Privileging Localism and Visualizing Nationhood in Anti-Consumption

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INTRODUCTION

- Product Origin Imagery and Nationalism
  - Anti-consumption
    » Sandikci and Ekici 2009; Varman and Belk 2009; Witkowski 1989
  - Place Country Images, Country of Origin effects
    » Ger, Askegaard, and Christensen 1999; Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993

- How do anti-consumption and product origin get intertwined to produce discourses of identity and patriotism in which localism is pitted against nationalism?
  - Anti-consumption movements in India
THEORETICAL ISSUES

Understanding Place Country Images and Country of Origin Effects

» Schooler 1965, 1971; Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993
  – Origin has functional and symbolic connotations
    » Johansson, et al. 1994; Askegaard and Ger 1998
  – Psychological processes
    » Beliefs not attitudes: Erickson et al. 1984
    » Motivation levels and congruency of information:
      Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran 2000
  – Subcultural variations
    » Laroche et al. 2002
  – Impact of international crisis and animosity
    » Heslop et al. 2007; Klein et al. 1998
THEORETICAL ISSUES

Understanding Place Country Images and COO

– Consumer Ethnocentrism
  » Shimp and Sharma 1987
  – Development of scale of measurement
  – Buy national supports nation building and is patriotic
– Need to situate country and product in specific cultural context
  » Askegaard and Ger 1998
– Shift in focus from country to place
  » Ger et al., 1999
THEORETICAL ISSUES

- **Anti-consumption and Product Origin Imagery**
  - Roles of economic and cultural imperialism in consumer resistance to globalization
    » Witkowski 1989; Breen 1988
  - Role of identity politics and elitism in anti-corporate movements
    » Kozinets and Handelman 2004
  - Anti-hegemonic identifications in the rejection of global over local
    » Thompson and Arsel 2004
THEORETICAL ISSUES

- **Anti-consumption and Product Origin Imagery**
  - Nationalist ideology in an anti-consumption movement
    » Varman and Belk 2009
  - Morality in the interpretation of COO cues
    » Lee, Motion, and Conroy 2009
  - Predatory globalization, chauvinistic nationalism, and religious fundamentalism in politically motivated brand rejection
    » Sandikci and Ekici 2009
THEORETICAL ISSUES

Key question:
– How can local products be privileged over national products in a discourse of nationalism?
METHODOLOGY

■ An Interpretive Research Study
  • Conducted over two years a study of Apni Banao Azadi (ABA)
  • In-depth Interviews with 5 key activists
  • Publicity Material and Publications
    – Pamphlets, Movement Diary, and Nai Duniya (journal published by ABA)
  • Discursive analysis of Gandhi’s writings and secondary published material on Indian freedom movement.
  • Emergent design and constant comparative method
    » Strauss and Corbin 1990
FINDINGS

- Tracing the Colonial Origins of POI and Anti-consumption
  - Swadeshi Movement
    - 19th Century protection for local industry
    - Partition of Bengal (1905-1908)
    - Boycott of British cloth and Khadi
    - Drain Thesis
      » Bayly 1986, 1998; Gellner 1983
FINDINGS

■ Tracing the Colonial Origins of POI and Anti-consumption
  – Entry of Gandhi in 1915
    • Actively deployed consumer boycotts in
      – Non-Cooperation Movement (1921-22)
      – Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-31)
FINDINGS

- It was “sinful” for a man to wear the “latest finery of Regent Street when his neighbors the spinners and weavers starve… the knowledge of sin bursts upon me; I must consign foreign garments to the fire and thus purify myself and thenceforth rest content with the khadi homespun made by my neighbors.”
  - M.K. Gandhi
  » Quoted by Bayly 1986
- Travel 3rd Class, Hunger strikes, Spinning Wheel, and Khadi
Gandhi with his spinning wheel
FINDINGS

- Tracing the Colonial Origins of POI and Anti-consumption
  - Non-cooperation Movement 1921-22
    - Boycott of foreign goods
    - Public display of boycott through bonfires
    - Import of foreign cloth fell from Rs. 1020 million to Rs. 570 million
    - Production of handloom production went up from 931 million yards in 1920 to 1084 Million yards in 1922-23.
  » Sarkar 1983
A print ad during the freedom movement.
Rejection of the British goods during the freedom movement. A picture from Bombay.
FINDINGS

- Tracing the Colonial Origins of POI and Anti-consumption
  - Civil Disobedience Movement: 1930-31
    - Boycott of British Goods
    - Fall in British cloth import from 1248 in 1930 to 523 million yards in 1931.
      » Sarkar 1983
    - “Other British imports also suffered, and from May to August 1930 the British Trade Commissioner’s office was flooded with panic stricken reports and complaints from Imperial Tobacco, Dunlop and other ‘white’ firms.”
      » Homi Bhabha, President Bombay Mill Owners’ Association in 1931
FINDINGS

- Tracing the Colonial Origins of POI and Anti-consumption
  - Influence of Anarchist Political Ideology on Gandhi and Gandhian Movements
  - Emphasis on individual liberty, anti-consumption, equity, and decentralization
  - Anti-statist vision of Nationalism
    » Gandhi 1997
FINDINGS

- Contextualizing a Post-Colonial Anti-Consumption Movement and Product Origin Imagery (POI)
  - Neoliberalism and Structural Adjustment Program
  - Economic Growth
  - Decline in welfare policies
    - Slowing of employment generation
    - Reduction in access to food and clothing.

FINDINGS

- Apni Banao Azadi (ABA)
  - Founded in 1989
  - Stopped multinationals such as Cargil, Coca Cola, Pepsi
  - Regularly hold meetings, rallies, and publish protest material.
FINDINGS

- Emphasizing Nationhood
  - Nation is a community. Before internationalism, there has to be nationalism. Before a person becomes accountable to a larger community he has to be accountable to his own family (nation).
    - Mishra, ABA Activist
FINDINGS

Delegitimizing Multinational POI:

– 90% of the Third World markets have been captured by multinational corporations. They have crossed all limits of exploitation and corruption. Poor countries have allowed their bureaucratic, judicial, and legislative functions to be controlled by these corporations. This poses a challenge to our freedom.

– Andolan (Movement) Diary 2008, p. 9
FINDINGS

- Delegitimizing Multinational POI:
  - Dark deeds of Multinational Corporations
    - Founder of Parmalan, a large Italian food firm has been arrested on charges of embezzlement
    - IBM accused of bribing in South Korea
    - Kerala government finds Coca Cola guilty
      » Nai Duniya 2004, p. 28
FINDINGS

Delegitimizing Multinational POI:
- Some slogans used by ABA
  - Multinationals, Quit India
  - Wake up again, Boycott foreign
  - Save culture, remove slavery
  - Our country, goods foreign, cannot be sold, cannot be sold.
  - Coca Cola will not sell in the country of milk and curd.
FINDINGS

- Espousing Decentralized Nationalism
  - If we can make people understand that these multinational corporations are their enemies, then we can make them to participate in boycott. It empowers people because it’s a form of non-cooperation that they can control. They can’t close these businesses, but they can force them to retreat.

  » Verma, ABA Founder
Protest against FDI in India. This protest is not by ABA. The interesting part is that the protest is directed at state (symbolized by the police officer in this picture) and not just at MNCs.
Protest against Tata Small Car-Nano. This protest is not by ABA
FINDINGS

- Espousing Decentralized Nationalism
  - The state has succumbed to them [multinational corporations]. It is really a healthy sign that people everywhere are opposing on their own. They are spontaneously getting united and are providing leadership to protest movements.
  - Nai Duniya 2007, p. 2
    » Anti-state nationalism
**FINDINGS**

- **High Morality of Anti-Consumerist Nationalism**
  - Boycott is a powerful tool of protest. But it is difficult to follow. To boycott, people need to have high levels of moral strength. Without moral strength, they cannot boycott...in our assessment only 15-20 % have the strength to boycott. It requires a lot of training and preparation.
  
  - Ritesh, ABA Activist
## FINDINGS

### Toward Gandhian Localism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Goods</th>
<th>Don’t buy: Goods by MNCs</th>
<th>Buy: Indian Goods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>Red label, Lipton Tiger, Green Label</td>
<td>Pallavi, Gurukul, Tata Tea, Rahat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Annapurna, Cargill</td>
<td>Tata, Birla Salt, Baja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toothpaste</td>
<td>Colgate, Closeup, Pepsodent</td>
<td>Prudent, Promise, Neem twig,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>Old spice, Sunsilk, Ponds, Palmolive</td>
<td>Sarvodaya, Wipro, Swastik, Meghdoot, Alikesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readymade Clothes</td>
<td>Wrangler, Nike, Adidas, Puma</td>
<td>India is famous for its readymade clothes that are available in Indian markets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS

- **Toward Gandhian Localism**
  - We are against multinationals because they are robbing people of their resources. These firms are large and concentrate wealth in a few hands. We are against this process. We are also against large Indian businesses. We do not consider Tata, Birla as national.
  
  - Verma, ABA Founder
  - » Early 90s substitution of foreign with local brands
FINDINGS

- Toward Gandhian Localism
  – One of the basic principles of swadeshi is that the distance between producer and consumer should be minimal. Large corporations increase the distance and the process of globalization makes it worse. In fact, for multinationals more distance is desired. We are for localization of processes. It’s the only way to minimize exploitation.
  – Verma, ABA Founder
FINDINGS

- **Toward Gandhian Localism**
  - When small scale local production happens then local populations of consumers and producers gain and exercise control. When large corporations take over production, then profits go to them and local population loses control. Large corporations can increase prices or remove workers without any accountability.

  » Balwant, ABA Activist
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

- Offer an understanding of a Third World Anti-consumption Movement
- Highlight Localism over Nationalism
- Limits of National-International dichotomy
- Revise emphasis on ‘National’ in POI, ethnocentrism, and animosity model
- Epistemologically deconstruct nationalism and understand fields of power in POI.

  » Bourdieu 1998
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

- Methodologically seek interstitial discourses of Anti-Consumption.
  » Critchley 2007

- Local Inversion of Hierarchy of POI
  » e.g. Batra, Ramaswamy, Alden, Steenkamp, and Ramachander 2000

- Anti-consumption vs. Resistance
  - Deeper systemic challenges
  - Paradigmatic shift in lifestyles