Max Weber as Professor: Freiburg and Heidelberg, 1894–1903

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Abstract: Five of the seven volumes in MWG III, devoted to Weber's academic lecturing, present notes from his teaching on political economy, finance and economic policy in Freiburg and Heidelberg before 1900. Detailed historical understanding of these subjects during this period in Germany is today limited, rendering Weber's teaching relatively inaccessible for modern readers. All the same, the raw state of this material lends us a window into Weber's reading and interests in a way mostly denied us in MWG I, which assembles published material for which the drafts, typescripts and proofs are almost all lost. An outline of Weber's lecturing 1894–1900 is provided, and especial attention given to MWG III/4, devoted to "The Worker Question and the Workers' Movement". The editor, Rita Aldenhoff-Hübinger, emphasises that this topic was not uncommon in contemporary university teaching, and that Weber made good use of contemporary sources. Besides reproducing Weber's own lecture notes, a Freiburg student Nachschrift – a fair copy written up after the lecture from shorthand notes – exists that sheds much light on the way in which Weber presented his material. Similarly, Else von Richthofen's fair copy of her notes from Weber's Heidelberg lecture course on agrarian policy (MWG III/5) confirms the lucidity with which Weber talked in the lecture room, based on notes that were at times quite limited.

Keywords: Max Weber; political economy; economic policy; agrarian policy; workers' question

DOI: 10.14712/23363525.2025.2

In July 1898, aged 34, Max Weber's short, intense and successful career as a university professor began to fall apart. In June he had reported being plagued by sleeplessness [*MWG II/3.1: 499*]; on 16 July he formally applied to be released from teaching for the final two weeks of the Heidelberg summer semester so that he might go on a *Kur* [*MWG II/3.2: 515*]; by 25 July he was in a mental institution in Konstanz, where he spent three months before returning to Heidelberg [*MWG II/3.2: 520–521*]. In January 1900, after abortive attempts to resume regular lecturing, he made his first formal request to be released from his post, that a successor be appointed and his status and duties reduced to those of a *Privat-Dozent* [*MWG II/3.2: 712-1*]. Reluctant to lose such a successful young academic, the Baden administration in Karlsruhe demurred, and it was not until 1903 that Weber achieved the clean break that he desired. Fifteen years later, for the Summer Semester of 1918, he accepted an invitation to teach one course in Vienna on a trial basis, elaborating arguments he had sketched out in the 1913 essay on categories. Completing the lectures, he concluded there was after all no way back, that he found lecturing an exhausting and tedious exercise. But in the spring of 1919, he accepted an appointment at Munich, repeating in a short summer semester the material he had presented in Vienna, then for the winter semester presenting his last complete course of lectures, later reconstructed from

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student notes and published as his *General Economic History* [*Tribe 2019: 22–24*; *Weber 2023*]. Presenting a new course on *Staatssoziologie* during the Summer Semester of 1920 he fell ill in late May, and died in June.[1]

That Weber, once he assumed his teaching duties in Freiburg during the autumn of 1894, only taught fourteen semesters during the following twenty-six years – four semesters of which were in some respect or other incomplete, so ten full semesters out of the following fifty-two – has perhaps contributed to the neglect of this aspect of his work, given the scope and volume of his subsequent published writing. It is also likely that the tendency to discount "teaching" as a significant part of academic activity has also played its part. These priorities were reflected when in 1981 the programme for the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* was published. It was divided into three sections: 23 volumes of writings, speeches and unpublished drafts [*MWG I*]; 8 of correspondence [*MWG II*], and 2 volumes of lectures, the *General Economic History* plus one of unspecified lecture notes by Weber and notes on these lectures by students [*MWG III*].[2] As it turned out some forty years later, there are 24 volumes in MWG I; 10 in MWG II; but now 7 in MWG III. Most of the contents of MWG I were already in the public domain; the correspondence now included in MWG II has been significantly supplemented beyond the material preserved until the early 1990s in the former GDR, and so not readily accessible for scholars;[3] while in 1981 no-one seems to have been aware at all that the Merseburg archives also contained Max Weber's lecture notes from Freiburg and Heidelberg, which now fill five of the seven volumes of MWG III. Given the general absence of manuscripts, typescripts or proofs against which the contents of MWG I can be checked, these lecture notes are a unique resource. They provide an entirely new perspective on Max Weber's interests, reading, and working methods. As we already knew from the MWG edition of *Politik als Beruf*, published in 1992 as MWG I/17, Weber's own lecture notes were sparse and scrappy; but diligent editorial work has shed much light on this apparently unpromising material.

The primary editorial work done on the lecture notes, as with the correspondence, was transcription, emendation, and the provision of biographical detail. This was itself a major and time-consuming undertaking. With MWG I the manuscript and typescript source material (now with minor exceptions entirely lost) had mostly already been set, proofed and published, and the general value of the relevant editions depends on the quality of the editorial work done on material which was already available. This is variable from volume to volume, but it is possible to single out the major scholarly achievements represented by Knut Borchardt's edition of the writings on the Bourse [*MWG I/5*], and Edith Hanke's

[1] The course briefly summarised positions outlined in the lectures of Summer Semester 1919, then developed in a more formal manner material presented in the third chapter of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* – see MWG III/7.

[2] *General Economic History* had been compiled in the early 1920s from student notes by its editors, Siegfried Hellmann and Melchior Palyi, but these sources were not retained. The general veracity of the continuous narrative they produced could later be confirmed from the two sets of shorthand notes published in MWG III/6 – hence *Mitschriften*, made during the lecture. However, if students write up notes into a continuous narrative shortly following their attendance at a lecture, they will tend to reproduce the broader sense of what the lecturer said (*Nachschriften*), and there are two sets of notes of this kind from the 1890s. It is possible that Hellmann and Palyi worked from both *Mitschriften* and *Nachschriften*, which would have made the construction of a continuous narrative much easier, and less speculative.

[3] The insights in Wilhelm Hennis's essays on Weber during the 1980s were in part supported by his visits to the archives in Merseburg.

edition of the drafts on *Herrschaft* [*MWG I/22-4*].[4] Generally speaking, the editors of the lectures have refrained from exploring too deeply their substance, but the care with which they have been assembled make it possible for the reader to do this work. Handed over to the Prussian State Archives in June 1943 by Marianne Weber, after the war they ended up in the GDR's Merseburg archive, where in the early 1950s they were re-ordered into sections without any prior account being made of their condition and organisation.[5] Returned to Berlin in 1993, Wolfgang Mommsen re-divided and arranged them, so that the editors

Table 1. Max Weber's Teaching in Freiburg and Heidelberg (MWG III/7: 123–124)

Freiburg		**Weekly load**
WS 1894–95	Allgemeine und theoretische Nationalökonomie	4 hours MWG III/1
WS 1894–95	Finanzwissenschaft	4 hours MWG III/3
SS 1895	Praktische Nationalökonomie (Volkswirtschaftspolitik)	4 hours MWG III/2
SS 1895	Die Deutsche Arbeiterfrage in Stadt und Land	2 hours MWG III/4
SS 1895	Agrarpolitik	2 hours MWG III/2
WS 1895–96	Theoretische Nationalökonomie	5 hours MWG III/1
WS 1895–96	Geld-, Bank- und Börsenwesen	2 hours MWG III/2
SS 1896	Theoretische Nationalökonomie	5 hours MWG III/1
SS 1896	Geschichte der Nationalökonomie	1 hour MWG III/1
WS 1896–97	Nationalökonomie	5 hours MWG III/1
WS 1896–97	Finanzwissenschaft	4 hours MWG III/3
Heidelberg		**Weekly load**
SS 1897	Allgemeine ("theoretische") Nationalökonomie	6 hours MWG III/1
WS 1897–98	Praktische Nationalökonomie: Handels-, Gewerbe- und Verkehrspolitik	5 hours MWG III/2
WS 1897–98	Agrarpolitik	2 hours MWG III/5
SS 1898	Allgemeine ("theoretische") Nationalökonomie exkl. Litteraturgeschichte	5 hours MWG III/1
SS 1898	Arbeiterfrage und Arbeiterbewegung	2 hours MWG III/4
WS 1898–99	Praktische Nationalökonomie	5 hours MWG III/2
WS 1899/1900	Agrarpolitik	2 hours MWG III/5

[4] See Knut Borchardt [*2002*] a translation of his "Max Webers Börsenschriften. Rätsel um ein übersehenes Werk", Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, *Sitzungsberichte* 2000 (4); and my review of MWG I/5 [*2002*]. For Edith Hanke, see my review of MWG I/22-4 [*Tribe 2017*].

[5] This same neglect was characteristic of the draft material left in Weber's study at his death.

could work with the materials related to one course of lectures. As is usual with lecture notes, they were re-used, revised and supplemented for subsequent courses, so for example the lecture notes we now have on "theoretical economics" have travelled a long way from their initial state.

Prior to assuming his full professorship in Freiburg Weber had been teaching in the Law Faculty in Berlin, primarily on commercial subjects since he had begun by deputising for Levin Goldschmidt, the supervisor of his doctoral dissertation on medieval trading companies. The full manuscript of the dissertation had been submitted in February 1889 [*MWG II/2: 182–183*], then a printed version of Ch. III for formal examination followed during the summer, while the complete dissertation was published in October. Already in May 1889 he wrote to his uncle, Hermann Baumgarten, that he had in mind completing a *Habilschrift* on Roman agrarian relations [*MWG II/2: 187–188*], which would qualify him as a university teacher. His legal training was completed in October 1890 with his second state exam, having previously applied to work for the Bremen Chamber of Commerce; but his qualifying examination came too late [*MWG II/2: 214*], he failed to be appointed to the post and he made no further applications for permanent non-academic legal employment. Living at home in Berlin he regularly attended an informal Thursday evening meeting of a "Staatswissenschaftliche Gesellschaft" and wrote to his uncle in January 1891 that he had become "one-third economist" [*MWG III/2 22*]. In late October 1891 he had formally submitted an application for his *Habilitation* [*MWG II/2: 254*]; by 5 February 1892 the process was complete and he was qualified as a *Privat-Dozent*.

Shifts in national politics now played a part in the development of Weber's career. The Verein für Socialpolitik had been founded shortly after German Unification in 1871 as a national organisation of historians, economists, lawyers, politicians and public officials dedicated to investigating and publicising the "social question" – the social condition of the German people. Following Bismarck's resignation as Chancellor in March 1890 and a general opening-up of national politics the Verein now seized the opportunity of repositioning itself as a body offering the government counsel on public policy. Its first move was to propose in September 1890 a national survey of the situation of rural workers, circulating two questionnaires to rural employers between December 1891 and February 1892 [*MWG I/3.1: 3–5*]. Max Weber was commissioned to write up the results for East Elbia, the heartland of the Prussian aristocracy [*Tribe 1983: 195–196*]. In May he also accepted a proposal from Gustav Schmoller that he make a presentation of the topic at the forthcoming annual meeting, scheduled for September in Posen, but postponed to March 1893 in Berlin because of a cholera epidemic. His substantial and detailed report was ready by the autumn and published in December 1892 [*Weber 1892*]. The 28-year-old Max Weber then delivered the plenary address to the VfS annual meeting, outlining the organisation of rural work, literally "the constitution of rural labour" [*Weber 2019*].

Now qualified to teach in the university, Weber had already during Summer Semester 1892 presented two lecture courses, on the Roman law of property and on insurance law, and then three during the Winter Semester 1892–93: on Roman legal history, commercial law and the law governing bills of exchange, substituting for his teacher Levin Goldschmidt who had fallen ill. His VfS report had immediately lent him a national profile; from late 1892 he became the subject of various provisional discussions regarding an appointment as a professor of law other than in Berlin [*MWG II/2: 6*]. Meanwhile Max Sering, Professor

at the Berlin Agricultural College and who had in 1891 originally proposed the VfS survey of rural labour, was approached as the preferred successor to Eugen von Philippovich, the professor of economics at Freiburg who was moving to Vienna. On 3 March 1893 – hence before 20 March 1893, when Weber addressed the annual meeting of the VfS – Schmoller wrote to Friedrich Althoff, the Prussian Minister for Higher Education, suggesting that if Sering took the Freiburg post, then Max Weber would be a suitable replacement for the vacancy created in Berlin [*MWG II/2: 7*]. Given Max Weber's work on Roman agrarian relations, and the positive reception of his text on East Elbian rural labour, he was therefore already being considered as a candidate for positions outside the standard legal curriculum, reflecting his growing interest in economics, agrarian history and contemporary policy. Then, in June 1893, Sering turned down the proposal from Freiburg. In July the faculty in Freiburg drew up a new list of candidates for the post, with Max Weber now at its head.

Althoff had in the spring of 1893 floated the possibility of an appointment for Weber as an "extra-ordinary" Professor of Law in Berlin, normally an unpaid post but remunerated by lecture fees, regularising his position as *de facto* deputy for Goldschmidt. There was much confusion during the following months, Althoff prevaricating about the proposed appointment, sounding out Weber's intentions, the relevant official in the Karlsruhe ministry going on holiday and so stalling the Freiburg proceedings, Weber eventually at the end of 1893 being appointed as a salaried "extra-ordinary" Professor of Law in Berlin, the faculty in Freiburg then drawing up a third list of candidates and for the second time putting Max Weber in first place, until finally in April 1894 Weber accepted the Freiburg post. The convolutions of Weber's transition from an "extra-ordinary" Berlin Professor of Commercial and German Law, teaching during the Summer Semester of 1894 four courses over eight hours a week – law of the sea, agrarian law, commercial law, insurance law – to a full Professor of Political Economy and Financial Science at Freiburg a few months later in the Winter Semester of 1894–95, are laid out at some length in the second volume of correspondence [*MWG II/2: 6–11, 320–323*]. The editorial apparatus supplied by Rita Aldenhoff-Hübinger lays to rest to some of the more conspiratorial stories about Althoff, Berlin, Prussia and the German states that have been linked with Weber's transition of 1893–94. But these stories should not distract attention from the fact that Max Weber, a fully-qualified academic teacher of commercial law, had from early 1893 developed a profile as a leading specialist on the German rural economy and labour organisation that could serve as a basis for an appointment in political economy.

But the complexities of this period do not end there. That Weber also during 1894 rapidly became an expert on stock and commodity exchanges, composing the first part of an outline for a Workers' Library publication during the summer of 1894, reviewing the results of an investigation into the functioning of stock and commodity exchanges published in the specialist journal *Zeitschrift für das Gesammte Handelsrecht* in four parts during 1895–96, on this basis contributing two articles on stock and commodity markets to Conrad's *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, being appointed to a provisional national advisory committee on the regulation of exchanges in 1896 but excluded in 1897 from the permanent following Junker machinations, being the first academic to lecture on Financial Science in a German university – hardly any of this is illuminated in his correspondence, or by any other sources. We are fortunate that Knut Borchardt's magisterial editorial introduction to the writings on *Börsenwesen* [*MWG I/5.1: 1–11*] provides

a thorough account of the regulatory and policy issues arising out of the operation of stock and commodity exchanges in later nineteenth century Europe, clearly connecting with Weber's political and policy interests. Max Weber had in the course of just over three years first dissected the functioning of agricultural labour markets, then gone straight on to the analysis of financial markets. He quickly gained a reputation as the leading specialist in both fields. The energy he brought to his practical and institutional mastery of market functioning was then applied to the academic study of political economy and financial science during the Winter and Summer semesters in Freiburg, rendering more understandable the breakdown that he eventually experienced in 1898.

His first task in Freiburg during the autumn of 1894 was to put together courses on both general economics and financial science while lecturing on each of them four times a week. Since there were usually more students during the summer than the winter semester in Freiburg the general economics course was usually given in the summer, and that on "Practical Economics" in the winter. But this arrangement went awry at the start, due to decisions made before Weber arrived, and his efforts to get the programme back on track merely led to him repeating the same course another three times in Freiburg, and then immediately again when he arrived in Heidelberg. But he did get the desired alternation in place for the winter of 1897–98, and then prepared a more elaborate version of the general course, complete with printed guide, for the Summer Semester of 1898. But this was the semester in which he was increasingly distracted by his sleeplessness, and he never taught the subject again. All told, he repeated the course with which he had begun in Freiburg another five times, and since the papers now reflect where he had got to, but not directly where he had started out, we cannot know exactly how and what he taught as general economics in the autumn of 1894. On the other hand, the lectures on Financial Science that he gave in the autumn and winter of 1894–95 were only repeated once more, in WS 1896–97, and so we can assume that these notes reflect more closely where he had started out. Similarly with "Practical Economics", while he should in theory have taught this course three times in Freiburg, in each of the winter semesters, he actually only presented it once, in the summer of 1895, then repeated it in Heidelberg during the winter semester of 1897–98, then limping though it for the third and last time during the autumn and winter of 1898–99. Agrarian policy he taught three times; the "labour question" twice.

As I have shown elsewhere systematic comparison of Weber's exposition of general economics with that of his predecessor Philippovich's own textbook reveals an interesting mix of convergences and divergences; but above all, how rapidly Weber mastered the basic principles and materials of his new subject [*Tribe 2019: 44–47*]. Any adequate survey of the five volumes of lectures would need far more space than is available here; I will instead outline what we can learn about Weber's working methods, the sheer range of material that he successfully mastered, and how this was reflected in his own lecture notes and two sets of student's *Nachschriften* – fair copies of notes written up as a continuous narrative that must reflect how Weber built upon his notes in oral presentation. Importantly, these materials are, besides two sets of student notes from Knies's Heidelberg lectures in the early 1880s, the only direct evidence we have of how the emergent subject of economics was presented to German students during the heyday of the "German Historical School".

Weber had in fact registered for Knies's lectures in his second student semester at Heidelberg, SS 1883 [*MWG II/1: 329*], since evidence of attendance at a course of lectures on

political economy was by then a required part of a training in law. In an essay originally written in 1984 Wilhelm Hennis drew a clear line from Knies to Weber on the basis of the new 1883 edition of Knies's textbook [*Hennis 2000: 119–143*; *Knies 1883*], arguing that here was the origin of Weber's "Science of Man". But on the narrower technical front of basic principles as presented in lectures, Weber's allegiance in the later 1890s was primarily to the new Austrian wave of economists, initiated by Carl Menger's *Grundsätze der Volkswirthschaftslehre* [*1871*] and during the 1880s developed by Eugen von Böhm Bawerk and his brother-in-law Friedrich von Wieser [*Tribe 2010*]. Knies's textbook had originally been published in 1852, and the revisions to the new edition were separate additions, *Zusätze*, so that it is easy to identify in what way Knies's text had been updated to reflect the major shifts in political economy since the early 1870s, let alone the 1850s. Knies entirely overlooked the significance of Menger, indeed made no reference at all to any Austrian writing and instead heavily criticised the work of Léon Walras for its mathematical nature [*Knies 1883: 501ff.*].[6] He did recognise that a major shift in what counted as modern political economy had occurred; but he associated this not with any "Marginal Revolution" of the 1870s but with a new socialist political economy – of Rodbertus, Marx, and Lassalle. He associated them with the idea of labour as the source of all value, hence after all as continuous with the core principles of early nineteenth century Franco-British political economy, an abstract system of production and distribution in which there was no place for human agency – and so actually quite unlike the early nineteenth century *Nationalökonomie* upon which Menger himself explicitly drew. So confused was Knies about recent developments in political economy that he saw Walras as a continuation of Ricardo.

In fact Böhm-Bawerk and von Wieser had attended Knies's lectures and contributed to his seminar in 1876 [*Hennings 1997: 10*], but as Kiichiro Yagi observes in his introduction to a set of Knies' lecture notes from 1886, the conception of market price that he there advances owes nothing to the new theory [*Yagi 2000a: 10*]. Furthermore, the broad similarity of these notes from the period immediate following Weber's attendance at Knies's lectures with another set of notes dating from the Summer Semester of 1880, two years before Weber's first casual attendance in Summer Semester 1882, confirms the regular manner in which Knies reproduced the content of his lectures.[7] Knies begins both courses with a systematic overview, starting from with the definition of concepts, the relation of the legal order to economics, the divisions of political economy and its literature. In Seligman's notes from 1880 the textbooks listed are those of Rau, Roscher, Hildebrand, Knies, Schäffle, Lorenz von Stein, Mangoldt, and Hermann. In 1886 the list is similar, excluding von Stein and adding Schönberg's *Handbuch der politischen Ökonomie* and Kohn's *Lehrbuch*. The most recent book listed is Bischof's 1876 *Grundzüge eines Systems der Nationalökonomie* [*Yagi 2000b: 21*]. Schäffle was Menger's predecessor in the Vienna chair, and Knies adds the comment that his textbook "is very productive"; while Mangoldt is relegated in this later listing to "smaller works". None of the newer work in economics, in German or any other language, is here included.

[6] We can assume that Knies only had a copy of Walras's *Éléments d'économie politique pure* [*1874*] because Walras had sent him one, which was something he regularly did to publicise his work – letter of Knies to Walras, 22 September 1874, Letter 299 [*Jaffé 1965: 429*].

[7] "National Oekonomie. Prof. Knies April 1880", Edwin R. A. Seligman Papers Box 86 Notebook IV, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Butler Library, Columbia University.

All of which is to say: Weber had indeed attended a course of lectures on political economy as a student, but what he presented eleven years later in 1894 bore little relation to what had been conveyed to him then about the basic analytical framework of contemporary economics. How did he manage to finish teaching four courses in commercial law in Berlin at the end of SS 1894, then begin teaching a course in general economic theory the same October in Freiburg, without anyone apparently noticing that he had never done this before? Part of the answer to this can be found in the editorial work done on the lectures on "Practical Economics" included in MWG III/2, which he began teaching in SS 1895.

Hauke Jessen and his editorial team asked the question: so if Weber was a novice lecturer in economics getting up lectures in a field entirely new to him in the summer of 1894, how did he manage to lecture from Tuesdays to Fridays for one hour a day throughout SS 1895 and give the impression he knew what he was talking about? Jessen homes in on the issue of where the material used by Weber comes from, and how he used it. With hindsight, the first point is almost predictable: Weber ransacked by topic the substantial handbooks available to him. His principal sources were the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, the first edition with two supplementary volumes including about 2000 entries (70 separate articles are identified as Weber's sources – MWG III/2: 97); Schönberg's *Handbuch der Politischen Ökonomie* in its third and fourth editions that contained only a few dozen entries, but in greater detail than the *Handwörterbuch*; journals such as Schmoller's *Jahrbuch* and Conrad's *Jahrbücher der Nationalökonomie*; materials from the reports of the Verein für Socialpolitik; together with titles in a series he jointly edited with fellow economics teachers in Baden [*MWG III/2: 10–11*]. The editorial report to the volume also includes two plates of pages from Weber's notes, showing how this core material was supplemented in the margins by more detailed data and material related to texts cited in the further reading to the entries Weber had consulted [*MWG II/2: 100–102*].

Jessen then goes on to examine the relationship between direct quotations and their sources, establishing that a direct quotation could often be traced to a handbook entry, while this entry itself was not mentioned in the lecture notes – giving the auditors of the lectures the impression that he had read far more widely than he really had. Indeed, the bibliography assembled from the lectures [*MWG III/2: 748–769*] identifies those entries that are not directly mentioned in the lectures, but can be assumed to be sources for them. By my count there are 88 of these.

As for the oral presentation of Weber's lectures, the scrappy nature of the notes he used implies that he relied heavily on his own ability to present a coherent narrative from a rough outline. He was very good at this. In the summer of 1895, he taught the *Praktische Nationalökonomie* course four times a week at 11 a.m., and so he had some time in the morning to go through materials and add to them so that everything was fresh in his mind during the lecture. There again, constantly working in this way with unfamiliar material is very stressful, and given the nature of his breakdown – that he lost confidence in his ability to speak, and ever after hated lecturing – this does seem a plausible contributing factor in his eventual retirement in 1903 from any obligation to lecture in Heidelberg, and the long break before he tentatively started again in Vienna in the summer of 1918.

Set against the lectures on economic history from 1919–20, we can perhaps better appreciate that the account of those lectures we now have is not a confection whose coherence comes to a greater or lesser extent from Hellmann and Palyi as the editors of student

notes; rather, as evidence of the range but also the consistency of Weber's intellectual interests, rooted in his very earliest work. The essential task of placing the *Wirtschaftsgeschichte* in its proper context has still barely begun, after almost a century. Jessen's account of the lectures on *Praktische Nationalökonomie* does seek to provide such a context, hampered however by the generally poor quality of existing historical commentary on the "German Historical School" to which Weber claimed allegiance, and a tendency to overlook that in an increasingly international context – of politics and economics, of economy policy and economic "theory" – German academics were increasingly detached from their European and American colleagues. The two contemporary English-language standard authorities on trade, Frank Taussig [*1892*] and Charles Bastable [*1887*], are not mentioned in the bibliography of MWG III/2. Here Weber reflected the limitations of his German colleagues, an important feature of any context: an absence.

But there are also clues in these lectures to his later interests. In 1910 Weber maintained in passing that his arguments on religion and the "spirit" of capitalism went back to lectures he had given twelve years before. He was referring to his lectures on *Praktische Nationalökonomie*. In reviewing economic development since the Reformation, the ideals of Catholic "utopians" like Campanella, the role of Jesuits in South America [*MWG III/2: 236–243*], he sketches out the economic consequences of particular Christian ideals. And there is more: having already argued that societies based upon slave labour were doomed to long-term decline, he here elaborates that idea in a comparative account of Brazil, the United States, and China. Here we see the Weber we "know" in the process of its formation, and it changes what we think we knew.

We can see more directly the relationship between the production and delivery of Weber's lectures in MWG III/4, "The Workers Question and the Workers' Movement". He lectured on this twice a week in Freiburg during SS 1895, and then again in Heidelberg during SS 1898. The manuscript of Weber's original notes was revised and added to for 1898, but this does not seriously alter what we are able to conclude from it. For there is also a student *Nachschrift* for the Freiburg lectures [*MWG III/4: 250–310*], 166 pages in the original notebook, and so a substantial record in its own right. By comparing the *Nachschrift* with Weber's own notes we can see how successfully Weber converted his lecture notes into a coherent and fluent oral narrative.

Rita Aldenhoff-Hübinger's introduction to this volume is especially helpful, since she begins by making clear that this topic existed uncontroversially in German university lecture programmes. She demonstrates how widespread formal lecturing on socialism and workers' movements during the 1880s and 1890s was – so that, for example, Schmoller, Wagner, Sering and Oldenburg all lectured regularly on the social question and the history of socialism in Berlin [*MWG III/4: 5*]. Similar lecture courses were given in Breslau, Freiburg, Strasbourg and Tübingen. In Heidelberg Knies lectured on "The History of Economics and of Socialism, with reference to Communist Doctrines" during WS 1895–96 and WS 1896–97. Both Georg Adler and Heinrich Herkner taught in Freiburg, and importantly had published books on the subject [*Adler 1885*; *Herkner 1894*]. Lujo Brentano, Weber's eventual predecessor in Munich, had early in his career studied English trade unions and published a major two-volume work on the subject in the early years of the newly-united Germany [*1871/1872*]. When Weber moved to Heidelberg for SS 1897 Emil Leser was giving a special lecture course on "Contemporary Socialism", and

a *Privat-Dozent*, Carl Kindemann, also taught a course of "The Worker Question in Industrial Life" [*MWG III/4: 14*]. Both repeated the courses in the following winter semester, while 50 students registered for Max Weber's course on the workers' movement during SS 1898, including Else von Richthofen. Moving back to the teaching in Freiburg, Weber's colleague Schulze-Gävernitz had also studied the English trade union movement, and his *Zum socialen Frieden* [*1890*] traced its development from Chartism to the contemporary union movement. 35 students signed up for Weber's Freiburg lecture course on "The German Worker Question in Town and Country" in SS 1895, as against 19 for his course on "Praktische Nationalökonomie" [*MWG III/4: 13*].

Weber's lectures on general economics began with "Begriff der Wirtschaft" [*MWG III/1*: *200*][8]; so too the lectures on the *Arbeiterfrage*:

> § 1. Introduction: Concept of the Worker Question
> A **problem** that is involved with **workers**.
> Existence presupposes that a **group of people** exist which distinguishes itself as "**workers**" from **others**, and therefore rightfully have this as a special characteristic.
> If this is in fact the case
> 1. **Of what does the characteristic feature** of the worker consist?
> Others **work**, not only intellectually but **physically** (master shoemaker)
> **Works for others**. – In a certain sense everybody today **works for others**: for the purpose of **exchange** (even the **master** shoemaker).
> What is specific to the "working for others" of the worker? [*MWG III/4: 73*]

Weber proceeds through clarifications and specifications of the nature of work, subordination, liberty, exchange and competition, arriving over a page of notes later at "the modern form of **economic rulership**, the rule of man by man, in **contrast** to other economic circumstances, personal dependency" [*MWG III/4: 75*].

The *Nachschrift* opens as follows:

> Introduction §1. Concept of the Worker Question
> The Worker Question presupposes, that men and women (*Menschen*) are distinguished from others as workers. What are the characteristic features of the worker?
> Initially one might say: the worker works **for** others. Thereby is distinct from a craftsman. But that cannot be the particular feature of the worker, because everyone works for others, in that each produces for exchange, so for the use of others. It could further be said: the worker offers services, others, the master craftsman, the factory owner and so forth, commodities. [*MWG III/4: 250*]

And so Max Weber's concise notes are transformed into his speech, presumably noted in shorthand by this student, then converted back into a record of this speech as a continuous narrative that reproduces the points Weber had prepared in the way that he spoke them.

That Weber began his lectures on the "worker question" by defining what a worker was, following this with a historical account of unfree labour organisation from antiquity to the Middle Ages, subsequent to which there emerged the modern form of free

[8] "'Economic action' (*Wirtschaften*) is a particular form of external human purposive action, i.e. of conscious behaviour towards goods and people; motivated/brought about by those **needs** which for their satisfaction require 'external' means …" (translated for sense omitting editorial insertions).

rural workers and the genesis of a working class – this was the way that any Professor of Law would proceed. Not like Georg Simmel, who had studied philosophy; or Friedrich Gottl who, trained as a philosopher, tried his hand at this kind of conceptual elaboration but never got beyond the concept of a concept [*Tribe 2019: 53–55*]. It is also here quite evident where the structure of the first three chapters of *Economy and Society* originates, as distinct from the earlier, discursive, manuscripts appended to them by Marianne Weber. MWG III/4 lays out the structure of the *Nachschrift* in parallel with the lecture notes, showing how some sections of the lectures as delivered were abbreviated by the student – comparison of the student's version of Weber's account of Marx's *Das Kapital* with Weber's notes highlights that much of the detail Weber presented simply passed this student by [*MWG III/4: Weber's notes 174–179, the student's version 303–306*]. What is indeed very striking about these passages in Weber's lectures is the fluency and detail with which he described the development of Marx's account of capitalism. When talking of the labour movement in France, England and Germany Weber clearly draws upon Herkner [*1894*]; Adler's book was devoted to the German labour movement, while further detail of the English labour movement would have been found in Brentano, if not in Conrad's *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenchaften*. But however limited Weber's sources might have been, evident throughout the student *Nachschrift* is that Weber's oral delivery provided a structured historical narrative that accurately reproduced the accounts we can find in Brentano, Adler and Herkner.

And this is a characteristic throughout these lectures: with very little time to prepare for topics about which he had not it seems previously read in any detail, his presentations are structured, factual and detailed. He is never busking, free-associating to fill time – his notes provide sufficient defence against that hazard. Perhaps this capacity had been fostered by his legal training, the years that he had worked in and out of Berlin courts. From the sometimes-acerbic comments he made about his Heidelberg teachers in letters to his mother and father during his first two semesters [*MWG II/1: 296–298, 323–329*] we know that he had strong opinions about the rights and wrongs of university teaching.

What is evident in the Freiburg materials is confirmed by comparison of Weber's Heidelberg lecture notes on agrarian policy for WS 1897–98 with the notes written up after each lecture by Else von Richthofen [*MWG III/5: 331–410*]. Unlike the lectures on the labour movement, socialism and communism, Weber was here lecturing on a subject upon which he had extensive specialist knowledge. His presentational structure remains the same: he opens with "The Concept and Particular Nature of Agrarian Policy" [*MWG III/5: 197*]. While part of economic policy, agricultural production raises problems distinct from those of commerce and industry in general, making necessary an appreciation of agrarian organisation and development, of *Agrarverfassung*. *Technologie,* the technical organisation of production including agronomy, identifies how a particular production outcome can be achieved and the technical means of so doing; economics by contrast

> seeks to identify the forms and institutions of human social life that are created by the meeting of need, hence in particular the production of goods. **Social** science, not applied natural science, like *Technologie*. [*MWG III/5: 198*]

Land is the basis of the production of means of subsistence, but this is also a form of immoveable property that has a population distributed across it. Weber's notes here are

somewhat hard to follow, but if we turn to the opening lines of Else von Richthofen's *Nachschrift* it all becomes clear:

> Agrarian policy concerns the economic problem that rest on the particular character of agriculture. Agrarian policy does not ask, like agricultural science, how a technical production outcome can be achieved, but is an economic science.
>
> It is important 1. because of the fundamental importance of the ownership of land, 2. because of the specific nature of population structure, 3. because of the particular role that *Grund + Boden* assumes in the means of production. To begin with, its particular character does *not* derive from its immovability, that can be found with other goods. But land is
>
> 1. the place of human economic activity, and this is especially true of agriculture.
> 2. The land has to be capable of cultivation.
> 3. Particular climatic conditions are necessary.
>
> There is a tendency to claim that land cannot be increased, is limited + a natural product, *the* monopoly good in contrast to capital goods, *but*
>
> 1. Today land is also a product of labour.
> 2. The amount of land in the world is indeed strictly limited, but this absolute limitation is not yet something that is directly felt, the yield of these lands can still be increased through labour. [*MWG III/5: 334*]

Besides anything else, we can see here in Else von Richthofen's notes the listing by number and alphabet that is such an obvious feature of the first three chapters of *Economy and Society*, marking the regular structure of the presentation. Here again, her *Nachschrift*, in organising Weber's oral presentation, leads us straight back to the structure of the notes he had made. There is so much that could be done with this material that it is hard to know where to start, and this is certainly not the place to do so.

What these five volumes of lecture notes do however confirm at length and in great detail is how little we know about the *Staatswissenschaften* during the last third of the nineteenth century – not simply of economics (or more variously and idiomatically *Nationalökonomie*, *Volkswirtschaftslehre* or *Politische Ökonomie*), but of the linkage of economics, politics and the law. The primary literature is enormous, while the secondary literature, apart from legal history, is both dated and limited. The German university was at this time at its peak of international prestige, across the sciences and the humanities. The American university system, expanding rapidly during this post-bellum period, adopted many of its features and creatively adapted them. Developing initially on the basis of undergraduate education, a new generation of American students seeking postgraduate training but lacking opportunities in the USA studied in Germany – auditing lectures, like Edward Seligman in Heidelberg during SS 1880, or Frank Taussig in Berlin for WS 1879–80 – or registering for doctoral study. In this way by the 1890s American academic economics quickly became both strongly historical/institutional and at the same time Austrian; not then incompatible approaches, as Max Weber himself exemplified. Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk made a particular impact during the 1890s, publishing in American journals just as the first wave of American graduates who had studied in Germany began to offer graduate training to domestic students. We know very little about all of this, either the German story or the American story; but this proved to be the formative phase for the academic economics that developed in the USA from the 1930s onwards, and hence foundational for academic economics as we know it today. One way into a better understanding of how this all came about has been made possible by the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe, especially

through the publication of Weber's lecture notes as MWG III. The diligent and thorough editorial work of many scholars has opened up a resource of immense significance, even if there is at present little recognition of the potential that has been unleashed.

Acknowledgements

Funded by the European Union (ERC, DEPE, 101088549). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

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