REVIEW

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Reading *The Oxford Handbook of Max Weber*

Edith Hanke, Lawrence A. Scaff, and Sam Whimster, eds.

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The *Oxford Handbook of Max Weber* is a collection of 32 essays which are divided into six major areas on Weber's thinking. The titles of these Parts can be rendered in shorthand as 1) capitalism, 2) society, 3) politics, 4) religion, 5) culture, and 6) knowledge. While these categories are a reflection of much of Weber's work, they are by no means exhaustive. In addition, this Handbook is not the typical overview of Weber's thought; instead, the Editors, Edith Hanke, Lawrence A. Scaff, and Sam Whimster, have specifically instructed their contributors to show that Max Weber can "still say something important" and to argue that his thinking is "current and alive to us in the present" (p. 5). This means that a number of contributors have sought to trace Weber's influence on contemporary issues: Robert J. Antonio takes up the issue of modern capitalism and its defense by Margaret Thatcher and the more recent criticism by Thomas Piketty, and Lufti Sunar employs Weber's writings for the basis of a discussion concerning civil society in contemporary Turkey. Stefam Leder reframes Weber's outlook in terms of Islam's impact on society and Johann P. Arnason examines Weber's concept of Western rationalism in light of S. N. Eisenstadt's notion of "multiple modernities" (as does Kenichi Mishima). Barbara Thériault uses a thought experiment about tattoos in an eastern German city and Rosario Forlenza and Bryan S. Turner compare Weber's notions regarding Protestantism with the late modernization of Catholicism. Each of these chapters is interesting and informative and they provide considerable food for thought. Furthermore, they convincingly demonstrate that Weber prompts us to "build on his work" and that he "still inspires us today" (pp. 152, 487). In this sense, the Editors have achieved their stated goal to demonstrate Weber's continuing influence and his modern relevance.

There is, however, a difficulty with an emphasis on Weber's influence and relevance and that involves the question of what Weber actually wrote. Many of the contributors have alluded to numerous aspects of this problem. Stefan Breuer mentioned the variations in texts and suggested that we might focus on the final version (p. 238). John Scott justifiably complained that much of Weber's work was incomplete and fragmentary (p. 133). Addressing the specific issue of Weber's sociology of music, Brandon Konoval asked what did that mean for Weber (p. 465). And, Ralph Schroeder noted that Weber often failed to provide a systematic theory so scholars are forced into reconstructions (p. 151). Thus, the issue of determining Weber's relevance today seems to be less pressing than to determine what he actually meant. Fortunately, many of the contributions address both

issues. In what follows, I will concentrate mostly on one or two chapters in each Part and offer a couple of remarks on the others.

Part I contains five chapters and most of them are outstanding. Sam Whimster insists that we must regard Weber as an economist because he was preoccupied with economic theory, economic history, and economic policy (pp. 21-22). Moreover, Whimster argues that Weber's understanding of economic theory and history impacted his placement between the dueling schools of economics. While Weber sympathized with the Historical School's emphasis on history and the individual, he agreed with the Austrian School's insistence on method. Nonetheless, Weber rejected the Austrian school's conviction that economics was a nomological science which could provide general laws and he insisted that economics should inform economic policy. Whimster also discusses Weber's influence on the founders of neo-liberalism but suggests that Weber would have objected to the neo-liberalism belief in free markets. Weber had objected to the old "Rentiers" who wanted to live comfortably from their investments; but Whimster convincingly argues that Weber would be appalled at the unimpeded pursuit of profits. For Weber, economics could not be divorced from social economic policy (pp. 27, 37, 42).

Hinnerk Bruhns begins his chapter with Friedrich Naumann's observation that the French had their theme of revolution but the Germans' have theirs of capitalism. Bruhns admits that capitalism is a topic that interested Weber throughout his life and he allows that Weber thought it to be the most important theme of the twentieth century. However, Bruhns argues that we fail to understand that Weber dealt with various forms of capitalism and he was particularly concerned with both the history of capitalism and the differences between agrarian capitalism and modern rational capitalism. Today, there is a battle between those who defend capitalism and those who seek its replacement, and it is timely that Bruhns reminds us that Weber was not a defender of capitalism [nor was he an opponent], but sought to understand its place in the history of economics and its role in modern society.

Geoffrey Ingham's chapter is devoted to Weber's analysis of money and he argues that it has historical worth because it draws upon Georg Friedrich Knapp's classic work and because it influenced Joseph Schumpeter's economic theories (pp. 70-71, 81). Ingham insists that Weber's theory has more than historical importance and that it needs further investigation for a fuller understanding of money and for a better appreciation of how currency could be employed in resolving modern political disputes (pp. 81-82).

Laura R. Ford addresses the issue of how law affected the rise of Western capitalism and she stresses the crucial importance of calculability. Within Germany, law provided the structural framework for the "freedom of contract" (pp. 93, 101). And, internationally, it provided Germany with the legal order necessary to compete on the world stage (p. 98). Ford also addresses the relationship between religion and law: it was the Catholic Church with its clerics and jurists who furthered the process of rationalization but it was not until the West had developed "formally rational law" that it reached "the pinnacle of consistency and predictability" that is the hallmark of modern capitalism (p. 99). Ford does not disagree with the view that Weber regarded law as a "coercive force" in modern society; however, she suggests that Weber regarded some aspects of modern law as a means of achieving some semblance of social equality because the rule of law helps promote the "promise of innate, human rights" (p. 103).

Part II is devoted to society but in a political sense. Sung Ho Kim takes up the notion of "civil society" and notes that it is a "nebulous concept." Kim writes "If the state is written in prose using nouns, defining civil society seems more akin to a work of poetry peppered with adjectives" (pp. 167-168). That the notion of civil society is resistant to clarity does not render it less important and Kim goes to considerable length to show why it is. Weber's notion of civil society is neither a "*communitarian-social*" one nor a "*liberal-judicial*" one. Instead, it is a vision in which partisanship is encouraged. This type of partisanship is not designed simply to be an opposition; rather, it is intended to foster a "system of contention" to debate the nature of democracy (pp. 173, 181).

Like "civil society", "power" is also difficult to define; unlike the former, the latter holds a prominent place in Weber's thinking. John Scott intends to provide a "clear elucidation of Weber's conceptual framework" regarding the concept of power. Scott allows that his contribution may not be a "definitive interpre-

tation" but he insists that he finds a "logically coherent view of power" in Weber's writings (p. 133). Power is not simply domination but is systematic and can be found in three forms: it is found in the traditional notions of class, and of status, as well as in the modern concept of the political party (pp. 138-139). Accordingly, power is both economic and political. Scott's final point is a caution not to simply use Weber's notion of power because that leads to misinterpretations; rather, one should regard his scattered comments about power within his larger intellectual enterprise (pp. 144).

Ralph Schroeder examines the role that rationalization plays in modern politics, modern economy, and modern globalization. Schroeder maintains that we have much to learn from Weber about modernity and that his account of politics is based upon a "wider account of social change" (p. 160). Although Weber may not have been able to envision the recent populist movements, he had a sufficiently developed sense about the influence of charismatic and demagogic leaders on "the people." Furthermore, Schroeder is not convinced that the process of rationalization leads to the "iron cage." Rather, he suggests that it leads to something less constricting—more like a "rubber cage" which can be stretched (pp. 153, 162).

John Breuilly acknowledges that he is not a Weber specialist and that he is not concerned with nations per se; however, he contends that Weber has much to offer us about the notion of nationalism. The problem for Weber was that because the German state was a recent formation that it lacked a nationalist spirit. That deficiency placed Germany at a considerable political disadvantage in comparison to the other established nations. Breuilly suggests we try a thought experiment and consider what Weber would have been like had he not been born in 1864 but in 1844. In this scenario, he would have not been schooled in the great achievement of German unification. But Weber grew up watching military parades and other instances glorifying the new German state; as a result, he understood the importance of nationalism. Breuilly notes that Weber had a strong sense of nationalism but he also reminds us that it was accompanied by a sense of realism and a sense of responsibility (pp. 200-201).

Part III is on politics and all five chapters are written by Weber experts. Andreas Anter returns to his familiar theme about the modern state but here his focus is on the state's claim to possessing the monopoly on the use of legitimate force. However, Anter notes that many states seem to lack the means of defense and they are compelled to resort to private contractors; thus, causing confusion about the legitimacy of the use of force (pp. 230-231). Stefan Breuer takes up his familiar discussion about Weber's notion of the three formal types of domination. He not only provides a concise definition of traditional, legal, and charismatic domination but indicates the ways in which Weber's detractors have failed to offer a better conception of legitimate domination (pp. 239-240, 247). Kari Palonen returns to his notion of Weber as a political animal and notes how this "lifelong *Homo politicus*" regarded politics as being involved with the notion of chance (p. 259). Germany was not just a regular nation but was a great power; hence, vanity needed to be replaced with realism. Palonen offers the example of Weber's warning about unrestricted U-boot warfare and indicates that America's entry into the war was just what Weber had cautioned against. In addition, Palonen invites us to consider what Weber, the nationalist, would say about the chances of peace in respect to two of the major supra-nationalist institutions: the United Nations and the European Union (pp. 268-272).

Hans Henrik Bruun again takes up the relationship between politics and ethics and he argues that Weber had contrasted the ethics of conviction with the ethics of responsibility in theory, but in practice Weber believed that there needed to be a combination of the two. They were contradictories in their "purest form" but in the real world the person who acts according to the ethics of responsibility is ultimately forced back to the ethics of conviction. This is because it is finally a matter of "ultimate values" and an issue of Luther's "Here I stand" (pp. 297-298). The issue of ethics in politics is not merely of historical concern; Bruun provides two contemporary examples of the problem of consequences. The first was the actual situation in Denmark and the problem caused by the Muhammad cartoons while the second is the clash between convictions and consequences in the fictional television series "House of Cards." The true politician recognizes that politics is a dirty business but he recognizes that ultimately, he has a "responsibility to his own conscience" (p. 304).

Claudius Härpfer reminds us that Weber ridiculed the notion of the "will of the people" and he warned that mass democracy was too often motivated by "emotional elements" (pp. 278-279, 285). Nonetheless, Härpfer also reminds us that Weber insisted that each individual has the obligation to be educated and to act realistically; that is, "to meet the 'demands of the day'" (p. 286).

Part IV is on religion and is composed of eight papers. Peter Ghosh focuses on Weber's ethics and legitimately complains that they are often misunderstood. That is because scholars often overlook the relationship between ethics and religion in Weber's works. It is to Ghosh's credit that he notes the influence that the Protestant theologian and philosopher Ernst Troeltsch had on him. Troeltsch was a colleague of Weber's at Heidelberg and was a close friend for almost two decades. There is little correspondence between the two because they resided in the same city and in the same house for a number of years. It is unfortunate that Ghosh does not explain Troeltsch's later and somewhat negative attitude about Weber just as Ghosh distinguishes between "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" without noting that Weber regarded this as Ferdinand Tönnies most valuable contribution to the study of society. Nonetheless, Ghosh is correct to maintain that Weber offered us a "brilliantly original analysis of modern ethics" and that it has considerable relevance for today (p. 327). Scott Lash considers the religious ethics of the clan in China and how it survived and he wonders about the growing influence of modern China. Rosario Forlenza and Bryan Turner note that Weber did not write much about Catholicism but their chapter is rich in discussing Catholicism in nineteenth century Germany. Eduardo Weisz concentrates on the ancient Israelite prophets and argues that they should be regarded as the forerunners to the modern charismatic leaders. It is to Weisz' credit that he reminds us that one of the things which Weber valued in Amos, Isaiah, and others was their moral and political stands (p. 432). In perhaps the most interesting chapter of Part IV, Hira Singh discusses Weber's analysis of caste in India. Weber's concern was with the "distribution of power in society" and the Indian caste system is a great example of how status can be disrupted (p. 394). The example is the tension between the priest and the prince and the question is who has the greater status? Singh cautions against attempting to view this relationship through a European lens because India did not have anything similar to the Western master and slave or serf and lord. Nonetheless, Singh concludes that Weber's analysis on the Indian caste system is worthy of further study (p. 408).

Part V is on culture and perhaps the most intriguing chapter is Brandon Konoval's on Weber's sociology of music. Not only does Konoval emphasize Weber's immense learning but also Weber's immense personal interest in music. He notes Weber's relationship with the pianist Mina Tobler and the history of music, but he also stresses that Weber wrote his sociology of music during a time of major changes in music—Debussy and Stravinsky to name just two (p. 470). Konoval also relates Weber's writing on music with philosophy (Nietzsche) and with economics (Bücher), thus revealing that Weber's concern with music is found in more places than his sociology of music, and is of interest to a much larger audience than to only musicology specialists.

Joshua Derman's chapter on culture in the Occident competes with that by Konoval for the title of most intriguing; Derman offers a wide-ranging discussion of the crucial importance that "culture" ("Kultur") plays in Weber's thought. Derman emphasizes the role that rationalization played in the rise of Western capitalism and how that helped determine European culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Derman allows that some of Weber's facts have been shown to be wrong but Derman takes issue with the charge that Weber was completely Eurocentric (p. 525).

Thomas Kemple also addresses the process of rationalization and its impact on German "Kultur". Kemple argues that Weber did not believe that the process of rationalization was moving relentlessly in one direction and points out that Weber was also interested in how irrational approaches tended to affect discussions. Kemple also disputes the claim that Weber was Eurocentric and adds that Weber adopted a type of "heuristic Eurocentrism" for "methodological purposes" (p. 446). There is much to be said for most of Kemple's claims; an exception is his claim that Weber conceived of "Kultur" as "civilization" (p. 447). Like Konoval and Derman, Kemple prompts the reader to consider Weber's writings from a slightly different point of view; and the results are enlightening.

The final Part has four papers. Sérgio Da Mata emphasizes Weber's preoccupation with reality and notes that his "science of reality" ("Wirklichkeitswissenschaft") grew out of the historical school but that it shares some affinity with Nietzsche's courage to face reality (p. 608). Jos C. N. Raadschelders takes issue with the claim that Weber's notion of the "iron cage" is so rigid; rather than constricting people, bureaucracy provides the societal structure in which people can function successfully (pp. 563-564). Gangolf Hübinger focuses on the notion of intellectuals but he argues that many of them on not ivory tower idealists but are "committed observers". He points specifically to Raymond Aron and Ralf Dahrendorf as two such "committed observers" and he notes how both were heavily influenced by Weber's insistence on the importance of responsibility in politics. He argues that they accepted Weber's notion of the "duality of imperatives" and that the "committed observer" possessed the will to act along with the will to truth (p. 542). Stephen Turner explains a number of Weber's methodological contributions, among them causation and ideal types. He clarifies what Weber meant by "objective possibility" by suggesting that a historian could consider a number of possible "causes" which could have been responsible for some historical event and then focus on the one that would have been the most probable one to have caused it. Turner then explains that when some explanation reaches a certain degree of probability then it becomes an "adequate cause" and he notes that Weber drew heavily from his Freiburg colleague Johannes von Kries. Turner concludes that Weber's methodological writings continue to be relevant but he cautions that many of his notions have been misinterpreted and misrepresented (pp. 579-581).

The book is not without some flaws. Stephen Turner noted correctly that "Weber's methodological writings are some of the most influential parts of his work" (p. 575). In light of this, it is unfortunate that Turner's chapter is the only one out of the thirty-two to focus on method. Second, the book has a 40-page index so one might think it complete; however, there are a number of entries that are not. To offer just two examples. "Ideal types" has a single listing: pp. "581-82" yet "ideal type" is discussed on pp. 23-24, 32, 436, and probably p. 39 ("ideal-typical spirit"). "Stephen Turner" has a single listing: "435-36" but he is mentioned on pp. 25, 435 and 441 note 40. Given the length of this book, a more complete index would help the reader locate issues and names.

To many readers, the emphasis on Weber's current relevance and his world-wide influence will be a welcome change from the more typical analyses of Weber's own writings. For others, this focus overshadows the critical need to understand what Weber wrote and the contexts and quarrels which prompted him to write. Regardless whether one is inclined towards the appreciation of Weber's influence or towards the understanding of his works, all those who are interested in Weber's thinking will find this book's emphasis on yesterday, today, and tomorrow, stimulating.