The making of the consumer: knowledge, power and identity in the modern world


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Abstract

Book synopsis: We constantly hear about 'the consumer'. The 'consumer' has become a ubiquitous person in public discourse and academic research, but who is this person? The Making of the Consumer is the first interdisciplinary study that follows the evolution of the consumer in the modern world, ranging from imperial Britain to contemporary Papua New Guinea, and from the European Union to China. It makes a novel contribution by broadening the study of consumption from a focus on goods and symbols to the changing role and identity of consumers. Offering a historically informed picture of the rise of the consumer to its current prominence, authors discuss the consumer in relation to citizenship and ethics, law and economics, media, work and retailing.

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anthropology; the political contestation of water and tea, as well as shopping in modern Europe, and the current refashioning of consumer identities in East Germany, in multinational stores in China, and in public debates. about the effect of consumerism on childhood and citizenship in Europe and North America. Missing Person. The consumer as an engine of wealth and representative of the public interest is an established figure in contemporary politics and discourse. Indeed, the consumer may have become all too familiar, exhorted to keep the The early modern state was a coercive machinery designed to make war and to extract resources from society. Yet at the end of the eighteenth century, this machinery came to be radically transformed. Or rather, the ‘state’ was combined with a ‘nation’ forming a compound noun – the ‘nation-state’ – which was organised differently and pursued different goals. It was only in the nineteenth century that relations between Europe and the rest of the world were irrevocably transformed. The reason is above all to be found in economic changes taking place in Europe itself. At the end of the eighteenth century, new ways of manufacturing goods were invented which made use of machines powered by steam, and later by electricity, which made it possible to engage in large-scale factory production.