

JAMES P. WOODARD, *Brazil's Revolution in Commerce: Creating Consumer Capitalism in the American Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

A central tension in the study of Latin America revolves around the extent to which the region's nations can be lumped together because they have similar histories and the extent to which their individual histories diverge. Foreigners tend to lump them together and local scholars split them apart, often asserting some sort of exceptionalism. One aspect that seems to connect the region over the course of the twentieth century is the role of the United States. James Woodard's *Brazil's Revolution in Commerce* does an admirable job of detailing the process of how the United States, and so many of its companies and their products, became dominant in Brazil over the course of the twentieth century.

In just under 400 pages of text and almost 100 pages of detailed notes, Woodard discusses just about every effort made by American corporations, trade associations, and government agencies to promote U.S.-made goods and services throughout much of the twentieth century. Given the book's focus on this era, Woodard also analyzes the establishment of American-owned factories in Brazil. One of the book's main contributions to the historiography is its thorough discussion of trade promotion and advertising. By doing so, *Brazil's Revolution in Commerce* moves away from simplistic assertions of US government or corporate hegemony. Instead, the book shows how Brazilians transformed many aspects of American consumer capitalism and made it their own. Although Woodard does not cite Thomas Misa's (or many other scholars for that matter) analysis of "multi-local" enterprises, the book provides an in-depth analysis of the development of Brazilians' embrace of foreign goods as their own.

The book is organized chronologically into six lengthy chapters. This organization allows Woodard to focus on the different products and services of various eras, and the ways U.S.-based corporations promoted them. Chapter One focuses on the first great push of US business penetration in Brazil in the post-World War I period. This chapter focuses on new forms of advertising, especially for automobiles and radios. Chapter Two pays particular attention to the automobile industry's role in expanding consumer credit. The next chapter provides a great deal of material on the changing retail landscape in urban Brazil. The following chapters cover the post-World War II period, and then the expanding consumer culture from that era of civilian politics through the 1964-85 military dictatorship.

The best parts of the book detail the entry of US advertising firms, particularly those selling cars and appliances in Brazil. These companies not only sold American goods to Brazilians, they also transformed advertising itself. They

did so as revolutions in magazine printing and radio made it much easier to disseminate consumer culture more broadly. Woodard tracks the development of advertising and the spread of modern marketing techniques from the 1920s into the 1960s and beyond, when Brazil's consumer culture is much more developed. This was particularly the case in the aftermath of the establishment of the domestic automobile industry during the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-61). By focusing on advertising and changing media, Woodard does an excellent job of connecting the initial American-style consumer culture of the 1920s with its later expression in the 1960s and 70s through television.

That long historical sweep allows Woodard to study products ranging from ice cream and soda to automobiles and appliances. He also analyzes the growth of both foreign retailers (e.g., Sears Roebuck) and Brazilian department stores (e.g., Mappin). Because *Brazil's Revolution in Commerce* covers so much ground, it is an important addition to the historiography. The book is organized chronologically and has a fine index, and so is a valuable resource for scholars of consumerism, advertising, trade, and US businesses abroad. Unfortunately, the book's organization and Woodard's focus limit its broader usefulness. He fails to engage with the broader literature on multinational corporations in Latin America and elsewhere, and too often conflates U.S.-based businesses with America itself. Ford, for example, and to a lesser extent General Motors, relied on managers from across the globe for their foreign operations. Ford do Brasil was frequently led by Europeans. Indeed, Kristian Ordberg, a Dane, became the long-serving director of Ford in Brazil after having held a similar role in Argentina. As early as the 1920s, some U.S.-based multinationals were truly, for lack of a better term, multinational in personnel, outlook, financing, etc., and not American per se. Moreover, the foreign auto companies' design and marketing strategies in Brazil reflected their understanding of diverse global markets. General Motors' reliance on executives and engineers from its Germany's Opel Automobile—one of its divisions from 1929-2007—is another important example of that complexity.

The book is very long, and it is not written for undergraduates or a general audience. Its utility for graduate students is also somewhat limited by the ways Woodard approaches his subject. In the broadest sense, he never really asks or seeks to answer the "so what?" question. It appears Woodard has chosen to avoid addressing a wide variety of historiographies. He does not engage with broad histories of Brazil's or Latin America's twentieth century, nor does he connect his analysis of Brazil to studies of American corporations elsewhere in Latin America or the Global South, or even Canada or Western Europe. Moreover, he ignores the findings of many scholars of Brazil who have likewise studied foreign businesses there. In a book of more than 500 pages, Woodard only men-

tions other scholars' works in a bibliographic essay that does little to connect his findings to any particular historiography.

*Brazil's Revolution in Commerce* has neither a conventional introduction nor conclusion, and that signals to the reader how Woodard has chosen to wall off his findings from the works of others. It is a shame he did that because he is a fine researcher, and his book is filled with important and interesting insights. Perhaps the kindest way to interpret Woodard's choices is to say he has left the analysis to his readers. I only wish he had guided them more to the rich historiography on the many topics covered in this very well researched book.

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ANA MARÍA REYES, *The Politics of Taste: Beatriz González and Cold War Aesthetics*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2019.

Ana María Reyes's book, *The Politics of Taste: Beatriz González and Cold War Aesthetics* is an interesting analysis of the visual representation of the cultural impact of industrialization, internal immigration, and discourses of democratization and development in Colombia between 1964 and the 1970s. The artistic and socio-political structure of that process, Reyes argues, can be traced in the visual work and statements of Beatriz González and in the response of her contemporary critics, all connected by a particular idea of "taste." According to Reyes, her book "looks at the role played by the arts and criticism within this restricted and precarious return to democracy [following the dictatorship of General Rojas Pinilla], as well as at the effects of the modernization programmes that were taking place within a deeply traditional and hierarchical society" (p. 9). These programmes included migration, lured by or forced into "the *ideals* of urban civility and imagined opportunity" (p. 190) and the mechanics of urban consumerism and functional art.

Reyes's study is rich in information, illustrations, and ideas. It is also clearly structured. Six main paths guide its reading: González's personal artistic process through abstract art, Pop Art, Neo-Dada, and conceptual art; the response of her critics, among them Nicolás Buenaventura, Aurita de Cali, Walter Engel, Luis Fernando Lucena, Darío Ruiz Gómez, and, above all, Marta Traba; the place of modernism within the conventional historical sequence of Western Art; the socio-political context, internal (the populism of the National Front) as well as external (the Cold War); the construction of a post-war urban popular culture marked by migration and the "civilizing" Alliance for Progress; and a series of links between educational and art institutions such as the Universidad de los