Zur Lage der Soziologie

Max Weber: A Bibliographical Essay*

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Max Weber: ein bibliographischer Bericht

Inhalt: Der Beitrag gibt einen Überblick über die Rezeption der Soziologie MAX WEBERS in der seit 1960 erschienenen Literatur. Angesichts der Breite und Spezialisierung dieser Literatur werden sechs Bereiche der WEBER-Rezeption unterschieden und nacheinander behandelt: (1) WEBERS vergleichende Studien und historische Typologien, (2) seine methodologischen und erkenntnistheoretischen Beiträge, (3) seine Stellung als Theoretiker des „burokratischen Zeitalters“, (4) seine allgemeinpolitischen und hochschulpolitischen Auffassungen, (5) die marxistische Auseinandersetzung mit WEBER sowie Vergleiche zwischen dem Webersehen und dem Marxsehen Ansatz und schließlich (6) die Biographie MAX WEBERS im Kontext der zeitgenössischen Geistesgeschichte.

Abstract: The article attempts an overview of the reception of MAX WEBER’s sociology in the literature published since 1960. Considering the wide scope and specialization of this literature, six dimensions in the WEBER-reception are distinguished and taken up in turn: (1) WEBER’s comparative studies and historical typologies; (2) his basic methodological and epistemological contributions; (3) his place among theorists of “the bureaucratic age”; (4) his general and his academic politics; (5) the Marxist struggle against WEBER, but also scholarly comparisons of WEBER and MARX; and finally (6) WEBER’s biography in the context of the intellectual history of his and our time.

Much scholarship and partisanship continue to revolve around the works and impact of MAX WEBER and KARL MARX. In recent years the level of DURKHEIM scholarship has improved, and there is a steady stream of studies on individual writers and various isms in the history of modern social thought. However, nothing compares to the sheer magnitude of the concern with MARX and WEBER. This is not at all surprising in MARX’s case, since political ideologies linked with his name legitimate the governments of a large part of the globe and since in many other countries variants of Marxism are kept alive by radicalism — by the ineradicable revolutionary sentiments of alienated intellectuals — in the face of persistent inequalities and inequities. WEBER however, never created an ism in politics or scholarship, not even the political decisionism or the methodological individualism that have sometimes been attributed to him. What, then, maintains so much interest in WEBER’s work? Primarily its intrinsic scholarly superiority, as a comparative approach to macrosociological investigation, over reductionist Marxism and ahistorical structural functionalism. However, there are also political and epistemological reasons for WEBER’s continued importance: As a researcher probing into the relations between ideologies and social structures, and as a methodologist concerned with the relations of methods, values and facts, WEBER must remain controversial in the battles, inside and outside the academy, about the purpose and consequences of social knowledge for polity and society — empirical study is never an innocent or neutral undertaking.

In would like to distinguish three stages or phases in the American and English WEBER reception. During the first stage The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904/5), in TALCOTT PARSONS’ translation of 1930 (WEBER 1958), became widely assigned reading on American campuses, but without reference to WEBER’s comparative studies of the world religions. With the growing interest in large-scale organization and stratification in the wake of the Second World War WEBER’s notions of bureaucracy and of class and status were widely diffused, but without their systematic location in his typologies. GERTH and MILLS’ 1946 selections from WEBER (WEBER 1946), contrasting bureaucracy and charisma, became very influential in shaping an image of WEBER’s work, and PARSONS’ translation of the difficult-to-read categories of Part I of Economy and Society (published under the misleading title The Theory of Social and Economic Organization in 1947) made available that segment in splendid isolation from the main

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body (WEBER 1947). Moreover, PARSONS’ “creative misinterpretation” of WEBER in The Structure of Social Action (PARSONS 1937) and subsequent writings as one of his forerunners and a systems theorist manqué received much attention after 1950 with the ascendancy of his structural functionalism¹.

In 1960 REINHARD BENDIX countered this Parsonian interpretation by putting before the reader the historical substance of WEBER’s comparative sociology of politics, law and religion on the level of its own intentions (BENDIX 1960)². PARSONS had at first treated WEBER as one predecessor among others of his own theory of voluntarist social action and later juxtaposed to him his own social systems analysis, which provided a framework for studying the relations of social actors irrespective of time and place. From his systems perspective WEBER’s definitions of various kinds of social action and his historical typologies appeared atomistic. Yet WEBER too presented, in the first chapter of Economy and Society, a general, “ahistorical” sociology of the social group, which moved logically from individual social action through various forms of social relationships to the concerted actions in the organization (Verband) with its legitimate domination. For WEBER these definitions provided the basis for an historical typology within which the distinctive and historically unique course of western rationalism could be studied. By contrast, PARSONS came to relate his systems approach to a neo-evolutionism that perceived the “progress” from tradition to modernity as a process of almost unilinear structural differentiation and value transformation — in sharp distinction from WEBER’s acute sense for the ambiguities and paradoxes of western rationalism.

Both BENDIX and PARSONS shared prominently in the second stage of the WEBER reception, which was reached reciprocally with the revival of comparative studies in the fifties. Whereas many development studies followed a “Weberian-Parsonian” approach emphasizing the predominance of values in social systems old and new, BENDIX’s intellectual portrait showed the reader the intricate ways in which WEBER related ideas and material and ideal interests. Moreover, BENDIX facilitated the study of development issues by clearly relating The Protestant Ethic to WEBER’s studies on the world religions, and by embedding bureaucracy and charisma in their proper typological matrix within the Sociology of Domination in Economy and Society. He also edited, with a group of students, the first reader in comparative political sociology, State and Society (BENDIX et al. 1968), which was based on a Weberian conception of historical sociology in contrast to the functionalist approach with its evolutionary overtones³.

The third stage of dealing with WEBER began with the centenary commemoration of his birth at the Heidelberg meetings of the German Sociological Association in 1964⁴. The event turned out to be the beginning of the great onslaught on WEBER as arch representative of liberal or bourgeois social science, an onslaught carried forth by a new political generation without any memories of the Second World War and hence without any personal yardsticks for comparing the present with the past.

It is important to understand that the three stages are not exclusive sequences: The Protestant Ethic is still frequently interpreted in isolation; the selections from the very popular GERTH and MILLS edition are still widely used as the major reading assignment on WEBER; the definit-

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¹ On PARSONS’ WEBER interpretation, see also J. COHEN, L. HAZELRIGG, W. POPE (1975a), and the subsequent exchange: PARSONS (1975) and COHEN, HAZELRIGG, POPE (1975b). On the first stage of the WEBER reception, see ROTH and BENDIX (1959). On the notion of “creative misinterpretation”, see my essay on “Value-Neutrality in Germany and the United States”, in BENDIX and ROTH, 1971: 35, and on its effects in the context of the gradual WEBER reception, see also H. STUART HUGHES, 1975: 31ff.

² For overviews and expositions of WEBER’s work as a whole since 1960, see RAYMOND ARON (1967); LEWIS A. COSER (1971); JULIAN FREUND (1969). There are two readers: DENNIS WRONG (1970); DIRK KÄSLER (1972).

³ For the contrast between Weberian historical sociology and structural functionalism in State and Society see RANDALL COLLINS (1968).

tions from Part I of *Economy and Society* are still ritually quoted out of theoretical and historical context. However, the comparative approach is now well-established, although funding for foreign area studies has declined severely. Finally, political critiques of WEBER’s work from the Right and Left date back to the nineteen thirties, quite apart from the heated scholarly controversies about *The Protestant Ethic* and issues of *Wertfreiheit* in which WEBER was embroiled for many years.

What has been the progress of WEBER scholarship since 1960? BENDIX’S intellectual portrait of WEBER was written in a situation in which “as a comprehensive whole his work remains relatively unknown” (BENDIX 1960: xix). For this reason much of the book is a careful exposition of his comparative studies, especially in *Economy and Society*. This magnum opus did not become available in a complete English edition until 1968, and then only in an expensive hardcover edition that effectively reduced student access and precluded class-room use (WEBER 1968). (Eight years later about half of all scholarly citations still refer to the various fragmentary selections rather than to the complete edition.) My introduction to *Economy and Society* (see WEBER 1968: xvii-cxiv) was written with a view toward supplementing BENDIX’S book by giving particular attention to those studies omitted there, especially the early inquiries into ancient and medieval capitalism, and by reconstructing chronologically the long gestation of WEBER’s conceptualization of *Economy and Society*. WEBER’s comparative studies on the world religions have been available in English since the nineteen fifties, but they are in need of critical edition both in the original and in translation.

In spite of the political polemics which have surrounded WEBER in the controversies about the nature and course of contemporary social science since the mid-sixties, and partly in response to them, many valuable studies have been done since, and there is no sign of any letup. The literature in which WEBER is a major reference has grown so large that the individual reader can no longer keep track of it, but I shall attempt a broad overview. There tends to be a split in the WEBER literature between his historical sociology and his methodological and programmatic writings, even among the political critics. This dichotomy has created two WEBER images, but it is also true that much of the literature is highly specialized within and outside this distinction. Given the wide scope of WEBER’s work, it is inevitable that many publications stress one aspect to the exclusion or neglect of another; given the realities of the scholarly division of labor, of which WEBER was extremely conscious, it takes different kinds of expertise to be competent in

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5 See my chapters “Political Critiques” and “Value-Neutrality in Germany and the United States” in BENDIX and ROTH (1971).

6 As FRIEDRICH H. TENBRUCK recently put it in a spirited critique of the WEBER reception, which has been no less fragmented in Germany than in the United States, albeit for different reasons: “For decades we were faced with attempts at grasping this or that aspect of WEBER’S writings. His work as a whole became visible for the first time when Reinhard Bendix presented us with his intellectual portrait, in which he sketched the main ideas that permeate Weber’s work” (TENBRUCK 1975: 663). For a similar formulation, see JOHANNES WEISS (1975: 12).

7 This edition is based on the fourth German edition edited by JOHANNES WINCKELMANN, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (WEBER 1956). The fifth edition, with almost 300 pages of annotations by WINCKELMANN, was published in 1976. However, a critical edition of all of WEBER’S work is called for, similar to the MARX/ENGELS edition. Yet the situation is complicated by the fact that because of the Nazi regime and the Second World War the greater part of WEBER’S original manuscripts and much of his voluminous correspondence with many scholars and political men seem to have been lost or widely scattered. The absence of the original manuscripts is particularly irksome because much of WEBER’S work, especially the bulk of *Economy and Society*, was published posthumously in a rather inadequate fashion in spite of MARIANNE WEBER’S valiant efforts. A German editorial group is presently planning a complete edition of WEBER’S works.

8 The three volumes of the sociology of religion, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (WEBER 1920), have been republished unchanged several times. Only *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* has been edited by JOHANNES WINCKELMANN, together with the critiques and anti-critiques. See WEBER (1972/73).

9 For a lengthy selected bibliography see CONSTANS SEYFARTH et al. (1976). For the latest bibliography of WEBER’S own writings, see DIRK KÄSER (1975).
one area or another. As a rough classification, I would like to distinguish, and take up in turn, six dimensions in the literature: (1) the comparative studies and historical typologies; (2) basic methodological and epistemological contributions, including the availability of WEBER’s own writings in English, (3) his place among theorists of “the bureaucratic age”, (4) his general and his academic politics, (5) the Marxist struggle against WEBER, but also scholarly comparisons of WEBER and MARX, and finally (6) WEBER’s biography in the context of the intellectual history of his and our time.

(1) Compared to 1960, there is today a much greater awareness of the whole of WEBER’s Sociology of Domination and Religion. In the literature on state-and-nation-building and on economic and social development, there has been an increasing realization that the applicability of models of western modernization and bureaucratization is analytically and practically very limited. Here it has been helpful that to the dichotomy or dialectic of bureaucracy and charisma, which is only one part of WEBER’s vision of rationalization, have been added his notions of patronal forms of government. S. N. EISENSTADT, for instance, observed in 1973 that “perhaps one of the most important – albeit somewhat recent – developments in this context was the growth of the ‘patronalism’ concept to describe the political regimes of several new states.” (EISENSTADT and ROKKAN 1973; Vol. I, 4)10. In the realm of religion an exemplary Weberian approach, without undue literal dependency, was taken in the brilliant study by CLIFFORD GEERTZ (1968), Islam Observed, comparing Indonesia and Morocco; and notable critiques of some of the difficulties of WEBER’s Sociology of Religion have been presented by BYRAN S. TURNER (1974), again in the Islamic context.

10 In Vol. II of EISENSTADT and ROKKAN (1973) the notion of patronalism is given explicit treatment in the essays by SIMON SCHWARTZMANN on regional contrasts in Brazil and by STUART GELLAR on West Africa. For an application of the concept of patronalism to Nepal, past and present, see ERNEST GELLNER (1975); for a detailed analysis of WEBER’s views on patronalism in the Arab context, see BRYAN S. TURNER (1974); for a reformulation of patronal rulership in the context of WEBER’s typology, see my essay on “Personal Rulership, Patronalism and Empire-Building”, Chapter VIII of BENDIX and ROTH (1971).

and by TERRY LOVELL (1973) in his comparison of WEBER and LUCIEN GOLDMANN11. However, while WEBER’s political and religious typological analyses are now better understood, the practiced methodology embodied in his comparative studies still requires more attention that it has received, especially compared to his critical methodological writings. Only a few writers, notably JOHN REX (1971) and STEPHEN WARNER (1972), have dealt with WEBER’s actual strategy of research, which involves the elaboration of socio-historical models (“ideal types”) and of historical theories proper12. Failure to look closely at WEBER’s research strategy has led (or misled) much of the development literature of the past 25 years to search in a one-sided fashion for functional equivalents to the Protestant ethic. Yet neither in The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism nor in the comparative studies did WEBER consider any one religious factor as crucial or decisive for the rise or absence of various forms of capitalism; instead, in his comparative studies he tried to lay the basis for establishing the mix of “material” and “ideal” factors accounting for the uniqueness of Occidental history.

(2) What BENDIX did for WEBER’s empirical studies, HANS HENRIK BRUUN (1972) has done in the meantime for his methodological statements — a lucid and cohesive exposition and analysis rather than intellectual history or political critique. BRUUN once more makes it clear — and it still seems to be worth repeating — that the principle of freedom from value judgment was rooted not in a relativistic or nihilist attitude but in the logical consideration that values are undemonstrable by scientific methods and in the conviction that “values and science are two closed spheres containing the key to each other” (p. 290).

Two other epistemological and methodological investigations in English are noteworthy: W.G.

11 For a follow-up on The Protestant Ethic, see CONSTANS SEYFARTH and WALTER M. SPONDEL (1973). Insufficient attention is still paid to WEBER’s study of ancient Judaism; exceptions are FREDDY RAPHAEL (1970), and PETER L. BERGER (1963).

12 See also my essays ROTH (1975, 1976a, 1976b).
RUNCIMAN’s interpretation of WEBER as a philosopher of science (1972) and JOHN TORRANCE’s lengthy essay on “Methods and the Man” (1974), which in part is a rejoinder to RUNCIMAN. The massive but subtle study by GERHARD HUFRAGEL, Critique as Vocation: The Critical Content in Max Weber’s Work (1971) and the concise study by FRITZ LOOS, On Max Weber’s Doctrine of Values and Law (1970) are written in German. An older German critique, from a phenomenological viewpoint, is ALFRED SCHUTZ’s The Phenomenology of the Social World (1932), which since its translation in 1967 (SCHUTZ 1967) has received considerable attention among a new breed of phenomenologically oriented sociologists and philosophers of science. This is a prime example of a very narrow focus on WEBER’s definitions of social action, subjective meaning, ideal type and interpretive sociology to the exclusion of everything else. SCHUTZ and his latter-day followers endeavor to provide a phenomenological grounding to WEBER’s basic categories and to supplement them with an epistemological buttressing in which he was not interested, since he merely wanted to construct baseline concepts this side of epistemology and philosophy of science from which to get on with his empirical inquiries.13

WEBER’s methodological and programmatic writings were posthumously published under the misleading title Wissenschaftslehre, a term which he did not employ. They comprise the critical essays on WILHELM ROSCHER, KARL KNIES, EDUARD MEYER, RUDOLF STAMMLER, LUJO BRENTANO and WILHELM OSTWALD, the programmatic essays on objectivity and value freedom (aimed in part at GUSTAV SCHMOLLER and his reigning dispensation), and the basic definitions of social action and the social group (perhaps written in part during DURKHEIM), with the familiar “Science as a Vocation” tagged on. Although these essays and fragments were mostly written in a specific polemical context and address themselves to targets no longer recognized by most of today’s readers, they still make worthwhile reading because of their continued pertinency to present interests and their programmatic aspects. In 1949 SHILS and FINCH presented their translation of “The Meaning of ‘Ethical Neutrality’ in Sociology and Economics”, “Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy”, and the critique of EDUARD MEYER together with the essay on objective possibility and adequate causation in historical explanation (WEBER 1949). For many years these essays, important though they are, were the only ones accessible to the English reader. Now the situation has improved considerably and most of the other parts of the Wissenschaftslehre have become available: the 1913 fragment “On Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology”, a first version of the introductory terminology of Economy and Society (WEBER 1970); WEBER’s earliest methodological, book-length treatise “Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics” (WEBER 1975a); and the critique of LUJO BRENTANO, “Marginal Utility Theory and the So-Called Fundamental Law of Psychophysics” (WEBER 1975b), in which WEBER argues that economics, as an analytical enterprise concerned with economic rationality, is not dependent on basic psychological theories, thus defending the rationale of marginal utility theory against critics from the ranks of institutional and historical economics − JOSEPH SCHUMPETER once noted that among his peers WEBER was remarkably free from any animus against formal economic theory, although he never worked in that competing medium. Only the two critiques of RUDOLF STAMMLER − already translated by GUY OAKES − and the shorter attack on WILHELM OSTWALD, “‘Energetic’ Theories of Culture” are presently not accessible; however, a summary of WEBER’s position on STAMMLER’s confusion of “the ideal validity of a norm with the assumed validity of a norm in its actual influence on empirical action” (326) is contained in an excursus in Economy and Society (WEBER 1968: 325–337).

13 For a critical appraisal of the claims of SCHUTZ and those of PETER WINCH, from the perspective of ordinary language analysis, see SUSAN HEKMAN (1975). For the latest contribution, see THOMAS BURGER (1976).
interpretation in the literature on formal organization has improved — witness CHARLES PERROW’s treatment of the Weberian approach in his critical essay, Complex Organizations (see PERROW 1972: Chap. 4)\textsuperscript{14}. Moreover, and quite properly, there has been increasing recognition that for many purposes of formal organization or systems theory WEBER’s utility is rather limited. Yet it is probably fair to say that WEBER received most attention in both Europe and the United States as theorist of the bureaucratic age.

WOLFGANG SCHLUCHTER’s Aspects of Bureaucratic Domination (1972) is the most judicious and comprehensive account we presently have of WEBER’s place in the literature on bureaucratization and democratization\textsuperscript{15}. The book draws together 150 years of intellectual history and most of the American and European discussion of bureaucratization and democratization. In both historical and contemporary perspective it compares WEBER’s vision with its two alternatives, the Saint-Simonian and the Marxian. SCHLUCHTER deflates the Saint-Simonian hope shared by so many American organization theorists that politics can ever be reduced to efficient administration and that replacing office authority with functional authority (expertise) can ever bring about the vaunted change from “the domination of men to the administration of things.” Far from being uncritical toward WEBER, SCHLUCHTER identifies the theoretical ambiguities and empirical lacunae of WEBER’s thought, yet he concludes that WEBER’s perception of the ineluctable dialectic of formal and substanti ve rationality intensified by “progress” provides us with the best basic model for understanding the nature of modern society; and similar to BRUUN he makes it plain that WEBER’s postulate of value freedom is the dialectical precondi-

We owe to DAVID BEETHAM (1974) the best extant treatment of WEBER as theorist of modern politics\textsuperscript{16}. BEETHAM synthesizes WEBER’s perception of the preconditions of liberal democracy mainly from his political writings on Imperial Germany and Imperial Russia. He shows that WEBER’s scholarly and political writings differ in approach, not just in content. His political analysis is concerned with the assessment of a given distribution of power with a view toward changing it; it explicitly addresses questions of how to bring about change — parallel to MARX’s interests. In essence, WEBER practices situational class analysis. By contrast, the scholarly writings focus on long-range transformation and historical comparisons. BEETHAM correctly points out that in the latter the emphasis is on types of legitimation and on bureaucracy as a superior technical instrument, whereas in the political essays bureaucrats are treated as a status group with vested interests. In turn, capitalism appears as part of occidental rationalization in the scholarly writings, whereas in the political ones capitalism’s capacity for creating class conflicts is stressed. WEBER fully recognized that the introduction of advanced capitalism into “underdeveloped” countries such as Germany and Russia militated against the opportunities for liberal democracy by reinforcing both traditionalism and radicalism. BEETHAM’s account of WEBER’s untranslated writings on Russia cannot be found elsewhere in such clarity and completeness.

(4) If much of WEBER’s sociological vision, both in his scholarly and political writings, remains viable, the same cannot be claimed for his politics, which had to be time-bound, as WOLFGANG MOMMSEN shows in his massive and exhaustive account of WEBER’s place in German politics. The first edition appeared in 1959, almost at the same time as BENDIX’s intellectual portrait. The

\textsuperscript{14} In the literature on professionalization there has also been a more sophisticated understanding of WEBER. JEFFREY BERLANT’s study of the American and English medical associations as monopolistic professions and status groups (1975) benefited from the availability, in Economy and Society, of WEBER’s treatment of monopolist and expansionist tendencies within various kinds of groups.

\textsuperscript{15} Previously, SCHLUCHTER wrote a tightly reasoned essay on the relation between science and politics, value freedom and the ethics of responsibility in WEBER’s thought; see SCHLUCHTER (1971).

\textsuperscript{16} The following observations draw on my elaboration of BEETHAM’s analysis and of WEBER’s views on the preconditions of liberal democracy in my essay “History and Sociology” (ROTH 1976b). On WEBER’s political thought see also ILSE DRONBERGER (1971), CHRISTIAN VON FERBER (1970), KARL LOEWENSTEIN (1966), DANIEL ROSSIDES (1972), LAWRENCE A. SCAFF (1973).
second edition (MOMMSEN 1974a) incorporates all the new source materials and the secondary literature since accumulated, and contains a lengthy reply to numerous critics, including BENDIX and myself. In 1959 the book was representative of the youngest scholarly generation’s attempt to come to terms with “the German catastrophe” (as the octogenarian FRIEDRICH MEINECKE had titled his last work) and with the web of intellectual guilt for the rise of Nazism; it was written partly under the impact of Anglo-American re-education, with its appeals to the ghosts of the natural law tradition, and partly in response to the attempt by parliamentary survivors of Weimar Germany to install WEBER as patron saint of the fledgling Federal Republic—a role for which he was not well suited. His advocacy of a democratized form of national integration that would permit Germany to take a more responsible part in the politics of the great powers makes WEBER the politician a man of his time and not ours. However, MOMMSEN does not rest his case there. He also posits a fateful intellectual link via CARL SCHMITT, the theoretician of the authoritarian state, to Hitler’s appearance as the “charismatic leader with a political machine.” This construction, coupled with a tendency to view WEBER’s sociological writings as indicative of his political views, led to a sometimes acrimonious clash with mostly older scholars and political men. BENDIX, PAUL HONIGSHEIM, KARL LOEWENSTEIN, BENJAMIN NELSON and PARSONS became prominent participants in a controversy that eventually broadened into the political warfare that engulfed American and European universities from 1964 on.

In The Age of Bureaucracy MOMMSEN (1974b) put his views in his own English words, but the slim volume of five essays on WEBER’s politics and sociology cannot substitute for the author’s main opus, which unfortunately remains untranslated. This English volume is paralleled by a partly overlapping collection of previously published essays in German (MOMMSEN 1974c), which also contains a discussion of the United States in WEBER’s political thought and a new contribution on “Verstehen und Idealtypus”. In both volumes MOMMSEN goes beyond his political biography in that he now tries to demonstrate explicitly an underlying intellectual unity of WEBER’s political and sociological vision.

Partly in reaction to MOMMSEN, MARCUSE and LUKACS, ANTHONY GIDDENS has offered his own interpretation in Politics and Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber (GIDDENS 1972), a small volume that is an addendum to his comprehensive treatment of MARX, DURKHEIM and WEBER in Capitalism and Modern Social Theory (GIDDENS 1971). GIDDENS (1972: 8) rightly considers “one of the most urgent tasks confronting modern social theory . . . that of re-examining the social and political environments which generated the main parameters of social thought which exist today. In the case of WEBER, this means making something of a return to the sort of discussion which his works stimulated in Germany during his own lifetime”.

If WEBER’s politics come from a much different time and place, his views on the role of the university and a specifically academic “freedom from value judgments” (which may be a better translation than the customary “value neutrality”) have remained ideal and target in contemporary American academic politics. EDWARD SHILS has edited, translated and for the first time collected WEBER’s editorials, articles, speeches, and memoranda, which at several occasions precipitated a public éclat involving government officials, professors and parliamentarians (WEBER 1974). The collection is intended as a “classic” contribution to the present-day discourse. It is also useful because it shows the concrete political incidents and issues which finally made WEBER state his position more systematically in “The Meaning of ‘Value Freedom’ in Sociology and Economics” (1913) and in “Science as a Vocation” (1919). WEBER wished to preserve “the proud tradition of academic solidarity” (1974: 6) against interference from the governments, the churches and various interest groups and therefore advocated, inter alia, a national organization or union of professors in opposition to the cartel of the ministries of education against the universities. He denied that there was meaningful academic freedom as long as political and religious criteria determined appointments; he feared that the increasing manipulation of younger scholars by the ministries through often secret preference would breed academic . . .

17 On some of the exchanges between MOMMSEN and his critics, see BENDIX and ROTH, 1971: 66.
place-hunters and operators, at the same time that he castigated the growing tendency of bourgeois students to look upon academic patents and fraternity membership as qualifications for joining the "feudal" establishment.

As civil servants, German professors were under even greater restrictions than American government employees are under the Hatch Act, restraints to which American academics are unaccustomed, although, as WEBER pointed out at the time, university administrations tend to take the place of the ministries of education. WEBER condemned authoritarian indoctrination and patronage of students not only for pedagogical reasons, but also because he desired the universities to have a moral justification for rejecting interference on the part of "religious, economic, social and political parties (which otherwise) would then all possess the right to have separate universities or professorships provided for them, in which instruction in accordance with their own ideals would be given" (1974: 22). Anybody opposed to such a state of affairs must also for himself forego "instruction in ultimate values and beliefs." We must not forget, however, that this political stand was not directly related to the epistemological distinction between value and fact on which WEBER founded the logical possibility of scholarship and science.

(5) Both this epistemological distinction and the advocacy of a liberal university as an elite of scholars committed foremost to the intergenerational continuity of academic competence are totally unacceptable to the long line of WEBER's Marxist critics, recently joined by LÉFÈVRE and THERBORN. LÉFÈVRE, one of the leaders of the student rebellion at the Free University of Berlin in the late sixties, wrote a highly controversial dissertation on which the examiners split, _On the Historical Character and Historical Function of the Method of Bourgeois Sociology_ (LÉFÈVRE 1971). It was part of the theoretical justification for the attack on one of the outposts of "Americanized" social science, which subsequently was largely displaced by the Marxist "science of society". The book is a narrow case study limited to WEBER's methodology and _The Protestant Ethic_, but since it proceeds from a total theory of cognition and society it can claim to demolish all of contemporary social science by proving WEBER's "insufficiency of method" (the title of the first chapter) The method is "insufficient" because it separates the Ought from the Is, takes the epistemological possibility of a purely empirical science as unproblematic, and studies only limited causal connections — all of which adds up to veiling the "truth" about capitalist exploitation. WEBER's subjective recognition of capitalism's inherent inhumanity thus would appear irrelevant to his method of inquiry, as indeed it was in contrast to his substantive concerns. For LÉFÈVRE, WEBER's work, and hence all of social science today, rests on a "naive and optimistic research liberalism" (LÉFÈVRE 1971: 17), which parallels the free enterprise model with its glorification of the anarchy of production. Here there are satirical possibilities, but LÉFÈVRE cannot afford to be anything but deadly serious in his insistence on a unity of theory and practice that will totally transcend the prevailing mode of production and domination. MOMMSEN (1974a: 446) correctly views this stance as "naive Hegelianism with a Marxist twist." After all, the alternative to the imperfect liberal university can only be central political control or a universal consensus on a philosophy of history — and the former is much more likely than the latter.

GOERAN THERBORN's _Science, Class and Society_ (1976) is intended as a contribution to the formation of sociology and historical materialism. He offers his study as an exercise in the sociology of knowledge, even more, as a "historical materialism of historical materialism, or, in other words, a social scientific study of the development of (Marxist) social science" that reduces sociological theorizing to "underlying" relations of production and class struggle. With ALTUSSER, he believes that Marxism became a science by turning to working-class politics. The equation of philosophy and class struggle — "philosophy is, in the last analysis, class struggle in theory" — in ALTUSSER appears to THERBORN (1976: 47) "a philosophical practice of the greatest significance." In this view the whole history of sociology and contemporary American social science, which THERBORN reviews extensively if superficially, must look like apology. Since class commitment is crucial, it is revealing to THERBORN (1976: 255) that, in contrast to MARX, ENGELS and LENIN, those "proletarian" intellectuals, of the capitalist world who, as a sociologist, has been formed by being part of a militant labor movement." THERBORN's treatment of WEBER does
not differ much from LEFEVRE's. Just like him, he makes only fleeting references to the bulk of WEBER's historical studies and stresses the individualist perspective of social action at the expense of the practiced methodology and the substantive historical explanations. If THERBORN would admit the closeness of MARX and WEBER as historical analysts, as TURNER has demonstrated it again, he would have to explain how a self-professed "class-conscious bourgeois" could hold views similar to those of a "proletarian" thinker.

These two examples are representative of other Marxist or neo-Marxist endeavors. They have been balanced by comparisons made by BENDIX (1973), GIDDENS (1970, 1971), MAYER (1975) and RUNCIMAN (1963). In general, MARX-WEBER comparisons, political and non-political, have almost become a specialty. The genre was initiated in 1932 by KARL LOEWITH with a famed philosophical inquiry, the Weberian part of which is now available in English (LOEWITH 1970).

(6) Apart from uncompromising Marxists for whom personal qualities must recede behind class membership, most of the writers considered so far seem sympathetic to WEBER, and some even engage in intellectual hero worship. However, while few sociologists would dismiss WEBER's achievements out of hand, a quite substantial number are ambivalent about the work and unsympathetic to the person. The man who was known to his contemporaries for his easy laughter is almost invariably pictured in that formal portrait that graces so many books — including DONALD MACRAE's — confirming the cultural stereotype of the grim-faced German professor. MACRAE's sketch in the Modern Master series (1974) is the first overall account that is a frank exercise in debunking. Beginning with WEBER's reputation and depicting the life, the man, the country and his academic surrounding, MACRAE conjures up an image that probably will leave "the curious" to whom it is addressed with little curiosity and will not encourage many readers to take seriously much of WEBER's substantive work, which is treated in the later chapters. MACRAE appears to be irked by the observation that "practically all that is written on Weber is written in awe", although he conceives that "it is remarkable that despite this awe so much written about Weber is so good, even if so incomplete" (MACRAE 1974: 103).

MACRAE takes a clear position: He identifies himself with the evolutionary and positivist tradition from SPENCER and DURKHEIM to HOBHOUSE; he prefers "successful" sociologists like them and PARETO to "unsuccessful" ones like WEBER and MARX, and he likes his heroes dead and done with in the name, presumably, of scientific progress. Put another way, he does not care for historical sociology, for which clear-cut explanations, his apparent criterion of success, are not feasible. MACRAE seems to belong to those who are troubled by the Germanness of MARX and WEBER and by their persistent importance in the Anglo-Saxon realm, where they continue to be living presences instead of dead saints (as ERICH FROMM and ANTHONY GIDDENS have put it). His ultimate explanation is in line with the cultural stereotypes: WEBER and MARX, about whom he has written earlier (MACRAE 1969), succeed by obfuscation rather than Gallic clarity or English common sense. WEBER must be a magus, at heart an irrationalist exerting an irrational appeal far beyond what is tolerable to the positivist view of the world.

This image contrasts with MARTIN GREEN's mythological universe in which WEBER incarnates the Apollonian spirit as a nemesis of Deme- trian and Aphroditean irrationalism (GREEN 1974). In GREEN's mythology almost the whole twentieth century, as a cultural configuration, is the creation of two diametrically opposed spiritual attitudes: those of D. H. LAWRENCE and of WEBER. There is too much heavy-handed symbolism in GREEN's reconstruction, and a preoccupation with establishing point-by-point parallels and oppositions between persons and ideas. But his work makes fascinating reading and has a lesson for sociologists and intellectual historians; it provides a wealth of scattered and jumbled materials for the study of intellectual circles as originators.

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18 For some other recent Marxist or neo-Marxist comparisons, see RICHARD ASHCRAFT (1972), JOHN LEWIS (1974), JOACHIM STREISAND (1965). Cf. also the older account by NORMAN BIRNBAUM (1953). For an attempt at synthesizing MARX and WEBER, see IRVING ZEITLIN (1973: 123–138).

19 For more references, see my essay on WEBER's relationship to MARX in BENDIX and ROTH (1971), Chapter XII.
of new ideas and for some of the major transmissions of ideas from central Europe to the Anglo-Saxon realm, a topic precisely dealt with by PARSONS and H. S. HUGHES. Foremost, GREEN succeeds in sketching one important story relatively unknown to Americans—the rise of Schwabing, the bohemian suburb of Munich, around 1900 as the locus of the new movement of aesthetic and libidinal liberation and as the vanguard of much that is familiar to us today in the American counterculture. The central figure was the calamitous, drug-addicted Otto Gross, who in his rebellion against an authoritarian father, a famous criminologist, radicalized Freudian ideas in the direction of an intensely lived way of life that was politically and erotically anarchic. Frieda von Richthofen, a distant relative of the Red Baron, converted D. H. Lawrence to the anti-paternalistic creed of Gross, her erstwhile lover, and thus changed the English literary climate. Frieda's older sister Else, one of the first women Ph.D.s at the University of Heidelberg, taught WEBER the moral value of eroticism, which found its reflection in successive changes in his sociology of religion. After Else gave birth to one of Gross' illegitimate children in 1907, WEBER began to read Freud and Gross and wrote to her a scathing attack on the tenets of total libidinal freedom (reprinted under camouflage in BAUMGARTEN, 1964: 644–48). But regardless of his opposition to Otto Gross' anarchism, he became the legal adviser and helper-in-need to members of Gross' circle in matters of divorce, child custody, draft dodging and criminal prosecution. GREEN (1974: 66ff) casts WEBER in the role of the "greatest, though most self-divided, representative . . . of the patriarchal mode", as "the Brutus of Patriarchy, the virtuous rebel," while Lawrence plays the part of the worshipper of Demetrian matriarchy and Gross that of Aphroditean enthusiasm. As the tortured defender of moral responsibility WEBER appears ultimately as the embodiment of patriarchalism's enlightened Apollonian side. GREEN seems to be quite right in perceiving WEBER's promotion of his wife Marianne, as a leader of Women's Liberation and as a scholar, as a form of liberal patriarchalism intended to bring women into the Apollonian world of work, which Frieda, the Demetrian spokeswoman of total feminine liberation, hated so passionately.

After MITZMAN's psychohistory (1970) and GREEN's mythologizing enterprise, it is only fair that MARIANNE WEBER's own account, with its sometimes vexing mixture of unabashed glorification and overly discreet cover-up, should finally be available to English readers (MARIANNE WEBER 1975). The biographies of these men and women by GREEN, MITZMAN and MARIANNE WEBER and the story of Heidelberg and Schwabing as intellectual constituents of the twentieth century are important for cultural, social and political history, especially for understanding some of the antecedents of our own intellectual and professional environment. Beyond that, they can make a contribution, as case studies, to the sociology of the intelligentsia. However, the utility of WEBER's comparative sociology remains independent of the question of its origins. Here intellectual development, rather than social reductionism, is called for. Insofar as comparative research is breaking new ground, it can gradually leave WEBER behind as a genuine classic—dead and dusty in MACRAE's sense. Yet there is another side to WEBER's influence that will probably not diminish soon. In the face of his own denials that he was concerned with philosophy, WEBER took a distinctive stance that made KARL JASPERS choose him as the heroic figure of his existentialist philosophy. This stance of stoic existentialism may survive the results of his scholarship, just as the Prometheus and messianic spirit of MARX has survived his scientific accomplishments. The hoped-for progress of scholarship cannot resolve the need for making existential choices for which MARX and WEBER remain exemplary.

References


Zur Lage der Soziologie


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