

Marketing, Modernity and “Americanisation”: Individual Entrepreneurship and the Genesis of Consumer Industries in Australia

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Abstract

Purpose - This paper shows how international cultural influence is mediated by individuals, particularly those whose birth, education or other experience overseas enables them to see opportunities for innovation not evident to others. The case in point is the “Americanisation” of culture in Australia, where “America”, that is, the United States, represents the archetype of modernity, and ‘culture’, in this context, means the whole complex of practices and institutions identified with the emergence of “consumer society”.

Methodology/approach - Using library, online and interview sources, the paper considers three historical conjunctures when particular persons have introduced innovations which have provided the basis for the subsequent development of different kinds of consumer industries. Firstly, the Foster brothers, Americans who produced the eponymous iced lager in the 1880s; secondly, between the World Wars, when Harold Clapp presided over the Victorian Railways Commission; and finally, the late 1960s, when fast-food franchising first comes to Australia.

Research implications/limitations - Given the emphasis on the role of individuals in this paper, the description and analysis of the historical and structural forces prevailing at each conjuncture is correspondingly light. However, in each case, it is shown how individual agency can produce significant and durable cultural change.

Originality/value - Theoretical paradigms of international cultural influence dominant in recent decades, notably ‘cultural imperialism’, have discouraged attention to particular persons. With their emphasis on objective historical and structural forces, such paradigms have swamped individuals in determinism and denied their agency. This paper strives for some balance between structure and agency.

Key words - Americanisation, Australia, brewing, modernisation, franchising

Paper type - Research paper

From the beginning of European settlement, the development of Australia has taken place in the shadow of the United States. Already in the colonial era, before either country had much sense of a national culture, the U.S. (usually referred to by the more mythical term “America”) had become an established reference point for all kinds of human endeavour. For example, even before a sod was turned in the founding of the southern city of Adelaide, in 1837, one of colonial governors critics bewailed, “Oh, had we but a Yankee surveyor to help us, all would be well”. (Dutton and Elder, 1991, p. 194) The gold rush of the 1850s brought immigrants, technologies and products from the U.S., but also increased the diffusion of democratic ideas in the lead-up to Federation in 1901 (Bell and Bell, 1993), so that “America remained the standard of modernity” into the twentieth century (White, 1981, p. 51). However, there has also been a longstanding critical discourse of resistance against “Americanisation”, coming at some stages from Anglophile conservatives, such as long-serving post-War Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, and other times, cultural nationalists on the Left (White, 1980).

The most influential and durable manifestation of the latter has been the “cultural imperialism” thesis of the 1970s and 1980s, exemplified by Humphrey Mc Queen’s *Australia’s Media Monopolies*, which he says are actually “not Australian. They serve the interests of U.S. Imperialism”. (McQueen,

1977, p.6) The central proposition of the cultural imperialism thesis is that the culture in general, and media in particular, of the U.S. is imposed upon subject nations like Australia, as a deliberate ideological strategy to overcome resistance to the economic and military purposes of the U.S. Thus, the international news, film and television programs, and advertising campaigns emanating from the U.S. are seen as instrumental in bringing about a society amenable to the marketing of U.S. goods and services, and the stabilising of its strategic interests. In this view, it is impersonal forces – all-powerful cultural products and practices, with economic and military organisations, the corporations and the Pentagon, standing behind them - which enables the U.S. to exert its influence. However, the social mediation through which the influence is articulated from one country to another, that is, its human agents, is not theorised as part of the picture. Similarly, the influence, being ideological, is theoretically inferred in this perspective, rather than being empirically demonstrated, particularly via denunciatory concepts such as “consumerism”.

By 1991, it became possible to begin to put this basically Cold War worldview into some perspective, as John Tomlinson did with his argument that, *inter alia*, the cultural imperialism thesis was too nebulous to be a theory at all, and that it was really a kind of critical discourse, not even about capitalism as such, but about modernity (Tomlinson, 1991). He suggests that we think instead in terms of “cultural globalisation”, which supersedes the idea that one national culture is deliberately imposing itself upon the rest, and rather, envisages “complex connectivity” between nations which are all experiencing global modernity together, however unequally (Tomlinson, 1999). This more open perspective on cultural influences between nations has given rise to work which accepts the globalisation phenomenon in its complexity, including the role of individual agency, and is more empirically-grounded (Sinclair, 2007 and 2012).

In the era of globalisation, both capital and labour are seen to be “deterritorialised”, or cut loose from their nations of origin. Corporate investment comes from multiple sources and crosses borders with ease; so do persons: business expatriates, foreign students and academics, retirees, and tourists, and with rather more difficulty, immigrants, refugees, exiles, and “guestworkers” (Appadurai, 1990). Yet while we think of this movement of peoples as characteristic of the global era, it is not at all a new phenomenon, and as suggested above, it has been relatively neglected in accounts of how cultural influence has been mediated from one place to another, at least within neomarxist perspectives like cultural imperialism.

Yet, nor is there much guidance to be had from the nonmarxist literature. Robert Park, an American sociologist of the 1930s, noted the “wider horizons” of the immigrant, and modernisation theorists of the post-World War II era such as Everett Rogers valorised the outsider’s “cosmopolitan” perspective as a motive factor in generating social change (Rogers, 1962, p. 147). There is an abundant research literature in the management field on entrepreneurship, which seeks to understand individual behaviour relative to resources and opportunities, but this is ‘stratified, eclectic and divergent’ and suffers from “an ill-defined paradigm” (Murphy and Welsch, 2006, p.13. It includes some work on immigrant entrepreneurs, but this is limited to “ethnic” entrepreneurs in the U.S. (Fregetto, 2004).

This paper explores some cases of how international cultural influence can be mediated by individuals, particularly those whose birth and upbringing, education or other experience overseas has enabled them to see opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship not evident to others. This is examined in the particular context of the “Americanisation” of culture in Australia, where “America” represents the archetype of modernity, and “culture”, means the whole complex of practices and institutions identified with the emergence of “consumer society”, such as marketing, branding, and franchising. The paper focuses on three historical stages at which particular persons have introduced innovations that have provided the basis for the subsequent development of different kinds of consumer industries. Firstly, there is the case of the Foster brothers, Americans who first produced the eponymous iced lager in the boom years of the 1880s. The second moment is between the World Wars, when the Railways Commissioner in the State of Victoria, Harold Clapp, brought modern innovations to food marketing and tourism. Finally, there is the era of the “multinational corporation” in the late 1960s, when fast-food franchising first comes to Australia.

In the beginning was the wort: Foster’s

Two brothers from New York who made a brief intervention in Melbourne’s brewing industry in the 1880s not only established Foster’s Lager as a brand, but ultimately, with the international success of that brand, gave their name to one of Australia’s largest globally active corporations of recent decades, the former Fosters Group. William M. and Ralph R. Foster arrived in Melbourne in 1886, together

with a Mr. Sieber, a German American brewer, and Frank A. Rider, a refrigeration engineer, also from New York. They brought with them all the equipment they needed to establish a “very modern”, state-of-the-art brewery in suburban Collingwood, then “the brewing capital of the nation” (Dunstan, 1987, p. 18), which was specifically set up to brew lager beer, a relatively light, bottom-fermented beer made to be drunk cold, as distinct from the traditional top-fermented, more dense ales, drunk at room temperature, as in Britain (Deutsher, 1999). German in origin, *lager-bier* had become popular in the U.S. during the 1860s (Symons, 1982).

The Germans at the Gambinus Brewery, also in Collingwood, and the Cohn Brothers in provincial Bendigo were already making lager in 1885, using German equipment, and there were importers in Melbourne bringing in bottled lagers from Germany and the U.S. (Wilson and Gourvish, 1998). So, the Foster brothers were not the first to be brewing this “beer of the future”, or as the *Australian Brewers’ Journal* predicted it to become, “the drink of Australia”. However, they knew they were at the brink of a shift in taste, and were able to press the advantages they had in having a product well-adapted to local conditions, and the marketing needed to fulfil the prophecy. The beer was launched (the barrels were “rolled out”) in the summer, on 1 February 1889, and as a lure to increase distribution, every pub which took it was given a free supply of ice. However, the sensation made by Foster’s Lager prompted the bottled lager importers to retaliate by drastically dropping the price of their product. The Foster brothers in turn successfully lobbied to have import duties on lager raised by State Parliament. Yet, with this achieved, there was the most surprising turn of events – after little more than nine months of having their new beer on the market, the Fosters sold out entirely to a local syndicate, a public company formed as the Foster Lager Brewing Company Limited. After settlement, the brothers quit their house in Melbourne’s first suburb, Fitzroy, and returned to the U.S., and “were never heard of again”. (Dunstan, 1987, p. 18)

All this narrative is more the stuff of legend, a myth of origin, rather than historical scholarship. The definitive source, as cited, is Keith Dunstan’s *The Amber Nectar*, published in 1987, an official history of what was then, and is again now called, Carlton and United Breweries. Dunstan’s main primary source for the early period is the *Australian Brewers’ Journal*, and since secondary sources published subsequent to Dunstan’s work largely just plagiarise him, the trail has grown cold and nothing more has been turned up on the mysterious Foster brothers. So, their motivation in coming to Australia, and the reason for their bailing out, are both just matters of speculation, although they appear to have sold the brewery at a loss, and in continuing financial and management difficulties which State government protection had not resolved (Dunstan, 1987). It seems plausible to conclude that they had come intent on opening up a market in Melbourne for the new style of beer, exploiting the technology already developed in their own country and in Germany, but that they simply cut their losses when this proved more difficult than they had thought.

Yet however short was their sojourn and however frustrated were their attempts to profit from introducing their modern brew to the Marvellous Melbourne of the 1880s, the brothers from New York left an exceptional legacy for the brewing industry in Australia, and the identity it went on to establish for itself in the world. Foster’s Lager continued to be a popular brew during the depression of the 1890s, so that the Foster Brewing Company Pty Ltd, as it became known in 1897, was one of the several metropolitan breweries, albeit the smallest, which consolidated the industry, first by forming a cartel in 1903, and subsequently by merging as Carlton and United Breweries Pty Ltd (CUB) in 1907. Foster’s original brewery was closed in 1908, but the lager continued to be brewed at CUB’s Victoria Brewery so as to meet popular demand, including from the distant States of Western Australia and Queensland (Dunstan, 1987). Even in an era when beer was still very much a local product, Foster’s Lager had gained some interstate appeal, and it was probably this that allowed the brand to survive the merger. Previously, Victoria Brewery had developed its own lager to compete with Foster’s, “Brewed by an Expert Brought specially from America”, as they advertised it, but this brand was evidently replaced by Foster’s (Quoted in Symons, 1982, p.105).

Carlton and United Breweries became a public company in 1913, and shored up its dominant position in Melbourne with the continued acquisition of pubs, thus vertically integrating brewing with retailing via exclusive outlets, the “tied house” system which endured for decades. CUB also bought out other brewers, not only in Victoria, but interstate, a trend which accelerated after World War II. Yet as Australia moved into a more modern corporate era, CUB itself was bought out entirely in 1983 by the pastoral company Elders IXL, which then went on to acquire major brewing companies and retail distribution outlets in the UK, Canada and the U.S., renaming itself Foster’s Brewing Group in 1990. Under this name, the 1990s saw major acquisitions of interstate breweries, and further

international expansion with the opening up of the group's own breweries in China, India and Vietnam (Carlton United Breweries, 2006).

However, a change in direction was signalled in 1996, with the purchase of a prominent Australian wine company, Mildara Blass. In 2001, Foster's dropped the word "Brewing" from its name, and merged Mildara Blass with a major U.S. acquisition, Beringer Wine Estates. It continued to reposition itself as "a pure multi-beverage organisation" with the sale of its pub interests, once the basis of its market dominance, over 2003 and 2004, and then in 2005, with its takeover of Southcorp, itself an Australian-based but international wine corporation (Fosters Group, 2006).

Yet while the Group might have thought it had outgrown Foster's Lager as a brand, that underestimates the crucial role of the brand in enabling the corporation to achieve the global standing that it enjoyed at that time, and indeed, plays down the brand's actual value as such. In the 1960s, the then CUB was obliged to modernise its branding strategies when its decades-long monopoly in the home State of Victoria was challenged by the entry of Courage Breweries from the UK. In 1966, for the first time since the introduction of television a decade before, CUB launched a television advertising campaign in which its different beers were each given their own identity: at this time, Foster's was "the distinct beer with some feminine appeal". (Carlton United Breweries, 2006)

In the 1970s, at the same time as CUB was beginning to breach interstate beer monopolies and build its brands nationally, making Foster's the leading national brand by 1977, it was also exposed to film audiences in the UK in the popular Australian comedy *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* ("Fosters – it's Australian ...", 2006). Interestingly, the company was reported at the time to be reluctant to see its product so associated with the low-class "ockerism" of the era (Crawford, 2008), but later was to claim how the film "made Foster's a household word in Britain and the biggest beer import in UK's history" (*The Age*, 2003). Meanwhile, from 1972, CUB was using sports sponsorship and celebrity endorsement to introduce Foster's to the U.S., the country from which it had first come (Fosters Group, 2006).

By the 1980s, CUB had lost its inhibitions about giving Foster's an ocker brand identity, using actor-comedian Paul Hogan, prior to his days as *Crocodile Dundee* and association with Tourism Australia, in the launch of a draught version of Foster's in the UK, saying it "Tastes like an angel cryin' on yer tongue" ("Fosters – it's Australian ...", 2006). Sports sponsorship continued to be a major marketing tool, both nationally, with the Foster's Melbourne Cup, and internationally, with Formula One Grand Prix around the world (Fosters Group, 2006). Further international promotion followed in the wake of the various overseas acquisitions, licensing and distribution arrangements which the company made in its drive to "Fosterise the world" (Speedy, 2006a, p. 21), notably with Scottish & Newcastle Group in the UK, Miller in the U.S., and Molson in Canada. By 2006, the Foster's Group was claiming Foster's Lager to be the world's third largest-selling, and widely-distributed beer brand, available in 150 countries (Fosters Group, 2006). Ironically, for the sake of truth in advertising, the brand had to be repositioned internationally from "Australia's favourite beer" to "Australia's most famous beer", as it had dropped back since the 1970s to just one per cent of the domestic beer market in Australia (Simpson, 2005).

Indeed, subsequent events suggest that Foster's Lager eventually became a much more valuable asset to the Group as a global brand than as a manufactured product. In April, 2006, the Group announced the total sale of the European brand rights to Scottish & Newcastle. Foster's Group explained that the rate of royalties which it was earning from its set licensing deal with Scottish & Newcastle (£37 million annually) was worth less to them than the one-off sale of the rights (for £750 million). The proceeds were intended to repay debt, the Group said at the time, (presumably as incurred in its recent major wine acquisitions), and affirmed that it would still be free to market its other beer brands in Europe (Speedy, 2006b). The Group also made it clear that it was retaining the rights to license and distribute Foster's Lager in the rest of the world, and later announcements in 2006 made it evident that it had become more profitable for them to trade in the rights to the brand than it was to actually brew the beer – it sold the last of its breweries in China, and also those in Vietnam and India. It retained the rights to the brand in China and Vietnam, but sold them outright in India to its then U.S. distributor, SABMiller (Speedy, 2006a).

To round out the Foster's story: an eventful 2011 saw the Foster's Group spin off its unprofitable wine business, and relaunch itself as Carlton United Brewers, but only then to succumb to a takeover by the aforementioned SABMiller (Williams, 2011). This new owner is the second largest global brewing and bottling corporation, originating in South Africa, headquartered in London, and bearing the name of the iconic U.S. beer brand Miller, which it took over in 2002 ("SABMiller: About Us",

2014). Such takeovers of national brands like Foster's and Miller are clearly symptomatic of globalisation rather than Americanisation, as well as a reminder that not even the U.S. is immune from globalisation. Foster's retains its brand identity as being "Australian for beer" (Quoted in Speedy, 2006b), but this positioning seems to work best in the UK, the brand's largest market, where it appeals to entrenched British ideas of Australian-ness.

"The Spirit of Progress": Sir Harold Clapp

Harold Winthrop Clapp (1875-1952, Sir Harold after 1941) was a committed moderniser who had a particular impact on food marketing and the development of the transport and tourism industries in Australia, but who was also influential in a much wider sense for the mass market methods of distribution and sales which he established. As Chief Commissioner of the Victorian Railways from 1920 until 1939, Clapp was able to deploy a key sector of infrastructure in the south-eastern State so as to facilitate a major social transition, from pre-War subsistence living to the incipient consumer society of the 1920s.

Although born in Victoria's capital city of Melbourne, Clapp was profoundly formed by an American background. Both of his parents were American-born, the father, Francis Boardman Clapp, having come to Victoria in the gold rush years. After becoming involved with stagecoach services, Clapp Senior went on to found the Melbourne Omnibus Company, which in turn became the basis of Melbourne's sophisticated cable tram network, adopting the cable technology from San Francisco. Clapp Senior remained as Managing Director until his company became absorbed into the public Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board after 1916 (Angelico, 2006).

Very much his father's son, Harold Clapp went from a private school education to an apprenticeship in engineering, and then to his first job, with the Brisbane Tramway Company, in distant Queensland, in which his father was a shareholder. Clapp oversaw the transition from horse to electric power, and is credited with having driven that city's first electric tram in 1897. In 1901, he left for the U.S. to take up a position with General Electric, which involved him in the building of the subway in New York (Belbin and Burke, 1982). Thus began a career in urban electrification and transcontinental railway management which took him to posts in California and the mid-West. After nearly twenty years in the U.S., and when in line for the presidency of Southern Pacific Railroad at £35,000 a year, he chose instead for his own reasons to accept £5,000 a year to return to Melbourne as Chief Commissioner of the Victorian Railways ("Rebel in the Railways", 2005).

In an era in which most people had no private cars but travelled by public transport; when the railways formed the main link between the cities and the regions, but were beginning to be threatened commercially by competition from road transport; and when the processing and distribution of primary produce was relatively undeveloped, Clapp saw how the railways could profit from bringing the producers into more direct contact with consumers. He soon drew attention to his arrival back with his first "Eat More Fruit" campaign, with the rationale that "If the demand for fruit can be stimulated, more will be required, consequently more will be grown, and so more transportation will be demanded" (Quoted in Symons, 1982, pp. 124-125). This mission, to sell as well as carry produce, meant that Clapp had to extend the scope of the (Victorian) railways activities well beyond their technical management, although that was certainly not neglected. Clapp was so much a publicist and entrepreneur that it is easily forgotten that he was, after all, an engineer. He soon completed the electrification of the suburban lines, and expanded and upgraded the State network (Adam-Smith, 1981). At a much later stage, following a trip to the U.S. in 1935, he imported equipment from there and adopted design concepts which enabled the Railways to build, under his personal supervision, the first steel-enclosed, air-conditioned, and streamlined passenger train in the Southern Hemisphere, the thoroughly modern and tellingly-named 'Spirit of Progress' (*The Victorian Railways News Letter*, 1958).

Clapp preached to his "fellow railwaymen" that "The aim and ambition of everyone of us in the railway family is to GET THE BUSINESS [sic]". (Quoted in Adam-Smith, 1980, p.101) Consistent with this, he brought the Railway's advertising activities in-house, it formerly having been leased to a private company McGarry, 1980), and took a personal interest in devising slogans such as "Citrus fruit is nature's way To keep you fit for work and play" (Quoted in Adam-Smith, 1981, p 2), and "Everyday – in Everyway RAISINS [sic]". (Quoted in Fiddian, 2003, p.27). On one occasion, Clapp admitted, "Of course it sounds silly, but it sells". (Quoted in "Rebel in the Railways", 2005, pp.104-105) As well as advertising with banners, hoardings, posters and pamphlets at railway stations, Clapp took up the new medium of radio with weekly talks, after 1925 (Adam-Smith, 1981). He was not just

in step with , but setting the pace for the historical process by which advertising became, by 1930, what Raymond Williams called “an organised system of commercial information and persuasion, as part of the modern distributive system in conditions of large-scale capitalism”. (Williams, 1980, p.179)

While Clapp continued by various means to promote fresh primary produce, particularly in times of glut, such as when “Peach Week” became “Peach Fortnight”, he went on to involve the Railways in light food processing and retailing (“value adding”). The Sunraysia district, with its soldier settlement farms producing grapes and citrus fruits on lots irrigated by the Chaffey brothers, the Canadians from California (Wescott, 2006), would have reminded Clapp of his own time in California, and since the line to Mildura was the longest in the State, he could see the benefits in promoting citrus and, not grapes, but raisins (Fiddian, 2003). Consistent with later attempts to bring primary production and secondary industry together, Clapp’s strategy was for the railways to carry the produce at a loss, but profit from higher freights on manufactured goods being carried back from the city to farmers made prosperous by the sale of their produce (Adam-Smith, 1980).

Thus, when the railways opened its own bakery in 1923, it was distinguished not so much by the meat pies which it helped to make into a national dish, but by the raisin bread. Backed by what Clapp himself called “propaganda”, and with the innovation of machine-wrapping of the bread, the first in the State to offer this, by 1926 raisin bread was so popular that not only the railways’ bakery but scores of other bakeries throughout Melbourne were making it, and still do. Similarly, Clapp gave a fillip to milk consumption by selling “pasteurised milk in sealed bottles” at railways “refreshment rooms” (Symons, 1982, p.125), a literal commodification of milk which added the essentially modern qualities of standardisation, hygiene and convenience to a product which in those days was most often fetched from the local dairy in one’s own tin billycan. As well, icecream was made a feature of train travel. As to the citrus fruit, Clapp opened a fruit juice stall at Flinders Street Station, the city terminus for all the suburban lines, which was a total innovation. As Michael Symons describes it in his *One Continuous Picnic: A History of Eating in Australia*:

Behind the counter of white vitrolite, with black edging, stood a line of 10 uniformed attendants, each at her Sunkist fruit juice extractor, the first in the country. Customers purchased fourpenny tickets at a cabinet, presented them at the counter and selected orange or lemon. The attendant cut the fruit, squeezed the juice and added sugar, syrup and soda from an American-looking fountain. (Symons, 1982, p. 126)

Again, this was a great success, with 27 such stalls five years later becoming the biggest outlet for the State’s citrus growers. Poultry, eggs and meat were a different matter, however: rather than freight them in from producers, the railways had its own poultry farm and butchery, the latter being supplied by usual wholesale channels (Symons, 1982, p. 126). By the end of the 1920s, Clapp had integrated the fruit and juice stalls, bakery and butchery, along with refreshment rooms, bookstalls and other platform services into the “Refreshment Services Branch”, not to mention the railways’ own advertising agency, as mentioned, and its guest house at the ski resort of Mt Buffalo (McGarry, 1980).

Clapp’s strategies as a moderniser went beyond the consolidation of these various enterprises into the one State organisation dedicated to “GET THE BUSINESS” from private road transport competitors. Firstly, he sought to give a general stimulus to trade between country and city with an annual special rail service which began in 1922, the Victorian National Resources Development Train, which soon became known as the “reso train”. This train provided first-class accommodation for city business people wanting to spend a week visiting rural projects. Then, in 1924, the Better Farming Train was inaugurated. This was not only an agricultural show on wheels, displaying agricultural science and farm technologies, but also came to include a “domestic economy” carriage demonstrating household skills, a mothercraft and child welfare carriage, and another again for public health (Harrigan, 1962). In this way, Clapp was putting the railways to the purpose of what is still called “agricultural extension” in the U.S., specifically implementing an approach which post-World War II theorists would later advocate as the “diffusion of innovations”, a deliberate strategy for achieving “modernization” (Rogers, 1962). Similarly, the rationalisation of child-rearing practices which the train brought to rural women gave further reach to the role of government in this era in “producing the modern model baby” (Reiger, 1985, p.138).

Clapp’s further contribution to modernising babies and child-rearing was the establishment of a crèche at the central terminal of Flinders Street Station, where mothers, brought into the city by rail to shop, could leave their children in the care of professional staff (Harrigan, 1962), and fittingly,

surrounded by the modernist interior design of Stephenson and Turner. These were architects specialising in health facilities, but who later, towards the end of Clapp's term of office in 1939, were also commissioned to install a massive mural featuring the Spirit of Progress in the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, an entity operated by the Railways until 1959 (Goad *et al.*, 2004). Another huge mural featured at the then country terminal, Spencer Street Station, which, with its depiction of the century of transport to 1935, also very much reflected both the modernising mission and modernist taste in public art of the Chief Commissioner (Adam-Smith, 1980).

Clapp was a moderniser in labour relations as well, explicitly on the dominant U.S. model of the time. While he had his rhetoric about the "railway family", he saw himself as its patriarch, and resented union challenges to his attempts to implement "scientific management" techniques, or "Taylorism", the labour management theory behind Fordism. Clapp sought to expand his personal commitment to Taylorism within the Railways by sending senior officials to see it in practice in the U.S. (Butler-Bowden, 1991), although this was not unique – "progressives" in Australia had been actively interested in Taylorism and other modernising ideas of their U.S. counterparts since before the War (Bell and Bell, 1993). More benignly, because Clapp evidently valued self-improvement as well as efficiency in his workers, he encouraged them to study, and set up a Victorian Railways Institute, with its own library, sporting and social facilities (Angelico, 2006). Against opposition, he also opened up employment in the Railways to hundreds of women. His biographer, Patsy Adam-Smith, came from a family of 'station mistresses' (1980, 104).

As well as Taylorist efficiency, Clapp was imbued with several other values and beliefs which were giving an ideological foundation to capitalism in the U.S. at the time. His commitment to sales, service, and showmanship will already be evident, but these were fused with notions of personal uplift, in that characteristically "American" version of the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism first formulated by Benjamin Franklin and popularised in the 1930s by Dale Carnegie. Clearly, Clapp saw individual moral virtue as the path to commercial success when he wrote to staff:

A pleasing personality is worth more than money in the bank. The first step is the abolition of selfishness and complacency. Replace these with consideration of others and cheerfulness. And always observe the rules of cleanliness and neatness. This will help to improve railway salesmanship. (Quoted in Adam-Smith, 1980, p. 104).

The belief here in cleanliness, which for him was "almost ... a religious cult" (Belbin and Burke, 1982, p. 110) earned him the public nickname of "Clever Mary", after a brand of household cleanser widely advertised at the time, because for all his efforts to improve the Railways, Clapp was not a popular figure. He himself had more "pep and hustle" ("The Story of Sir Harold", 1975, p.86) than "a pleasing personality", and his green Stetsons and the American accent he never lost marked him out as a "Yank" (Adam-Smith, 1980) amongst the people and the press of Victoria, which labelled him as "a 'megalomaniac', or a person who thinks big, especially of himself" (Angelico, 2006, p. 7). Ironically, since he was applying the methods of capitalist competition to a state instrumentality, he was also denounced as a "socialist" ("Rebel in the Railways", 2005). This epithet was partly because of the wide diversification of activities under the Railways Refreshment Services Branch (as summarised above, plus the crèche at Flinders Street Station), which his critics saw as properly the domain of private leases, if indeed they were to be associated with the railways at all. Yet it was also because of his aggression in confronting private enterprise, at one stage going so far as to initiate a railways bus fleet to compete with a private service on the route between Melbourne and the second major city of Geelong (Butler-Bowden, 1991). Another time, questions were asked in parliament about Clapp having threatened that his private road transport competitors "wouldn't have a feather to fly with" by the time he was finished with them" (Adam-Smith, 1980, p.101).

It would be easy to dismiss Clapp as a "booster", in the style of the self-promoting small-town businessmen's brotherhood of Sinclair Lewis' novel of the time, *Babbitt*, but although he shared their firm belief, which has become today's conservative orthodoxy, that social development is generated by commerce, he had none of their smug provincialism. Rather Clapp's modernising outlook included a truly national vision, evident in two of the fields in which he intervened actively in his later years, namely tourism and railway unification. Given the intrinsic value of domestic tourism to the railways, especially in the era before buses and cars, the railways had taken a series of initiatives in tourist development well before the Victorian Government Tourist Bureau which Clapp inherited (Harrigan, 1962; White, 2005). While Clapp applied the same vigour to promoting tourism as he did to primary

production in Victoria (Fiddian, 2003), such as popularising the chalet at Mount Buffalo which the railways took over in 1924 (Adam-Smith, 1981), he saw tourism beyond this, in a national context: Clapp was a nation-builder as well as a moderniser.

In a report to the Commonwealth in 1927, the Chairman of the Victorian Railways Betterment and Publicity Board, Charles Holmes, together with T. E. Moorhouse of the joint Commonwealth-State Development and Migration Commission, argued for a national coordinating agency and “greater zest in salesmanship” in promoting domestic tourism on a national basis, and as well, for circulating “propaganda”, mainly through offices in the “English Speaking world”, to attract tourists from overseas. The reso train was mentioned as a model for domestic tourism, while on the overseas front, reciprocal farmers’ tours and group tours of industrialists were envisaged (Davidson and Spearritt, 2000, p. 77). It is difficult not to see Clapp’s hand in this, and not surprising that when the Australian National Travel Association (ANTA) was subsequently established in 1929, its offices were set up in the Victorian Railways building in Flinders Street, with Clapp as Chairman, a position he held until his death in 1952, and Holmes as “chief executive officer”, until 1957 (Davidson and Spearritt, 2000). The ANTA overseas offices, which were opened during the 1930s and represented a wide range of Australian interests for a time, were subsequently absorbed with the onset of World War II into the Department of Information, one of whose directors wrote of Clapp as “the prime instigator and founder” of ANTA (Quoted in Vickery, 2003, p.149). The Melbourne office meanwhile devoted itself to “promotion and propaganda”, commissioning posters from the likes of popular commercial artists Percy Trompf and James Northfield, and inspired by the successful *National Geographic* from the U.S., bringing out the monthly magazine *Walkabout*. ANTA was eventually succeeded by the Australian Tourist Commission in 1967 (Davidson and Spearritt, 2000).

As well as having made such a durable contribution to modern nation-building with tourism, Clapp was instrumental in bringing about the ultimate unification of the railways of the nation. Clapp left the Victorian Railways with the advent of the War in 1939, and held various executive posts in aircraft production and land transport under the Commonwealth, before being asked in 1944 to report on railway unification. Exasperated by the “state-mindedness” which had led to three different rail gauges in the five States, and so prevented the development of a national rail system, Clapp characteristically argued in favour of rail unification, rather than road transport development, both for defence and for economic reasons. The Commonwealth accepted his recommendations in principle, but there was resistance amongst the States, so that it was not until 1962, a decade after Clapp’s death, that it became possible to travel between Melbourne and Sydney without changing at Albury, the Victoria-New South Wales bordertown (Adam-Smith, 1980 and 1981; Harrigan, 1962).

Clapp was well-placed to bear out Marx’s dictum that, “The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future”, in that his experience in the U.S., and the values and beliefs he acquired from his American background, enabled him to see opportunities for innovation, and to be sustained by a guiding ideology in pursuing them, not apparent or available to others without such a background. However, he could only capitalise on his individual qualities and fulfil the prophecy to the extent that there were actual or potential similarities between the U.S. and Australia. Symons suggests that Clapp had arrived having seen in California how publicity could be used to clear the glut of agricultural production created by irrigation, and that that publicity had to emphasise “family goodness”, in an age of prohibition in the U.S. and the corresponding sentiment of “wowsersism” in the ascendant in Australia, seen for instance in six o’clock closing (1982, p.129). Thus, it was wholesome citrus fruits, raisins and milk rather than wine grapes which suited the era. The discovery of vitamins before the War made both national populations receptive to the idea that food should be good for you, and that this was especially important for children.

As well, political conditions in Australia favoured Clapp’s mode of promotion. For all the personal criticism he bore, Clapp’s support of primary production would have won favour with rural interests, including the government-supported “single desk” marketing boards, and the two Country Party premiers under whom he served. More than fruit, Symons identifies the promotion of milk as being of enduring consequence, not just in building a local dairy-based consumer culture in Victoria, but in providing the basis upon which the overseas food corporations then beginning their operations in Australia could develop national markets (1982, p. 130). Cadbury’s advertised the “glass and a half of full cream milk in every half pound” of their Dairy Milk chocolate from 1928, “one of the all-time greats of British advertising” (Cadbury Schweppes, 2006); Peter’s icecream, a company established in Melbourne by yet another American, was “the health food of a nation”; Nestlé (or Nestles as it was

then called) was claiming as early as 1914 that its condensed milk was “the best substitute for the mother’s milk” (Quoted in Symons, 1982, p. 130); Kellogg’s introduced their cornflakes, made to be consumed with milk, to Sydney in the 1920s; while Kraft processed cheddar cheese was brought to Melbourne in 1926 by Fred Walker, a local food manufacturer whose greater claim to fame was the development of Vegemite (Symons, 1982, pp. 132-134). In all, as Symons concludes:

Clapp was at the top of a powerful public service elite, consciously manipulating an entire population. He arose when the crisis of world war had welded the modern State apparatus ... for keeping the troops in line. The new “mass society” flocking twice daily beneath Clapp’s Flinders Street clocks was to be moulded into a nation of consumers. (Symons, 1982, p. 128).

Thus, Clapp’s significance is not so much in the particular forms of consumption which he introduced, such as the regimented fruit juice bars, bottled milk, or packaged raisin bread, but more in the fostering of a move to mass consumption in general. In this regard, his mission was very much in accord with the manufacturers, retailers, and other “captains of consciousness” in the U.S. during his era, who sought to “Fordize American business and industry” (Quoted in Ewen, 1976, p. 24) with a “general strategy to consumerize the worker”, especially through advertising, as Stuart Ewen describes it (1976, p. 28). On the production side, the strategy involved lowering costs with efficiencies achieved via Taylorism and the application of Fordist mass-scale production, so that, on the consumption side, workers could be paid better so as to afford to buy the manufactured goods which were advertised to them. For many theorists of capitalism, this is seen as a definitive transition which gave capitalism its form for most of the last century, when Fordism was “the centre of modernism” (Murray, 1989). Clapp was one of the engineers of this transition in Australia, or as an erudite railway shunter’s graffiti put it, “Kant on pure reason is nothing compared to Clapp on pure raisin”. (Adam-Smith, 1980, p.110)

Have a nice day: the food franchise era

By the late 1960s, Australia was well on the way to becoming an “affluent society” (Galbraith, 1958). Post-War economic development, migration and the baby boom stimulated suburbanisation of the cities, facilitated by widespread car ownership. More women in the workforce gave families relatively greater disposable income, while the arrival of television in 1956 and the influx of U.S. advertising agencies shortly thereafter created an unprecedented medium for marketing all kinds of goods and services, at the same time as new forms of retail distribution, such as the supermarket, spread through the suburbs. As well, there was franchising, which, like the supermarket, was a business form first developed in the U.S., and from which franchisers were beginning to look for international opportunities around this time. In fact, Australians were already familiar with the franchised manufacturing of the product that has since become the essential symbol of American cultural influence – Coca-Cola. Similarly, the car dealerships from which they bought their Fords and (General Motors) Holdens, and the “service stations” which sold the petrol for them, distributed by the “seven sisters” of the international oil industry (Sampson, 1975), were franchises.

However, these were only the “first generation” of franchise operations: the second generation was led by Kentucky Fried Chicken which opened up its first Australian store in Sydney in 1968 (Belin, 1973). Other “fast-food” franchises soon followed, notably McDonald’s, which has become closely identified with the whole concept and logic of this kind of operation, as “McDonaldization”, basically the application of Fordism to convenience food (Ritzer, 1993). The present study focuses on these businesses, but it should be noted that franchising has become one of the major modes of corporate expansion across many fields, both large-scale global businesses like hotels (Hilton, Intercontinental chains), and relatively small but national ones, like the Baker’s Delights, Flight Centres and Snooze stores which make one shopping mall so much like any other in Australia today, not to mention the 7-Eleven on every downtown city block: indeed, franchise signage gives the modern, global city its characteristic look and feel.

The opening up of a fast-food franchising operation requires a prior judgment to be made about the potential market for the kind of food envisaged, as well as the recruitment of a suitable manager. In the case of Kentucky Fried Chicken, which had developed as a franchise operation in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s and opened in Australia in 1968, market entry was decided on the basis of research which showed that Australians spent less than half as much on food cooked outside the home as did Americans at that time, and calculated how many stores and how quickly they were to be opened up accordingly. This clearly was deliberate, strategic “Americanisation”, though commercially rather than

ideologically motivated. A judgement was also made about what proportion of stores, and in which locations, were to be franchised, and which held by the corporation. The “free-standing, image-building store” with the signature red and white striped roof was found to be “acceptable” to Australians when first introduced from the U.S.; similarly, the actual cooking equipment was similar to that used in the U.S. (Powis, 1972).

As for the manager, this was Bob Lapointe, actually a Canadian rather than an “American”, who had met “Colonel” Harland Sanders, the founding father of Kentucky Fried Chicken (known since 1991 as KFC) in Toronto, where he had had a number of KFC stores. He moved to Australia in 1967 to set up KFC as Managing Director, and as a major franchisee. He did the same with Pizza Hut from 1970, and went on to develop a lifetime career in franchising, most recently with Lone Star Steakhouse and Saloon (Franchise Council of Australia, 2003), but Lapointe is best seen as a career franchiser, not an Americaniser. That is, his record would indicate that he has pursued franchise development as a mode of business in which he has experienced success, not as a cultural project. The success of that mode of business, however, is consequential for cultural change, such as increased frequency of eating food cooked outside the home, the kind of food that that is, and the rituals of “dining in” at franchised outlets called “restaurants”. These have changed the very meaning of the word, to include the kind of place which has no table setting or service, and where you eat with your hands. Although we are talking here of KFC, Ritzer’s concept of McDonaldisation clearly applies, that is, the application of the same thorough-going rationalisation which Max Weber saw to have characterised the spirit of capitalism. This rationalisation was made attractive in the advertising of the era which represented KFC and its competitors in terms of a modernity characterised by “newness, cleanliness, efficiency, conviviality, affordability and the centrality of the nuclear family” (Brailsford, 2003).

As for Colonel Sanders, he had actually sold out of the business in 1964, but has remained, even beyond his death in 1990, as the figurehead of a corporation variously owned at subsequent stages by PepsiCo, the tobacco company R J Reynolds, and subsequently by Yum! Brands, which claims to be the world’s largest food franchise corporation (KFC, 2006). Colonel Sanders had given his personal support to the Australian venture with a publicity visit in 1970 (*The Sun*, 1970).

The following year, McDonald’s opened its first Australian outlet in Sydney. In accordance with its policy in other foreign markets, McDonald’s “opted for local control and autonomy” by appointing an Australian, Peter Ritchie, as second in command to an experienced franchisee from the U.S., Donn Wilson. Ritchie had a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of NSW and a background in real estate, probably more relevant to food franchising than any restaurant experience. He took over from Wilson as Managing Director in 1974 (Love, 1986, p. 432). Interestingly, Ritchie was a committed Americaniser in his business orientation: “I always admired the U.S. approach to things”, he is quoted as saying, “American companies seemed more efficient and aggressive than Australian companies”. (Quoted in Love, 1986, p. 433)

However, as John Love argues in his *McDonald’s: Behind the Arches*, McDonald’s was sensitive to its American origins, which made the operation vulnerable to criticism not only for its efforts in bringing about “the American system” of eating, but also in circumstances such as a sustained campaign by the unions in favour of compulsory unionism. Eventually, Ritchie wore down such popular resistance, so that McDonald’s began to make a profit by the end of its first eight years here, slightly better than the average of its other overseas operations at that time (Love, 1986, p. 437). It is worth mentioning that Ritchie was succeeded by another Australian, Charles Bell, who had a legendary ascent through the company to become Australian Managing Director in 1993. Other Australian CEOs since have been Guy Russo, who also rose through the ranks, and more recently Peter Bush, who had a management background (Wealth Creator Magazine, 2006). Of these, Bell distinguished himself by becoming the first non-U.S. Chief Executive and President of McDonald’s International in 2004 although he died in 2005 (“Wannabe boss now McDonald’s head honcho”, 2004). Bob Lapointe of KFC also had a stint as President of KFC International (Franchise Council of Australia, 2003), suggesting a more “global” and less “imperial” model of the international management of these kinds of corporations might be developing.

Yet by no means were all the food franchise operations of the 1960s and 1970s connected to the internationalising US-based corporations of the era. A quite different case is presented by Taco Bill Mexican Restaurants Australia PL, which sold scores of franchises in the eastern States after an American immigrant, Bill Chilcote, opened the first restaurant on the Gold Coast in the country’s subtropical northeast in 1967, then worked his way south, with another launched in Sydney in 1970, eventually establishing his base in Melbourne in 1972 (Taco Bill, 2014). Chilcote had come from San

Diego, California, in 1955 to live on the Gold Coast and embrace its surfing subculture. He observed the lack of variety in eating options there at that time, and also a certain fondness for drinking beer. On this basis, he concluded that Australians would like to have Mexican food with their beer, as Americans did, and returned to the U.S. to investigate the production methods and acquire the basic equipment needed to make Mexican food (Chilcote, 2006). The cultural anomaly here, however, was that Americans were accustomed to eating Mexican food because they lived close to Mexico (indeed, not to forget a good part of the U.S. used to *be* Mexico until 1848) and it had been assimilated into the culture. However, Mexico was quite remote geographically and alien culturally to Australians: would Australians go for Mexican food nevertheless, because they were culturally close to Americans?

On returning to the Gold Coast with his corn-processing equipment, Chilcote would invite groups such as the Country Women's Association to try the Mexican food, and generally engage in local promotional activities. However, he soon found that his most enthusiastic clientele was amongst expatriate Americans around the country who sought him out, including the U.S. embassy in the distant capital of Canberra, whom he would supply via airfreight. The inherently more local restaurant business developed more slowly, but even there, both Chilcote and his successor in the company, Stan Teschke, also an American (Teschke, 2006), have attributed a significant role to the large number of secondary school teachers which Victorian and NSW State governments recruited from the U.S. in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and who were pleased to find their familiar Mexican food in Australia. Whereas McDonald's, KFC and the like deploy massive advertising campaigns through their agencies, Taco Bill, being extremely small-scale and local by comparison, has always handled what little advertising it does "in-house", and has relied on word-of-mouth to build its clientele. Evidently, the American expatriates, and especially the teachers, played a crucial intermediating role in introducing Mexican food to the students, families and other groups of Australians who now patronise Taco Bill, not so much the beer-drinkers Chilcote expected.

In further contrast to the market entry strategies consciously employed by global corporations like McDonald's and KFC, Chilcote claimed that he had not envisaged a franchise business developing when he arrived back in Australia with his taco-making capital equipment in 1967. Rather, the franchises developed through individuals who came to him and asked for him to set them up, so like the clientele, this has been an organic, grass-roots process, not the rolling out of a corporate business plan. The company makes a point of declaring itself to be an Australian-owned, fully-franchised company (Taco Bill, 2014), presumably to ensure there is no confusion with Taco Bell in the U.S., another of Yum! Brands extensive franchise operations. However, unlike Taco Bell, Taco Bill restaurants are true sit-down restaurants with table service, and each one is laid out and decorated individually by the franchisee.

Chilcote has said he named his company Taco Bill because his name was Bill, although he was certainly aware of Taco Bell already being in existence at that time. While he later sold out his interest in the company to Stan Teschke, he continued to rejoice in the identity of being Taco Bill, although the company's verbal association with Taco Bell, originally something of an in-joke, did become an embarrassment, mainly because, in Bill's own words, Taco Bell's food is 'shithouse' (Chilcote, 2006). Nonetheless, in spite of its late founder's personal distancing, and the rather random and risky development of the company itself, the case of Taco Bill provides an unusual illustration of how the U.S. food franchising model can be adapted in local markets, in this case by Americans, although there are many Australian-initiated examples as well. These would include national ones such as the chicken chain Red Rooster, as well as those concentrated more in a certain city or state, like Lord of the Fries in Melbourne. Indeed, with the expansive diversification and competitiveness of the Mexican food business in Australia, Taco Bill is now largely consolidated in and around Melbourne. Yet global or local, corporate or grass-roots, food and other franchised businesses are one of the most pervasive forms with which Australia's built environment is becoming Americanised: that is, made modern.

In his splendid history of the globalisation of Mexican food, *Planet Taco*, Jeffrey Pilcher credits Bill Chilcote with having been one of the first "pioneers" to establish a Mexican restaurant outside of the U.S., "the granddaddy of overseas restaurants" and also notes the significance of Taco Bill's early association with the surfing subculture (Pilcher, 2012). However, as just noted, the former national pre-eminence of Taco Bill in the Mexican food scene has been overtaken by competitors large and small, and also by changes in food fashion. Ostensibly "authentic" Mexican food is "cool" for urban hipsters, while Cal-Mex and Tex-Mex styles have become familiar to the mainstream. Symptomatic of the global era is Gomez y Guzman, a chain of franchised and company-owned Mexican restaurants being strategically developed not only in Australia, but across Asia, owned by a consortium of private

Conclusion

The Foster brothers in the colonial capitalist era; Harold Clapp between the Wars; and franchise entrepreneurs like Lapointe, Ritchie, Chilcote and Teschke in the late 1960s and early 1970s are all Americans, or American-experienced individuals who "made a difference" to the development of consumer industries in their time. However, even if their particular background gave them insights that others did not have into business opportunities and the potential for innovation, those opportunities and that potential were given to them by their time, not created out of nothing by the entrepreneurs themselves. In each case, a certain conjuncture of economic forces allowed these individuals to capitalise upon their American "know-how". While discontinuous, the three periods in which the entrepreneurs appear are each in their way crucial stages in the emergence of capitalist modernity: the two boom and bust eras of late nineteenth century industrialisation and of the decades between the World Wars, and the long post-World War II boom. The boom times at least presented favourable conditions for individuals who had learned new ways of making and selling things in the U.S. which they thought might take on in Australia, and enabled those prophesies to fulfil themselves. As Marx famously observed, men don't choose the circumstances under which they make their own history, but even so, some are in a better position than others to turn those circumstances to advantage.

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