



## **Marxism & marketing**

### *Marketing White Cider*

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White Cider is an alcoholic drink, that is made from literally squeezing the last drop of apple juice from apples that have been used previously to make cider or apple juice. The resultant apple juice is then added to water, with various chemicals, to provide a highly alcoholic drink. In fact, three litres of White Cider contains the same alcohol level as three quarters of a litre of whisky. The difference is you can purchase three litres of White Cider for two pounds ninety nine pence, compared to twenty pounds for a bottle of whisky.

A few years ago I was teaching a group of MBA students and during a lecture on market segmentation, focussing on how the alcohol industry segments the market, I brought up the example of White Cider. In particular, how White Cider appeared to target the low cost segments in the alcohol market. Just then a student put his hand up and said, and I am summarising here, 'I was part of the team that initially developed White Cider. We identified that the only segment in the market that we had not reached was what we called the park benchers – those people who are poor, typically homeless, and often with serious alcohol problems'. So there you go White Cider was designed to encourage poor, homeless people with alcohol problems to drink more alcohol, whilst the alcohol producers make a profit from its sale.

So what do we think then about organisations producing White Cider for a socio-economic deprived community?

From a marketing perspective, and to this we can add a capitalist perspective, what is wrong with organisations producing White Cider? After all isn't the role of the organisation to make a profit? And in making a profit, isn't the organisation simply meeting customer needs, which is a central tenet of marketing?

Yes, would be an appropriate answer here if we take a capitalist perspective. After all, isn't it the individual's choice about what they chose to drink?