

indicative of the author's perceptive, tolerant, and basically good-humored understanding.

Paul Freedman is the Chester D. Tripp Professor of History at Yale University. He is the author of *Ten Restaurants That Changed America* (2016) and *American Cuisine and How It Got This Way* (2019).

. . .

Engineered to Sell: European Émigrés and the Making of Consumer Capitalism. *By Jan L. Logemann.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2019. vii + 371 pp. Illustrations. Cloth, \$105.00. ISBN: 978-0-226-66001-1.

doi:10.1017/S0007680521000313

Reviewed by Dario Gaggio

This ambitious and fascinating study tells the history of marketing at midcentury, when consumer engineering came of age as a result of the combination of market research and attention to design in its multiple dimensions. By the 1930s, and with increasing force in the post–World War II decades, a variety of experts began to envisage the possibility of making consumer behavior more predictable not only by monitoring and measuring preferences but also by actively shaping consumption as a social process. As Roy Sheldon and Egmont Arens put it in 1932, consumer engineering could thus become even more comprehensive “humaneering.” While many studies have examined these themes, Jan Logemann breaks new ground by focusing on transnational exchanges between Europe (above all, the German-speaking lands) and the United States and by following the professional trajectories of a diverse group of experts who left the Old Continent in the interwar decades to market their knowledge across the Atlantic. This transnational approach persuasively challenges simple narratives of Americanization by highlighting complex connections and subtle contradictions that an exclusive focus on either the United States or Europe would miss.

The book is divided into three sections and nine chapters. The first section is devoted to market research, which sought to apply the insights of psychology and sociology to the study of (and intervention in) consumer behavior. A chapter deals with the “Vienna School,” a group of practitioners who began their careers when the former Habsburg capital was a hotbed of social reform. The rising tide of fascism led these experts to emigrate to the United States, where they brought the ambitious thrust, if not the politics, of Red Vienna. Prominent among them was sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld, who established the Bureau of

Applied Social Research at Columbia University and introduced sophisticated qualitative techniques centered on panel studies and predicated on notions of brand personality. The commitment to integrating academic and commercial pursuits was shared by German psychologist Kurt Lewin and behavioral economist George Katona, the protagonists of another chapter. Influenced by Gestalt psychology, Lewin and Katona rejected behaviorism and conceived of consumers as highly differentiated actors embedded in distinctive social networks. They also understood mass consumption as a crucial element of American democracy. In that vein, Lewin at MIT studied the impact of peer, nonhierarchical, groups (think Tupperware parties) and Katona at the University of Michigan pioneered the measurement of consumer confidence.

Of particular interest to business historians will be chapter 4, which explores the figure of the marketing consultant. Two very different experts take center stage here: Austrian former psychoanalyst Ernest Dichter and German-born statistician Alfred Politz. Both Dichter and Politz established successful consulting firms that were retained by a variety of organizations, ranging from government offices to the major Madison Avenue advertising companies. Dichter sold the results of motivation research, steeped in Freudian insights, while Politz pioneered new sampling techniques for the quantitative analysis and interpretation of consumer preferences. The author challenges Vance Packard's depiction of marketing consultants as powerful "hidden persuaders," portraying them instead as knowledge entrepreneurs for whom claims of scientific prowess were very much part of the pitch.

The contribution of European émigrés was even more evident in the realm of design, the subject of the book's second section. Like market research, industrial design became an increasingly professionalized activity at midcentury, when the "institutionalized creativity" of designers came to be understood as key to commercial success in a variety of industries. And as with market research, corporations internalized some of the design functions and hired consultants to engineer their products and brands. A chapter reconstructs how, riding on the reputation of the Werkbund and the Bauhaus, a small army of designers left central Europe in the 1930s to bring innovative solutions to the United States, where they were welcomed enthusiastically not only by the corporate world but also by prominent cultural institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art. Chapter 6 is one of the book's most successful, with its focus on two complex and fascinating characters, Ferdinand Kramer and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, who never fully reconciled themselves with the expectation that design's main function could be the acceleration of obsolescence. Kramer, an architect by training, brought his experience as a committed reformer in interwar Frankfurt to bear on the

design of modular furniture for the masses (but also of disposable novelty items such as a plastic foldable umbrella). He was one of the few “consumer engineers” to go back to Europe permanently after the war, critical of the excessive power of American sales managers. Moholy-Nagy founded the “American Bauhaus” in Chicago, which became the School of Design of the Illinois Institute of Technology. Logemann tells the eventful history of this institution as one of both conflict and fruitful collaboration with the corporate world. Business historians will be especially interested in chapter 7, which focuses on two of the most successful design consulting companies of the era, one founded by French-born Raymond Loewy in New York and the other by German-born Walter Landor in San Francisco. Also influenced by Gestalt principles, these designers insisted on getting involved in all aspects of the marketing process, from product development to retail. In so doing, they turned brands into integrated aesthetic and psychological experiences.

The final section of the book follows the émigré consumer engineers on their postwar trips back to Europe, where they helped make U.S. mass consumption more palatable to Europeans but also reminded them of the European roots of American modernism. A chapter is devoted entirely to Hans Knoll and his U.S.-born wife, Florence, who redesigned corporate offices and other spaces on both sides of the Atlantic with their distinctly cosmopolitan and modern taste. The last chapter examines a variety of ventures that the émigrés promoted in Europe after the war, from their collaboration with Voice of America and other U.S. government organizations in the context of the Cold War to the establishment of training institutions such as the Ulm Institute of Design. Despite their early success, many of the companies established by the European émigrés in the United States did not survive the “creative revolution” of the late 1960s and early 1970s, though their academic ventures proved longer lived. Nevertheless, we can agree with Logemann when he maintains that we still live in world the transatlantic consumer engineers contributed to shaping. Their holistic approach to consumption is as relevant today as it was in the age of high modernism and social engineering.

Dario Gaggio is professor of history at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is the author of In Gold We Trust: Social Capital and Economic Change in the Italian Jewelry Districts (2007) and The Shaping of Tuscany: Landscape and Society between Tradition and Modernity (2017).

. . .