

“Consumer Engineering” – Mid-Century Mass Consumption between Planning Euphoria and the Limits of Growth, 1930s-1970s

March 26–28, 2015

Institut für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, Universität Göttingen

Conveners: Gary Cross (Pennsylvania State University), Ingo Köhler (Göttingen), Jan Logemann (Göttingen / GHI)

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015 PH 12 (NIKOLAUSBERGER WEG 15)

4:00 PM

Welcome

Ingo Köhler, University of Göttingen

Hartmut Berghoff, German Historical Institute, Washington

Introductory Remarks: Consumer Engineering in Transatlantic Perspective

Jan Logemann, University of Göttingen

5:00 – 7:30 PM

Panel I – Consumer Engineering and Innovations: Costs and Benefits

Costs of Marketmaking Innovations: the Business Perspective

Andrew Godley, University of Reading

What does “Fast Capitalism” Mean for Consumers?

Gary Cross, The Pennsylvania State University

7:30 PM

Reception (at Gipskabinett, 2nd Floor)

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2015 MZG 6.117 (6TH FLOOR “BLUE TOWER”)

9:00 AM

Coffee and Welcome

9:30 – 12:00
AM

Panel II – Business Strategies In Postwar Western Europe

Chair: Hartmut Berghoff, German Historical Institute

Middle Way Kitchens – Swedish Social Engineering and the (Global) Consumer

Orsi Husz, University of Uppsala

Consumer Credit as a Marketing Tool: European Experiences of Consumer Credit at Mid-Century

Sabine Effosse, University of Paris-Ouest / Nanterre

Old Sports, New Shoes: Product Innovation, Consumer Engineering, and the Consumption of German Sports Footwear, c.1950–c.1980

Thomas Turner, Birkbeck College, University of London

Market Research as a Means of Consumer Engineering: The German Car Industry and the Consumer, 1950s-1980s

Ingo Köhler, University of Göttingen

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 – 3:15 PM **Panel III – Designing Places of Consumption**

Chair: Alexander Engel, University of Göttingen

Engineering the VIP Interior: William Pahlmann and the Aesthetics of Individualism in Postwar America

Regina Blaszczyk, University of Leeds

“Shopping Malls and Social Democracy: Victor Gruen’s Postwar Campaign for Conscientious Consumption in American Suburbia”

Joseph Malherek, George Washington University

Concorde and Consumers: Engineering Desire for a Technological Icon, 1959-1979

Guillaume de Syon, Albright College

3:15 PM Coffee Break

3:30 – 6:00 PM **Panel IV – Social Engineering and Rationalizing Consumption**

Chair: David Kuchenbuch, University of Gießen

Organizing Sellers – Rationalizing Society: Victor Vogt’s Verkaufspraxis and the American-German Flow of Practical Business Knowledge, 1925-1943

Uwe Spiekermann, GHI Washington

Engineering Patriotism? Buy-National Campaigns from Austria, Britain, and Switzerland, 1910-1970

Oliver Kühschelm, University of Vienna

Rationalized abundance. Visualizing well-being in Romania during the 1950s

Mara Marginean, Romanian Academy, Institute of History

7:00 PM **Conference Dinner**

Place: Bullerjahn, Markt 9

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2015 MZG 6.117 (6TH FLOOR “BLUE TOWER”)

9:00 AM Coffee

9:30 – 11:45 AM **Panel V – Consumer Movements and the Response to Consumer Engineering**

Chair: Steffen Jahn, University of Göttingen

*Belgian Consumer Movements between Hopes for Modernist Engineering and
Countercultural Critiques*

Giselle Nath, Ghent University

*“The Consumer Crusader”: Hugo Schui and the German Consumers’ Association. An
Example of a More Activist Approach to German Consumer Organization?*

Kevin Rick, University of Marburg

Engineering an Empowered Consumer by Publishing Consumer Reports?

Günter Silberer, University of Göttingen

11:45 AM Coffee Break

12:00 – 12:45 PM **Concluding Discussion**