

Nationalism and Ideology in an Anticonsumption Movement

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In this research we examine the role of the nationalist ideology of *swadeshi* in a contemporary anticonsumption movement and show that its deployment is linked to the experiences of colonialism, modernity, and globalization in India. Specifically, we offer a postcolonial understanding of reflexivity and nationalism in an anticonsumption movement opposing Coca-Cola in India. This helps us offer an interpretation of this consumer movement involving spatial politics, temporal heterogeneity, appropriation of existing ideology, the use of consumption in ideology, and attempts to bring together a disparate set of actors in the movement.

Anticonsumption has been described as “a resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment or rejection of, consumption more generally” (Zavestoski 2002, 121). It may be directed at a brand, a set of brands, or, as Zavestoski notes, consumption more generally. Recent attention to anticonsumption has emerged in the 2006 International Conference on Anti-Consumption Research (see <http://www.icar.auckland.ac.nz>), as well as in special issues of the *Journal of Business Research*, *Psychology and Marketing*, and *Consumption Markets and Culture* devoted to the topic. But most of this work has been at the individual psychological level of consumer attitudes and actions. The current research focuses on the relatively neglected level of the historic emergence of ideology and its nationalistic emphasis in an anticonsumption movement in India.

Researchers have examined various forms of resistance in consumer activism and anticonsumption movements in the past 2 decades (Argenti 2004; Cohen 2003; Dobscha 1998; Elsbach and Bhattacharya 2001; Firat 2004; Frank 1997; Heath and Potter 2004; Klein, Smith, and John 2004; Penalzoza and Price 1993; Rao 1998; Rumbo 2002; Yazicioglu and Firat 2007). These studies have broadly focused on identity politics, local dislocations by global corporations,

exploitation of vulnerable stakeholders, and environmental damage by businesses as reasons for consumer activism and resistance. Several consumer researchers have also identified the role of ideology in shaping resistance to consumption and consumer activism (Kozinets and Handelman 2004; Witkowski 1989; see also Arnould and Thompson 2005). Yet the historical emergence of ideology and the deconstruction of its discursive practices to understand the relationship between anticonsumption and the concept of nationhood or ethnic identity have received only limited attention in consumer research (Crockett and Wallendorf [2004] is an exception).

In this research we examine a movement against Coca-Cola from the village of Mehdiganj in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. We deconstruct the specific elements involved in the movement’s attempted deployment of the nationalist ideology of *swadeshi*. We show that the anticonsumption movement is impelled by the nationalist ideology and is characterized by temporal variability and spatial politics. Furthermore, we show that the contemporary discourse of *swadeshi* is different from its original ideological articulation, and this explains the recursive impact of the appropriation of existing ideology in a new anticonsumption movement. Highlighting the materiality of ideology, we show that the nationalist ideology of *swadeshi* has been historically dependent on developing close linkages with key consumption objects. In cultivating an understanding of these ideological issues, we demonstrate that the anticonsumption movement involves a diffused set of ideas used to broaden the base of the movement against its corporate adversary. In the final analysis, we offer an understanding of how prominent global brands run the risk of becoming antinational icons of oppression.

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UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY OF SWADESHI

The nationalist ideology of **swadeshi** is defined by Sarkar (1973, 92) as an ideology “closely associated with many phases of Indian nationalism—that indigenous goods should be preferred by consumers even if they were more expensive and inferior in quality to their imported substitutes.” Our interpretation of the nationalist ideology of **swadeshi** is closer to that of scholars who have argued that **ideology** is not merely the distortion of facts, development of false consciousness, or creation of distorted beliefs and have instead suggested that **all truth is socially constructed** (Althusser 1971; Eagleton 1991; Zizek 1989). Accordingly, **for ideology to be successful it has to relate to a certain material reality** and cannot merely create distortions in the ideational domain, as critical theorists such as Horkheimer and Adorno (1944) and Marcuse (1968) argued. This interpretation helps us focus on the socioeconomic context that is impelling the nationalist ideology of **swadeshi** in India. In particular, we draw on **Althusser’s seminal contribution that systematically highlights ideology as a structural feature of a lived reality by emphasizing lived features of our daily existence, such as voting and saluting, that constitute the materiality of ideology.** In unpacking the nationalist ideology of **swadeshi**, we offer an understanding of its colonial and postcolonial phases in Indian history. Thus, in order to understand anticonsumption in Mehdiganj, we focus on the economic and sociopolitical roots of the **swadeshi** ideology. This is particularly useful in contextualizing the neonationalist response to globalization in general and to Coca-Cola in particular (see Gerth [2004] for an account of a somewhat similar anticolonial import-boycott movement in republican-era Shanghai; see Foster [2008] for related analysis of the contest of meanings and value for Coca-Cola in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere).

Tracing the Colonial Origins of Swadeshi

Historically, **swadeshi** dates back to the late nineteenth-century specter raised by nationalists in the Indian subcontinent against the decline of local industry in the face of increasing competition from British manufacturers. The first systematic deployment of the ideology happened between 1905 and 1910 in the **swadeshi** movement in Bengal, where people were protesting against the British decision to divide the region into separate provinces. The key basis for this movement was the fear of an economic drain leading to the impoverishment of locals forced to participate in the British Empire. **The British cloth that was at the center of this movement was actively targeted by nationalists, and attempts were made to symbolize it as being dirty and impure** (Bayley 1986). A defining feature of the rejection of foreign cloth was support for the consumption of *khadi*, or home-spun cloth, which became a symbol of resistance and national identity (Trivedi 2003). The lyrics of a popular song in the nationalist movement capture the essence of the drain thesis and the centrality of consumption to the movement:

We may be poor, we may be small,
But we are a nation of seven crores (seventy million). . . .
Defend your homes, protect your shops,
Don’t let the grain from our barns be looted abroad.
We will eat our own coarse grain and wear the rough, home-spun cloth,
What do we care for lavender and imported trinkets?
Foreigners drain away our mother’s (*Bharat Mata*’s) milk,
Will we simply stand and watch? (Goswami 1998, 625–26)

Cochran (1980, 47) documents similar songs in the movement against foreign brands in Shanghai during the first 3 decades of the twentieth century.

The **concepts of sacrifice, purity, and morality through boycott and swadeshi** were taken to their ultimate conclusion by Gandhi (1997). Supporting the ideology of **swadeshi** as a vehicle for *swaraj*, Gandhi (1997) interpreted consumption of machine-manufactured products from outside India as sinful. **In the Gandhian worldview, real swaraj, or positive freedom in Berlin’s (1969) interpretation, was not possible without moral development, in which resisting modernity was foundational.** Furthermore, **Gandhi’s vision of swadeshi and swaraj were constantly woven around mythic India with its glorious past, which shunned technology, urban life, and consumerism and idealized self-sufficiency** and the limited consumption of village India. The Gandhian interpretation of **swadeshi** is particularly relevant here because of its influence on the anticonsumption movement in contemporary Mehdiganj.

The rhetoric of Gandhi was historically contingent on the nationalist belief that **the cultural changes brought about by the British were premised on the inferiority of the Indian culture, which was perceived to be getting hegemonized and displaced** (Panikkar 2006). **Gandhi’s (1997, 72) rhetoric suggesting that “Indian civilization is unquestionably the best” attempted to unify Indians and instill a sense of self-belief in the society. Interestingly, the identity politics considered central to new social movements and primarily in richer Western countries was an integral part of the Indian nationalist movement** (Eder 1995; Melucci 1995; Offe 1999; Touraine 1981). As Ahmad (1992, 172) emphasizes, the identity politics of nationalism also challenges Said’s (1978) interpretation of Orientalism, which fails to see in **swadeshi** the contrarian discourse of inverting the global hierarchy by **“situated social agents impelled by their own conflicts.”**

Another defining feature of **swadeshi** in the nationalist movement **was an attempt to sublimate conflicting, multiple solidarities based on caste, religion, and regional affiliations under the unifying rubric of nationhood.** Furthermore, the **swadeshi** movement at this time sought to secure autonomy for the imagined national space through the fusion of the abstract notion of Indian nationhood with a particularized vision of Hindu as *Bharat* (the dominant indigenous term for India) and **swadeshi** practices such as the boycott of foreign products (Goswami 1998). **It was clearly an attempt to memorialize Indian nationhood and to represent it as a unified economic, cultural, and political whole** (Alam 1999).

It has also been argued that the swadeshi emphasis on the local has to be situated within the broader context of colonial expansion and that “the deterritorializing thrust of capitalism spawned national territorial closure and strategies of reterritorialization” (Goswami 1998, 627). Thus, **Indian nationalism**, as Breckenridge and Van der Veer (1993, 12) have argued, **is the “avatar of orientalism in the later colonial”** period. The ideology of swadeshi entailed a search for an authentic Indian community and an absolute national space with mythic interpretations of the past in response to the global decentering of the local processes. The particularized national space was conceived as the pure container of Indian culture, and **handlooms became material symbols of the imagined simplicity and purity of rural life, which were regarded as being outside the boundaries of the modern colonial era** (Goswami 1998).

Thus, a reflexive response to the colonial experience shaped the cultural representation of India in the nationalist discourse of swadeshi (see also Askegaard and Kjeldgaard 2002; Sahlins 1993). A similar reflexive response continues to guide the current movement against Coca-Cola.

The Postcolonial Avatar of Swadeshi

The swadeshi ideology in India did not disappear with independence. Although the Gandhian ideal of swaraj was sidelined in postindependence India in favor of a more popular and Western version of urbanization and nation building, the ideology of swadeshi continued as an important feature of the economic development process for several decades after 1947 (Bardhan 2003). The **emphasis on import substitution in the mixed economy** pursued by the Indian state until the early 1990s was a direct result of the dominance of this ideology (Bardhan 2003; Goswami 1998). Until 1991, India broadly witnessed an attempt to balance requirements of operating as a capitalist economy and as a welfare state. It was argued that the project had its inherent limitations and that the sluggish growth rate was brought about by a divide between political and economic development as the economy failed to match the changing aspirations of politically and materially more aware people (Bardhan 2003). Others attribute “this historic failure of the nation to come into its own, to a failure due to the inadequacy of its bourgeoisie as well of the working class to lead it into a decisive victory over colonialism and a bourgeois-democratic revolution” (Guha 1982, 7). As a result, the postcolonial sociopolitical space in India has been dotted with social movements (e.g., environmental movements such as Chipko Movement, Silent Valley Movement, and Narmada Bachao Andolan; agricultural reform movements such as Shramik Sangathana Movement and Sarvodaya; and Maoist movements such as Naxalite Movement and People’s War).

Driven by rising internal discontent and the neoliberal phase of global capitalism, India has witnessed some significant changes in the past 2 decades as part of the structural adjustment program started in the country in 1991 (Bardhan 2003). The economic liberalization has removed trade tariffs, privatized government-controlled industries, made In-

dian currency trade on world currency markets, and allowed multinational corporations to have free access to the Indian market (Chandrashekhar and Ghosh 2000). The structural adjustments have resulted in sharp economic dislocations and an increase in inequality in the country. **The structural adjustment program**, mandated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, **has also been criticized for eliminating state subsidies and price support programs, resulting in a decline in per capita consumption of food** (Patnaik 2004; Swaminathan 2000) and clothing (Chossudovsky 1997).

The rural-urban divide is particularly relevant to contextualize the Mehdiganj protest because rural India, where 70% of the population resides, shows greater poverty, inadequate educational infrastructure, and poorer health facilities compared with urban India. With the onset of the structural adjustment program, households with no access to land have increased from 38.7% to 43.1% of total households, and 100,000 farmers are reported to have committed suicide because of economic hardships in the 5-year period between 1998 and 2003 (Jha and Negre 2007). Ironically, while this decline in farm welfare occurred, the state decreased its budgetary expenditure on rural development from 22.2% of the national budget to 13.8% between 1991 and 2002 (Jha and Negre 2007). From the perspective of postcolonial theory, Gupta (1998, 35) argues that **postcolonial developments in India reflect a tension between “industry-first” and “agriculture-first” strategies**. Thus, the agrarian crisis that characterizes the present Indian economy and critical interpretations of current state policies constitute the background discourse of swadeshi against globalization and the neoliberal development model that shapes the Mehdiganj anticonsumption movement (see also Aiyer 2007).

The contemporary processes of globalization have again unleashed a deterritorializing dynamic of colonial spatial and economic practices and are **spurring a resurgence of opposition, this time involving neonationalism**. As a result, the ideology of swadeshi continues to shape the ongoing debate about the concept of nationhood in India (Goswami 1998; Panikkar 2006). Snow and Benford (1988) have suggested that frames that actors use to justify their actions in a social movement must resonate with their audiences. It involves a critique of modernization and globalization and finds expression in several movements of resistance in the country. **In such tension-laden confrontations with globalization, prominent multinational brands become a synecdoche for the global generally** (Burke 1996; Foster 2008; Miller 1997; Taussig 1980). Whereas Gandhi’s villain was colonialist Britain symbolized by its machine production, **postcolonial India faces the invasion of Western-branded goods**. Europe has already been colonized by irresistible American brands, according to recent histories (De Grazia 2005; Domosh 2006). Canclini (2001) reveals a parallel brand invasion in Mexico. And after years of protectionism and the expulsion of a number of prominent foreign brands like Coca-Cola, India now faces similar threats to its identity and economy. The anticonsumption movement against Coca-Cola in Meh-

diganj is shaped by this discourse against globalization. The resurgence of swadeshi is characterized by renewed claims to an alternative vision of participatory processes and has rekindled the tradition versus modernity debate in India (Lindberg 1995). Thus, as a reflexive process in response to modernity of a particular form, tradition is being reinvented in India. And a noticeable feature of this process is that **in modernity**, as Giddens (1990) points out, **reflexivity takes a new character in which the past cannot be justified without its modern legitimation**. In this case, we find that globalization gives legitimation to swadeshi in India.

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The village of Mehdiganj is located approximately 20 kilometers from the holy Indian city of Varanasi. This village has a population of about 12,000 and is primarily composed of Patels, who form a community of weavers. Most villagers make their living from agriculture. Historically, however, the community of weavers has been very closely integrated into the silk industry of Varanasi. For the past several years, the peaceful village of Mehdiganj has been transformed into a battleground in the anticonsumption struggle and the anticorporate movement in India. Farmers in Mehdiganj and surrounding villages are agitating against the Coca-Cola bottling plant located in Mehdiganj. In 1999 Coca-Cola started this bottling plant, which is owned by Hindustan Coca-Cola Holdings Private Limited, which also owns the beverage firm nationally.

Coca-Cola has a history of troubled existence in the country, and in 1977 it was forced to withdraw from the market after the government made it mandatory for the firm to maintain greater transparency in its transactions with the parent firm and to reduce its equity stake in accordance with the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, a law enacted in 1974 to regulate the businesses in the country. It is alleged that in order to avoid this law, Coca-Cola—which was suspected to be indulging in an illegal transfer of money to Atlanta—decided to withdraw from the Indian market, accusing the government of forcing disclosure of their formula (Subramanian 2002). Under the changed economic climate of the structural adjustment program in the nineties, Coca-Cola returned to India in 1993 by taking over Parle Beverages, the largest Indian manufacturer of carbonated soft drinks.

In order to understand the role of ideology involved in the anti-Coke-consumption movement, we chose to examine over a period of 1 year the discursive practices of some of the key organizations participating in the well-publicized struggle against Coca-Cola in Mehdiganj. We began by examining and analyzing brochures, media articles, and Web sites offering news and information about the anti-Coke movement in Mehdiganj. This helped us in identifying Lok Samiti (People's Association), Gaon Bachao Sunghursh Samiti (Save the Village Association), and Azadi Bachao Andolan (Save the Freedom Movement) as the three key organizations involved in the local anti-Coke movement.

Lok Samiti is part of Lok Chetna Samiti, which is a Gandhian organization dedicated to pursuing the larger goal of **sarvodyaya, or collective welfare** (Wolf 2005). Similarly, Azadi Bachao Andolan is another Gandhian organization that specifically pursues Gandhi's vision of swaraj and swadeshi. These organizations operate primarily in North India, and for more than 2 decades their activities have focused on espousing Gandhian ideals and the swadeshi ideology. Historically, their protest against multinationals in general and Coca-Cola in particular predates the Mehdiganj struggle. Their activities also include recent protests against the large Indian corporations, which they believe are increasingly similar to the multinationals in the globalizing national economy. In Mehdiganj, the resistance was initially started in 2002 by farmers under the banner of Gaon Bachao Sunghursh Samiti to protest the pollution and water shortage attributed to Coca-Cola. In the following years, the other two organizations joined the local protest activities in Mehdiganj and brought a distinct ideological interpretation to the protest movement. The movement is simultaneously determined by symbolic concerns of protesting against a giant global brand and by pragmatic concerns caused by displacements in their local setting.

The activist organizations make use of pamphlets, booklets, public meetings, protest rallies, and supporting Web sites to argue their case. We collected their brochures and periodicals and the articles posted on related anti-Coke Web sites. These methods of protest have been an integral feature of Gandhian activism in recent years. Most of these activities were also extensively used in the nationalist movement and have a distinctive Gandhian imprint of *satyagraha*, or protest for truth. The pamphlets and booklets are commonly distributed at protest rallies and public meetings that are attended by consumers, workers, and farmers. The rallies are held in neighboring villages and cities around the bottling plant. The protests attract varying participants depending on sites, which include schools, public parks, and open fields.

We also visited and observed protest sites and activities of anti-Coke activists. We attended protest rallies and followed public speeches to understand the activities of the organizations involved in the movement. This part of the data collection was conducted primarily by the field researcher along with a research assistant, who interacted with activists and Coca-Cola managers and observed protest activities. The field researcher and the assistant are Indians who have lived in North India and close to Mehdiganj for several years and have a good understanding of the local culture and Gandhian activism. The two authors of this article, however, were involved in analysis and theorization. While only one researcher collected field data, for simplification we use "we" instead of "I" in our discussion of the research activities. This phase of the fieldwork consisted primarily of participant observation in Mehdiganj and neighboring villages. Additionally, we conducted 10 interviews with activists, giving representation to each of the three organizations. Our initial contact with the activists was made through an acquaintance who was closely associated with

Azadi Bachao Andolan. This contact in turn helped us access the other two organizations as we immersed ourselves in the protest activities. We also interviewed villagers in Meh-diganj and surrounding villages to understand their views on the protest and the reasons for it. We conducted 17 interviews with the villagers. A participant profile is presented in tables 1 and 2. Following qualitative research conventions, our sample plan was purposeful, and we used within-case sampling and a nested approach, looking at various relevant actors in the movement. Our objective was to look for variance in the extent of their immersion in the anti-Coke movement (Thompson and Troester 2002). We broadly questioned activists about the reasons for opposing Coca-Cola and their understandings of the state of the movement. In addition to these interviews, we visited the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Meh-diganj, which is at the focus of the protest movement. Although we found it initially difficult to access Coca-Cola, our university positions in India helped us access its managers. We observed the operation of the plant in a nonproduction period. This gave us an opportunity to observe the water extraction, cleaning, and disposal processes of the plant. We also informally interviewed three officials associated with the firm. In these interviews, we questioned these officials primarily about the allegations made by the anti-Coke activists, in order to elicit their version of the story.

Our database comprises pamphlets, periodicals, media articles, material downloaded from anti-Coke Web sites, field notes, and verbatim interview transcripts. Much of the protest material and the interviews were primarily in Hindi and were later translated into English. These multiple sources of data helped us understand the different facets of discursive practices and their ideological mooring in the context of activist organizations, Coca-Cola, and the village of Meh-diganj (Price and Arnould 1998). In particular, the methodological triangulation and referential adequacy helped us understand different and often contradictory facets of ideology in the anti-Coke protest (Erlandson et al. 1993). For

example, our interviews with activists and the Coca-Cola managers presented contradictory versions of the protest movement and of the contested notion of nationhood. Similarly, we found contradictions between activists' interview-based claims of inclusivity in defining the protest agenda and the observed practices of hierarchical decision making in the invocation of *swadeshi*.

(RE)ENACTING SWADESHI

In order to comprehend the attempts made in the movement to countervail Coca-Cola's corporate agenda, we focus our analysis primarily on the key ideological elements in the anti-Coke discourse employed by the activists. We found that five broad themes of discursive practices emerged in our analysis. The five subsections below are named for these themes: "Emplacing Nation and Reclaiming Spaces," "Mythic Identity in the Heterogeneous Time of a Nation," "Creating a Movement by Pluralizing Discourse," "Stigmatizing Coca-Cola and Morphing Ideology," and "Deploying Consumption to Materialize Ideology." These five themes help us understand the dimensions of space, time, plurality, recursion, and materiality in ideological practices involved in the anticonsumption movement examined in this research.

Emplacing Nation and Reclaiming Spaces

The meaning given to a space depends on the nature of the social practice being undertaken (Bourdieu 1977; Lefebvre 1974). Nations are created not by merely drawing maps on the globe but through concrete social practices to develop a coherent social space in which nationalism is realized (Carter 1987; Shapiro 1999). The creation of a national space was an integral feature of the *swadeshi* ideology in colonial India. A similar attempt at emplacing Indian nationhood was witnessed in Meh-diganj. In this discourse, an effort is made to envision national boundaries as imper-

TABLE 1

PROFILE OF ACTIVISTS AND COCA-COLA MANAGERS

Pseudonym	Organization	Occupation	Age (approximate)	Interview duration (min)
Ritesh	Azadi Bachao Andolan	Senior activist	50	90
Aman	Azadi Bachao Andolan	Senior activist	40	90
Rajan	Lok Samiti	Senior activist, schoolteacher	35	120
Ramesh	Lok Samiti	Senior activist	25	30
Satish	Lok Samiti	Activist	25	30
Ashok	Lok Samiti	Activist	25	60
Raghvendra	Lok Samiti	Activist	40	45
Prashant	Gaon Bachao Sunghursh Samiti	Senior activist, farmer	60	60
Kamlesh	Gaon Bachao Sunghursh Samiti	Senior activist, farmer	55	60
Piyush	Gaon Bachao Sunghursh Samiti	Activist, farmer	23	45
Santosh	Coca-Cola	General manager	50	60
Pavan	Coca-Cola	Plant manager	35	60
Mahendra	Coca-Cola	Human relations manager	35	30

NOTE.—All activists and managers described in this table are male.

TABLE 2
PROFILE OF VILLAGERS

Pseudonym	Occupation	Gender	Age (approximate)	Interview duration (min)
Ramesh	Farmer	Male	40	60
Ashok	Farmer	Male	30	45
Manju	Farmer, homemaker	Female	30	30
Ramu	Farmer	Male	35	60
Manoj	Farmer, former Coca-Cola worker	Male	25	60
Niru	Farmer, homemaker	Female	30	30
Hari	Farmer	Male	25	30
Raman	Farmer	Male	40	45
Ashish	Farmer	Male	35	60
Ravindra	Farmer	Male	30	30
Kalol	Farmer, former Coca-Cola worker	Male	45	30
Salim	Farmer, former Coca-Cola worker	Male	45	30
Kritika	Farmer, homemaker	Female	25	30
Diwan	Farmer	Male	60	30
Mirza	Teacher	Male	40	30
Inder	Farmer	Male	45	45
Ratan	Former Coca-Cola worker	Male	25	30

meable to foreign multinationals and to reclaim local space from the deterritorializing thrust of globalization. For the sedimentation of these boundaries, it is necessary for the anti-Coke activists to project the firm as an exploitative business entity from another country. A pamphlet circulated by Azadi Bachao Andolan (2001, 4–5) makes the following claim:

[British] East India Company that came into the country for trade, robbed India of its wealth for 200 years and cunningly colonized us and made us into slaves. The Country became bankrupt. Today in place of East India Company, 14,000 multinational firms are robbing India. Leading this pack are Pepsi and Coca Cola. These firms sell several varieties of cold drinks and are taking away 5000 million INR [\$120 million] as profit from the country.

Spatial politics is manifest in several ways in the above narrative. It is evident that Coca-Cola is portrayed as an outsider that comes from a foreign nation. Moreover, the movement of profits is given a spatial emphasis by highlighting its expatriation away from the country. The narrative also shows that the swadeshi ideology is being deployed to create a discourse in which the heterogeneous society of India is presented as a social space characterized by economic and social unity (Bourdieu 1998). Here, India is represented as a homogenous national space that is being uniformly exploited through expatriation of profits by Coca-Cola. Similarly, a spatial identity is being created through the discourse of colonized nationhood by the claim that the entire nation is being enslaved by multinationals such as Coca-Cola (Shapiro 1999). Here, evocation of slavery also reminds consumers of the colonial past that continues to stigmatize the nation. For these activists, the expulsion of Coca-Cola from the national boundaries would erase the stigma and lead to the creation of a desired free national

space. It is notable that Coca-Cola left India in 1977 and did not return for 20 years.

The anti-Coke activists further claim that the Coca-Cola plant is destroying the region by consuming 2.5 million liters of water every day and is contributing to a serious water crisis. In highlighting the problem of water, activists claim that Coca-Cola uses its financial muscle to buy government favor and influence its functioning as a regulatory authority. In recreating the nationalist emphasis of swadeshi, a Lok Samiti (2006, 1) pamphlet raises the issue of contaminating the space around it, claiming:

In breathtaking arrogance, the company dumped sludge into the fields around it. People began to develop sores on their feet after they walked through the discharged water that had been flooding their fields. Mosquitoes became a serious menace and malaria cases increased. Many said that some hand-pumps in the area have been emitting foul, non-potable water.

Citing such problems, a pamphlet from Azadi Bachao Andolan (2005, 18) further claims that “freedom from Coca Cola is the first step in our new freedom struggle.” In this neonationalist discourse, an attempt is made to show Coca-Cola as a large and arrogant American enterprise—that is, in a phrase that has become an indictment of globalism (Pendergrast 2000), as “Coca-Colonizing” the space. In the spatial politics witnessed in Mehdiganj, we found that Coke’s social space was labeled as Western, malignant, and imperialistic. In contrast, the social space of Indian nationhood was framed as just and benign (Bourdieu 1998). In an attempt to reterritorialize the deterritorializing thrust of globalization, the notion of Indianness is emplaced in specific spatial boundaries. And as Foucault (1998) has suggested, this comprises the heterotopia of the national space, in which resistance to globalization is fostered. The heterotopia cre-

ated in the Indian nation space inverts the reality of global and Western influences.

In summary, the emphasis on expatriation of profits, excessive usage of underground water, and damage to the environment is an attempt to reinforce the image of Coca-Cola as a foreign invader that is violating the national space. As the process of globalization symbolized by Coca-Cola attempts to obliterate national maps and deterritorialize Meh-diganj to make it a part of the global economy, anti-Coke activists try to emplace Coca-Cola in the space of Indian nationhood. This emplacement into the specifics of spatial politics is shaped by the nationalist ideology of swadeshi, which impels the anticonsumption movement against Coca-Cola.

Mythic Identity in the Heterogeneous Time of a Nation

Postcolonial theorists have argued that temporality is an important dimension of identity construction (Bhabha 1994; Gupta 1998). A significant element of the swadeshi ideology in the nationalist movement was the emphasis on the creation of an alternate and authentic Indian identity in response to the lack of sovereignty under British colonialism. Our data show that, influenced by the history of the ideology, an important kernel of anti-Coke activism by Azadi Bachao Andolan and Lok Samiti is the emphasis on identity politics inherent to the consumption of Coca-Cola. Specifically, activists use the ideological framework of swadeshi to highlight the role of cultural imperialism associated with Coca-Cola. The following extract from a pamphlet by Azadi Bachao Andolan (2001, 9) illustrates this feature of the movement:

Pepsi and Coca Cola in order to increase their sales spend millions of rupees and rope-in film stars, sports personalities, singers to endorse their products. These firms are taking away the ability of consumers to think rationally by continuously creating new and sexy advertisements. These encourage people to adopt a life of conspicuous consumption. They [Pepsi and Coca-Cola] are indoctrinating small children into this hedonistic lifestyle by sponsoring religious celebrations, advertising in schools and colleges, and through beauty contests. These activities are making a mockery of our culture.

In this discourse, Coca-Cola is an agent of alienation from the traditional Indian identity (see also Belk 2000). Here, the movement attempts to recreate the discourse of colonialism by showing that social agents are unable to attain their identities and their interests because of the activities of the firm. The extract also highlights other important dimensions of the discursive practices in this anticonsumption movement. The emphasis on resources that multinational corporations enjoy is a constant target of attack by these activists. According to the activists, these resources allow Coca-Cola to “use” popular Indian icons to influence the behavior of consumers. This emphasis on resources is combined with the discourse of U.S. hegemony, and the com-

bination is blamed for subjugating third world countries. Highlighting this dimension, Aman, an anti-Coke activist, stressed that “this firm [Coca-Cola] is against our value system. It threatens our very identity.” According to Chatterjee (2004, 7), heterogeneous time in a postcolonial setting is not merely “the co-presence of several times—the time of the modern and the times of the pre-modern” but is rather a “new product of the encounter with modernity itself.” The above narratives show that in the discourse of swadeshi, the nationalist ideology is deployed to make Coca-Cola modern and thus different from the traditional Indian value system, which is dichotomized and rendered as premodern.

In identifying the issue of cultural contamination associated with the consumption of Coca-Cola, Ritesh, one of the key activists of Azadi Bachao Andolan, reveals in the following interview extract the temporality that the movement is trying to focus on:

Consumption of Coca-Cola violates our culture and is leading to cultural imperialism. *Lassi* and *sherbat* are our drinks, but these [Coca-Cola and Pepsi] have come from outside and are spoiling our youth. There is a difference between youngsters who consume these drinks [Coca-Cola and Pepsi] and those who consume the traditional Indian drinks. The former will wear pants, shirt, cap, and glasses of a certain kind, while the latter will be seen in *dhoti kurta* [traditional Indian clothes]. You should see the expressions of these people when they are consuming Coca-Cola; they are full of pride. These people think that they are modern *aur ek thasak hoti hain* [and are full of arrogance]. Consumers of traditional Indian drinks are far more humble and down-to-earth.

In this narration, it is clear that privileging the traditional Indian drinks, such as *lassi* and *sherbat*, is an attempt by the activists to counter the notions of modernity and progress associated with consumption of Coca-Cola. This differs from the study of Manning and Uplisashvili (2007) of the deployment of claims of local tradition and purity in Georgian beer production while simultaneously embracing modern Western brewing, packaging, and branding methods. These activists further try to highlight and reaffirm their beliefs in the alternate ideology of nationalism, voluntary simplicity, and purity to counter the multinationalism and consumerism associated with Coca-Cola. This discourse draws on several normative principles in the region. Traditional social norms accord superiority to “natural” over “synthetic” products like Coca-Cola. Furthermore, traditional norms have favored “homemade” over “market-based” food items as signifiers of purity and personal care (Goyal and Singh 2007; Khare 1976). The ideology of swadeshi was an attempt to unify the pluralities of caste, region, and religion in the nationalist movement. In its more contemporary form, we find a strong recurrence of this theme of unification in the deployment of the swadeshi ideology in the anti-Coke movement. Similar to the nationalist deployment of swadeshi, Coca-Cola and its consumers are created as the “other,” and an interpretation of the unified traditional Indian identity is posed as contesting this con-



struction. This is a reversal of the marginalization of local identity that took place during the earlier commercial invasions of colonialism (McClintock 1995, chap. 5). According to Bhabha (1994), the narrative of nationhood is often split into an ambivalent “double time” in which one part pertains to people being taught to be part of a nation and the other concurrent process is performative, involving the use of a nation to unify, signal, and reify nationhood. The above narrative shows that as a nationalist ideology, swadeshi gives expression to the double time of Indian nationhood. On the one hand, educating consumers to boycott Coca-Cola, as a marker of the current deterritorializing thrust of the neoliberal globalization, is an essential feature of the relationship between swadeshi and anticonsumption actions. Here, the ideology of swadeshi is used as a pedagogical tool to educate consumers into becoming like “true Indians,” and rejection of Coca-Cola is a vehicle for achieving nationhood. On the other hand, swadeshi is also deployed performatively to create a mythic Indian identity that is homogeneous and timeless.

In summary, anti-Coke activists create temporal heterogeneity in their interpretation of Indian nationhood. This interpretation relies on the creation of a double time of nationhood. Thus, the ideology of swadeshi creates ambivalence in which consumption of Coca-Cola and consumption of traditional Indian drinks become markers of colonized present and precolonial past, which simultaneously characterize contemporary India.

Creating a Movement by Pluralizing Discourse

It has been observed that new social movements are characterized by a disparate set of actors who transcend their class-specific roles (Offe 1999). In the movement in Mehdiganj, an attempt is being made to form a coalition of consumers, farmers, and workers to oppose Coca-Cola. This alliance requires a wide array of discursive practices in the ideological formation of swadeshi. Through these discursive practices, the anti-Coke movement hopes to ensure that individuals and groups of consumers, farmers, and workers repeatedly confront Coca-Cola with claims and intentions that are, in the long run, incompatible with the firm’s claim to legitimacy. These discursive practices are attempts to help the movement weld together an alliance of disparate entities and mount a broad-based challenge against its chief antagonist.

As described earlier, the protest against Coke’s consumption of water and pollution of fields is an attempt to raise concerns relevant to farmers in the region. Inder, a farmer in the village, further recounted:

It used to take 5 hours to irrigate my field earlier. Previously, water level was high; now it has gone down, it takes more time to irrigate land. It sometime takes 15 hours. Earlier, there was only one government tube well and that used to cater to the need of the entire village. Earlier, water was available at 25–30 feet; now it is available at 150 feet. In our area of Mehdiganj, farmers are very badly affected by

Coca-Cola. It has bored wells 500–600 feet deep that draw a lot of water.

This narrative shows that the farmers in the region believe that Coca-Cola is responsible for harming their interests. The allegation made by the anti-Coke activists of the depletion of the water table caused by Coca-Cola is an issue that finds support among the villagers in the region.

The discourse of identity described in the previous subsection (“Mythic Identity in the Heterogeneous Time of a Nation”) is further aimed at getting consumers to reject Coca-Cola in favor of traditional Indian drinks. The activists also try to demonstrate to consumers that Coca-Cola indulges in an unfair business practice by overpricing its products. Anti-Coke activists tell consumers that the prices of the firm are unfair because its principal raw ingredient (water) is available at almost no cost. In a public debate between the activists and the Coca-Cola managers that we observed, when the Coca-Cola managers insisted that their consumption of water was much less than activists claimed, Sandeep Pandey, representing Lok Samiti, told them that the movement was “in principle against any form of privatization of water.” Arguing against the symbolic activity of rainwater harvesting at both the Coca-Cola plant and in one of the local prisons, Pandey sarcastically told the Coca-Cola manager, “I humbly request you to shut down your plant in Mehdiganj and shift it to Central Jail. You can do your rainwater harvesting there and continue to produce Coca-Cola from the prison.”

In this swadeshi discourse, the economic problem of water is also closely tied to the humanitarian problem of the claimed exploitation of workers by Coca-Cola in the bottling plant at Mehdiganj. Ratan, a villager who has worked in the Coca-Cola plant in the past, informed us:

If there will be no water everybody will die. The plant will be of no use. . . . We used to get Rs 60 [per day]. . . . Workers are getting low wages. People are also not getting jobs. . . . These are the issues of dissent. . . . How can we make a union? In my home there is nothing and family members are dying of hunger. Should I make desperate attempts to arrange food or [should I] make a union? Please, tell me.

The above narrative reflects the anger against the Coca-Cola bottling plant in the region. This narrative combines the concerns of farmers, villagers, and workers into a unified discourse of their exploitation by Coca-Cola. It is evident that the allegations of scarcity of water, low wages, and joblessness raised by the anti-Coke activists find resonance in the region. This argument is from an article on one of the anti-Coke Web sites, India Resource Center (2006):

The vast majority of the workers at the Mehdiganj bottling plant are contract workers who receive no benefits and are “temporary.” The union enjoyed some successes, including winning a US\$2 wage for an 8 hour day and double time for work on Sundays. In 2002, the union protested for eight days to demand that contract workers be made permanent and that

workers be paid during winter months (when the bottling plant drastically reduces production). The Coca-Cola company responded by dismissing the key leaders of the union, including Bhagwan Das Yadav, and some workers who had participated in the protest. False cases were also initiated against 13 of the union leaders. The Coca-Cola company also rolled back many of the gains realized by the union.

Such narratives of exploitation by a foreign firm are similar to the discourse of *swadeshi* in the nationalist movement. The anticonsumption movement also alleges that the “real working conditions” inside the Coca-Cola plant involve violations of India’s minimum wage law and exploitation of workers. In the course of one of our visits to Mehdiganj, a worker who had developed some skin problem on his feet was brought to us. We could see that his feet were covered with blisters, and he was in visible pain. He and the activists told us that in the process of working at the Coca-Cola plant, the chemicals used for cleaning the bottles went inside his shoes and caused the skin problem. The alleged plight of such workers is a common part of public speeches given by anti-Coke activists. In an attempt to further portray Coca-Cola as a violator of national laws, these activists also expose the cases of union leaders who have been dismissed by Coca-Cola. For example, in one of the protest rallies being covered by the international press, Lok Samiti arranged a television interview with Bhagwan Das Yadav, the union leader mentioned in the previous extract, to give an account of how his attempts to unionize were scuttled by Coca-Cola in collusion with the state.

The Coca-Cola managers we interviewed emphasized the benefits associated with their presence and dismiss all the allegations made by the activists against the firm. These managers insisted that Coca-Cola follows the laws of the country by regularly paying its taxes, getting state certification for pollution control, having proper water purification processes in place, and minimizing its usage of groundwater. They further made an attempt to discredit the movement and asserted that Coca-Cola is a socially responsible firm with a reputation for active community involvement across the globe. In the words of the Coca-Cola managers:

Santosh: Coca-Cola is being targeted because it is an American company. We have never violated any law of the land. Coca-Cola as a global corporation has a larger manifesto of contributing to local communities. We regularly conduct development activities such as health camps, adult and women education programs, and distribution of blankets in Mehdiganj.

Pavan: Coca-Cola has taken several initiatives to help the community. We employ deaf and dumb workers from Varanasi to help them make their living.

Furthermore, in order to break the unity of diverse stakeholders in the movement, Santosh argued that Coca-Cola is an economic asset to the region and provides employment opportunities for hundreds of workers. He also claimed that farmers in the region were happy with the firm and supported

the business. The managers maintained that the main reason for the bias against Coca-Cola was the popularity the activists gained by opposing it. They also held that this publicity comes in handy for material gains. One of the managers told of a local activist, Rajan, who until recently only had a bicycle and torn clothes. Reportedly after taking leadership of the movement against Coca-Cola, he graduated to motorbikes, trendy clothes, fancy sunglasses, and a big house.

Rajan is the most important leader of Lok Samiti in Mehdiganj, and the attack against him is an understandable tactic by Coca-Cola. Rajan’s house, constructed as a school by an organization funded by expatriate Indians, is also an easy target because it is quite posh compared with the semipermanent houses that characterize his village. Anti-Coke activists deny these allegations and claim that their organizations function on a voluntary basis and are supported by public donations. Rajan informed us, “Lok Samiti is supported by Asha [a voluntary organization], AID [Association for India’s Development, another voluntary organization], and donations from our supporters.” Similarly, Aman of Azadi Bachao Andolan clarified to us, “We are completely funded by donations from our well wishers and from the subscribers of [our journal] *Nai Azadi*.” They further accuse Coca-Cola of fraudulent practices and of bribing local and state officials to get their support. According to Rajan, “Coca-Cola bribes *panchayat* officials by giving mobile phones, clothes, utensils, and by providing them with hand pumps.”

In summary, through the ideology of *swadeshi*, the anti-Coke movement makes an attempt to bring together a disparate set of actors that includes consumers, farmers, and workers to oppose Coca-Cola. From the perspective of the anti-Coke movement, this requires managing a plethora of conflicting stakeholder interests by keeping a diffused and wide array of discursive practices in the ideological framework. Coca-Cola resists this oppositional unity and attempts to placate different stakeholders in the movement by claiming that its presence in the region is benign.

Stigmatizing Coca-Cola and Morphing Ideology

In the original deployment of *swadeshi*, local consumer goods were considered inferior to their British counterparts. Despite the stigma of inferiority, it was considered patriotic and sacred to prefer local products over superior British goods (Sarkar 1973). However, in the anti-Coke movement in Mehdiganj, the global hierarchy of superiority in production is inverted through the health discourse that stigmatizes the brand. Several pamphlets and articles and the public speeches of activists try to highlight the harmful health effects of consuming Coca-Cola by citing studies conducted across the world and by encouraging consumers to adopt traditional Indian drinks such as *lassi* and *nimbu paani*. To enhance the credibility of their claims, these activists cite medical reports and health studies done in different parts of the world. The following extract from a pamphlet released by Azadi Bachao Andolan (2001) cites

medical reports and discursively unpacks some of the harmful ingredients in products like Coca-Cola:

Sugar—you consume six spoons of sugar in a bottle [of soft drink], which mixes with your blood and poses a serious health hazard. This results in dental diseases, diabetes, obesity, and digestive problems.

Caffeine—these cold drinks contain caffeine to enhance their taste . . . and can cause six types of cancers that include cancers of stomach and bladder. Doctors have labeled consumption of caffeine as slow poisoning.

Acid—In order to make these drinks tastier, phosphoric and citric acids are used . . . phosphoric acid reduces the level of calcium and phosphorous in your body. Calcium necessary for your bones gets dissolved and passes off with your urine [when you consume these drinks]. This results in pain in your joints and weakness of bones.

Carbon dioxide—Carbon dioxide is used to create fizz in these cold drinks. Carbon dioxide can cause ulcers in stomach and intestines.

Activists often use theatrical methods in their discourse to sharpen their ideological rhetoric against the firm. In a protest rally organized in Mehdiganj, the following claim about the drain on consumer health was made by Ashfaq, one of the key activists of Lok Samiti:

Coca-Cola also contains acid. If you want to try this out, you should try it in your home. If there is a toilet in your home and if it is very dirty, you take a bottle of Coca-Cola and pour it inside. You take a brush and clean it after sometime. You will realize that your toilet starts shining. This happens because Coca-Cola contains acid. You can imagine what it must be doing to your stomach when you drink it.

This speech was made at a rally to launch a “100 days of protest” strike against Coca-Cola and included hundreds of young and old consumers in the region. To enhance the credibility of their claims, these activists also regularly demonstrate the effectiveness of Coca-Cola for cleaning toilets in their visits to local primary schools.

Recently, Coca-Cola was hit by a major controversy about high pesticide content in its Indian soft drinks. A Centre for Science and Environment (2006, 14) report states, “In all brands of Coca-cola, the total pesticide residues were 11.05 ppb, which is 22.1 times the BIS [Bureau of Indian Standards] limit for total pesticides in soft drinks [0.5 ppb].” Although it is likely that farmers who employ pesticide-intensive agricultural practices, and not Coca-Cola, have brought about the pesticides in groundwater used to manufacture Coke, the activists argue that the cola giant should have processes in place to purify water before selling it to consumers. The problem of pesticides is invoked by these activists in almost every public engagement. Ashfaq further informed the audience at a protest rally that “Coca-Cola contains pesticides. In Andhra Pradesh, farmers are using Coca-Cola as a pesticide in their farms.” In order to gain more credibility, these activists further cited a report given

to the Indian parliament by a Joint Parliamentary Probe Committee headed by the current agriculture minister (Srivastava 2006). The stigmatization of Coca-Cola through the health discourse is an attempt by these activists to avenge the stigma of being considered inferior to the West. Thus, the health discourse is a simultaneous marker of transformed swadeshi and of the superiority of local Indian products (Sarkar 1973). The privileging of local drinks, the allegations of health problems in cola consumption, and the reporting of pesticides in Coca-Cola characterize this discursive shift in the hierarchy of global production systems. Therefore, the current practice transforms swadeshi from valorizing consumption of inferior local produce to a discourse of a new hierarchy in which the local is not only morally superior but also produces superior objects of consumption.

The cumulative narratives show that in the creation of India, there is a guarded celebration of nationhood in the postcolonial discourse. Unlike the original ideology of swadeshi, in the contemporary discourse the state is an ambivalent agent. The ambivalence toward the state stems from the political economy of postcolonial India, in which the neoliberal state is perceived to be guilty of colluding with large multinational corporations like Coca-Cola. And yet the welfare state remains an instrument of justice that is invoked to protest against Coca-Cola. This is evident in several petitions Lok Samiti has given to state authorities to restrict the usage of underground water, to report pollution of fields, and to inform about the illegal occupation of village land by Coca-Cola. Thus, ambivalence characterizes the protest against Coca-Cola and the current ideology of swadeshi.

In summary, in the anticonsumption movement in Mehdiganj, the ideology of swadeshi gets transmuted in two important ways. First, the more contemporary adoption of swadeshi subverts the global hierarchy of superior goods and celebrates local products over their global alternatives by stigmatizing Coca-Cola. Second, nationhood symbolized by the Indian state is ambivalently celebrated in the contemporized swadeshi ideology. Thus, in the anticonsumption movement against Coca-Cola, the recursion of the nationalist ideology of swadeshi is not a mere repeat of historical ideas but entails their morphing due to conditions of post-coloniality.

Deploying Consumption to Materialize Ideology

Ideology does not merely exist in the ideational domain; it requires materialization to become effective (Althusser 1971; Gramsci 1971). Althusser (1971) differentiates between the theoretical ideology and the practical ideology of social life and emphasizes the significance of the material expression of ideology. Thus, Althusser (1971) stresses the significance of uncovering materiality and its apparatus in an ideology. In focusing on the materiality of swadeshi, we draw attention to processes of the deployment of consumption objects and to attempts to integrate ideology with everyday practices of its subjects. A significant part of the anticonsumption movement in Mehdiganj is an attempt to

engage consumers in boycott activities. Through the boycott of Coca-Cola and consumption of traditional Indian drinks, the idea of Indian nationhood is given a material form (see also Bewes 2002). Most activists encourage consumers to look for alternatives to carbonated soft drinks and regularly distribute pamphlets calling for boycotts of the producers of these drinks, as illustrated in a pamphlet from Azadi Bachao Andolan (2001):

Let's make Coca Cola and Pepsi quit and go—

1. Let's not consume Pepsi-Coke.
2. Let's make our friends, family members, and relatives boycott these brands.
3. In the marriage celebrations in our family, neighborhood, or in our village we should not allow these cold-drinks to be served.
4. Indian cold-drinks like *thandai*, *lassi*, and *Rooh-Afza* should be served. These are cheaper, tastier, and healthier alternatives.

Here the emphasis on consumption of local drinks such as lassi and thandai helps materialize the ideology of swadeshi and its notions of nationalism. These attempts are similar to Althusser's (1971) emphasis on paying close attention to everyday practices, such as voting and saluting, that constitute the materiality of ideology. We also found references in the printed material and Web sites to the use of force and violence by Coca-Cola to quell this nonviolent protest movement. Many of the protest activities are inspired by the Gandhian tradition of satyagraha, or showing dissent through peaceful consumer boycotts and hunger strikes (Bayley 1986). The following extract from an interview with Ashok, a Lok Samiti activist, explains:

Our method of protest is very different. We follow the dictum of Gandhi and never use violence. *Hum Coca-Cola nahin pite aur logon ko bhi na pine ke liyen samjhate hain* [We don't drink Coca-Cola and make others understand that they should not drink Coca-Cola either]. In front of my shop there was a shop that was selling Coca-Cola. You can call it our influence, I requested that shop owner not to sell Coca-Cola and I asked him to sell lassi instead. That fellow also used to put [up] posters of Coca-Cola. I made him understand [*samjhaya*] that people with family stay in this locality and he should not display Coca-Cola posters. He complied. If you do not listen, we will not use violence, instead we will engage you in a dialogue.

Thus, materializing the ideology of swadeshi, the activists enact a particularized notion of Indian nationhood by emphasizing nonviolence, consuming lassi, and refusing to consume Coca-Cola. Similarly, the stories of the use of Coca-Cola to clean toilets and as a pesticide on farms described earlier provide further illustrations of the perceived necessity to integrate the ideological discourse of swadeshi with the everyday actions of its stakeholders. Anti-Coke activists attempt to translate the ideology of swadeshi into a structural

feature of the lived reality of its participants by emphasizing such acts. Thus, nationalist and neonationalist appeals are made to people as consumers, emphasizing lived features of their daily existence in consumption processes.

Finally, our assessment of the movement shows that resistance still remains at the margins of the rising consumer society in postcolonial India. Although activists make exaggerated claims of success and point to the declining sales of the soft drink, their ability to mobilize popular support outside Mehdiganj has been rather limited. Activists frequently cite the ban placed on Coca-Cola by several U.S. universities in their public speeches, but it appears that such bans were the result of the universities signing exclusive contracts with Pepsi-Cola. The resonance of swadeshi in Mehdiganj is significant, and the movement has witnessed popular participation in the region (Van Breukelen 2006; Wolf 2005). The perceived sense of displacement caused by Coca-Cola is much greater and is coupled with a stronger organizational presence of the activists in the region. But in much of urban India, and especially among its large middle-class population, the movement finds little resonance. However, it would be an error to underestimate the extent of the potential damage the movement can cause to the brand globally. Here, supporting Giddens's (1991) assertion about interpenetration of global and local, we found that some of the activists were invited to the United States and Europe to give accounts of their struggle against the multinational giant. Globalization of the Mehdiganj struggle is also evident in the presence of international media at their protest rallies. For example, at one of the protest rallies we found a German television channel that was covering the resistance to Coca-Cola's sponsorship of the last soccer World Cup. The Coca-Cola managers are well aware of the dangers associated with the internationalization of the local issue. This concern was best illustrated in an early morning phone call that we received after one of our field visits to Mehdiganj in which an excited Pavan, who headed the operations of the bottling plant, triumphantly informed us that "the truth has finally prevailed and the University of Michigan has lifted its ban on Coca-Cola." The cola giant further tries its best to reduce the damage to the brand by portraying Coca-Cola as a vehicle of industrialization and economic transformation (for more on this strategy by Coca-Cola, see Ger and Belk [1996]).

In summary, the data presented in this section suggest that the anti-Coke movement relies on the ideological discourse of swadeshi. The nationalist framework suggests that violating the economic rights of workers, polluting farms, creating ecological imbalance by exploiting underground water, and selling unhealthy drinks to consumers are as central to Indian nationhood as are specific notions of Indian identity and nonviolence. We have identified five dimensions of space, time, plurality, recursion, and materiality to explain the anti-Coke movement. The key to understanding these tropes lies in the comprehension of reflexivity that defines the ideological framework. Here, reflexivity implies that local drinks like lassi are celebrated because they do not rep-

resent globalization, but their appropriation by a large global corporation like Coca-Cola can lead to a discursive shift that will again recreate nationalist resistance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This article investigates the concept of a nationalist ideology in the context of an anticonsumption movement. Our focus on the historical emergence of swadeshi helps us understand the role of a nationalist ideology in resistance to consumption and in construction and reification of political and cultural spaces. Specifically, we describe issues of space, time, plurality, recursion, and materiality, which have not been adequately treated in prior anticonsumption research. We argue that a nationalist ideology is an unarticulated challenge to global brands that particularly manifests itself in postcolonial encounters and is an important addition to the contradictions in present-day consumer culture (see also Holt 2002). Our findings expand the boundaries of theorization on resistance to consumption, anticonsumption, reflexivity, and ideology in consumer research in several important ways.

Our research shows that the creation of national space is a reflexive local response to the historical perceptions about the displacements caused by globalization in the region (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard 2007; Foster 2008; Goswami 1998; Sahlins 1993; Wilk 1995). This makes our context in India different from Miller's (1997) Trinidad, where Coca-Cola is not perceived as a symbol of global homogenization but is embedded in the discourse of ethnicity. Our findings about the anti-Coke movement show that a reflexive deployment of tradition and nationhood makes the authenticity of global brands a contested terrain. The intensity of the anti-Coke movement in the cultural domain is consonant with Fine's (1992) thesis that the global popularity of a brand provokes fears of and resistance to its perceived global hegemony. Holt (2002) argues that in the postmodern world, brands face the challenge of consumers becoming aware of the commercialization of countercultures, the sponsored nature of existence, an authenticity deficiency, and difficulties in attaining the identities promised by marketers. We add to this list of contradictions by highlighting another important feature of the contemporary existence that threatens consumer culture and hinges on the local response to the global. We have identified the role of a nationalist ideology that, apart from the images of the economic exploitation of the local, involves invocations of tradition, patriotism, and an alternate local identity to create deeper challenges to authenticity. It can be argued that leaders of the anti-Coke movement, impelled by swadeshi, essentialize India and yet situate it in a heterogeneous time space that is a reflexive response to the transnational flows under neoliberalism (see also Ghosh 2006). Unlike Holt's (2002, 86) conceptualization, however, we do not observe authenticity becoming an "endangered species." To the contrary, in swadeshi we see a distinct, vibrant, and contrarian discourse of "authenticity" that is made inaccessible to international brands. In swadeshi, the experience of transnationalization shifts the

discursive space of authenticity to one defined by an inversion of global flows.

Our findings show that authenticity is being created around a particularized notion of nationhood. In the national space, consumers are reflexively taught to become like themselves, and this makes Appadurai's (1996) call for postnationalism rather premature (see also Sahlins 1993). Our findings also show that, to create a particularized notion of localism in the face of globalism, activists engage in "authenticating acts" of personal protest, stage "authoritative performances," and invent a sense of Indianness to create a feeling of integration (Arnould and Price 2000). In particular, by highlighting the role of swadeshi ideology and its constituting elements, we complement several researchers who have emphasized the role of local reflexivity in response to globalization of consumption processes (Askegaard and Kjeldgaard 2002, 2007; Çağlar 1995; Foster 2008; Wilk 1995). We agree with these authors that local consumption is constantly being reconstructed in response to globalization as competing discourses try to "outlocal" each other (see also Ger 1999). We have contributed to this theorization in two important ways. First, we have shown that the reflexive response has elements of space, time, plurality, recursion, and materiality that have not been adequately realized earlier. Second, unlike Askegaard and Kjeldgaard (2007), we also see reflexivity as a neoconservative response that may not offer inclusive branding strategies that restrict local economic and cultural displacements. We concur with Sahlins's (1993) argument that "a simple opposition between the West and the Rest is in many ways an oversimplification" and show that the dichotomization of global as exclusive and local as inclusive is limiting. This feature of antibrand movements is particularly significant because global brands, as markers of transnational flows, increasingly deal with such allegations of economic and cultural displacements caused by their presence. Furthermore, our findings add to the understanding of consumption spaces in consumer resistance developed by Kozinets (2002) and Thompson and Arsel (2004) by showing that, in a postcolonial national space, a reflexive attempt is made to create a heterotopic consumption space in which globalization is resisted and inverted to preserve traditions (see Foucault 1998). Thus, our findings show that understanding resistance to consumption requires a deeper analysis of localized cultural interpretations of production and marketing systems as they are reflexively determined within national spaces in our increasingly global world (see also Giddens 1990).

We also inform consumer research on the role of ideology in consumption in several significant ways. Our findings show that temporal heterogeneity is a reflexive dimension of postcolonial anticonsumption that remains elided in extant theory (Crockett and Wallendorf 2004; Kozinets and Handelman 2004). Specifically, our findings show that the anticonsumption movement studied is characterized by a double time of nationhood (Bhabha 1994). We argue that the presence of temporal variability in the nationalist ideology of swadeshi opens up spaces for resistance and al-



ternate consumption discourses through which local drinks are valorized and Coca-Cola as a multinational brand is demonized. Our examination of ideology in colonial and postcolonial India offered us a unique opportunity to illustrate that ideology is a path-dependent process and that the appropriation of swadeshi in the new anticonsumption movement has a recursive impact on the ideological discourse as well. We found that the contemporary forces of globalization and postcolonial experience play a particularly important role in attenuating the ideological discourse. These shifts help in understanding the recursive impact of the appropriation of existing ideologies in new anticonsumption movements, previously elided in consumer research (see also Ahmad 1992; Eagleton 1991). Past consumer research that has highlighted the role of ideology in consumption has overlooked the question of why religious, nationalist, and political ideologies have kernels in their discourses woven around consumptionscapes. For example, while Crockett and Wallendorf (2004) provide an account of a political ideology influencing consumption, an important question that our research poses and addresses involves the necessity of consumption to a political ideology. We argue that the materiality of an ideology achieved through linkages with consumptionscapes is necessary for the creation of frame resonance (Althusser 1971; Snow and Benford 1988). Moreover, we further understanding about the role of ideology and consumption signifiers in consumer research by providing a description of how they are used to form a coalition of stakeholders within a marketing system. In highlighting this neglected dimension of consumer theory, we provide an account of discursive practices employed by these anticonsumption activists to broaden the base of their movement by making swadeshi a plural ideology (see also Buechler 2000; Melucci 1995; Offe 1999). Hence, an ideology not only impels an anticonsumption movement but also is a plural discursive space to accommodate a disparate group of actors.

In conclusion, our study raises several issues that consumer researchers may wish to address in the future, including how specific discursive strategies are developed and implemented, the role of the institutional context, and the processes by which different stakeholders influence the challenges mounted to their ideology. Within the broader literature of consumer activism and boycotts, this particular study introduces a nationalistic resistance to Western globalism as well as a local concern with issues within the lived experience of farmers, villagers, workers, and other constituencies. Given the growing nationalism in nations like India and China, it will be of interest to learn more about the frictions that leading global brands may create among consumers and the intersecting discourses through which these brands are understood. It will be of interest to understand how anticonsumption movement leadership is able to influence the ideological foundations of the struggle. Ideology is a complex socioeconomic phenomenon, and yet it remains one of the biggest challenges for the consumer re-

search scholarship to decipher and unravel in this period of late capitalism.

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