthermore, the minimum wage per month based on a 40-hour workweek is US\$74 in Ukraine (Visnyk Podatkovoyi Sluzhby Ukraine 2006), compared with US \$824 in the United States, prior to the summer 2007 increase (U.S. Department of Labor 2007). Despite the income level differences, Ukraine has a thriving advertising industry that promotes an affluent way of life. Magazines are proportionately more expensive in Ukraine due to disparities in income level, and the items advertised in Ukrainian magazines are generally targeted at the relatively affluent. Many brands of vodka advertised in magazines cost the equivalent of US\$20–40 per bottle (Euromonitor International 2006).

The Social Meaning of Drinking in Ukraine

Despite the economic struggles that most Ukrainians face, consumers in the middle and upper classes have enough disposable income to support a thriving drinking culture. Increases in consumption have occurred not only for traditional beverages, such as beer, wine, brandy, and vodka, but also for “luxurious and exotic” drinks, such as whiskey, cognac, gin, tequila, and liqueurs. Ukrainians, especially those who live in big cities, not only are spending more money on alcohol products but are consuming more diverse varieties of alcohol (Euromonitor International 2006).

No traditional Ukrainian wedding or celebration would be complete without vodka, *horilka* in Ukrainian (Kononenko 1998). *Horilka* is embedded in Ukrainian history, fairytales, and folklore, and it not only is consumed on social occasions but is widely believed to have medicinal value. Vodka recipes with fruit, vegetables, honey, and lemon have been handed down from generation to generation as herbal medicines that supposedly heal ailments from sore throats to cancer (Gomozova 2001). Although the overall consumption of vodka has decreased from 72% of the population in 1998 to 58% in 2006 (Unian 2007), premium brands of vodka and brandy have become more popular, given the increased level of income for many Ukrainians (Euromonitor International 2006) and also the growing perception among consumers that cheaper spirits are of poorer quality.

Beer is also a favorite beverage of Ukrainians, one that is part of the youth scene and a “must” for informal parties. Beer’s popularity is based not only on its lower alcohol content by volume but also its image of naturalness (Euromonitor International 2006). The growth pattern is attributed to advertising, whose budgets have doubled since 2004. In 2006, 71% of Ukrainians drank beer—an increase from 59% in 1998—the reverse pattern of vodka consumption during the period (Unian 2007). As with wine, beer consumption is also acceptable at business lunches, where vodka would be considered too potent a beverage.

Alcohol Usage Patterns in Ukraine and the United States

Current estimates indicate that the alcoholism rate in Ukraine has grown dramatically in the past 15 years, from 2% to 10% (Korrespondent.net 2007). According to World Health Organization data reported by Webb et al. (2005), rates for heavy alcohol use are extremely high—38.7% in men and 8.5% in women—in studies where heavy alcohol consumption was defined as 80 grams of ethanol in a typical drinking day and on a monthly basis. Webb and his co-researchers found that the heaviest alcohol use was among 26- to 54-year-old Ukrainian men, particularly those who live in the southeast and have young children. Although women drink less than men, there is growing concern across Europe that young professional women are increasing their consumption and using drinking as a way of asserting their individuality, especially with the introduction of “feminine” beverages, such as Vodka Mudslides and Baileys Minis (Womack 2005).

This drinking pattern is in sharp contrast to that of North Americans, whose heaviest drinkers are men age 21 to 25. Drinking declines after age 25 and is negatively correlated with the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS 2008) figures. Statistics for 2000–2001 show that 8.5% of the U.S. population either abuses alcohol (e.g., fails to fulfill major obligations because of alcohol usage) or is dependent on alcohol (e.g., has impaired control) (Lakins, Williams, and Yi 2006).

A Comparison of the Regulatory Environments

Ukraine

The regulation of advertising is a recent development in Ukraine and is limited to government restrictions and self-imposed restrictions by media companies. Before 1991, the demand for high-quality products was so great that they needed little to no advertising. No formal need for regulation existed because advertising in the Soviet Union served to foster cooperation in support of national goals and to encourage certain consumption patterns when commodities were scarce (e.g., encouraging the purchase of margarine instead of butter) (Rotzoll, Haefner, and Hall 1996). When consumers were exposed to ads, they may have questioned the quality of the products, but they did not question the political intent of the ads. After the change to a market economy, Ukrainians encountered a proliferation of Western-style advertising messages, which generated skepticism and suspicion that advertising is a form of Western propaganda. Adding to the growing suspicion was the fact that alcohol advertising messages clashed with government initiatives promoting a healthy lifestyle. Despite the heavy consumption of alcohol in Ukraine, it was associated not with indulgence but with ritual celebrations and medicinal properties. Western-style advertising messages positioned alcohol consumption as an indulgence and a way of gaining status, which provoked unrest. Some cultural clashes remain today, which are exacerbated by the excessive media clutter associated with advertising.

With the advent of the market economy in Ukraine after 1991, the Verkhovna Rada (the Ukrainian parliament) instituted the Advertising Act, which regulates advertising in general and imposes additional restrictions on alcohol and tobacco advertising through Article 22 (Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady 1996; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2006) (see Article 22 in Appendix 1). Since 1992, various attempts have been made to ban all advertising of tobacco and alcohol, but lobbyists for the industries have succeeded in blocking further regulation. However, the Verkhovna Rada is expected to tighten the regulations for alcohol and tobacco advertising in the future. In 2001, a strategy was established for "improvement of

regulations with the subsequent aim of gradually getting rid of tobacco advertising" (Tobacco Control Resource Center 2003), and the Ukrainian parliament took a step in that direction in 2008 by adjusting existing advertising regulations and banning advertising of tobacco and alcohol on the streets (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2008). Whether further changes in advertising regulations will succeed in banning alcohol and tobacco advertising depends on various factors related to the economic and political crises.

In addition to general prohibitions against misleading or inaccurate claims, Article 22 prohibits alcohol advertising on television from 6 A.M. to 11 P.M., on the first and last pages of newspapers, and on front and back covers of magazines. Other prohibitions exist on outdoor advertising, sponsorship of events, distribution of samples, and the sale of goods with trademarks. Several restrictions are age specific, such as prohibiting the use of images of celebrities or people who are popular and prohibiting alcohol advertising in publications that target people below the age of 18. Ukrainian law states that it is illegal for people under 18 to purchase alcohol.

Other restrictions address message strategy and portrayal issues. Ads cannot include statements that alcohol consumption is an important factor for achieving success in sports, sex, or social situations, nor can ads give the impression that consumption solves problems or has a stimulant or sedative effect. Ads cannot imply that alcohol products have medicinal properties, and they must carry a warning about the harmfulness of consumption that is at least 15% of the size of the ad. Ads must also be clearly separated from editorial content so that they are identifiable as advertising.

Failure to comply with regulations is covered under Article 27, which states that fines can be imposed by a judge in amounts varying from the current equivalent of \$US13,000 to \$39,000. To date, no penalties for violations of alcohol regulations have been made public; however, penalties have been imposed for comparative advertising (Bakalinska and Ivanytska 2004).

Various attempts at alcohol bans have been implemented in Ukraine to curb high rates of alcohol consumption. A complete ban was

enacted by the Russian imperial government in 1914, which was revoked by the Soviet government in 1925 and is credited with significantly decreasing the consumption rate (Neproblema.com.ua 2007a). However, others attribute the large sale of illegal alcohol products and a growing problem with drug addiction to the ban (Krugosvet Cyclopedia n.d.). A two-year ban was enacted in 1985 by the Soviet government, but the "half-dry law" allowed the sale of alcohol at certain times of the day when most people were working. The result was that large numbers of people failed to go to work, but the ban is believed to have saved an estimated 500,000 lives in Ukraine and other Soviet republics (Neproblema.com.ua 2007b).

The United States

Restrictions on the content of alcohol advertising in the United States are remarkably similar to those in Ukraine, despite different histories of advertising developed over different time frames. Alcohol advertising regulations emerged hurriedly in Ukraine when the country became a market economy, whereas in the United States, they evolved over the course of the twentieth century.

In the United States, alcohol advertising regulation derives from several sources, including trade associations, media companies, and state and federal laws (see Appendix 2). Trade associations for beer, wine, and distilled spirits provide voluntary guidelines; media companies have various clearance standards and vehicle regulations; state laws restrict advertising on various media and regulate contests, samples, refunds, and so forth (Fueroghne 1995); and federal laws provide restrictions aimed at consumer protection. At the federal level, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) prohibits all advertisers from making false and misleading statements, whereas the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (BATF) specifically address the advertising of legal but harmful products under its purview. Restrictions vary somewhat for each type of beverage, but the BATF generally requires ads to include the name and location of the manufacturer and to avoid the following: making false and misleading statements, disparaging a competitor's product, promoting the intoxicating properties of the beverage, representing the product with medicinal or therapeutic effects, and using an official flag or

government insignia (Fueroghne 1995). The BATF has also warned that the use of athletes endorsing alcoholic beverages can be considered misleading and therefore subject to regulation. State laws add further restrictions that vary from state to state. Violations of federal and state laws carry penalties that can be enforced.

Detailed voluntary guidelines also exist for beer, wine, and distilled spirits from their trade associations. The Beer Institute guidelines ask that beer ads not portray sexually explicit activity as a consequence of drinking, include scenes of inebriation or overindulgence, encourage underage drinking, make health claims, condone drunk driving, or associate beer drinking with activities requiring alertness, and so forth. Beer ads can portray beer as a natural part of social interactions but should not claim or represent that individuals "cannot obtain social, professional, educational, athletic, or financial success or status without beer consumption" (Beer Institute Guidelines 2006). Beer ads should also not claim or represent that individuals "cannot solve social, personal, or physical problems without beer consumption." Essentially, it is acceptable for ads to position beer with success and problem solving as long as they do not suggest that these outcomes are only available through beer consumption.

Wine Institute standards ask that wine ads encourage proper use by avoiding portrayals of excessive drinking and appeals to people below the legal drinking age—especially through use of models below the age of 25, portrayals of traditional heroes of the young, or associations with rites of passage to adulthood. According to guidelines, wine shall not be presented as "essential to personal performance, social attainment, achievement, success, or wealth," nor can it be "directly associated with social, physical, or personal problem solving" or "presented as vital to social acceptability and popularity" (Wine Institute Guidelines 2005). As with beer, it is acceptable to position wine with success and problem solving as long as it is not deemed essential.

The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States calls for restrictions on distilled spirit advertising in various media and prohibits advertising that is directed to people below the legal drinking age. Ads

should not contain claims or representations that individuals can attain social, professional, educational, or athletic success or status as a result of consumption. Ads should also “not rely upon sexual prowess or sexual success as a selling point for the brand” and “should not depict overt sexual activity” (Distilled Spirits Council Guidelines 2007). Distilled beverage restrictions call for restrictions on messages that tie the product with success, just as beer and wine restrictions do, but they hold advertisers to a higher standard by not requiring the claim to be “essential” in order to constitute a violation.

Media company standards provide additional restrictions on the advertising of alcohol. For example, in addition to various types of depiction restrictions, NBC forbids on-camera consumption of alcohol (Fueroghne 1995). Network standards historically played a significant role in the regulation of alcohol; however, after the demise of the National Association of Broadcasters’ (NAB) Code in 1982, networks developed their own standards, although many used the NAB guidelines as the basis for their policies (Maddox and Zanot 1984).

In addition to the regulations for a particular medium, specific magazines in the United States and in Ukraine are free to add further restrictions on advertising or to reject ads that they do not wish to carry. For example, vehicle restrictions on alcohol advertising by the different magazines in the sample are summarized in Table 1. Essentially, no magazine in either country placed any restrictions on alcohol advertising beyond those issued by law or by voluntary trade associations except for *Men’s Health*. Both the Ukrainian and the U.S. versions of the magazine have stated policies of rejecting advertising for alcohol products that are more than 35% alcohol (70 proof).

No usage warnings appear in American alcohol ads, but Congress passed a bill in 1988 that requires every container of beer, wine, and liquor sold in the United States to warn pregnant women about the risk of birth defects and to warn the general public that consumption impairs the ability to drive or operate machinery and may cause health problems (Fueroghne 1995).

As in Ukraine, an alcohol ban was attempted in the United States, which began in 1920. Prohibition was credited with reducing

consumption by 50% in spite of half-hearted enforcement; however, it was a "spectacular failure" at reducing crime and created a profitable, illegal industry for moonshiners and members of organized crime (Davidson 2003, pp. 37–38). Prohibition ended in 1933.

The Relationship Between Government Regulation and Self-Regulation

In theory, government regulation has certain strengths and weaknesses relative to self-regulation. Legal scholars note that it has the ability to unify and enforce policy across all products and services, but it often uses legal standards that lack an intimate knowledge of business problems and concerns. "As such, the regulatory approach is strong on the letter of the law but weak in obtaining adherence to its spirit because regulations are often alien to business in their design and implementation" (Boddewyn 1989, p. 20). Boddewyn also notes that self-regulation has the advantage of offering more realistic standards that can lead to greater effectiveness. When it is complementary to government regulation, it relieves some of the burden.

Some believe that the combined efforts of self-regulation and government regulation work together so that firms obey voluntary guidelines of self-regulatory bodies and avoid federal regulation, which can result in stiff penalties and negative media coverage and, in turn, affect public opinion, investor relations, and so forth. According to Wayne Keeley, director of the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus in the United States, CARU is able to achieve a 95% compliance rate among businesses to avoid FTC intervention and its consequences (Taylor et al. 2008). In practice, however, the relationship between self-regulation and government regulation is less clear. Rotfeld (1992) argues that the power of self-regulation has often been overstated despite the fact that it may deter certain advertising practices. He concluded that the power of self-regulation is limited not only by the lack of legal authority to enforce guidelines on member organizations but also by competing goals. With the goal of self-regulation programs rooted in business and the goal of government regulation rooted in consumer protection, it is unlikely that self-regulation alone can fulfill the public

policy goal of discouraging false advertising or decrease the need for government involvement. Uneven compliance across firms further weakens the ability to police marketplace abuses (Rotfeld 2001).

Some examples provide additional insights into this relationship. Before 2003, industry codes allowed placements of ads in media where as little as 50% of audience members were adults; however, at the FTC's request, the industry modified the codes to require that at least 70% of the audience be adults 21 or older and that audience composition data be used for verification (Federal Trade Commission Report 2008). Although the FTC has applauded these industry efforts, critics say the FTC failed to recognize that the industry codes have been significantly liberalized "to permit the use of parody and humor in beer advertising to legitimize the portrayal of illegal and dangerous activities in connection with beer consumption" (Curley 2008, p. 1).

The relationship between different self-regulatory bodies is also complex. The Distilled Spirits Council is credited with eliminating the advertising of distilled products on television for five decades by a self-imposed ban in 1948; however, Rotfeld (1997) argues that the ban on distilled beverage advertising was the result of decisions by media companies rather than the trade association because the ban applied to mainstream media only. Although distilled beverages were not advertised in mainstream media until 1996, when Seagram's began running ads in selected markets, they were advertised freely on networks aimed at Hispanics until 1988, when Spanish-language networks began rejecting the ads (p. 12).

Regulations from vehicles and media companies usually stem from management practices. Lack of fit with the editorial content is the most common reason for rejecting advertising, given the potential for audience complaints, damage to the vehicle's overall image, and concerns over taste (Rotfeld, Jevons, and Powell 2004). Because managers are evaluated on the basis of ad revenue and profitability, "even the best policy is often driven by a mix of greed and fear—wanting the revenue and not wishing to drive away the audience" (p. 66).

In some countries, self-regulation is a driving force for advertising regulation (Boddewyn 1988); it is difficult to gauge the potential for self-regulation in Ukraine, however. Its impact would depend on complex factors, such as the extent to which the concept of consumer protection develops, how controls within the media system evolve, and which goals are set through self-regulation.

Method

Theoretical Models for Analyzing Text

Two theoretical frameworks ground this study for examining the content of ads: text analysis and message strategy analysis. Frith (1997) applies text analysis to advertising content through a deconstruction framework that requires (1) an analysis of the surface meaning of ads, (2) the identification of the advertisers' intended meanings, and (3) the uncovering of cultural or ideological meanings. Analyzing the surface meaning requires noting the objects and people in the content as well as design elements, colors, and so forth to gain an overall impression of the ad. Uncovering the advertiser's intended meaning of the ad reveals the message that advertisers attempt to communicate to consumers—typically the benefits consumers can expect from using the advertised brand, which can be communicated explicitly or implicitly. Revealing the cultural or ideological meaning offers insights into the ad within its cultural context and requires an understanding of the ad's underlying messages about cultural values shared by members of the culture.

This type of deconstruction requires “undressing the ad” and going beneath the surface to find the deepest ideological and social messages available (Frith 1997). Because power relationships and stereotyping are often part of the cultural ideology, one technique for going beneath the surface is to examine the interaction between characters and to exchange the roles and demographic characteristics of the key players in the ad (Frith 1997, p. 10). Changes to the narrative that occur by reversing the gender roles, age, race, or ethnicity of the characters are usually indications of ideological beliefs.

A second framework is the Six Segment Advertising Strategy Wheel (Taylor 1999), which provides insights into the advertiser's intended message. The strategy wheel has served as a foundation for a variety of other investigations, including viral advertising (Golan and Zaidner 2008), political communication (Cunningham and Jenner 2003), cross-cultural research (Lee, Nam, and Hwang 2001), and Web-based campaigns (Kim, McMillan, and Hwang 2005).

Three of the six segments in the strategy wheel are for products that have high emotional importance and use "ritual" strategies. For example, products that are advertised in the *ego* segment make statements about consumers by appealing to vanity or self-actualization. These products do not promise to transform consumers because they are already self-actualized. Instead, they simply show others who the consumer really is. In contrast, *social* segment ads include appeals for being noticed and gaining social approval, with conspicuous consumption fulfilling an important role. *Sensory* segment ads appeal to the senses of the consumer by providing "moments of pleasure" (Taylor 1999, p. 13). Ads for products in this category appeal to the senses (taste, sight, hearing, touch, or smell).

The other three segments of the model use "transmission" communication strategies and are best suited for providing detailed economic information about the product, price, and benefits. Purchase decisions for *routine* segment items are based on rational buying motives (e.g., groceries and personal care products), whereas decisions for *acute need* segment items are usually made hurriedly and among easily available options (e.g., cleaning supplies and auto parts). Decisions for *rational* segment items are made with rational, deliberate decisions because these products usually require high involvement (e.g., cars, computers, and household appliances). Alcohol advertising in both cultures is more likely to rely on ritual than transmission strategies; however, Taylor (1999) did not anticipate a universal buying-decision process. He predicted that culture, rather than product category, drives advertising strategy.

Research Questions

Two research questions were posed to examine differences in the strategies that alcohol advertisers use to navigate the regulatory and cultural environments in the United States and Ukraine. Specifically, the study asked:

RQ1: Given different regulations for alcohol advertising in Ukraine and in the United States, how well do each country's magazine ads adhere to their respective legal requirements?

RQ2: Given the constraints of regulation, what differences in creative strategy emerge as advertisers navigate their respective regulatory environments? How does each country's creative strategy for alcohol ads communicate surface characteristics, the advertiser's intended message using various appeals, and ideological meaning?

The Sample

A sample of ads for the text analysis was drawn from several types of magazines from August 2006 to obtain as broad a sample as possible. A total of 50 magazines were examined: 24 Ukrainian and 26 American publications, and all were leading magazines for their topic areas. The magazines covered various interests, including business, finance, women's issues, men's issues, health, entertainment, home, news, culture, and sports; however, not all magazines contained alcohol ads. The 22 magazines (11 Ukrainian and 11 American) that carried alcohol advertising are listed in Table 1.

As a result of including every ad in each magazine (halfpage, full page, or two-page spread), the total sample included 42 unduplicated Ukrainian ads and 49 unduplicated American ads, which provided a total of 91 ads. Because text analysis is an interpretive method that has the goal of gaining depth and insight, it uses smaller sample sizes than traditional content analyses—sometimes as few as a single ad (Stern and Holbrook 1994)—and often at a single point in time (McAllister 1997). Various alcohol products were advertised, including vodka, cognac, gin, whiskey, tequila, liqueur, wine, and beer. (See Table 2 for the specific brands advertised in each country.)

Each ad was examined by both researchers, first to determine whether the ad complied with the country's regulations and second to analyze the cultural messages. Frith's (1997) procedure for text analysis and Taylor's (1999) strategy wheel were used to note the surface elements, advertisers' intended message, and ideology. The comparison of alcohol advertising between the two cultures benefited from having a Ukrainian researcher and an American researcher who could each serve as authorities for their respective countries and offer in-depth explanations to each other. They were also able to recognize key differences between both cultures when things they took for granted about their own culture failed to emerge in the other culture. In cases of ambiguity, they were also able to elicit comments from other members of their own culture to aid in interpreting the ads. True to the nature of the interpretive method, the researchers were the research instrument (Taylor 1994).

Findings

RQ1: Country-by-Country Adherence to Regulation

Ukraine

Regulation of alcohol advertising in Ukraine imposes various content restrictions, and several ads appeared to be in direct violation of the law. For example, an ad for Nemiroff Vodka's "Tough Guy" from *XXL* magazine (see Figure 2) simply showed the bottle surrounded by text but made improper claims regarding health and the solution to problems (e.g., vodka cures illness, dilutes your sad feelings, and is a good companion). These statements may also be in violation for claiming a stimulating or sedative influence. The mere identification of the alcohol content would not be permitted by U.S. regulations, but it is not in violation of Ukrainian law.

The translation of the text says:

Vodka can cure your illness and dilute your sad feelings. It can be a good companion that can bring people together and can be a wonderful communication tool. Nemiroff "Tough" is a new

product that was launched just recently. To this day, it is the strongest vodka among the Nemiroff products.

A Butterfly Light Wine ad from *Otdohni* magazine not only positioned the product as part of a healthy lifestyle—a violation relative to health claims—but also claimed that it can be consumed anytime and without consequences. In the United States, the alcohol content of wine usually varies from 7 to 14%, with most “light” wines in the 7 to 10% alcohol range. In Europe, the legal ranges of alcohol by volume for wine range from 8.5 to 14%, with light wines in the 8.5 to 11% range (Elmore 2008). Although light wines have less alcohol content than regular wines, they are not alcohol free. The implication that the alcohol content is so minimal that it can be consumed without consequences is particularly worrisome for Ukraine, a country that has zero tolerance for drunk driving. The ad says:

Are you striving to constantly be as fit as a fiddle? It's easy! . . . When it comes to alcohol consumption, modern youth appreciate comfort and consumption without any particular consequences. Beverages that can be consumed at business lunches, at work, and in good company are appreciated more and more among youth.

Light wine has less alcohol and fewer calories. It is already desired by many dynamic Europeans, for it allows them to maintain the delicate balance between business and leisure meetings. Light wine adds pleasure to the healthy lifestyle.

In addition to claiming medicinal benefits in magazine ads, Ukrainian alcohol advertisers freely communicate health messages on Web sites. While a formal examination of Web sites is beyond the scope of the study, it is of interest to note that the Lvivske Brewery Web site (2007) claims that moderate consumption of beer promotes longevity, decreases the likelihood of heart disease, and alleviates suffering from kidney disease. It also includes a drinking song: “He Who Drinks Lvivske Beer Will Live for a Hundred Years.”

Ads are not permitted to say that alcohol enhances people socially, athletically, or sexually; however, a *Maxim* ad for S-V vodka pictures an attractive man, who explicitly speaks to his success and tells others that this is attainable by drinking S-V. The ad says:

The world belongs to people who are first.

I know my value. I'm confident and successful. If you want that too, you should drink S-V, the first-class vodka that combines classics and modernity. Drinking S-V is a measure of your masculinity, exquisite style, and noble taste.

Whereas several advertisers are guilty of obvious violations, others visually depicted what they could not say in words. One vodka advertiser (Hortytsya; see Figure 3, *B52* magazine) visually implied social and sexual success with ads using photo galleries of sponsored night club events, which often included images of attractive, young drinkers in highly sophisticated, social situations. Another advertiser (Medoff Vodka; see Figure 4, *Maxim*) presented a party scene in which the brand plays a central role in the social success of the participants. The text speaks only to the product attributes, but the imagery is shown from the perspective of an unseen man about to enter the room. He quickly sees that this party is going to be a success as he is warmly welcomed into the room by a sexually attractive woman holding a glass of Medoff vodka. Any anxiety he may have felt going into a social situation dissipates while the others watch with envy. The women in the background wish they could be with him and the men look on, jealous of his success.

An ad for Status vodka (*XXL*) simply shows the product with the message "Live by your own rules"; however, attached to the ad is a poster that positions the product as a means to sexual success by including a voluptuous woman wearing a low-cut dress in a soft porn pose (see Figure 5). The ad portion complies with regulations but the poster does not. The ad/ poster combination appears to be an attempt to circumvent the advertising law.

Ads cannot include images of persons who are popular (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2006, Article 22, paragraph 3); however, several celebrities (Johnny Depp, Sharon Stone, etc.) were named in the text of the ads with photos of night clubs, fashion shows, or sponsored music events. Alcohol ads are also known to include stories and photos of lesser-known celebrities, such as the ALeXX ad in Figure 6 (*XXL*) that features a Cuban fashion designer. What appears at first

glance to be editorial material opposite a half-page ad is actually a two-page advertorial for ALeXX without clear identification as such, which appears to be a violation of the requirement that advertising be clearly differentiated.

Although Ukrainian law requires warning labels in ads that use a minimum of 15% of the space and enough contrasting elements to be highly visible (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine 2006, Article 22, paragraph 7), the law does not specify the width and height of the letters of the text. Various loopholes have permitted Ukrainian advertisers to blend the warning into the background of the ad and make them a design feature that can be nearly illegible. For example, the Ararat Ani cognac ad in Figure 7 used warning labels with such elongated letters that it appeared much like a bar code.

Since the time that the sample was collected, Ukrainian legislation has been amended to require advertisers to use black letters on a white background and to place the warning horizontally beneath the advertisement (Verkhovna Rada 2008). If advertisers comply with the regulations, they will not be able to rotate the warning or use colors to blend the message into the design. Yet there is no restriction on the use of elongated letters, and the "bar code" type of warning in Figure 7 remains legal.

The incidence of each type of violation and/or questionable advertising practice is noted in Table 3. Multiple violations occurred across the 42 ads, including messages with medicinal claims, problem solution, no consequences, explicit associations with success, and blurred lines between advertising and editorial content. Questionable practices included messages with implicit associations with success, illegible warning labels, and references to or depictions of popular people. One explanation for the relatively high number of violations is that in Ukraine the desire for advertising and sales revenue is great and the fear of consequences is minimal. As a country whose alcohol advertising regulations are still relatively new, Ukrainian businesses may be testing the limits of what the government and the public can tolerate.

The United States

The American ads were in far greater compliance with government and voluntary regulations, at least in the letter of the law, if not in spirit. None of the ads were factually deceptive, nor did they explicitly encourage underage drinking, make so forth, although innuendo was used in some ads to imply sexual success.

For example, beer ads are not to portray sexually explicit activity as a consequence of drinking, and technically, none of them did. However, several ads built strong associations with sex that were open to multiple interpretations, such as a Coors Light ad (*Maxim*) in which readers are encouraged to vote for their "favorite hottie online" and two *Men's Health* ads. In one, a St. Pauli Girl Lager ad profiled a sexually appealing woman with the product tag line "You never forget your first girl," and in the other, a Heineken Light beer ad used the headline "Longing for a first date to go smoothly?" The Heineken line could simply imply a wish for a first date to be free of anxiety, perhaps in contrast to dates that did not go smoothly, or, among other possibilities, it could imply a wish that the date culminates in sex.

Distilled beverage guidelines also prohibit ads from relying on sexual success as a selling point for the brand, and they, too, are technically in compliance. An 1800 tequila ad from *Maxim* depicted a couple dancing suggestively with the headline "A little bit older, a whole lot bolder: the ultimate smooth move." The woman takes the dominant role, leaving one to interpret that the man is with a woman who is older, bolder, and more sexually experienced than younger girls he might have dated in the past. By implication, they drink 1800, which is also older and bolder. The ad may invite an interpretation of sexual success, but it is not directly stated.

Table 3 shows that the American ads included eight examples of innuendo but no obvious violations. One explanation for the greater compliance in the American ads relative to the Ukrainian ads is the desire among the alcoholic beverage industry to avoid tougher government regulations, given the level of public scrutiny of its advertising practices (Hemphill 2005). Two other explanations are the desire to avoid the fate of the tobacco industry, which serves as a reminder that the threat of government attention is real, and the

desire to avoid incurring the wrath of advocacy groups, such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (Davidson 2003). In the end, advertisers must communicate in ways that are acceptable within the culture.

RQ2: Creative Strategy: Surface Elements, Advertiser's Intent, and Ideology

Surface Elements

To answer the second research question regarding how each country uses creative strategy to navigate the regulatory environment, we examined the surface elements, advertiser's intended message, and ideological messages (Frith 1997). First, the surface details of the ads were compared, which included the presence of people, the setting of the ad, stylistic elements, and so forth.

One striking difference that emerged was the heavier use of text in the Ukrainian ads relative to the American ads, which changed the overall look and feel of the ads. In some cases, the text provided copious instructions about how to prepare drinks, which was necessary for products that were unfamiliar to consumers and at an early point in the product life cycle. In others, it addressed the quality and authenticity of the product, which legitimized the product and provided justification for buying it as part of an affluent lifestyle. Little text was used in the American ads, which suggests that product use is so well ingrained that there is little need to legitimize it or to justify its use.

Another difference was the depiction of people. Many Ukrainian ads simply showed the bottle of alcohol with no people present, similar to the strategy seen in American ads; however, those ads that did depict people usually showed just one person. Other than the brands of vodka that used ads with photo galleries of people at famous bars such as the Hortytsya ad in Figure 3 (B52), only three other ads depicted pairs or groups of people—one for Chivas Regal (see Figure 8, *Maxim*) with three couples on yachts, one for Ararat cognac with a man and woman (see Figure 7, *EGO*), and the Medoff vodka ad (see

Figure 4, *Maxim*) with couples at a party. The ads with one person emphasized ways in which the product could enhance the individual and did not rely on relationships.

The American ads showed a wider variety of people—some lone individuals and several groups of people partying in social settings, such as a Jose Cuervo ad from *GQ* (see Figure 9). The people in both countries' samples were young, healthy, attractive, and successful looking; however, the American sample showed greater variation in race and ethnicity. The people in the Ukrainian sample were exclusively white, which is not surprising given the fewer ethnic minorities in Ukraine.

One final difference is that stylistically the look and feel of the ads differed. Even if the text were removed from the ads, it is unlikely that audience members would mistake a Ukrainian ad for an American one and vice versa. For example, two Ukrainian ads made use of a mirror as a device for fantasy, which would appear odd to Americans.

Advertiser's Intended Message and Use of Appeals

The ads were next examined for the advertiser's intended message (Frith 1997), which incorporated various appeals identified using Taylor's strategy wheel (1999). The most common appeals were sensory, social, and ego. Literally all alcohol ads carried some appeal to the senses, but some ads contained sensory appeals in combination with social or ego appeals and were coded for those appeals instead. Ads that used sensory appeals without other messages were coded for that appeal only. The process of examining the advertiser's intended message through their use of appeals required a deeper level of interpretation than simply identifying the surface elements. The interpretation offered below is not meant to be the only correct possibility but rather one that is true to the data (Lindloff 1995).

The summary of the different appeals by country (Table 4) shows that aside from the sensory-only appeal, the social appeal was the most prevalent strategy in the Ukrainian sample, whereas the ego appeal was the most prevalent in the American sample. The higher percentage of social appeals in the Ukrainian ads positions the various

brands as status symbols that have value for conspicuous consumption. In contrast, the high number of ego appeals in the American sample shows a communication style that flatters the consumer. Instead of implying that consumers need the product to achieve success, it sends the message that the product is the natural choice of successful people. As with other findings in the study, the percentages in Table 4 are provided as a descriptive measure of advertising strategy at this moment in time rather than a claim that this pattern will necessarily generalize to other samples.

Sensory Appeals. Examples of sensory appeals included a Finsbury Gin ad from *EGO* in the Ukrainian sample that speaks to the “impressive taste of cold in your mouth” and the enjoyment consumers experience when they drink it. A Koktebel wine ad (*XXL*) promises the taste of real flavor of natural wines, unlike those made from chemical processes. In the American sample, Absolut Peach Vodka (*Esquire*) tells consumers that they will “be seduced by the complex flavors of natural peach, blended with vodka distilled from grain grown in the rich fields of Southern Sweden,” while a Pilsner Urquell ad (*Esquire*) speaks to “the earthy, almost floral aroma with sweet hints of honeysuckle.”

These examples use explicit text intended to appeal to the senses; however, ads with visuals and minimal text also conveyed the message effectively. The Beefeater Dry Gin ad in the American sample (Figure 1) uses complex visuals that also appeal to the senses with the splash of lime. Whether all consumers decode the message in the same way (e.g., whether or not the appeal to the senses actually succeeds in stimulating the senses), the commonality in the encoding of the messages was the same—that the product can bring sensory pleasure to the consumer.

Social Appeals. Some ads speak to the desire for status and social acceptance, and ads with social appeals tell consumers that product use can make that happen. One of the Ukrainian Hortytsya vodka ads that positioned the brand against photos from the Man Ray club (Figure 3, *B52*) tells readers:

As soon as you arrive at the club, you are at a huge balcony where you are the center of everybody's attention. In fact, the

main thing at Man Ray is to look around and be seen. Look around and you will be noticed in the place that belongs to Johnny Depp.

In an ad for Koktebel cognac (see Figure 10, *EGO* magazine), an exotic woman seen through a mirror walks barefoot on a beach. Her image is not an objective reflection, however; instead, the mirror magically transports the viewer to another world—one that she inhabits. Wearing a seductive evening dress, she glances back at her admirer and beckons him to join her as she holds her glass of Koktebel. Her shoes are not part of the mirrored image, which suggests two realities—hers and the one she left behind that her admirer still inhabits. By drinking Koktebel cognac, he, too, can step into a world where this seductive woman awaits him.

Ads in the American sample also used social appeals but made greater use of social interaction. Rather than appealing directly to the need for status or social/sexual success, American advertisers typically conveyed to readers that alcohol makes the party, whether it is girls enjoying guys' night out (Jose Cuervo, *Glamour*), a couple dancing (1800 Tequila, *Maxim*), or a group of friends simply enjoying good times (Figure 9, Jose Cuervo, *GQ*).

The use of social and ego appeals often overlapped, and the meaning could be interpreted either way depending on the individual. For example, an ad for Chivas Regal in the Ukrainian sample (Figure 8, *Maxim*) depicts a level of affluence far beyond that of most young Ukrainians. Two yachts are connected by a hammock suspended over the water, and a happy couple stands on each yacht watching a third couple in the hammock, who show no concern that they are precariously positioned over the water. No text appears except the words "This is the Chivas Life," which takes for granted an affluent, indulgent lifestyle. One interpretation is that drinking Chivas Regal is an act of conspicuous consumption that will help social climbers attain the level of social success depicted in the ad (social appeal). Another interpretation is that people who have achieved this level of success naturally drink Chivas Regal (ego appeal).

Perhaps the most interesting use of a mixed social/ego appeal is for ALeXX brand cognac in the Ukrainian sample. Visually, the ad

shows the photo of a Cuban fashion designer on the left side of the two-page spread (Figure 6, *XXL*) and the bottle of cognac on the right with explanatory text. The text offers to reveal secrets for success that the “most influential men on the planet share.” These men “play for real, are masters of their own fate, and own the hearts and minds of many. They are influential beyond imagination.”

The influential man pictured is Osmani Lafita, a 22-year-old Cuban who emigrated to the Czech Republic and is now a fashion designer working in Paris. Lafita talks about his own personal style and gives advice on how to make the right impression through the selection of clothing, cologne, accessories, music, friends (e.g., Versace, Madonna, and Sharon Stone), and automobiles.

A while ago, I was driving a luxurious Mercedes. But now, I am exclusively driving a Jaguar. Why not BMW? Fashions come and go. When old jeans and super-fast cars are trends that are gone with the wind, Jaguar will remain. This is the legend. And the legend is the daughter of history.

He is already self-actualized, so drinking ALeXX cognac speaks to his exceptional taste rather than serving as a strategy for enhancement. However, the person seeking social acceptance and status may want to imitate Lafita's preferences and conclude that drinking the brand will accomplish this.

A more conventional ALeXX ad in *Cosmopolitan* uses techniques that are fairly comparable to current American advertising. It relies on visuals rather than text, showing an attractive woman in a revealing gown looking at a game piece for the video game TetriXX, which can be played on the ALeXX Web site. The ad includes the slogan “The Taste of Adult Games”—a play on words that references the flavor of the cognac, the TetriXX game, and sexual pleasures—and suggests the woman is ready for adult life, with all its vices and forbidden pleasures. A similar ad in the American sample (*InStyle*) depicted a seductive woman in a moment of ecstasy holding a bottle of SKYY vodka in one hand and her drink in the other.

American consumers who are not familiar with the ALeXX brand have no context for understanding some of the more subtle elements,

but Ukrainians know that the product line includes a progression. According to the Web site, ALeXX Silver is for those who are young, ambitious, in pursuit of success, and are just beginning to try the taste of adult games; ALeXX Gold is for those who have found success by defining their own way and are already acquainted with the taste of adult games; and ALeXX Platinum is for those who have not only found success but are sharing their experiences with others.

Ego Appeals. Ego ads appeared in both samples and were characterized by people who had already attained some measure of success. Examples from the Ukrainian sample included the Status Vodka ad (Figure 5, *XXL*) that tells consumers: "Live by your own rules. Status is for those who can do anything but want more out of life." Among Ukrainians, being able to "do anything" generally means being able to buy anything or go anywhere; thus, this brand is for self-actualizers who have already fulfilled their dreams but simply want more.

Perhaps the most obvious ego appeal appeared in an ad for Nemiroff Lex Vodka (*EGO* magazine). The ad simply showed the product with no people depicted but used the headline and body copy: "I am the law. The majority of people perceive themselves as part of the world. However, for a group of chosen ones, the world is part of them. The world is subject to their laws." The ad closes with a slogan that clearly differentiates people who aspire to success with those who already possess it: "The majority of people try to own the world. The chosen ones already have it. Lex."

One final ego ad was for Ararat cognac (Figure 7, *EGO*). The central character is a man drinking cognac with a woman who is only partially visible, and his mirrored reflection shows him to be a member of royalty wearing a gold, jeweled crown and velvet robe. As in the earlier ad, the mirror does not reflect his objective reality but instead reveals his inner self. The text tells readers: "Imagine yourself as a prince in the ancient city of Ani, where the air is filled with beautiful aromas. . . . This is Ani—an Armenian legend, the most wonderful cognac for enjoying friends." The product in the ad allows him to reconnect with his real self—a prince in a legendary Armenian city. By

being part of the legend, he also discovers the most honorable qualities and hidden desires of his friends.

In contrast, none of the American ads referenced social class or royalty and instead identified personality types or personal statements. For example, a Grand Marnier ad (*Maxim*) uses the headline "Do you prefer talking in bars to shouting in bars?" Assuming that the reader is the type of person who would answer "yes," the next line is, "You're ready for a Grand Margarita." The ad implies that you are no longer an immature youth who drinks pitchers of beer in loud bars where you have to shout to be heard. Now you are an adult who seeks the sophisticated, refined atmosphere of bars suited to conversation and classic drinks made of the finest ingredients. This type of ad emphasizes an ego rather than social component because it positions the product as the choice of a self-actualized person rather than that of a status seeker.

It is interesting to note that the American sample also included an ad that profiled a fashion designer; however, it differed from the Ukrainian ad by placing greater emphasis on ego than social appeal. A Miller Genuine Draft ad (*GQ*) saluted the British designer Oswald Boateng for being a self-taught, genuine craftsman who combines impeccable tailoring with bold color and texture. Through visuals and text, the ad portrays the successful, self-made man who drinks MGD—"Beer Grown Up." Instead of inviting consumers to drink the brand to attain Boateng's level of success, however, the ad invites consumers to drink a brand that epitomizes quality. By comparing Boateng's commitment to quality to that of Miller, it implies that it takes a class act to know one—a classic ego appeal.

Worth noting is that an occasional rational appeal appeared in the Ukrainian sample in combination with a sensory or social appeal, whereas none appeared in the American sample. For example, a Finsbury Gin ad (*B52*) explained the history of gin while positioning it as a way to gain social acceptance. A second Finsbury Gin (*EGO*) ad addressed the differences between making a gin and tonic with the proper ingredients versus settling for cheap, prepackaged drinks in aluminum cans. The ad explained that to make the perfect gin and tonic, touted as the most fashionable drink in the world, one must

drink only distilled gin with tonic from a freshly opened bottle. Ice must be made from mineral water and must be accompanied by a slice of lime or lemon. Consumers are further instructed on the right amount of ice to put in the goblet, the right way to pour the gin, and the right way to add tonic water. These appeals legitimized newer products and provided the added need for explanation in Ukrainian ads.

Ideology. After examining the surface elements and the appeals that advertisers use to communicate with consumers, the final step was to interpret the ideology of the culture as supported by the ads, which is a very complex challenge because it requires looking beneath the surface of the ads and inferring underlying values. Ideology was often revealed by considering how the ad would play in the other culture. For example, the Cuban designer in the ALeXX ad (Figure 6), who offers his secrets for success and is identified as one of the most influential men on the planet, would likely come across as arrogant to Americans. For the message to appeal to American status seekers, the comments would need to be understated.

The vast majority of ads appeared in men's magazines in both countries. In the Ukrainian sample, men were not only the audience for ads that depicted sexually available women but also for the many "how-to" ads that carefully educated them on the right brands to attain status or demonstrate their own success. Although women are consumers of alcohol in Ukraine, the implication through ads is that consumption of alcohol elevates the status of men more so than that of women, which makes sense culturally because men are heavier consumers of alcohol than women (Webb et al. 2005) and there is greater pressure on men than women to be savvy about alcohol products. This was clearly the case for the S-V vodka ad (*Maxim*) that positioned consumption of S-V vodka as a measure of masculinity, exquisite style, and noble taste. The one ad in the Ukrainian sample that appeared in a woman's magazine was the "Adult Games" ad for ALeXX cognac, which depicted a seductive woman in a low-cut gown. Stylistically, it depicted her from a male perspective, as if to show women what men find desirable.

American ads also used sex to sell alcohol; however, the depictions of women were more balanced. In a rare ad in the sample that targeted women, a Jose Cuervo ad from *Glamour* visually depicted a group of five attractive women laughing and drinking Margaritas, which was positioned against a headline that said, "Let's Hear It for Guys' Night Out." The ad playfully worked against the old stereotype of men having a night out together and leaving their wives or girlfriends behind. The women depicted in the ad are part of a generation who can drink freely and take part in social events with or without men. Its presence in the American sample from a female point of view contrasted sharply with the Ukrainian ALeXX ad. Furthermore, the absence of depictions of "liberated" women in the Ukrainian sample also made sense within the culture, given that gender equality is not an issue in Ukraine, nor was it in the past under Soviet rule. It is the observation of the researchers that Ukrainian men and women have always had political and economic equality with equal pay in the workplace. However, the heavier tendency toward the objectification of women in the Ukrainian sample raises other questions regarding gender roles that could be explored in further research.

Ukrainians also had no class distinctions under Soviet rule—no rich versus poor. It is only since 1991 that Ukrainians have participated in a market economy, with the result that some thrive and many others struggle. Given the relatively recent economic changes and the influx of new products, advertising serves as a way of maintaining and reinforcing that change, not only by teaching members of the culture which products and brands are important but also how one's identity is tied to consumption and how this identity can be used as a marker of success. Even more basic is how one defines success. The ads leave no doubt that success means having the affluence to possess material goods, and the mantra is "Live by your own rules." The only thing left unsaid is how to become wealthy enough to buy the goods.

Essentially, ads must teach Ukrainian citizens to be consumers—a message that their American counterparts take as a given. Several alcohol ads educate Ukrainians on how to choose new brands and new beverages that lack a history or tradition in Ukraine. By implication, these ads also educate consumers that there are many potential

missteps along the way to achieving success. Drinking ready-made cocktails in aluminum cans is out of the question, and buying any gin that is not from London could be a serious faux pas for the person trying to make the right impression. In this sense, Ukrainians may be more vulnerable to social/status appeals than Americans, who were exposed to similar types of appeals in earlier decades (Marchand 1985), but reject heavy-handed attempts at persuasion. Currently, American consumers respond better to subtlety or humor and can enjoy a feeling of superiority when they understand messages that are not universally understood. For example, the imagery represented by the British flag in the Beefeater Dry Gin ad (Figure 1) goes unnoticed by some consumers. Those who “get it” can pride themselves on their sophistication. The American ads make sense for people who have long since learned to be consumers and cannot imagine any other economic system.

Conclusions

This study evaluates alcohol advertising in popular Ukrainian and American magazines by examining the compliance with regulation and the cultural messages that emerge. Findings showed that both countries hold the advertising of alcohol to a higher standard than more benign products but vary in the source of restrictions, the degree of compliance, and the consequences of noncompliance. In Ukraine, restrictions originate from parliamentary law, but advertisers who fail to comply with the law have little to no fear of consequences. In the United States, restrictions come from multiple sources and the fear of consequences of noncompliance appears to be greater.

A final question is “What do these findings mean?” One obvious answer is that Ukraine has a system of regulation that is not adhered to, perhaps because the system has not stood the test of time. Some of the regulations follow Western models of regulation that are not a good fit. In a country where the legal alcohol purchase age of 18 is not strictly enforced (e.g., no identification is required), the regulation of the advertising is more stringent than the regulation of the product itself. Furthermore, there is not enough “buy-in” for certain restrictions, such as regulation against making medicinal claims, given the widely ingrained belief in medicinal properties of alcohol. Over

time, it is possible to fine tune the regulations to be a better fit to the culture. From a management perspective, firms that produce alcohol products will find Ukraine a more appealing target market than more developed countries because they are held to a lesser legal standard.

American alcohol ads are in greater compliance than Ukrainian ads, and the detailed voluntary guidelines give the appearance of building on the state and federal laws and offering strong protection to consumers. Yet there are many loopholes that favor advertisers. Advertisers can communicate visually what can't be said in words, and the content claims from the trade associations are written in such extremes that compliance is relatively easy (e.g., ads can associate beer consumption with success or status—they are simply prohibited from saying that individuals cannot obtain success without it).

A second answer to the question of meaning is that American advertisers appear to limit their creative strategy to avoid violations more so than Ukrainian advertisers. In addition to sensory appeals, which do not violate either country's standards, American advertisers rely heavily on ego appeals, which are less likely to violate standards than social appeals because the product is not positioned as one that improves the individual. Although advertisers may visually communicate ways that the product enhances consumers, the ego appeals convey that that success is the cause for using the product rather than the effect. Ego appeals are also more effective with young American adults who are believed to be "jaded with traditional advertising, tired of the same old stale images, and . . . cynical toward advertising manipulation" (Kellner 1995, p. 254). In Ukraine, where advertising has a shorter history, the social appeal is alive and well.

The inclusion of rational appeals in the Ukrainian sample and the greater number of social appeals relative to ego appeals also gives an insightful look into the differences between Ukrainian and American culture, which supports Taylor's (1999) prediction that culture rather than product category drives advertising strategy. From a managerial perspective, a standardized advertising strategy with a single message across markets is unlikely to succeed.

Finally, the ads support different ideologies that fit the history and cultural differences of their respective countries. Although a drinking culture has existed in Ukraine long before advertising became part of everyday life, advertising has the power to modify the drinking culture by introducing new brands of alcoholic beverages to widen the choices among consumers; to redefine the ways that alcohol fits social rituals, such as positioning alcohol as a reward for success; and to promote more expensive brands as superior to those that are commonly available and affordable. These insights into the relationship between culture and advertising in Ukraine and the United States advance our knowledge of key issues in international advertising (Taylor 2005).

Limitations and Future Directions

All research has certain limitations related to the method, and text analysis is no exception. As an interpretive method, it is able to provide the depth and understanding that content analysis cannot; however, content analysis is better suited for claims of generalization. Thus, larger samples of ads collected over a longer time period will be important for future studies. Comparative studies with Russia and other former Soviet republics will also be insightful.

Longitudinal studies will be important to monitor the changing role of consumers in Ukraine, changes in advertising appeals over time, and changes in how advertisers respond to regulation. Some violations may occur in a country with a relatively short history of advertising regulation, in which case future investigations may show fewer violations. If future research provides evidence that the number and type of violations persist, however, it may become the impetus for change, particularly if the Ukrainian people mobilize a greater desire for consumer protection.

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APPENDIX 1

Law on Advertising (Ukraine)

Article 22: Advertising Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages

1. Advertising for tobacco and alcoholic beverages

- is prohibited on television and radio; however, alcohol advertising is prohibited on the media between 6 A.M. and 11 P.M., whereas tobacco advertising is totally prohibited;
- is prohibited on products and in printed publications intended mainly for persons who have not reached the age of 18, or in the parts of other printed publications intended for the said persons;
- is prohibited on the front and back pages of newspapers, cover pages of magazines, and other periodicals;
- shall not contain images of persons who are popular;
- is prohibited where photographer's models have not reached the age of 18;
- shall not contain any depiction of the process of smoking or any other consumption of tobacco or alcohol;
- may not be located closer than 300 meters from the territory of children's preschool establishments, secondary general education schools, and other educational institutions in which children under 18 study;
- may not contain statements that smoking or alcohol consumption is an important factor for achieving success in sport, social, sexual, or any other realm and that produce an impression that alcohol or tobacco consumption exerts a stimulating or sedative influence, or may facilitate the solution of personal problems;
- shall not encourage alcohol or tobacco abuse, or negatively evaluate the act of abstaining from tobacco and alcoholic beverages;
- shall not depict medical employees or people who look like medical employees;
- shall not imply that tobacco or alcoholic beverages have medicinal properties;
- shall not imply that the majority of people use tobacco or alcohol.

2. Tobacco advertising shall adduce information about the content therein of substances harmful for health and the amount thereof.
3. Tobacco and alcohol advertising shall be prohibited in objects of social and cultural designation where mass entertainment venues are held (except special exhibition and presentation events).
4. The following kinds of tobacco and alcohol advertising activity are prohibited:
 - any free-of-charge circulation of tobacco and alcohol samples;
 - sponsoring events that are intended mainly for persons under 18 if in doing so, the name or image of a tobacco product or alcoholic beverage is used;
 - circulation and sale of goods (T-shirts, headwear, games, etc.) with the use of a tobacco or alcohol name and trademark to persons who have not reached the age of 18.
5. In all cases, advertising shall be accompanied by a warning about the harmfulness of tobacco and alcohol consumption, herewith not less than 15% of the space (volume) of the total tobacco advertising shall be allotted to this warning in the event that other means of advertising are applied. The warning must also be shown in a color that contrasts with the ad.
6. Advertisers of the said products are obliged to channel not less than 5% of the money spent by them for the dissemination of tobacco and/or alcohol advertising, for the production of social advertising information with regard to the harmfulness of tobacco and alcohol.

Sources: Verkhovna Rada 2006; Vidomosti Verkhovnoii Rady 1996.

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Major Restrictions on Alcohol Advertising in the United States

I. Restrictions by Federal Regulation

The FTC (Federal Trade Commission)

- Prohibits deceptive advertising or unfair practices.

The BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives)

- Ads must include the name and city of the manufacturer and designation of the type of product.
- Ads may not make any false or misleading statements and must not disparage a competitor's product.
- Ads cannot make statements about the beverage's intoxicating properties.
- Ads may not make representations that the product has medicinal or therapeutic effects.
- Ads cannot offer research data that would be considered misleading.
- Ads cannot use official insignia related to the armed services.

Source: Fueroghne 1995.

II. Voluntary Guidelines by Trade Associations

A. The Brewing Industry

Beer Institute Guidelines call for beer advertising to be done in a responsible manner with the product marketed only to those above the legal drinking age. Specific verbatim guidelines for representation are provided below.

Section 4. Beer advertising and marketing materials should not make the following exaggerated product representations:

- Beer advertising and marketing materials should not convey the impression that a beer has special or unique qualities if in fact it does not.

- Beer advertising and marketing materials should make no scientifically unsubstantiated health claims.
- Beer advertising and marketing materials may portray beer as a part of personal and social interactions and experiences, and a brand may be portrayed in appropriate surroundings, as a superior choice to complement a particular occasion or activity. Beer advertising and marketing materials should not, however, claim or represent that individuals cannot obtain social, professional, educational, athletic or financial success or status without beer consumption.
- Beer advertising and marketing materials should not claim or represent that individuals cannot solve social, personal, or physical problems without beer consumption.

Section 5. Beer advertising and marketing materials

- Should not contain language or images that are lewd or indecent in the context presented and the medium in which the material appears.
- May contain romantic or flirtatious interactions but should not portray sexually explicit activities as a result of consuming beer.

Source: Selected guidelines are taken from Beer Institute Guidelines (2006), available at www.beerinstitute.org/BeerInstitute/files/ccLibraryFiles/Filename/000000000384/2006ADCODE.pdf. See the Web site for the full Advertising and Marketing Code, January 2006 Edition.

B. The Wine Institute

Wine Institute Guidelines call for wine advertising to be done in a responsible manner with the product marketed only to those above the legal drinking age. Specific verbatim guidelines for representation are provided below.

Section 2. Advertising of wine has traditionally depicted persons enjoying their lives and illustrating the role of wine in a mature lifestyle. Any attempt to suggest that wine directly contributes to success or achievement is unacceptable. Therefore, the following restrictions shall apply:

- Wine shall not be presented as being essential to personal performance, social attainment, achievement, success or wealth.
- The use of wine shall not be directly associated with social, physical or personal problem solving.
- Wine shall not be presented as vital to social acceptability and popularity.
- It shall not be suggested that wine is crucial for successful entertaining.

Source: Selected guidelines are taken from Wine Institute Guidelines (2005), available at www.wineinstitute.org/initiatives/issuesandpolicy/adcode/details. See the Web site for the entire Code of Advertising Standards, September 13, 2005.

C. The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States

From the Section on Social Responsibility:

- Beverage alcohol advertising and marketing materials should portray beverage alcohol products and drinkers in a responsible manner. Beverage alcohol products and drinkers may be portrayed as part of responsible personal and social experiences and activities, such as the depiction of persons in a social or romantic setting, persons who appear to be attractive or affluent, and persons who appear to be relaxing or in an enjoyable setting.
- Beverage alcohol advertising and marketing materials should contain no claims or representations that individuals can attain social, professional, educational, or athletic success or status as a result of beverage alcohol consumption.

From the Section on Sexual Prowess and Sexual Success:

- Beverage alcohol advertising and marketing materials may depict affection or other amorous gestures or other attributes associated with sociability and friendship. While a brand preference may be portrayed as a mark of good taste and discernment, beverage alcohol advertising and marketing materials should not rely upon sexual prowess or sexual success

as a selling point for the brand. Accordingly, advertising and marketing materials should not contain or depict:

- graphic or gratuitous nudity;
- overt sexual activity;
- promiscuity; or
- sexually lewd or indecent images or language.

Source: Selected guidelines are taken from Distilled Spirits Council Guidelines (2006), available at www.discus.org/responsibility/code/read.asp. See the Web site for the entire Code of Responsible Practices for Beverage Alcohol Advertising and Marketing, 2007.

TABLE 1. Advertising Policies by Vehicle: Ukrainian and American Magazines

Ukrainian magazines	Stated restrictions on advertising of alcohol products	American magazines	Stated restrictions on advertising of alcohol products
Korrespondent	No	Car & Driver	No
Natali	No	Cosmopolitan	No
Karavan	No	Esquire	No
B52	No	Glamour	No
XXL	No	GQ	No
Liso	No	Maxim	No
Maxim	No	Men's Health*	Yes
Men's Health*	Yes	Sports Illustrated	No
Otdohni	No	Rolling Stone	No
Viva	No	In Style	No
EGO	No	Vanity Fair	No

Note: Information was obtained by telephoning each magazine.
 *Men's Health does not accept advertising for products whose alcohol content is 35% or higher.

TABLE 2. Alcohol Product Brands by Country

Alcohol type	Ukraine	United States
Vodka	Hortytsya, Russian Standard Status, Nemiroff, S-V, Size, Celsiy, Medoff, Stoletov	Finiandia, Stolichnaya, Absolut
Cognac	Martell, Klinkov, Koktebel, Becherovka, Ararat, ALeXX	Remi Martin
Gin	Finsbury	Beefeater, Bombay Sapphire
Whiskey	Chivas Regal, Hankey Bannister, MacArthur's	Wild Turkey, Woodford Reserve, Knob Creek, Maker's Mark, Chivas Regal, Johnny Walker, Glenlivet, Jameson
Tequila	Olmecca	1800, Jose Cuervo, Don Julio's
Wine	Koktebel, Inkerman, Legend of Crimea, Butterfly	Franciscan Oakville Estate, Schmitt Shone
Beer	Carlsberg, Hika	Bass Ale, Heineken, Budweiser, Amstel Light, Miller Genuine Draft, Stella Artois, Pilsner Urquell, St. Pauli Girl, Coors, Pacifico, Corona Light
Liqueurs		Grand Marnier, Midori Melon

TABLE 3. Incidence for Violations or Questionable Advertising Practices by Country

Incidence of violations		
Type of violation	Ukraine (in 42 total ads)	United States (in 49 total ads)
Medicinal claims	3	0
Solution to problems	1	0
No consequences	1	0
Blurred line between advertising and content	6	0
Brings social or sexual success—(explicitly stated)	3	0
Incidence of questionable practices		
Types of questionable practice	Ukraine	United States
Brings social or sexual success (implied)	10	8
Reference of inclusion of celebrities	4	0
Illegible warning label	12	Not applicable

TABLE 4. Appeals in Ukrainian and American Alcohol Advertising

Appeals	Ukrainian alcohol ads	American alcohol ads
Ego	6 (14%)	21 (43%)
Social	13 (31%)	12 (24%)
Sensory	13 (31%)	15 (31%)
Both ego and sensory	8 (19%)	1 (2%)
Ration	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
Total	42 (100%)	49 (100%)

FIGURE 1. American Ad for Beefeater Gin (GQ)



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FIGURE 2. Ukrainian Ad for Nemiroff Vodka (XXL)

**КРЕПКИЙ
ОРЕШЕК**

Есть немало благородных крепких напитков, хороших и разных, но водка среди них занимает особое место. Она — и лекарство от болезни, и «растворитель» печали, и «средство коммунизации». В конце мая ТМ Nemiroff порадовала своих почитателей, обогатившись новым продуктом — водкой особой Nemiroff «Мишна». На сегодняшний день это самая «крепкая» (цельх 50 градусов!) водка в ассортименте компании. Работа над рецептом и технологией производства нового продукта продолжалась около года. Кстати, специалистов и экспертов ТМ Nemiroff вдохновила популярность напитков крепостью свыше 40 градусов на рынках Казахстана, Беларуси и Туркменистана, где продукция компании представлена в широком ассортименте и по достоинству оценена. Основу новой водки составляет особый спирт класса «Люкс». Среди дополнительных ингредиентов композиции «Мишной» — хмель, тмин и даже мед. Интересно, что хмель известен своими тонизирующими качествами, он укрепляет иммунную систему, а еще дарит энергию и силу. При дегустации Nemiroff «Мишной» яркий аромат хмеля ощущается практически сразу. Тмин же придает напитку приятное послевкусие, а мед смягчает и гармонизирует аромат и вкус водки. Как и остальные про-

дукты компании, каждой штоф защищен от подделки: на колпачок

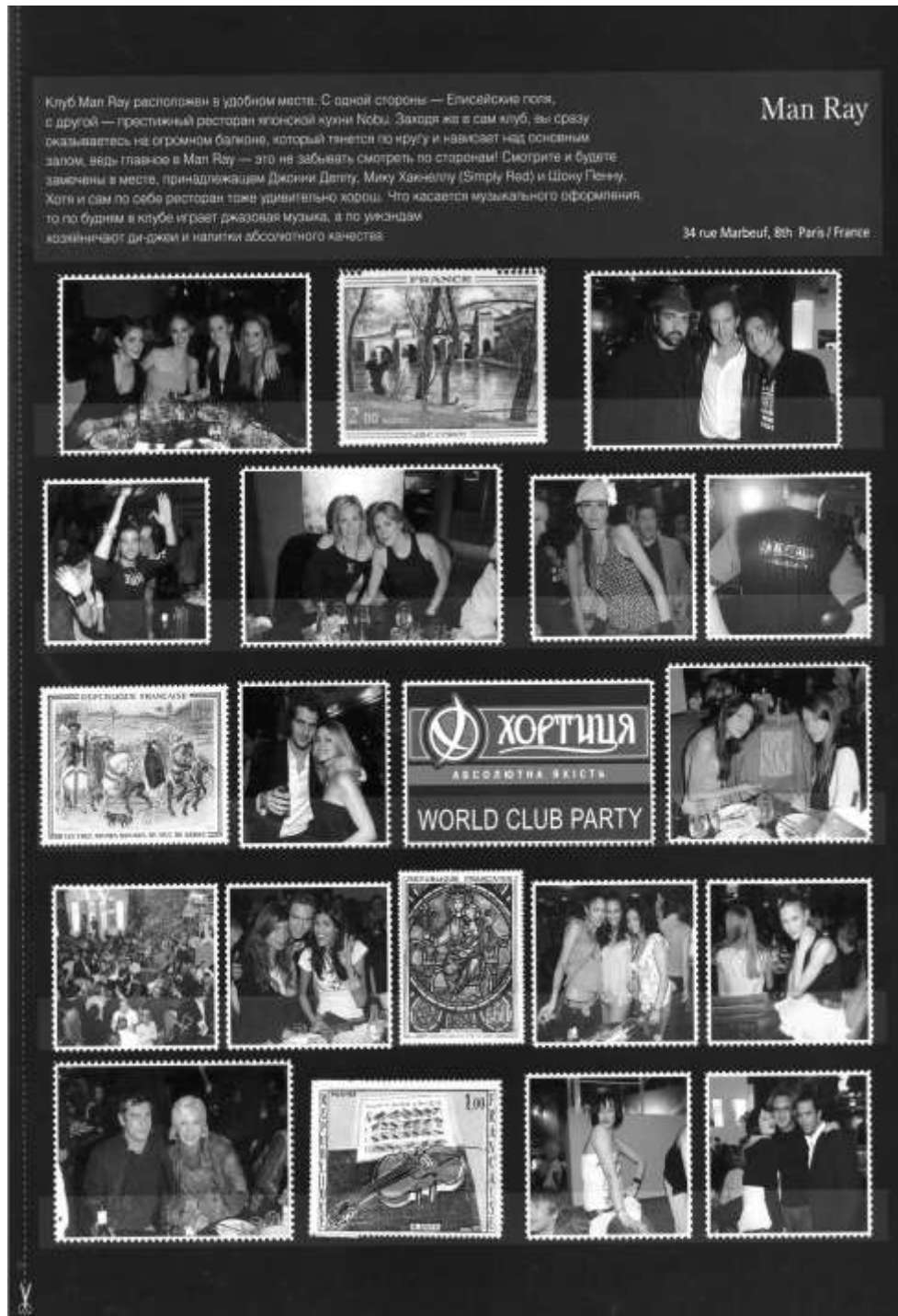
и герметико бутылки лазерным лучом наносится дата и время разлива водки. Если цифры совпадают и находится строго одна вод другой, то это — оригинальная бутылка водки ТМ Nemiroff. Водка Nemiroff «Мишна» имеет приятный водочный запах — это по достоинству оценят настоящие гурманы.



**НАДМІРНЕ СПОЖИВАННЯ АЛКОГОЛЮ
ШКІДЛИВЕ ДЛЯ ВАШОГО ЗДОРОВ'Я**

Рисунки: Пилипчук ДДРБСДМТ №142 від 14.03.08

FIGURE 3. Ukrainian Ad for Hortytsya Vodka (B52)



Notes: The ad shows photos taken at the Man Ray Club in Paris. The center of the ad contains the name of the trademark “Hortytsya,” the subslogan “Absolute quality,” and the slogan “World club party.”

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FIGURE 4. Ukrainian Ad for Medoff Vodka (Maxim)



© 2009 Medoff Vodka, Inc. All rights reserved. Medoff Vodka, Inc. is a registered trademark of Medoff Vodka, Inc. Medoff Vodka, Inc. is a registered trademark of Medoff Vodka, Inc.

Gourmet Line - новая серия для гурманов

Торговая марка MEDOFF™ выводит на рынок новую серию "MEDOFF для гурманов" (Gourmet Line).

Новая линейка состоит из трех продуктов: MEDOFF Silver, MEDOFF Gold и MEDOFF Platinum. Все три вида продолжают существовавшее направление водки MEDOFF, изготовляемых по особой технологии с вычением меда®, открытой еще в 1902 году.

Мед, при этом, выполняет роль природного адсорбента, очищая и делая основу более мягкой.

Уникальные рецептуры "серии для гурманов" специально спиканы для искушенных потребителей, знающих толк в хорошем продукте. Большинство натуральных растительных ингредиентов впервые используются в производстве аричных напитков.

Эти водки для настоящих гурманов!

MEDOFF Platinum

Напиток для ценителей чистой классической водки. Благодаря Технологии с вычением меда® достигается кристальная чистота, природная мягкость и бархатистость вкуса.

MEDOFF
Для строгих гурманов...



НАДМІРНЕ СПОЖИВАННЯ АЛКОГОЛЮ
ШКІДЛИВЕ ДЛЯ ВАШОГО ЗДОРОВ'Я

FIGURE 5. Ukrainian Ad for Status Vodka (XXL)

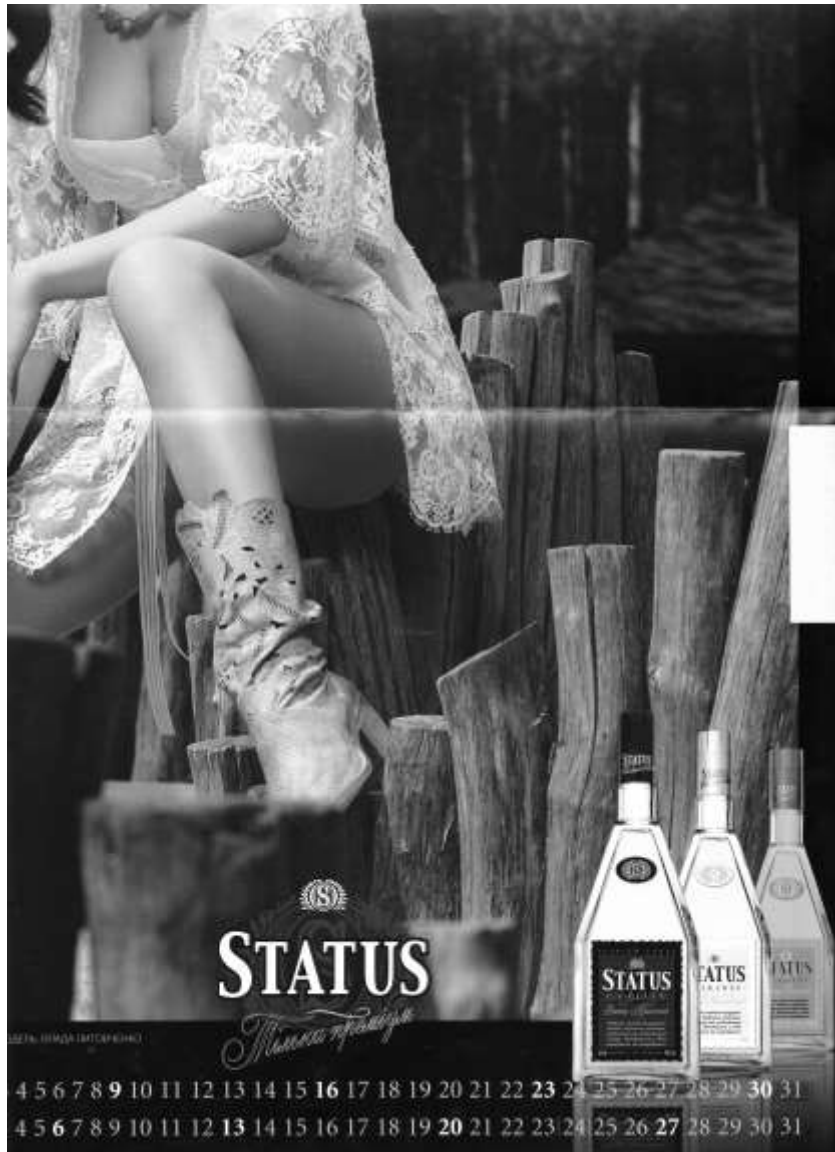


FIGURE 6. Ukrainian Ad for ALeXX Cognac (XXL)

ALEXX COGNAC
КУБИНСКИЙ ФЕНОМЕН

Після створення першого когніку в Україні, який став лідером продажів, випускають тільки один вид когніку. Це когнік АLeXX. Він є результатом роботи українських майстрів і єдиний когнік в Україні, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні. АLeXX COGNAC — це когнік, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні. АLeXX COGNAC — це когнік, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні.

КУБИНСКИЙ ФЕНОМЕН

Після створення першого когніку в Україні, який став лідером продажів, випускають тільки один вид когніку. Це когнік АLeXX. Він є результатом роботи українських майстрів і єдиний когнік в Україні, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні. АLeXX COGNAC — це когнік, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні.

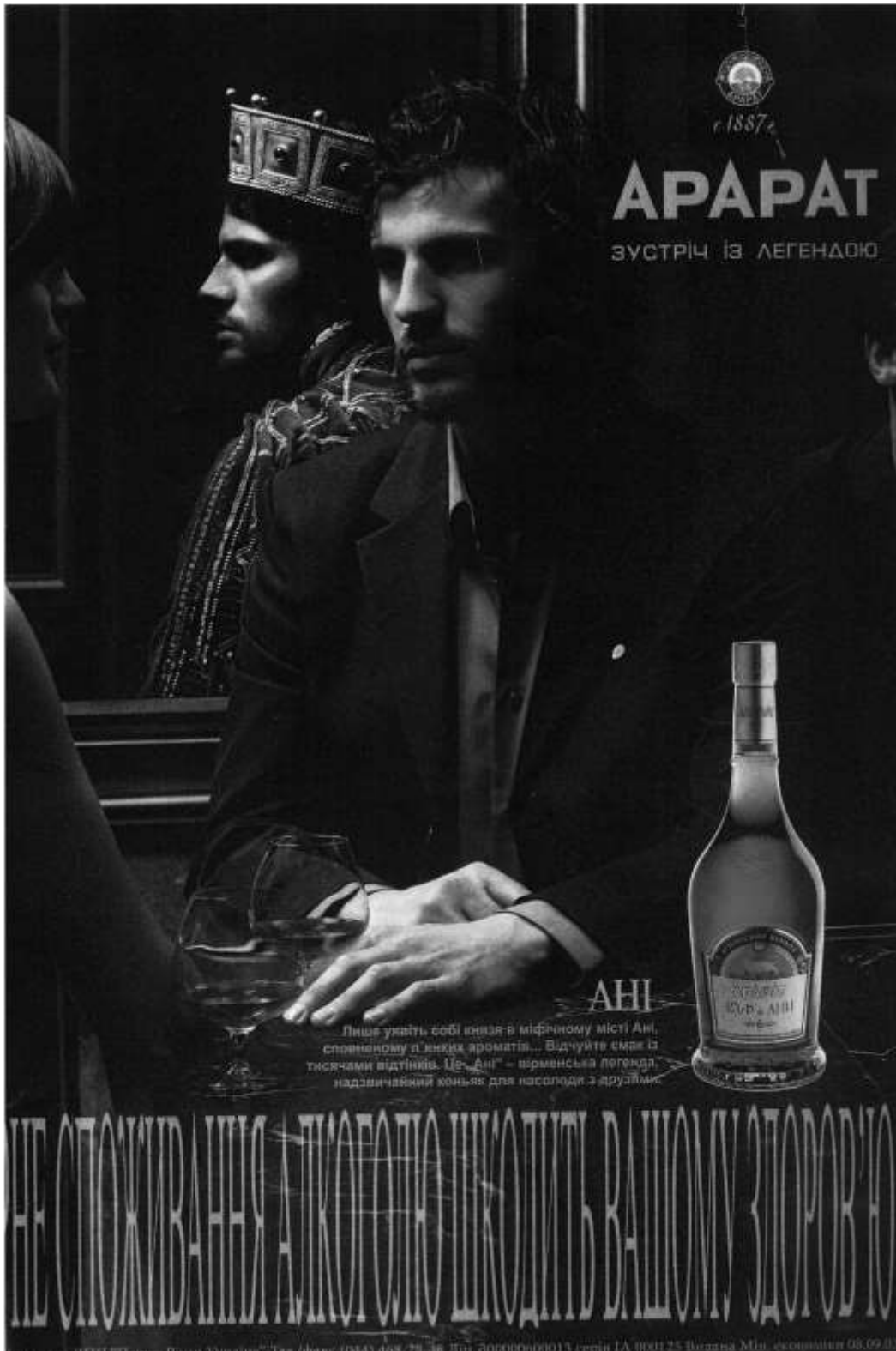
FORMULA USPIHA OT ALEXA

Після створення першого когніку в Україні, який став лідером продажів, випускають тільки один вид когніку. Це когнік АLeXX. Він є результатом роботи українських майстрів і єдиний когнік в Україні, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні. АLeXX COGNAC — це когнік, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні.

FORMULA USPIHA OT ALEXA

Після створення першого когніку в Україні, який став лідером продажів, випускають тільки один вид когніку. Це когнік АLeXX. Він є результатом роботи українських майстрів і єдиний когнік в Україні, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні. АLeXX COGNAC — це когнік, який виготовляють за традиційною технологією в Україні.

FIGURE 7. Ukrainian Ad for Ararat Ani Cognac (EGO)



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FIGURE 8. Ukrainian Ad for Chivas Regal (Maxim)

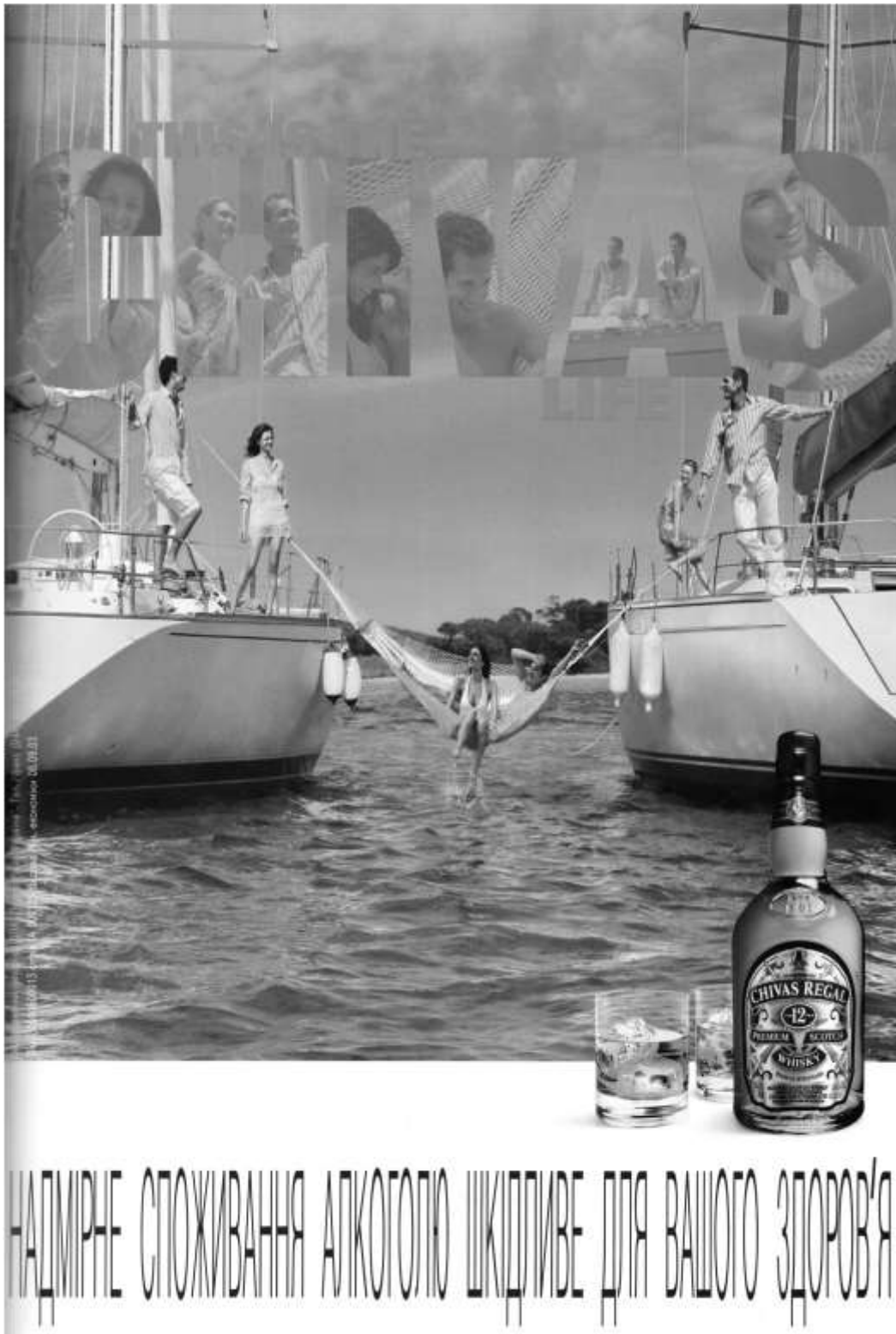


FIGURE 9. American Ad for Jose Cuervo (GQ)



FIGURE 10. Ukrainian Ad for Koktebel Cognac (EGO)

КОКТЕБЕЛЬ
КРАЇНА КОНЬЯКІВ

МІРНЕ СПОЖИВАННЯ АЛКОГОЛЮ
ДЛИВЕ ДЛЯ ВАШОГО ЗДОРОВ'Я

Дові 15 років цей коньяк відпочивав у сталітніх дубових бочках підвалах Коктебелі. Час надав йому глибокому смаку шляхетних тонів витримки. Старовинні ж технології наділили напій гідним вишню-коричневим кольором із золотистим відтінком. А зараз він запрошує вас ступити на унікальну землю краю Коктебель, який вже 125 років народжує неперевершені коньяки.