

The 'Branding' of Trudeau

Wayne Hunt
Mount Allison University

Abstract

This paper explores the implications of the strategic use of communications technology to market a particular point of view. Corporations have placed more emphasis on the selling of a brand than on the selling of a product. In recent times celebrities as well as states and even continents have tried to 'brand' themselves. The literature on 'branding' offers a newly gained perspective on the historico-cultural background of Pierre Trudeau's political career.

Introduction

Pierre Elliott Trudeau was often portrayed as a 'television' politician—meaning that he conveyed an image that was television-friendly—meaning that his time in high public office corresponded with the ascent of this particular medium—and meaning, finally, that there was something more mysterious, and less easily categorized, at work. Marshall McLuhan, famously, brought all of these concepts together. Paul Nesbitt-Larking points out that it was McLuhan who first identified Trudeau as a TV natural, McLuhan who saw “a deep, quiet, intellectual man whose moods and feelings were often indexed by the subtlest movement of his otherwise stoic face,” McLuhan who observed that this was “a cool face for a cool medium.”¹ Television emerged as the dominant form of communication during this era, and Trudeau, it has to be emphasized, was able to dominate television. McLuhan offered a number of scattered, and random, insights into the way in which this new visual medium represented an extension of human sensory patterns. However unorthodox his juxtapositioning of imagery and ideas, McLuhan's work did serve to underline the importance of the communications media in our society.

McLuhan's *aperçus* can also serve as an entry-point into a re-evaluation of Trudeau's career. The literature on 'branding' is helpful here. Trudeau's political rise, it can be argued, can be seen as the building of political 'brand' which was largely based upon the strategic use of communications technology. 'Branding' is a concept which has a specific contemporary meaning. The Canadian journalist and author, Naomi Klein, argues that 'branding' is not just about external images. As she puts it, it is not “just a mascot or a catchphrase or a picture painted on the label of a company's product”—it is about a deeper

phenomenon; it is about the way in which the “company as a whole could have a brand identity or a ‘corporate consciousness’...”² The process started out in the private sector. It is claimed that advertising’s “greatest single contribution to business is its ability to build brand”.³ But ‘branding’ reaches a different level of consciousness. It is essentially about identity. It has two components. The first component is to make a name synonymous with a certain lifestyle or, to be more precise, a cluster of lifestyle preferences. (One example is *Apple* computers, and the demographic that *Apple* tries to target with its advertising.) The second component refers to content, or to the physical features of the product. Klein insists that with ‘branded’ products this is a secondary consideration. It is, she insists, an “incidental part of their operations”. ‘Branding’ is a process which Klein finds to be intertwined with the policies which are associated with globalization. Trade liberalization and labour law reform, she explains, have allowed companies to out-source their productions to overseas operations. This further allows them to put more effort into the production of images rather than actual products. A company’s real work, she maintains, is “not in manufacturing but in marketing.”⁴

For ‘branding’ to work it must revolve around one central idea. For Trudeau, that idea was holding Canada together in its existing form. Why separate Quebec? he would ask rhetorically. Why not northern Quebec with its Cree population? Where will it all stop? But the rhetoric stopped when he categorically asserted that his Canada had to be open and inclusive. He acknowledged as much in a speech to the House of Commons setting out the public policies which would encapsulate his philosophy:

A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy would help to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies.

National Unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one’s own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.⁵

National Unity was an obsession with Trudeau. He merged his own personal identity into the larger identity of the nation-state. He was a political leader who, to adopt Isaiah Berlin’s well travelled metaphor, was a hedgehog, a per-

son who knows one big thing. This contrasted easily with those who pursued many often contradictory ends at once. Those in the second category were, by definition, foxes. Trudeau was not judged to be a fox, but even here there was dissent. Those who were on the other side during the 1980 referendum in Quebec took various positions on this. One view held that he “deliberately lied” and that he “duped the population of Quebec when he solemnly promised to reform the structure of Canadian federalism”. Another interpretation allowed that “if he did not lie he shrewdly remained ambiguous”.⁶ By either calculation his actions—at least in this instance—were the actions of a fox. How can this be explained? Once more it is necessary to turn to ‘branding’.

Trudeau was ‘branded’ with two big ideas: diversity and opposition to Quebec nationalism. The physical mechanism that took him into public life was of secondary importance to him. It was simply an instrument. Trudeau had not been a life-long member of the Liberal Party of Canada. Indeed he was associated with a social democratic party, the NDP, that was a competitor to the Liberals. The social democrats had been in power at the provincial level but they had not been in power at the national level—and more to the point, they had little prospect of gaining national power. The Liberal Party offered Trudeau an avenue to power.⁷ But it was far more than this. As an intellectual ‘brand’, Trudeau’s philosophy was based on the notion of counterweights. There was a problem with the political system if a minority did not alternate power with a majority.⁸ He was highly critical of a federal system which encouraged what he called the paternalistic instincts in government. As he put it in a famous essay which was published in 1961 when he was teaching constitutional law and associated with the NDP:

In short, it almost seems as though whenever an important segment of the Canadian population needs something badly enough, it is eventually given to them by one level of government or the other regardless of the constitution. The main drawback of such an approach is that it tends to develop paternalistic instincts in more enterprising governments, at the expense of democratic maturation in others.⁹

Trudeau ended the essay with the assertion that federalism, like democracy itself, had to “be held to be a fundamental value”.¹⁰ This principle stayed with him. Diversity had to be maintained within a federal system. This balance-of-powers allowed citizens to hold each level of government to account for their separate responsibilities. For Trudeau, this belief in the efficacy of a strict separation of responsibilities was a matter of faith. But it was also a way in

which the 'brand' was placed in an institutional context. It could be then taken to a wider public.

The 'brand' also had the advantages of simplicity. Many commentators have used Berlin's metaphor of the hedgehog to describe Trudeau and the particular *style* of leadership that was associated with the man.¹¹ The former Premier of Ontario, Bob Rae, used these categories to highlight—and to draw attention to—the contradictions in the Trudeau position. Rae rightly observed that Trudeau's 'one big thing' was the "demolition of Quebec nationalism". This fixity, Rae added, became his greatest strength. His talents were "always put to best use when he was in his 'J'accuse' mode". But this was also his greatest weakness. As Rae saw it, it was Trudeau himself who was authoring his own political demise. Canada's first minister "became a prisoner of his own rhetoric". Thus he became "an ideologue despite himself", someone who was "curiously rigid as he attacked anyone who chose to disagree" with him.¹² To be at his best, Rae continued, Trudeau needed an enemy and "he was never stronger or clearer or more effective than when he was eviscerating an opponent". When the dialectical struggle was not present, Trudeau languished. As illustrations of this, Rae cited the period between 1968 and 1972, and a second period which would last approximately from 1978 until 1979.

In the first period, Trudeau—as well as those around him—relied on flow charts and statistical forecasts of trends. Trudeau's public pronouncements took on a tone that was "technocratic, remote and aloof." This spoke "to the conservative side of his personality," underlining as it did "the often cautious nature of his actions."¹³ Simply put, Trudeau was not a manager. The flow-chart managerialism of this era, as he later acknowledged, was simply a cover for the fact that he lacked practical political experience. But this attempt to put a formal framework to governing was broken by the unexpected course of events. The most dramatic of these events, and the one with the deepest consequences for Trudeau as well as for the nation, was the invocation of the *War Measures Act* in 1970 in response to the kidnapping of a British diplomat and the murder of a Quebec cabinet minister.

In the 1978–1979 period, Trudeau seemed to lose interest in his job. The press was giving widespread coverage to internal divisions in the party.¹⁴ Trudeau and his party lost the 1979 election. He resigned, but he was persuaded to return to office one more time. He did so, and during his final term in office he brought a Charter of Rights and Freedoms to Canada that was ultimately endorsed by the provincial Premiers after a period of great acrimony. One Premier did not sign however. He was the Premier of Quebec, René Lévesque.

Levesque headed a sovereigntist government that was committed to restructuring Quebec's relations with Canada in a fundamental manner.¹⁵ The Charter, as Levesque viewed it, was simply a cudgel which Trudeau would use in his power struggle with a succession of Quebec Premiers. In addition to that, the Charter allowed for the 'patriation' of the amending formula. Prior to that, Canadian governments had to petition Westminster every time the Government of Canada wished to change a provision of the Canadian Constitution.

There was one area where Trudeau's dialectical powers of 'branding' were given full expression and that area was in federal-provincial relations: not for Trudeau any notion of 'special status'—this was "two-nations" by another name.¹⁶ It was Trudeau, after all, who as Justice Minister in 1967, took on the Premier of Quebec, Daniel Johnson, over the issue of Quebec's place in Canada. As Rae notes, and as others before him have noted as well, Trudeau was a confrontationalist. He was also a polemicist of the first order. Not so Lester Pearson, who was Prime Minister at the time. Pearson took the approach of a career diplomat. Pearson's preference was to 'muddle through'. But what Pearson left unclear, Trudeau made clear. As Bob Rae points out, the language of a "partnership that appeared to be emerging between Premiers John Robarts of Ontario and Daniel Johnson of Quebec was replaced by an unambiguous assertion of a determinedly symmetrical federalism, in which the powers of all the provinces would be recognized only to the extent that a 'strict construction' of the Constitution would allow".¹⁷

In order to understand this it is necessary to remember Trudeau's background. He considered himself to be a public intellectual. He was also the first to acknowledge that this was a mask, a facade to protect his privacy. Marshall McLuhan, as ever, put it pithily: Trudeau, the media guru said, donned a made-for-television mask because the medium "can't take a real face. It has to have a mask".¹⁸ As his biographers forthrightly recognized, Trudeau allowed his intellectual credentials to be strategically enhanced.¹⁹ His athletic prowess underwent the same grade inflation, as by inference, did his sexual prowess. This was charisma in the making. But Trudeau was a public intellectual in one important sense: concepts and ideas mattered to him, as did a sense of intellectual engagement. He would not be the first, however, to discover that it is a different matter to offer transformational leadership in the realm of ideas, than it is to offer the functional equivalent in the realm of public policy. Ideas do not translate into practice in a neat and clean manner.

These features of the Trudeau record have been much commented upon. Less appreciated, and consequently less understood, was the way in which the

changes in Canadian society were magnified and distorted, invented and re-invented, through the carefully-manufactured *persona* of this one man. It has to be emphasized at the outset that Trudeau himself was complicit in the process of myth-making. He encouraged it when it suited his purposes, he grew impatient with it when it moved out of his control. An analysis of this can benefit from the insights gained from the contemporary literature on ‘branding.’

The Cool State

Brands, simply put, are a corporate tool. Brand-building is defined as a relatively new model of communications. It is about the construction of a concept rather than a product. The New Economy may or may not be an illusory concept, but the value of many companies will rise and fall on the stock market on the basis of the value of their brand name.²⁰ The development of a ‘high concept’ brand is critically important. Allied with this is the parallel process of logo-building. A corporate logo is the visual embodiment of a brand. It is strategically designed to send a corporate message to consumers that this is the lifestyle we want you to adopt. Or, more to the point, this is the lifestyle that they want you to ‘buy into’—to use an emotive phrase favoured by the followers of Naomi Klein.

There is a deeper resonance to this. Even a publication as market-friendly as *The Economist* was obliged to admit that companies “exploit people’s emotional needs just as well as their desires to consume.” Hence Nike’s ‘just do it’ campaign sold runners on the notion of personal achievement in the same calculated manner as “Coca-Cola’s relentless effort to associate its soft drink with carefree fun.” Companies concoct a brief narrative around their services or product so that the ‘run-of-the-mill’ is transformed into something ‘more thrilling.’ Think of Haagen-Dazs ice cream, *The Economist* enjoined; or the endless litany of other marketing inventions.²¹ The term itself has passed its corporate sell-by date but it has moved effortlessly to other areas. The chair of Disney, Michael Eisner, said that the term is “overused, sterile and unimaginative” (words that surely indicate that it will be incorporated into political life!). To return to *The Economist*: “Products, people, countries and companies are all racing to turn themselves into brands—to make their image more likeable and understandable.” British Airways “did it. Target and Tesco are doing it, while people from Martha Stewart to Madonna are branding themselves.” This was not to mention the ill-fated ‘Cool Britannia’ exercise; or the effort by Wally Olins, a corporate-identity consultant and co-founder of the consultancy Wolff Olins, to “have a crack at branding the European Union.”²²

States can market themselves as much as any other entity. As one analyst noted, the rise of the brand state or even the brand continent is part of the postmodern politics of image and reputation. Both are part of a state's 'strategic equity' in the international market. Like branded products, branded states "depend on trust and customer satisfaction." Thus we talk about a state's personality in the same way we discuss the products we consume, describing it as 'friendly' (i.e. Western-oriented) and 'credible' (ally), or 'aggressive' (expansionist) and 'unreliable' (rogue). This preference for style over substance, he continued, transformed Europe's political landscape. It can be counted as a positive development, however, in that it supplants a more traditional form of national self-assertion. Thus, it is argued that the brand state's "use of its history, geography, and ethnic motifs to construct its own distinct identity is a benign campaign that lacks the deep-rooted and often antagonistic sense of national identity and uniqueness that can accompany nationalism." Ethnic chauvinism is thereby dispatched to the margins of political debate.²³

The Marketing: Trudeau as Superbrand

How can the concept of branding offer a new perspective on Trudeau? There are several ways, some obvious, others, less obvious. The notion of a youth culture falls into the first category. Trudeau, as much as Marc Lalonde and the others around Lalonde, were the first to recognize that the media made Trudeau into a whole new phenomenon. He did not resemble the politicians of his day in his physical and intellectual temperament. Trudeau portrayed himself as an outsider. This allowed him to look fresh and new. And it allowed him to look like he was above the routine affairs of partisan politics. Here was someone who did not have to make the deals that others around him were making. This allowed those around Trudeau to market him in an entirely new way: as a superbrand. They recognized that politics was changing and that an entirely new set of tools was needed to sell both politicians and political ideas.

This begged a bigger question: was the Trudeau of Trudeaumania their creation? Or was he his own man—in the sense that he knew where this was headed? Trudeau, as ever, was coy. His was a sphinx-like demeanor. When asked about his decision to run for the leadership of the Liberal party—did he want it or was he persuaded by his friends?—Trudeau retained a calculated ambiguity. "It's true," he said in retrospect, "that I had some reluctance to go for the leadership. I felt it was too early. I thought I would be an epiphenomenon with no roots and no power base in the Liberal Party. I wasn't known in English Canada, except for a few people in the universities. That was the real source of my hesitation. It was certainly not that I had an inferiority complex."²⁴

This reluctance became part of the myth. Trudeau was unique. Unlike other politicians, he did not read the stories about him that were published in the press. Paradoxically, this allowed him to be independent of the press even though his rise was a press-driven phenomenon. Much was made at the time of the spirit of Expo '67. Trudeaumania seemed to embody that spirit. Here was a man who promised to shake things up—here was a man who promised that he would actually *do* something. But it has to be emphasized that it was not just the fact that the man was different that counted, it was the deliberate creation of a whole new political market around the man that was truly revolutionary. And, as always, timing was not just important, it was everything. There was in Trudeau that quality that Napoleon looked for in his generals: luck. There was what might be termed an 'opportunity structure' in federal politics. The national scene had long been dominated by John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson. The American historian, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has described two alternating cycles in American politics. One cycle was identified with a sense of public purpose and with the public sector; the other, with the private sector. Bursts of energy, enthusiasm and experimentation with public programs followed the first cycle.²⁵ This was also a time for a new political cycle in Canada. The Trudeau 'brand' was not focussed exclusively on either the public sector or the private sector. His was a mixed economy approach—he fused the entrepreneurial energy of the private sector with the idealism of a generation that looked favourably upon the notion of public service.

At the heart of the Trudeau 'brand' was the *formal* notion of counter-weights in the federal system. Trudeau himself had pointed out that the provincial arena was the forum for change at the start of the decade when he entered elective politics. His attention was Quebec-centred. Much of the talent of Quebec went into the Quiet Revolution. As Trudeau recounts it, by 1962, "the Lesage government and public opinion in Quebec had magnified provincial autonomy into an absolute, and were attempting to reduce federal power to nothing; and so, to defend federalism, I entered federal politics in 1965."²⁶ Change that was shaking the foundations of the federal structure was coming from the province of Quebec during that era. But revolutionary transformations were not confined to that part of the country. The provinces were laboratories for social reform. There was much to be done to advance the interests of French-speaking peoples throughout the country. Trudeau was associated with generational change at the federal level in the same way that Lesage or Robichaud, the Premier of New Brunswick, were associated with a parallel change in provincial politics. The difference was that the aforementioned Premiers moved farther and faster in their own areas of jurisdiction.

But Trudeau was not often compared to provincial politicians. The point of reference was with John F. Kennedy in the United States. Television did for the Canadian leader what it did for Kennedy: it offered a preview of a show that was later entitled “Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous”. Television was the medium which allowed the private sector to market a whole way of life. But it was not just the private sector. When it came to Trudeau, public sector television joined in with enthusiasm. Trudeau styled himself a “citizen of the world”. He had a mission to accomplish in his own country however. He wanted to open up the institutions of the federal government to francophones. This he accomplished, with a concentration of energy and with a relative rapidity, in his first term of office.

In the 1972 General Election, the electorate called time on this project. As a result, Trudeau was reduced to a minority government. It was a humbling experience. He was obliged to compromise and to cut deals with his social democratic partners in another party, the New Democratic Party, in order to form a minority government and to stay in power. Commentators watched this fall from electoral grace and passed judgment on the man and his works. Some analysts opined that the once-mighty Trudeau would thereby be forced to act like an ordinary politician. As one formulation had it, he went from philosopher king to Mackenzie King (Mackenzie King was the country’s longest serving Prime Minister. He was remembered for his astute and cunning political skills in times of crisis.)

In looking back at this particular period it is clear that Trudeau left the impress of his own personality on the institutions around him. He ‘branded’ both the federal government and the Liberal party. The values and priorities that were associated with Trudeau became associated with these institutions. Each one placed more emphasis on bilingualism and multiculturalism. These institutions had a symbiotic relationship. As John Meisel noted in a celebrated essay, the national government and the Liberal party had a long and intertwined history. For most of the twentieth century the Liberal party controlled the mechanisms of power in the nation’s capital. It had earned its reputation as the Government Party through the adroit use of patronage, both high (for advertising contracts and for high level administrative appointments) and low (for student summer jobs and small-scale projects). This could not help but have an influence on the operation of Parliament. It also had an impact on Her Majesty’s Loyal Opposition. Extended time out of government office meant that the opposition was thrown into the margins—in every sense. The Government Party controlled Canada by controlling Central Canada. A first past-the-post electoral system, combined with an ineffectual upper house, insured that the

dominance of the Liberal party was complete. (Or complete at the federal level. By a curious cycle of Canadian politics, opposition to the governing party tends to build at the provincial level. One party dominance in Ottawa means that the provincial governments become *de facto* centres of opposition)²⁷.

John Meisel put a compelling story-line to this. But it was a story-line which underlined both the subjective and the psychological elements of 'branding. The Queen's University political scientist argued that the 1972 election was one of those occasions when objective factors (who wins?, by what percentages?, in what regions?) were less important than style factors. The Liberal Party took on a certain physiognomy, to invoke Meisel's term. Competence, efficiency, predictability and rationalism were prized by the party while to their opponents were ascribed the opposite values—incompetence, inefficiency, unpredictability (although even this has to be qualified with respect to what later became the Reform party and then the Alliance) and, above all, irrationality. These same values and style factors were imparted to the people who had the responsibility to implement the Trudeau policies. Trudeau had worked with the Privy Council Office in Ottawa several decades before he became Prime Minister. It proved to be an invaluable experience. Many others who served with him, or before he came to power, had followed the same career trajectory. The mandarins of the party moved from the service of the state to the service of the party with effortless efficiency. Lester Pearson, Mitchell Sharp, Jack Pickersgill, Marc Lalonde, Romeo LeBlanc: the list was long. There seemed to be a natural orbit or movement of celestial forces here: a 'star' in the civil service was often expected stand for public office as a Liberal candidate. After a period of time on the front benches they could expect a public sinecure with a diplomatic appointment or an appointment with a crown corporation. The Opposition party, or parties, were not taken seriously. There was a price to be paid for this attitude, however. It left the Liberals with a patrician disdain for Parliament and the workaday trappings of democracy. A state-centric and by extension, an Ottawa-centric, view of the country followed as a matter of course. Eventually, the electorate refused to tolerate this. According to Meisel, the 1972 election had to be evaluated by the precepts of Greek tragedy. Statistical methods could not capture the intensity of the reaction. The Liberal downfall, he observed, was due to a sense of *hubris*, that overweening pride that leads to a downfall, that causes your opponents to rise up in righteous wrath and exact retribution. The Liberal signs and the Liberal logo in that campaign was deliberately designed to highlight the face of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Still, the campaign became a disaster and the campaign slogan, 'The Land is Strong', proved equally disastrous.²⁸ In logo-building

terms, this had to be regarded as a market failure. (Presumably the irony was lost on the Prime Minister).

But it has to be emphasized that the ‘branding’ of Trudeau went far beyond the confines of the Liberal party. Trudeau had a powerfully articulated view of nationalism. In a well-known article, he derided Quebec-based nationalism as a work of the devil. It was, he suggested, backward-looking, parochial, and insular. It pulled francophone Quebecers into what he called “The Wigwam Complex”.²⁹ (The insult was calculated to give offense to Quebec nationalists but it did not win him support with Aboriginal communities.) As a final barb, Trudeau derided this form of nationalism as *petit-bourgeois* conceit, calculated to benefit only that serene minority who wanted their own plenipotentiaries, their own little bureaucracies, and their own sovereign right to declare war enshrined in their own constitution. (Naomi Klein made a parallel point when she implied that the “ad-busting” of social activists might not actually help the poorest members of society).³⁰ That Quebec nationalism would emerge in precisely the opposite way, as a forward-looking, cosmopolitan and open force was something that Trudeau did not contemplate, as was the fact that Quebec nationalists would have such a claim on the loyalties of that province’s francophone youth culture. The ‘brand’ that Trudeau marketed aimed to leverage the youth culture—or more precisely aimed to leverage youth culture as a force for federalism rather than for separatism.

Through his own lifestyle, as much as through his own example, Trudeau tried to sell a form of nationalism that avoided the word nationalism. His Canada was a Canada that was open to the spirit of adventure as much as it was open to the world. It was rooted in the vast physical fact of Canadian geography. As a political philosophy it was rooted in the notion of individualism and individual achievement. Cabinet discussions, one participant recalled, often took on an abstract and academic tone. In looking back on that period, one minister remembered this pattern of events: “No one who was sitting around the cabinet table seemed to follow all of the details of Trudeau’s argument but we all knew where it was going and, more importantly, we knew that he could sell it.”³¹ Trudeau had a clear position. He consistently opposed collective rights because he viewed this as simply a vehicle for Quebec nationalism. He rejected any proposal “whose effect would have been to identify a linguistic collectivity (French Canadians) with the government of a province (Quebec)”.³²

In his critique of Trudeau, Bob Rae looks for *hubris* in the Trudeau story. Rae argues that it was Trudeau’s forced concession on the notwithstanding clause in the Charter of Rights that gave Quebec more powers than anything that was

later proposed in the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords. (He was out of office at the time but he fervently opposed both of these developments on the grounds that they gave special privileges to one category of citizens over another category). Furthermore, his own fiscal policies over the sixteen years of his Prime Ministership did more to limit the power of the central government than anything proposed in the aforementioned documents. Rae counted Trudeau a hedgehog because his political life was based on the simple notion that French Canadians should seek “their full expression of citizenship in Canada itself, not in Quebec.” “Patriation,” he went on to say, as well as “the Charter, minority language rights, official bilingualism, opposition to Meech and Charlottetown were all manifestations of this ‘one big thing’”.³³

Conclusion

The Trudeau ‘brand’ seemed to be a way of reconciling unity with diversity. In the words of his biographers, his career was seen as an “attempt to resolve through legalistic formulations Canada’s contradictions as a nation”.³⁴ But there were problems with this. Although the brand message was strong and elegantly defined, it did not have the results that its author might have intended. His Charter was used by groups to further a sense of collective purpose. This may have been due to the fact that the concept was one thing, while the implementation was something else. It has to be remembered that, as a marketing method, brands are tools of differentiation. They force people to choose between competing products. Trudeau understood the need for a ‘brand’ before people in other parties understood the implications of this dynamic. He was “the first to market” in this sense. He understood how to fuse the dynamism of the private sector with a sense of idealism in the public sector. He openly embraced generational change and a new political cycle but he could not foresee where it would lead.

After a period of time, the law of unintended consequences came into force. Marketers have pointed out that when people are obliged to choose between competing logos, they do so not so much on the basis of the product itself but on the basis of the name. In political terms, they choose not on the basis of policy but on a wider matrix of attributes, most of which have an emotional appeal. Trudeau chose as a slogan “reason over emotion” but, paradoxically, his own support was often based on “emotion over reason”. He raised expectations for change, while saying that change was possible within the existing system. He divided Canadians between those who adhered to his version of federalism as well as his version of Canada—and those who did not. That situation continues into the present day.

Endnotes

- ¹ Paul Nesbitt-Larking, *Politics, Society and the Media, Canadian Perspectives* (Peterborough: Broadview, 2001), 158
- ² Naomi Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Toronto: Vintage, 2000), 7.
- ³ John Philip Jones, *How to Use Advertising to Build Strong Brands* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1999), 3.
- ⁴ Klein, *No Logo*, 4.
- ⁵ Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 8 October, 1971, as quoted in Jacques Hebert, "Legislating for Freedom," in Thomas Axworthy and Pierre Trudeau, eds., *Towards A Just Society, The Trudeau Years* (Markham: Viking, 1990), 138.
- ⁶ Guy Laforest, translation by P. Browne and M. Weinroth, *Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 15-16.
- ⁷ The following quote is revealing. When asked about his connections with social democrats he said: "I don't have a card, I tell you, the day I enter politics it will be with the Liberals. I don't want to be a missionary all my life. When I enter politics it will be to do something". From David Somerville, *Trudeau Revealed By His Actions and Words* (Richmond Hill, Ont.: BMG, 1978), 40.
- ⁸ This was the thesis of an article which argued that Quebecers would always use the political system, and the balance of forces in the federal system, simply to ensure their ethnic survival. Hence they developed an instrumental approach to the politics in which the political system would be worked to their collective advantage. He wrote that: "Historically, French Canadians have not really believed in democracy for themselves, and English Canadians have not really wanted it for others. Such are the foundations upon which our two ethnic groups have absurdly pretended to be building democratic forms of government. No wonder the resulting structure has turned out to be flimsy". Pierre Elliott Trudeau, "Some Obstacles to Democracy in Quebec," in *Federalism and the French Canadians* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 103.
- ⁹ Trudeau, "The Theory and Practice of Federalism," *ibid*, 138. The essay originally appeared in Michel Oliver, ed., *Social Purpose for Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).
- ¹⁰ *ibid*, 150.

- ¹¹ A further exploration of this theme can be found in Wayne A. Hunt, "Post-modern Foxes," *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 9: 1 (March 1994), 87–97.
- ¹² Bob Rae, "Trudeau: Hedgehog or Fox," in Andrew Cohen and J. L. Granatstein, eds, *Trudeau's Shadow, The Life and Legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau* (Toronto: Random House, 1998), 285.
- ¹³ *Ibid*, 287.
- ¹⁴ Christina McCall-Newman, *Grits, An Intimate Portrait of the Liberal Party* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), 319–321.
- ¹⁵ As early as 1963, Levesque, as Minister of Natural Resources for Quebec, made the following statement: "Confederation isn't sacred, you know. It is just a bargain made 100 years ago. It has become a bad bargain. Sometimes the only thing that you can do with a bad bargain is get out of it. And that can be done democratically". *Toronto Star*, 1 June, 1963 as quoted in Jean Provencher, transl. David Ellis, *Rene Levesque, Portrait of a Quebecois* (Toronto: Gage, 1975), 199.
- ¹⁶ As he acknowledged in an interview: "I never accepted the two-nations theory. That is why I never advocated *biculturalism*. In fact, from a sociological view, there are far more than two nations in Canada: English-speaking people, French-speaking people, aboriginals, and so on...That is why I always talked about *bilingualism* and *multiculturalism*, and why I always opposed the two-nations theory". Max and Monique Nemni, "A Conversation with Pierre Elliot Trudeau," *Cité Libre* 26: 1 (February–March, 1998), 92–93.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid*, 289.
- ¹⁸ Marshall McLuhan, "The Story of the Man in the Mask," quoted in Stephen Clarkson and Christina McCall, *Trudeau and Our Times, Volume One: The Magnificent Obsession* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1990), 112, fn. 26.
- ¹⁹ Clarkson and McCall, *Trudeau and Our Times*, 112–113.
- ²⁰ An example of the conventional corporate wisdom on this can be found in Martin Lindstrom and Tim Frank Anderson, *Brand-Building on the Internet* (London: Kogan Page, 2000), 124–132.
- ²¹ Leaders, "The case for brands," *The Economist*, September 8, 2001, 11.
- ²² Special Report Brands, "Who's wearing the trousers?," *The Economist*, September 8, 2001, 26.
- ²³ Peter van Ham, "The Rise of the Brand State," *Foreign Affairs*, 80: 5 (September/October, 2001), 3.

-
- ²⁴ Quoted in Christina McCall-Newman, *Grits, An Intimate Portrait of the Liberal Party* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), 109.
- ²⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Cycles of American History* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1986), 47.
- ²⁶ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, “Foreward,” *Federalism and the French Canadians*, xix.
- ²⁷ The basic groundwork for research on this topic was done by the late Professor Smiley. See, in particular, D.V.Smiley, Chapter 5, “The Politics of Canadian Federalism”, in *Canada in Question, Federalism in the Eighties*, Third ed., (Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1980), 120–157.
- ²⁸ John Meisel, “Howe, Hubris and ‘72, An Essay on Political Elitism,” Chapter Five, *Working Papers on Canadian Politics* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1973), 217–252.
- ²⁹ Trudeau, *Federalism and the French Canadians*, 211–212.
- ³⁰ Klein, *No Logo*, 428.
- ³¹ Personal Interview with the Right Honourable Romeo LeBlanc, 7 October, 2001.
- ³² Pierre Trudeau, “The Values of a Just Society,” in Axworthy and Trudeau, eds, *Towards A Just Society*, 368.
- ³³ Rae, 292.
- ³⁴ Clarkson and McCall, 11.

