

Single- and Multi-Ideology Marketing in the Province of Quebec in the Early 20th Century

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A lot of attention has been given to Nationalist ideology in the Canadian and Quebec marketing history. However, existing studies focus essentially on years starting from the Quiet Revolution, i.e. 1960, until today (Elkin, 1969; Elkin & Hill, 1968; Calantone & Picard, 1982). This is understandable since the Quiet Revolution (1960s-70s), Canadian society experienced drastic changes. The marketing history literature remains very limited before that period. A void persists regarding the influence of Canadian Nationalism ideologies in marketing strategies at the beginning of the 20th century. In counterpart, the Canadian and Quebec history literature, in general, is very rich on the topic of French vs. English nationalisms seeing the emergence and the evolution of Nationalism long before that time (Berger, 1969; Cook 1966; Moyles & Owram, 1988; Ignatieff, 1994; Levitt, 1972; Linteau & al., 1979; and Séguin 1997). We wish to specify at the outset that this paper is about the pre-Quiet Revolution Nationalism ideology, which does not carry the idea of Quebec secessionism province but rather the French and English Nationalism ideology that emerged from the conquest by England. This distinction is crucial because if one wishes to avoid mingling with two distinct, yet similarly labelled, historiographies.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the marketing strategies that manufacturers implemented in the province of Quebec where the French and English Canadian nationalist ideologies coexist. More specifically we investigate, with particular attention to ideologies, similarities and differences between marketing campaigns of manufacturers originating from English versus French Canada that were deployed at the beginning of the 20th century.

Our empirical context is the advertising of stoves and furnaces. It was selected for two main reasons. First, furnaces and stoves represent a vibrant market in Quebec at the time and advertising was abundant in both languages' publications. Second, the market was segmented and included some producers opting for differentiated products strategies. This is important because differentiated products, as opposed to cost leader products, typically command advertising strategies that are more likely to speak to ideological aspirations instead of prices.

Our examination relies on an analysis of three primary sources of data. First, we collected stoves and furnaces advertisements published by several manufacturers and

retailers in 22 English and French Quebec-based newspapers and magazines between 1900 and 1914, for a total of 3,422 ads. Second, we gathered six catalogs published and disseminated by French Canadian foundry owners. The catalogs provide information about stove and furnace models, descriptions, options, and sometimes prices. Third, we inventoried an exhaustive list of over 1,000 clients, their location, and their purchases, from general ledgers and from advertising to assess, as much as possible, buyers' social status, origin, and most likely ideological affiliation. Access to some foundries' general ledgers also informed us on the names, models and prices of stoves and furnaces produced.

From a method standpoint, we have identified and recorded all relevant stove and furnace ads published in our sample of newspapers, one by one. We then read them and, for each product, recorded an array of relevant information: the foundry's name, the name of the stoves or furnaces advertised, the newspaper's name and its geographical reach (local versus province-wide), the publication date, and the language (English or French). When an identical ad was repeated for a product in the same newspaper over a given year, we also recorded the number of appearances. Finally, we inventoried promotional slogans, descriptions and prices as, and if, they appeared. Product names, slogans, descriptions, publication language and geographical reach are the key indicators we used to identify the ideologies underlying a particular ad. The collected data was used to assess whether English Canadian and French Canadian manufacturers and retailers referred to the same ideologies when they developed advertising campaigns to sell stoves and furnaces to Quebec residents at the beginning of the 20th century.

Our analysis suggests that marketing strategies of foundries' owners-managers were far more elaborated than the "thin" existing literature posits thus far. Indeed, we document evidence that a multi-ideology framework mixing English and French nationalisms was used by French Canadian owner-managers in ads aimed at Quebecers identifying with either ideology. By contrast, English Canadian owner-managers developed advertising campaigns exhibiting references to a single ideology, the English Canadian nationalism, also often referred to as imperialism. The analyses further suggest that nationalist ideologies that producers tried to embed in stoves and furnaces were consistent with their differentiation strategies. This is because products were offered and

presented in a way as to project one's actual or desired social status or political position, in addition to, or even more than, to fulfill a basic need.

Our study has limitations that command caution as we interpret findings to apply them more generally to other contexts. Although stoves and furnaces represent an important sample of the time's Canadian production of domestic goods, we did not analyze the advertising of products, such as pots, pans, washing machines, sewing machines and furniture. Our study is also restricted to a relatively limited period of pre-World War I time as well as a sample of producers and retailers. Our corpus of data is also limited to publications and other documents that survived until now, and we know of others that were lost or destroyed, especially catalogs and general ledgers. Finally, the identification of ideologies present in ads remains somewhat subjective, even though cues were usually unambiguous.

This study enriches the literature on Canadian foundries at the beginning of the 20th century and on Canadian marketing history. And despite the caution that limitations command, we believe that the results may provide lessons applicable outside Canada, to other industries, and in contemporary times. The most important finding of this paper is that advertising campaigns designed by members of a threatened ideological minority are more sensitive to all ideologies forming a population than are campaigns designed by members of an unthreatened ideological majority. There are many possible implications. For instance, results point to the importance of paying attention to the diversity of ideologies present in a given market as well as to the ideological sensitivity and awareness of marketing campaign designers. Results also make globally homogeneous marketing campaigns questionable as to their ability to influence consumers identifying with threatened ideologies from which campaigns do not originate. Finally, our analysis may suggest, by extrapolation, that tapping marginal (non-mainstream) interest group members' opinion to assess the reach of advertising campaigns could potentially avoid futile marketing spend because those individuals appear more likely to provide opinions that take many ideological viewpoints into account. More broadly, this study provides support for the widespread claim that the social context in which marketing is to occur ought to be taken into consideration.

Sample of References

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