

Editorial

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When Max Weber came to publish his economic ethics of the world religions, in the pages of the *Archive for Social Science and Social Policy*, unsurprisingly he wrote an Introduction to the project which cannot be underestimated in its importance. After dealing with Confucianism, he wrote another explanatory piece in December 1915, the Intermediate Reflection, before moving on to Hinduism and Buddhism. The attitude of a religion's believers towards salvation was central to Weber's project. Life went on in the other fields outside religion, each with their own respective values. Weber drew up his list of the other spheres mainly to demonstrate how antithetic they were to the religious sphere – politics, economics, the aesthetic, the erotic, science and knowledge – but also to show when particular sphere were complementary to religion. From this, a range of interpreters have wondered whether the life orders and value spheres can form the basis for a universal sociology.

Olof Hallonsten shows how the Swedish sociologist Hans Zetterberg pursued a similar scheme, though one without any explicit reference to Weber's. Zetterberg put forward six institutional realms, each of which create and maintain separate institutional values. So, this gives us: science (knowledge), economy (prosperity), polity (order), art (beauty), religion (sacredness), and ethics (virtue). This initial outline was a work of the early 1960s and a statement of normative optimism. Zetterberg's institutional realms are better chosen for a stable society and their differentiation from each other carried the promise of society's members being allowed to follow a diverse manifold of pursuits. Over the decades Zetterberg identified the role of social actors within each realm, and – crucially – how each realm communicated with other realms.

Peter Flügel's massive study of the Jain sects, reviewed below, finds Weber's focus on transcendent salvation unhelpful. Jain 'theodicy' is materialist to a remarkable degree. And if one is to explain the longevity of the Jain sects and their adaptation in contemporary India, what is required is a sociology that interrelates the institutional realms of religious leaders, monastic orders, lay followers and the life worlds of

family and community. System interpenetration has to be analysed and communicative discourse explicated.

Omar Kassem analyses Weber's economic liberalism and how this was misappropriated throughout to the 20th century by a neoliberalism that claimed for itself cardinal importance, both as ideology and within the social sciences. William Davies has quipped that neoliberalism is the disenchantment of politics by economics; so unbridled is the economic realm, we could say the disenchantment of the world, period. Weber's position on economic science, its relation to politics and policy choices is still relevant and indicates a way back from the disasters of our times. Gustav Schmoller, ensconced as rector of the University of Berlin, forbade academic position to socialists and to Austrian 'market theory'. In disconnecting the positive and negative nodes of economic theory, he reduced 'national economy' to a flat state. Weber read the Austrians, and also Walras' presentation of marginalist pricing in Schumpeter's *Wesen* (Nature of Economics) of 1908. Walras opened the door to the Socialist Calculation Debate, which saw simpler ways of achieving market equilibrium, and from which Weber in 1919 most definitely resiled. But this debate c. 1930 found entry to the London School of Economics where Lionel Robbins linked Weber's precept of 'value freedom' to Walrasian economics. Market equilibrium would deliver maximum economic welfare through the agency of economic actors not state actors. The prize of economic welfare – one might say a normative 'gold standard' – is truly immense, but as Weber was clear its potential was always subject to the dynamics of power and should be subject to democratic institutions.

Tong Zhang rebuts the attempts of economic historians to falsify the Protestant ethic thesis. Alternative explanations (economic growth correlated by distance of denominational counties from Wittenberg, and the failure of institution building in the colonised tropics) are put forward. Economic historians, widely cited in the economists' journals, used intervening variables to escape the problems of confounding and chance correlations. Dr Zhang rejects the methodology of the intervening variable and the associated claims to have disproved Weber.

Keith Tribe reviews the MWG editions of the *Outline of Universal Social and Economic History* and the *Lectures on Practical Economy*. The former were given as lectures at the end of his life, the latter when he was starting as a professor of economics at Freiburg and Heidelberg. Tribe notes the editorial difficulties of these volumes, since placing Weber's economic idea requires a deep contextual knowledge, something Knut Borchardt delivered in his editing of the stock exchange writings. Publication of the Lectures, section III of MWG, has revealed a direct

continuity from early Weber, when he was absorbing knowledge from whatever source was to hand, mainly Handbooks, and his writing for the Economy and Society/Grundriss project.

When it comes to Law, the opposite problem occurs. Weber was educated and trained in law for a period of ten years, and then proceeded to throw it over in his post-doctoral thesis, *Roman Agrarian History*. The Roman Republic was destroyed from the centre, from the Senate, where public land grants given to settlements were appropriated by political and economic elites (not least the plebeian nouveau riche and corrupt patricians) and citizens were rendered without property rights. Michel Coutu reviews Hubert Treiber's *Reading Max Weber's Sociology of Law*. Weber's text on 'Recht', one of the few to survive in manuscript yet never published by Weber himself, has presented multiple challenges to interpreters. Treiber's exposition solves quite a few mysteries: the correct way of reading the formal and substantive matrix, the England problem, the plurality of law, and law's dual normative status—as enacted and enforced law and as legitimately accepted at the empirical level of social groupings howsoever formed; this latter indeterminacy spurred Weber to categorize social groupings through meanings held in common.

Álvaro Morcillo Laiz provides an extensive review essay of the publication of Weber's letters for the period 1875 to 1894. The MWG letter editors have to be congratulated for an outstanding and sustained feat of scholarship. Again, the context is all-important, without which we cannot gauge the significance of comments in Weber's prolific letter writing. Laiz entitles his essay the apprenticeship and journeyman years, and these are quite unlike any comparable intellectual figure. Laiz apprehends the fixity of certain forms of ideas emergent from his schooldays; politics, later becoming political economy discussions with his Berlin friends, and what it means to be a scholar and academic. Reading Sérgio da Mata's review of Gangolf Hübinger's new book, is to recognize that Weber was not so much formed as a conventional academic but was rather an intellectual combatant always seeking out new positions in the great transformation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Hübinger provides the wider context: the birth of disciplines, the marshalling of intellectual materials, and the emergence of modern social science and historiography.

