RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS

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EDITOR

1. Ethnic Revolutions and Occupational Dilemmas*

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In the early 1960's, Canada experienced what has popularly been called the Quiet Revolution. Following the death in 1959 of the premier of the Province of Quebec, where the French Canadians make up some 80 percent of the population, and the election the following year of the Liberal party, there developed a strong neo-nationalistic social movement. The sociopsychological roots lay in the increasing consciousness among French Canadians of their subordinate position compared with the English Canadians and of the lower status of their language and culture. The new Liberal government sought, through a series of striking legislative and administrative acts, to update the province economically and socially and to assert rights of equality with the English Canadians (See Royal Commission, 1965, 1967, 1969; Sloan, 1965; Desbarats, 1965; Guindon, 1968; Jones, 1967).

One sub-development of the Quiet Revolution was the growth of a movement seeking a politically independent Quebec. In recent years, considerable publicity has been given to the FLQ, that militant group of French Canadians which advocates violence as a means of achieving independence. This group, however, is small compared with the much larger group of Separatists, politically organized as the Parti Quebecois, which seeks independence by democratic means. And the Separatists in turn, are but part of the still larger neo-nationalist social movement, comprising members of all political parties, which seeks more advantages for French Canadians and power for Quebec.

The leaders of this new movement, it has been convincingly argued, do not come from the traditional French-Canadian business and professional elite, the working class, or the rural population; rather they originate from the new

1 Writers on the Quiet Revolution have distinguished between traditional nationalism of the French Canadians which was characteristic of earlier days and neo-nationalism which assumes a modern industrialized society with educated and technically skilled French-Canadian personnel (Fortin, 1968; Guindon, 1968).
2 In the Quebec Provincial Election of 1970, the Parti Quebecois received 24 percent of the popular vote and probably over 30 percent of the vote of French-Canadians.
middle class, that group of relatively well-educated and successful French Canadians ordinarily employed as salaried administrative, professional or white collar personnel (Brazeau, 1963; Guindon, 1964). Some members of the new middle class work for French-language institutions, such as French-Canadian business firms, associations, government or quasi-government groups; others are employed in English-Canadian institutions and industries. This paper concerns the latter group.

The neo-nationalist social movement in French Canada was preceded and accompanied by a modernizing socialization process. In years past, the French-Canadian economy had been largely rural; the commerce and industry small; and the professionals, the traditional priests, doctors and lawyers. When the more business oriented and technically advanced outsiders from English Canada, the United States and Great Britain introduced industry and large-scale commerce, they brought in their own executives and managers often employing bilingual foremen as intermediaries (Hughes, 1943). In the course of this modernizing process, the English-speaking outsiders introduced many new technical and white-collar occupations – one of which was advertising – which were foreign to French-Canadian traditions and ways of thinking.

Over a period of time, the French Canadians, through working with English-speaking personnel, formal course work and direct experience, acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to handle the more advanced administrative and technical positions. Many in fact learned the knowledge and skills so well that, when the Quiet Revolution came, they felt competent enough to assume major decision-making roles and compete when necessary with English-language personnel.

This dual process of socialization and a developing nationalism has been a familiar pattern in many parts of the world. In one way or another, it has been characteristic of such underdeveloped nations as India, Egypt, Algeria and Tanzania, and, in many respects, of such multi-ethnic advanced countries as Belgium and the United States where, in recent years, the increasingly qualified Flemish and Blacks have risen up in protest.1 In these situations, the outsiders ordinarily are technically more advanced and dominant and the native group economically disadvantaged and subordinate; the language of the outsiders is the language of upper echelon industry and commerce and has higher status; and the language and the popular culture of the outsiders, through the mass media and work world, penetrate into and threaten the native culture. This dual process, it is apparent, applies in a general way, to bicultural or pluralistic societies; it also applies to particular occupations. The analysis of the former permits certain broad generalizations about ethnic tensions in a society; the analysis of the latter is helpful in bringing out variations within a country and the subtleties of the process.2

In this report, in the form of a four-stage model, we analyze the operation of this dual process, in the context of the Quiet Revolution in French Canada,

1 When a nationalist social movement is successful and the native group has not had adequate socialization, it is likely, as in the Belgian Congo, to experience severe difficulties.

2 A developing nationalism and ethnic socialization of course are intertwined. Nationalism itself has its roots in a distinctive socialization and may not become a viable movement until the aspirations of an early socialization process are blocked, and the type of ethnic socialization in turn is likely to determine the limits of a nationalist movement.