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978-1-107-02721-3 — The Business of Waste
Great Britain and Germany, 1945 to the Present
Raymond G. Stokes , Roman Köster , Stephen C. Sambrook
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The Business of Waste
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The advent of consumer societies in the United Kingdom and West Germany after 1945 led to the mass production of garbage. This book compares the social, cultural, and economic fallout of the growing volume and changing composition of waste in the two countries from 1945 to the present through sustained attention to changes in the business of handling household waste. Although the UK and Germany are similar in population density, degrees of urbanization, and standardization, the two countries took profoundly different paths, from low waste to throwaway societies, and more recently toward the goal of zero waste. The authors explore evolving balances between public and private provision in waste services; the transformation of public cleansing into waste management; the role of government legislation and regulation; emerging conceptualizations of recycling and resource recovery; and the gradual shift of the industry's regulatory and business context from local to national and then to international.

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book had its origins in the mid-1990s in the personal experience of one of the coauthors, Ray Stokes. Having lived to that point for a number of years in the United States and Germany, I was struck upon taking up residence in Scotland in 1995 by what seemed to be a completely different attitude toward rubbish than I had encountered elsewhere. My initial impressions about this were later confirmed: for instance, recycling rates in Glasgow at that time were about 4 percent in the mid-1990s, while those in Germany – and even upstate New York, where I last lived in the United States – were at the same time vastly higher. What could account for such differences, given that all three countries were advanced industrial/consumer societies with more or less active environmental movements, and where environmental consciousness had increased dramatically in light of growing evidence of the harmful effects of pollution and climate change?

For various reasons, it took some time to get started on a concrete research project. The Aggregate Foundation (now the William Lind Foundation) provided seedcorn funding for it in 2006, when I became director of the Centre for Business History in Scotland. This allowed me to secure the services of Dr. Stephen Sambrook as a postdoctoral research associate to develop a proposal for funding. In early summer 2007, the application was successful in attracting major financial support from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (Project Reference RES-062-23-0580), and we started work on the project in earnest in September 2007. Stephen continued under the grant as a postdoctoral researcher and in that capacity carried out most of the UK-based archival research for the project. He is also a coauthor, of course. Our other coauthor, Roman

Köster, joined the team as a postdoctoral researcher funded by the ESRC grant, and he was responsible for most of the German-based archival research for the book.

The research and writing involved all three of us moving out of our comfort zones in two key ways. First, although we approached the history of public cleansing and waste management in Britain and West Germany since 1945 as economic and business historians, this project involved going beyond our usual sources and methods to consider the overlay of business/economic history on the one hand, and social, political, and environmental history on the other. Although this has been difficult at times, we believe that it has made the analysis more compelling in various ways. We also hope that the result will enrich all of these disparate fields in some ways.

The second, more important way in which this project pushed us out of our comfort zones revolved around the writing process. I have previously been involved in coauthoring four books. In each of these cases, however, coauthors undertook research and writing of discrete sections, and each coauthor worked for the most part completely independently on that. In this book we opted for a different arrangement, which proved extremely challenging, although it has also been extraordinarily fruitful. Following intensive discussion among the three of us about each chapter, I drafted an overview of it indicating the overall structure and its main themes and arguments. Stephen and Roman then provided details based on their archival and other research in the UK and Germany, respectively. I subsequently combined what all three of us had written into a single narrative, which we then discussed, corrected, and refined as a team. The writing process therefore took a long time, but it was worth it. We strongly believe, therefore, that to a greater degree than usual, writing has been as crucial to the research for this book as the archival and other investigations that have provided its empirical detail.

Our teamwork on research and writing depended, of course, on a number of organizations and individuals, and we are very pleased now to be able to thank them here formally. Generous financial support came from the William Lind Foundation and from the UK Economic and Social Research Council, while the finances (and many other things related to the project) were administered effectively and cheerfully between 2006 and early 2013 by Christine Leslie, the administrator of the Centre for Business History in Scotland. Christine's support has been essential to the smooth running and ultimate success of the project.

Preface and Acknowledgments

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Without archival and other primary data, historians cannot do their job, and we are therefore very grateful indeed to the archivists and librarians who provided assistance in identifying and consulting primary sources. The archives we used are listed in the bibliography. In addition, we would like to thank the Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM) in Northampton for allowing us access to their library early in the project. Other practitioners have also helped us in various ways in the course of research and writing, including the editor of the *CIWM Journal*, Ben Wood; Lewis Herbert; Stan Dagg; and Karl Pulver. A number of practitioners (including representatives of the Scottish Government, local authorities, the private sector, and the third sector) also took part in a workshop we organized in June 2010 on “The Business of Waste.” Held at the Centre for Business History at the University of Glasgow, the workshop featured presentations not only from practitioners but also from a range of scholars of varied disciplines who hailed from several different countries (including the United States, Hungary, and Germany, as well as the UK). This and subsequent interactions between scholars and practitioners have proven extremely fruitful, and some of the insights obtained through this process have found their way into the book.

We have also benefited from feedback that followed presentations of our ideas and findings at seminars and conferences in the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, France, Germany, and Canada. We are grateful to all participants for their critical engagement with our work and in particular to the audiences present at three separate presentations: the Copenhagen Business School, Bocconi University in Milan, and the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The three seminars took place at a critical phase in the writing in May and June 2012, and the comments and questions from the floor were both challenging and encouraging, especially from several participants from other disciplines. We have thought of them carefully as we prepared the final manuscript. And we are particularly grateful to the two formal discussants in Milan, Professors Andrea Giuntini and Antonio Massarutto. Both provided some excellent comments, as well as copies of some of their publications.

Last but not least, we would also like to thank the following individuals: Frank Smith, Eric Crahan, and Debbie Gershenowitz, our editors at Cambridge University Press (CUP), who have been very supportive of this project and who, one after the other, shepherded it from the proposal stage to the finished product; Abby Zorbaugh, the senior editorial assistant at CUP, who has patiently worked with us in the final preparation

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List of Abbreviations

AbfG	Abfallgesetz (waste law)
AkA	Arbeitskreis für kommunale Abfallwirtschaft (Working Group for the Municipal Public Cleansing Industry)
BA	Bundesarchiv (Federal Archives)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BDE	Bundesverband der deutschen Entsorgungswirtschaft (Federal Trade Association of the Waste Management Industry)
BMI	Bundesinnenministerium (Federal Ministry of the Interior)
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany)
BS	British Standard
BSI	British Standards Institution
BUND	Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (German Federation for Environment and Nature Conservation)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
COPA ⁷⁴	Control of Pollution Act 1974
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union (Christian Social Union)
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)
DDT	dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (insecticide)
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DGB	Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (German Trade Union Federation)
DIN	Deutsche Industrie-Norm (German industry standard)

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DM	Deutsche Mark
DOE	Department of the Environment
DPWA ⁷²	Deposit of Poisonous Wastes Act 1972
DSD	Duales System Deutschland (Grüner Punkt or Green-Dot System)
EEC	European Economic Community
EPA	Environmental Protection Act
EsEm	Schmidt & Melmer
ETH	Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)
EU	European Union
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GDP	gross domestic product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (limited liability company)
GMC	Greater Manchester County Council
HStA	Hauptstaatsarchiv (Central State Archive)
IPC	Institute of Public Cleansing
IWM	Institute of Wastes Management
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
KUKA	Keller und Knappich Company
LA	Landesarchiv (State Archives)
LAGA	Länder-Arbeitsgemeinschaft Abfall (Working Party of the States for Waste)
LGA	Local Government Act
MGB	Müllgroßraumbehälter (large capacity garbage container)
MLG	Mitchell Library, Glasgow
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ÖTV	Gewerkschaft Öffentliche Dienste Transport und Verkehr (public-sector employees' trade union)
PPP	public-private partnership
RIC	resin identification code of the American Society for the Plastics Industry (1988)
SCT	Society of County Treasurers
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SERO	Sekundärrohstoffsystem (secondary raw materials system)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)

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StA	Stadtarchiv (City Archive)
StJB	<i>Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i> (<i>Statistical Yearbook for the Federal Republic of Germany</i>)
TA	Technische Anleitung (technical specification)
TA Luft	Technische Anleitung zur Reinhaltung der Luft (technical specification for controlling air pollution)
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA)
TU	Technische Universität (technical university)
UBA	Umweltbundesamt
UK	United Kingdom
VKF	Verband kommunaler Fuhrparksbetriebe (Association of Municipal Public Cleansing Departments)
VPS	Verband Privater Städtereinigungsbetriebe (Association of Private Municipal Cleansing Companies)
WCA	Waste Collection Authority
WDA	Waste Disposal Authority
WRA	Waste Regulation Authority
WSL	Warren Spring Laboratory
ZfA	Zentralstelle für Abfallbeseitigung (Central Office for Waste Disposal)