

Editorial

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It is done, finished, completed. After 40 years of work, 47 volumes, and 35,500 pages the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe—the complete, not the collected works—has reached its triumphal conclusion. No less remarkable is the prompt, critical review of the whole enterprise by Klaus Lichtblau, which the journal publishes in this issue. For the full list of volumes of the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe (MWG), see the Appendix to Lichtblau’s review (pp. 120-124).

First some of the empirics of the MWG. After preliminary discussions in 1972 instigated by Horst Baier, Adorno’s successor at Frankfurt, the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe came into contractual existence in 1976 under the aegis of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities. The Academy’s Commission for Social and Economic History established the legal and institutional function of the main editorial board and its relation to individual volume editors, research assistants, the overall redactors, and the administrative work centre in the Academy in Munich. In the same year, 1976, a contract was signed between the Academy, the five senior editors (who were unpaid), and the Tübingen publisher Mohr Siebeck.¹

The big reveal was the issuing of the prospectus of the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe in 1981. This presented how the complete works were to be divided into three sections: 1) Writings and (published) Lectures (Schriften und Reden), 2) Letters (Briefe), and 3) the manuscripts of lecture courses. Also outlined were the principles on which the editing would be based (discussed below by Lichtblau). What amazed most in the prospectus was the bibliography, which ran to 16 pages in small font, comprising 295 items. The compilation of the bibliography, by Martin Riesebrodt and Dirk Kaesler, was crucial for the allocation of texts to the numbered individual volumes in the prospectus. A similar

1. For further detail, see E. Hanke, G. Hübinger and W. Schwentker, ‘The Genesis of the Max Weber-Gesamtausgabe and the Contribution of Wolfgang J. Mommsen’, *Max Weber Studies* 12.1 (2012), pp. 59-84.

preliminary search operation occurred with the letters. Not until most were located could they be divided up chronologically into individual letters' volumes—10 of them, 11 with the overall index. The first volume of the letters appeared in 1990. Section III, the lecture courses, were compiled from what remained of Weber's own notes along with surviving notebooks of some of his students. The first volume of this section appeared in 2009 the last, on applied economics, in 2020.

An issue, from the start, was the absence of manuscript copies of the main works. Only Weber's writings on sections of law and the sections of 'The Economy and the Orders' and 'State and Hierocracy' still exist in manuscript, and it is mystery where the rest went. During the writing and typing up of the texts, Weber often deposited them in the local bank for safekeeping, but what happened after publication? Were the early works disposed of during the move from Heidelberg to Munich, and what did Marianne Weber do with the manuscripts after her editions of the collected works appeared? She did place the lecture notes in the Prussian Secret State Archive in June 1942.

Another main issue was that Weber never fully completed his projects. The *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* was an essay which contained a promise to look at this history from a materialist perspective. That never happened, although his Munich lecture course on universal social and economic history relegated spiritual factors somewhat. The Economic Ethics of the World Religions fell short of his original plans, though he achieved closure through the publication of *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. Rainer Lepsius (in conversation) said Weber did not let Marianne into his study (they had separate studies in the Ziegelhäuser Landstraße villa). After Weber's death Marianne found piles of uncompleted manuscripts. Many of these ended up in the first editions of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, a topic Lichtblau discusses with acuity. Some of the prewar manuscripts were drafts, unedited, no footnotes, exploring provisional themes, and sometimes badly written; for instance sections on law, religion, cities, and music. Weber himself said he disliked thick fat books, which was the contemporary expectation of a professor, although he did produce some very thick reports and Handbook entries.

Weber's role as both author and editor also complicates. The remit of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* was re-written in 1904 and signed off by Weber, Sombart and Jaffé. The cultural and historical foundations of modern capitalism offered a very wide manifold, especially when placed alongside the contemporary sociological, political and policy themes. For example the 'Objectivity' essay signalled the new methodology for the *Archiv*—open to all points of view and social

science disciplines, demanding of empirical facts as well as theoretical approaches. Weber encouraged articles on methodology, but where did this leave his own methodology? Weber's critique of Stammerl, as a review essay in the *Archiv* in 1907, crystallized like no other article Weber's abhorrence of '*Lehre*' posing as scientific objectivity. Yet are Weber's many methodological interventions to be taken *in toto* as a *Wissenschaftslehre*? Marianne thought so, as did Winckelmann—and Lichtblau entertains it as an aspiration.

All of the above issues puts the MWG editors under considerable pressure. Horst Baier who was allocated the methodology volumes never delivered on their publication. He greatly assisted the English edition of the methodology writings with a fund of background research. Helpfully, in a letter to Paul Siebeck in May 1917, Weber referred to them as his collected writings on methodology.² Was Baier spooked by the possibility of a unified *Wissenschaftslehre*? No editor could lightly dismiss the possibility.

Lichtblau references back to Friedrich Tenbruck's observation that the MWG editors were perforce interpreters and not neutral 'philological' editors, and Lichtblau amply demonstrates this occurring. But faced with plethora of Weber's writings and therein an endless cat's cradle of cross referencing, not to interpret is to leave the volume editor vulnerable or weak, and some editors did not survive the process, in one case tragically. This placed an extra burden, in particular on Rainer Lepsius and Wolfgang Schluchter, to push the project to completion, helped in the later stages by Gangolf Hübinger. It also led to different interpretative positions within the senior editorial board with, by some accounts, volcanic arguments between an ethical Weber and a political/power Weber. Certainly Rainer Lepsius is to be applauded for holding the enterprise together amidst some serious disputes.

The scholarly achievement, on a massive scale, is the provision of context. Every letter is part of a correspondence that has to be tracked, despite missing letters, from start to finish. Every name, even the most obscure has to be identified. Every event, mentioned and background, has to be elucidated. The sheer slog of library visits, not just in Germany, must have been enormous and the assistant editors have dug out information one would not believe was still discoverable. The scholarly apparatus of the letters, a revelation to begin with, improves as more volumes appeared. This is especially notable with Weber's role as editor

2. See *Max Weber. Collected Methodological Writings* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012), ed. H.H. Bruun and S. Whimster, trans. H.H. Bruun, p. xii.

of the *Archiv* and the *Grundriß*; the article or book under discussion, and its author, has to be found, referenced and explained.

The same applies to Section 1, the Writings. Weber tends to assume his readers—and why not?—would know to what debate, book, or controversy he was referring without always spelling out the reference. This forces the MWG teams to provide and to an extent reproduce the context. This brings out just how much Weber was part of the wider academic context which, in addition, was multidisciplinary. It is this wider context within which, perhaps, the *Wissenschaftslehre* can be re-framed. The context was Baden neo-Kantianism. The Letters volumes reveal Weber explaining to correspondents, particularly those submitting work to the *Archiv*, the methodological significance of the ‘Objectivity’ essay. He makes clear that it was Windelband and Rickert who opened the door to nomothetic approaches in the human and social sciences without that requiring a science of Newtonian regularity. There was no requirement for researchers to tie themselves to historicist particularities (idiographic) or to fear theorizing in the cultural sciences. Weber’s heuristic of the ideal type is a product of this re-arrangement in epistemology, which includes the rejection of fusing ontology with epistemology in the form of monism (the Leipzig school). In jurisprudence, Georg Jellinek, takes advantage of this re-orientation to treat the state and its law as an object of juristic and sociological study. In religion, Troeltsch does the same, uninhibited by doctrinal imperatives. Carl Menger is acknowledged as making a theoretical breakthrough in economics (marginalism) without committing the discipline to a fundamentalist economic logic (which came later with von Mises in America). The methodology is the ‘logic’ not the ‘*Lehre*’ of how a common epistemological position can have several disciplinary heads—and not to forget Simmel in sociology and Husserl in phenomenology. Within this context Weber’s sociology appears but through a rather convoluted route, as documented by Klaus Lichtblau.

Without this securing of an underlying methodology it is hard to imagine how Weber would have possessed the confidence to take on the massive *Grundriß der Sozialökonomik* project, of which ‘Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft’ was both product and in part victim. The *Grundriß* is the first, and last time, that humankind in all its sociality has been placed within its physical environment. With Weber’s early death the project did not achieve full realization, which would otherwise have occurred in the 1920s. Not environmentalism, or ecology, or reductive evolutionism, but how human agency in its social, political and corporate forms moulds a common destiny.

Eberhard Demm completes his comparative study of the brothers, Alfred and Max Weber. Alfred embraced a philosophy of life, unlike his

elder brother and was far more emotionally forthcoming in the values he espoused. They held a common critique of bureaucracy, though interestingly Alfred, who counted Franz Kafka among his students in Prague, demanded that civil servants not be treated as ciphers. Given the inevitability of bureaucracy much turns on a humanistic and ethical civil service, alongside its functional expertise. A content analysis of their respective writings reveals for Max Weber the high frequency of *Macht*, *Gewalt* and *Herrschaft* and for Alfred, *Kultur*, *Mensch*, *Dasein*, *Zivilisation*, *Gesellschaft*. Alfred was recognizably a sociologist in our sense of the job description, whereas Max held the normative at arm's length even though it constituted the core of his sociology. Both saw Germany as a leading European power with an ordering attitude to the 'satellite' states of Mitteleuropa. Alfred was less abrasive in his political views and placed more towards the liberal-cosmopolitan end of the spectrum.

There is also an Alfred Weber Collected Works, listed in Eberhard Demm's bibliography (pp. 48-49). This project was more or less self-funded by students and enthusiasts of Alfred Weber, and the whole nine volumes can be purchased for less than the price of one volume of the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. Given the complementarity of the two brothers, as the embodiment of an educated upper middle class Berlin family, the discrepancy in price and availability is striking. The vast correspondence between Alfred Weber and Else Jaffé, a running commentary of their times, remains unpublished. It would be mischievous to say that Alfred's writings are more democratic in their availability while Max's enjoyed the sponsorship of the federal government and the Bavarian state. Both claimed the elite status of German professors, and their cardinal obligation was to scholarship, learning and freedom to learn within the university as a semi-autonomous institution; something evinced in their hostility to the Prussian authoritarian and *kaiserliche* university model.

Clearly the MWG has placed scholarship on a new footing. Whole thematic lines can be seen from early lectures on a new footing. Whole thematic lines can be seen from early lectures to late publications, the letters are now accessible not just to scholars prepared to ruin their eyesight in the archives. As Gangolf Hübinger has pointed out, the edition and its surrounding unique academic and literate culture places the reader at the heart of the human and social sciences in their formative era. Already there is a new international network of Weber scholars taking the resource and legacy further. No serious university library in the field of the social sciences should be without the full set of both the Alfred Weber Gesamtausgabe and the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe. It is good to report that the Bavarian Academy has embarked on a digital edition with open access. This will hugely improve the accessibility of

the edition, though whether it will help the intelligent navigation across the whole corpus remains to be seen.

Gangolf Hübinger reviews Robert E. Norton's book on Troeltsch's wartime writings. Norton argues that modern German democracy emerged in the internal battles of ideas during the First World War, this before President Woodrow Wilson declared his aim 'to make the world safe for democracy'. Also democracy in Germany did not proceed from defeat but through a 'process of social transformation' that started soon after the beginning of the war. Troeltsch and the brothers Weber launching of the German Democratic Party was the outcome of these battle of ideas. For Troeltsch Germany had long been on the path to democracy, one that was more cooperative and one with a 'supra-individualist philosophy of the state'. But it was after reading Max Weber's 'Parliament and Government', he was converted to the view that parliamentary government was indispensable to democracy. Germans had to accept the practice of coalitions and compromises. In the end (c. 1923) Troeltsch saw democracy being overwhelmed by right-wing agitation with accusations of it 'being Jewish, mammonistic, un-German and international'. The anti-democratic goal was 'civil war and a German fascist movement'.

Tong Zhang addresses the question whether science progresses through paradigm changes, as argued by Thomas Kuhn, or whether it develops incrementally. 'Science as a vocation' says the former, 'science as a profession' says the latter. Science as a profession slows down scientific progress by working within existing academic hierarchies and is directed towards normal scientific activities, now subject to the rationalization of esteem in terms of citations and publications. The paradigm changer has to go it alone driven by a sense of vocation despite the low probability of achieving a scientific innovation. Whole disciplines can be captured by professionalization and Zhang instances economics. 'Mainstream economics, as a derelict research paradigm, continues to prosper without providing any contribution to the progress of social science.' Put another way, high status economics as a discipline is dismissive of social economics and any impulse to interdisciplinary dialogue.