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Why Is Werner Sombart Not Part of the Core of Classical Sociology?

From Fame to (Near) Oblivion

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ABSTRACT The life and work of Werner Sombart poses an intellectual puzzle in the genealogy of modern social theorists. During his lifetime, Sombart was probably the most influential and prominent social scientist in Germany as well as in many other countries. Today he is among the least known social scientists. Why did he lose his status as one of the most brilliant and influential scholars and intellectuals of the 20th century? Why is his work almost forgotten today? While Weber's thesis about the influence of Protestantism on the development of capitalism is widely known, even beyond sociological circles, few sociologists today know that Sombart had an alternative explanation. An obvious explanation for Sombart's fall from grace is his embrace of Nazism. As Heidegger provides a counter-example, Sombart's fate requires a more complex explanation. In addition, we explore the different reception of his work in economic and sociological circles as compared to cultural theory and history.

KEYWORDS culture, religion and capitalism, social theory, sociology

The article has the following structure. We will first give a brief overview of Sombart's major works, his theoretical problematic and some biographical information. This is followed by a section on Sombart's relation to modernity, where we discuss the thesis that Sombart, like other German writers and scholars of the time, can be characterized as a 'reactionary modernist'. We go on to examine the relation between Weber and Sombart, mainly their different explanations of the emergence of capitalism and the role of the Jews. Next we ask if Sombart's Nazi sympathies marred his chances of post-war success. We argue that Heidegger

provides a counter-example and thus Sombart's fall to near oblivion requires a far more complex explanation. The final section explores Sombart's cultural theory, which still today serves as an entry point for social and cultural historians.

During the first part of the 20th century, Werner Sombart may well have been the most influential, most widely known but also most controversial social scientist in Germany as well as in many other countries. Today he is among the least known social scientists, even though he left an enormous opus that spans disciplinary boundaries and was always somehow responsive to contemporary societal, political developments and personal troubles. Sombart is perhaps best known for his essay 'Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?' (1976). To this day, political scientists, historians and labor specialists refer to the 'Sombart question' when addressing the exceptional character of the American labor movement (e.g. Dubofsky, 1994: xvi).

None the less, Sombart presents us with a significant intellectual puzzle in the genealogy of modern social theorists: Why did he lose his status as one of the most influential scholars and intellectuals of the 20th century? Why is his work almost forgotten today? After all, major social theorists rarely completely lose the stature they achieve during their lifetime. While Weber's thesis about the influence of Protestantism on the development of capitalism is widely known, even beyond sociological circles, few sociologists today know that Sombart had an alternative explanation. While many laypeople not only know that there is a 'Weber thesis' on the development of capitalism but also know what it says, few sociologists know that there is a 'Sombart thesis', let alone what it says.

One might think that Sombart's initial unabashed support for the Nazi government ruined his post-war reputation. This simple logic is refuted by the post-war glory of another eminent German academic who became involved with fascism, Martin Heidegger. In order to examine the questions from above, we shall, to some degree, compare Sombart's fate to that of Weber and Heidegger.

It is remarkable how little empirical research Werner Sombart inspires today on contemporary socio-economic and socio-political issues and how few theoretical controversies he provokes. To be sure, there is a recent edition by 'Sombart scholars' who try to affirm the importance of his work (Backhaus, 1996). There has been a vigorous debate about his Judaism thesis (Abraham, 1988; Davis, 1999; Mendes-Flohr, 1976; Mosse, 1979, 1987; Oelsner, 1962) and he still serves as source of inspiration for topics related to consumption and luxury in capitalism (Campbell, 1987; de Grazia, 1996; Mukerji, 1993; Roberts, 1998). Commentators seem to agree that only the latter is still seen as a valid contribution. Overall, even in Germany, Sombart seems today to have become mainly an object of passing historical interest where by necessity he is enumerated together with other (and evidently seen as more prominent) founding figures of sociology or other German thinkers of the Weimar period (e.g. Herf, 1984; Käsler, 1984; König, 1987a, 1987b; Krause, 1962, 1969; Kruse, 1990; Lenger, 1994; Lübbe,

1974; Mitzman, 1973, 1985; Ringer, 1969; Röpke, 1945; Sieferle, 1995; Sontheimer, 1978).

During his lifetime, the situation was rather different.[1] Sombart was held in high esteem by the grand old men of German sociology, above all Tönnies and Weber (with whom he was friends). He carried considerable weight in professional matters. There were countless major reviews of his books in core sociology journals (see Appel, 1987). Everett C. Hughes, for example, described Sombart's volumes of *Der Moderne Kapitalismus* as a brilliant series. Against the critiques, he stresses the 'keen and illuminating descriptions of economic processes sufficiently engaging to push contradictions into the dark nether regions of the subconscious' (1927–8: 501). W.H. Dawson, in a review of *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, calls the book a 'clever, indeed brilliant, piece of dialectic, however one may judge the writer's arguments and conclusions'. He also praises Sombart's style, which is concise and flowing, often vivacious and incisive, sometimes a little unorthodox, 'but certainly never dull'. This stands in 'strong contrast to the typical German heavyweight *Gelehrte*'s stolid and massive phraseology' (1927–8: 364). In 1930, Robert E. Park wrote a seven-page review of Sombart's *Die drei Nationalökonomien* in which he reflects widely about problems of the social sciences in general and *verstehende Soziologie* in particular, without ever touching upon the content of Sombart's book. At the very end of the review he spells out what he thinks about it:

> Sombart has cited something like 350 authors in the course of this brilliant and scholarly work. Some of them he damns utterly. With most of them he disagrees. In view of the unique character of his own work it seems that the world might have understood his purpose, point of view, and method somewhat better if he had written his personal confessions rather than a treatise on the logic of the social sciences. (1930–1: 1076–7)

Schumpeter said that *Modern Capitalism* 'shocked professional historians by its often unsubstantial brilliance. They failed to see in it anything that they would call real research – the material of the book is in fact wholly second-hand' (1954: 816 fn). He attested to the book's artistic quality but hastened to add that it followed a primitive analytic scheme.

Ludwig von Mises, to take another economist, had nothing positive to say either. Although his judgment is tainted by his bad experience with the German academic scene in general in the pre-Nazi period, he was especially outspoken about members of the historical school, which he accused of being

> . . . always ready to turn with the wind. In 1918 most of them sympathized with the Social-Democrats; in 1933 they joined the Nazis. If Bolshevism had come to power, they would have become communists. Werner Sombart was the great master of this set. He was known as a pioneer in

> economic history, economic theory, and sociology. And he enjoyed a reputation as an independent man, because he had once aroused Kaiser Wilhelm's anger. Professor Sombart really deserved the recognition of his colleagues because to the greatest degree he combined in his person all their shortcomings. He never knew any ambition other than to draw attention to himself and to make money. His imposing work on modern capitalism is a historical monstrosity. He was always seeking public applause.

However, after this rant he adds: 'And yet, it was more stimulating to talk to Sombart than to most other professors. At least he was not stupid and obtuse' (1978: 102–3).

It seems as if every commentator, whether in favor of or against Sombart's intellectual accomplishment, is enthused by his writing style and mastery of a vast array of historical material. If there is one word that comes up most often during his lifetime of assessment by peers, it is 'brilliant'.

Main Works and Issues

Der moderne Kapitalismus, first published in two volumes in 1902 and reissued in a much enlarged second edition from 1916 to 1928, was Sombart's most important scholarly work. In this book, he first introduces the concept of capitalism into the academic discourse. At least some of his contemporary social scientists praised the work as a classical and therefore definitive analysis of the origins and the nature of capitalism (e.g. Alfred Weber, 1950: 375).

Sombart (1902: ix–xxxiv) uses his introduction to *Der moderne Kapitalismus* to advance a kind of methodological and epistemological manifesto for a modern social science. Feeling uneasy with the 'historical school' in economics from which he started, he came to differ from the older generation of the historical school, for example his teacher Schmoller, in that he aimed for explanations based on ultimate causes. For Sombart, historical appearances built up to a social system that can be grasped by theory (and here he mentions explicitly the theory of Marx, see Sombart, 1902: xxix). However, he still considers himself a member of the historical school. Talcott Parsons essentially shares this judgment, since Sombart did not follow the intellectual agenda of Marx's base–superstructure theorem, in which productive forces are the most basic layer in society, upon which relations of production are erected and are, in turn, overlaid with an ideological sphere.[2] In Marx, the primacy is with the former two, in Sombart, with the latter – he gives definite priority to the spirit. Parsons is thus right to say that Sombart has 'assimilated the main content of Marx into the framework of historicoidealistic thought' (1949: 495).

Among the recurring themes in Sombart's works are race, Judaism, German-ness, capitalism and technology, Marxism, fashion, consumption and

leisure, and methodological issues. The first three are somewhat odd for a sociologist; nevertheless, they were of central importance to him. He also advocated a new program for sociology, which he called 'Noo-sociology' and which attracted hardly any followers. If one were to summarize Sombart's intellectual development in a nutshell, one could say that he radically changed his mind about two crucial issues: Marxism and Germany. He started out as a Marxist and ardent fighter for the cause of the socialist movement. This earned him the recognition of Friedrich Engels, who, in the supplement to the third volume of *Capital*, says that Sombart 'gives an outline of the Marxian system which, taken all in all, is excellent. It is the first time that a German university professor succeeds on the whole in seeing in Marx's writings what Marx really says' (1977: 893–4).

In this period, Sombart did not try to reject or transcend Marx. Instead, he attempted to complete the Marxian perspective by adding a socio-psychological and socio-cultural dimension to the analysis of the genesis and the nature of capitalism: 'We want a psychological foundation of social events and Marx did not bother about it' (Sombart, 1896: 72). The nature of the intentions of individual economic subject are of primary concern to Sombart (see also Sombart, 1902: xviii).[3]

After the turn of the 20th century, Sombart became a fervent anti-Marxist, with some anti-Semitic overtones. His relation to Germany was marked by an equal shift of valuation: in his early writings, he had many reservations about his country, but around 1910 he turned into a strident nationalist. His intellectual development can also be followed through different editions of the same book, *Sozialismus und soziale Bewegung* (cf. Epstein, 1941: 525). It first appeared in 1896 and was based on lectures delivered in Zurich; the English translation in 1909 was based on the sixth German edition (the book was translated into 24 languages). While the first nine editions were sympathetic to the socialist movement, the tenth edition (1924) revealed Sombart as a critic of Marx and socialism. This edition had the title *Proletarischer Sozialismus (Marxismus)*. In 1934, when the final edition of the book appeared, it was called *Deutscher Sozialismus* and supported the Nazi rulers. The core of this book has been identified in the words: 'For us there is only one aim – Germany. For the sake of Germany's greatness, power and glory, we will gladly sacrifice every "theory", and every "principle", whether it bears a liberal or any other stamp' (quoted by Fosdick, 1939: 429). Princeton University Press published an English translation of this book under the title *A New Social Philosophy* in 1937.

Going into more detail, we would argue that Sombart's turn away from socialism was first accompanied by a similar turn against Germany (around 1903), to be followed by a return to Germany and taking issue with the Jews.[4] His disappointment with socialism was a consequence of his high and unfulfilled hopes in the proletariat's capacity to develop a community spirit in the course of class struggle (see Sombart, 1904). First cracks in this faith become visible around

1900 ('is the proletarian movement qualified to lead our capitalistic urban life to higher forms?'),[5] giving way to utter disillusionment in 1906. In this year Sombart published *Das Proletariat*, where he stated:

> Like all city people, he [the proletarian] distinguishes himself from the earthbound, rooted, child of the land through the predominance of the understanding over the feeling and instinctual faculties. . . . He is remote from nature and fantasy, rather he is abstract, rational and utilitarian. (quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 91)

With the spiritual death of the working class, Sombart lost all hope of reconciling industrial civilization with *Volksgemeinschaft*. His consequent estrangement from industrial Germany is well documented in his book *Die deutsche Volkswirtschaft im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, published in 1903. There he points to the alleged link between the national character of the German people and the spirit of capitalism. '*Deutschtum* is responsible for the rise of capitalism. This conclusion left Sombart bitter and estranged from his people' (Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 91). While retaining his hostility towards capitalism, he would, however, slowly develop a 'strategy' of reconciliation with '*Deutschtum*', Mendes-Flohr observed (1976: 91). Sombart achieved this by distinguishing between two types of capitalists: entrepreneurs and traders. This first appears in an article in 1909, then in *Der Bourgeois* (1913). The entrepreneur is 'quick in comprehension, true in judgment, clear in thought, with a sure eye for the needful. . . . Above all, he must have a good memory' (see Sombart, 2001a: 39–40). It would be mistaken to take this sort of person for a decadent man, Sombart tells us. Contrast this with the trader whose 'intellectual and emotional world is directed to the money value of conditions and dealings, who therefore calculates everything in terms of money' (quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 92). Sombart was to identify this role as occupied by the 'Jewish species'.

Maybe Sombart made this distinction under the spell of wartime patriotism and hatred. However, the conceptual basis of the distinction had been laid earlier, namely between entrepreneurs and traders. In *The Quintessence of Capitalism* Sombart states:

> What peoples may be described as under-inclined to capitalism? I should say the Celts and a few of the Germanic tribes, the Goths in particular. Wherever the Celtic element predominated capitalism made little headway. . . . As for the Jews, I believe that in my treatise on *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* I have established the fact that the racial characteristics of this gifted people . . . were inherent in their blood from earliest times. Jews were traders from the first. . . . The capitalist spirit in Europe was cultivated by a number of races, each with different characteristics of its own, and . . . of these races the Trading peoples (Etruscans, Frisians, and

> Jews) may be divided off from those we have termed Heroic. (2001a: 46–7, 50)

In his *Deutscher Sozialismus* (1937), he draws to a close: 'What we have characterized as the spirit of this economic age . . . is in many respects a manifestation of the Jewish spirit . . . which dominates our entire era.' To rid mankind of this spirit, 'the institutional culture' must be so transformed that 'it will no longer serve as a bulwark for the Jewish spirit' (quoted in Harris, 1942: 813).

Sombart constantly dwelled upon the topic of racial categories. It was thus no surprise that he welcomed the Nazis' rise to power, whose chief ideologue he thought himself to be – a feeling that was not reciprocated. And, one must conclude, he was naïve at that, given the fact that even in his most Nazified book (Sombart, 1937 [1934]), time and again he mentions Marx as an intellectual authority. Even after he had turned away from Marxism, Sombart characterizes his relationship to Marx in the following way:

> However bluntly I reject the *Weltanschauung* of the man . . . I admire him unreservedly as a theorist and historian of capitalism . . . and it was his great talent to know how to approach it. In his genial problematic he gave economic science a path of fruitful research for a century. All social economists who did not take up this problematic were doomed to sterility. (1927: xviii)[6]

Every Nazi must have been bewildered by the idea that Germany should be a product of Jewish activity and that Marx was a hero. Given these oddities, from a Nazi's viewpoint, it probably did not matter much that Sombart professed to believe in the principle of leadership with the *Führer* receiving his directions only from God (1937: 194).

Sombart: A Reactionary Modernist?

Jeffrey Herf (1984) characterizes Sombart, along with Ernst Jünger, Oswald Spengler, Hans Freyer, Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger, as one of the main intellectual architects of what he terms 'reactionary modernism.'[7] The term, an ideal type, is designed to capture the paradoxes of embracing in conservative thought both the manifestations of technological advance and a romanticized version of pastoral life, while using a core of emotionally appealing metaphors and codes to reject most other features of the enlightenment or modernity, especially its main cultural achievements and political institutions.[8] Reactionary modernism joins backward- and forward-looking elements, namely progressive technology and regressive culture. The reactionary modernists were 'nationalists who turned the romantic anti-capitalism of the German Right away from backward-looking

pastoralism, pointing instead to the outlines of a beautifully new order replacing the formless chaos due to capitalism in a united, technologically advanced nation' (Herf, 1984: 2).

In Germany, reactionary modernism was based on support for industrial development and rejection of liberal democracy, and it became a major ideological platform of the Nazi regime. With regards to Sombart, the question requiring reexamination is of course whether he fits Herf's description of reactionary modernists and therefore the ideological *Wegbereiter* of the Nazis, or whether in the end he aligns himself more closely with those conservative and fundamentalist reactions to the Enlightenment that rejected the forces of modernization *tout court*.[9]

Reactionary modernists such as Ernst Jünger[10] or Gottfried Benn embrace both technological progress and certain modernist aesthetic tendencies while rejecting reason and its institutional accomplishments and safeguards in political and social affairs more or less wholesale.[11] However, Sombart left little room for ambivalence and interpretation. He becomes a proponent of the natural and mythic pre-capitalist conditions of life and an ardent foe of the artificial form of life of capitalism and the conditions for its possibility, including modern technology. The rural conditions of a natural, living *Gemeinschaft* constitute much more desirable conditions of social existence than those of the artificial *Gesellschaft*.[12] The relatively objective conceptual apparatus concerned with the origins of capitalism becomes *Zivilisationskritik* and is driven by a rhetoric of anti-capitalism and anti-modernism. The relatively detached analysis of capitalism is followed by an emotional lament over capitalism.

Stefan Breuer has argued that one can identify a 'German' line in sociology. His main criterion for setting up this category is the Germans' romantic criticism of capitalist rationality, the utility principle, and the lament over the breaking up of community bonds. Main figures like Tönnies, Scheler, Sombart and even Simmel belong to this group, while Max Weber stands apart. Unlike them, Weber did not welcome the First World War as a chance for redemption from fragmentation and alienation by means of German heroism, and, what seems even more important, he defended liberal democracy and its institutions (Breuer, 1996: 241; Liebersohn, 1988).

Sombart questions whether there has ever been an optimum balance in the relation between the forces of the natural and human environment and the individual. He comes to the conclusion that there have in fact have been such periods in human history, the most recent the 16th, the 17th and part of the 18th century in Western Europe. During this period 'there existed the greatest number of autonomous and extraordinary personalities' (Sombart, 1938: 402). But soon thereafter with the quantitative growth of culture, a rapid decline set in and the intellectual environment began to suppress and level down individual expressions.

Sombart's *Kulturkritik* amounts to a celebration of and peculiar longing for pre-industrial and pre-modern forms of life incapable of transcending themselves, and to a kind of modern fundamentalism about the failings of modernity in which its whole development right up to the present is seen as a sin against the immobile pre-modern order of society and nature.[13] A way forward appears to be almost impossible, apart from heroic German efforts to find a way out of capitalism and modernity (Breuer, 1996).

Sombart and Weber

When looking at the intriguing question of why Sombart fell from a highly visible and influential position into near oblivion, and why his colleague and erstwhile friend Max Weber rose to posthumous fame and became (besides Durkheim, and, perhaps, Marx and Simmel) *the* sociological classic, one could be tempted to suggest that one possible explanation is their different analyses of world religions, especially Judaism. Specifically, one might think that Sombart's latent (and at times manifest) anti-Semitism made him a less suitable figure for the post-war period than Weber.[14] There is much to recommend this interpretation. However, it needs some qualification.[15]

Werner Sombart and Max Weber were born within a year of one another. As a result, they both spent their youth and young adulthood in a Germany united by Bismarck in 1871, that is, in a country in which nationalistic, even chauvinistic and racist, convictions were entirely credible orientations. Categories such as the nation state, imperialism, colonialism or ambitions to be a world power were common conceptions and not tainted and implicated as they are today in subsequent catastrophic political developments. Scholars and intellectuals, let alone politicians, took such notions for granted and considered themselves to be champions of the causes connected with them. During the emergence of the German nation state, Max Weber, despite the image to the contrary that he acquired in much of the exegesis of his work after the Second World War, was just as ardent a nationalist and chauvinist as was Werner Sombart.[16] And, as we shall see, his analysis of the role of the Jews in historical development was equally problematic on a theoretical level (although far less on the political level).

The role of the Jews

Commenting on Sombart's *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, David Landes notes that 'Sombart's book received far more attention than it deserved. It should have been dismissed out of hand as pseudo-scholarly hoax' (Landes, 1974: 22). And Paul Mendes-Flohr adds: 'Indeed, the faults of his logic are so blatant, the tendentiousness of his presentation of the data so patent, that it is difficult to understand why his book was not summarily dismissed' (Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 94). Bert Hoselitz had written an introduction to the English edition of *The Jews*

and Modern Capitalism where he called the book a 'classic'. Barth Landheer reviewed the book and replied to Hoselitz:

> If the term 'classic' conveys excellence in regard to analytical powers as well as to formal expression, Sombart's work hardly merits a place in this category. It is a standard example of how 'facts' can be made to fit an idea. (1951: 587)

Sombart has some quite sinister statements in stock. Above all, he employs the popular stereotypes of the Jew as money-lender and usurer.[17]

> One of the causes to which the Jew owed his economic progress was . . . the fact that Israel was for generations a stranger and an alien. If we seek to account for this aloofness we shall find its roots in the ordinances of the Jewish religion, shall find that this religion always maintained and broadened the line of separation. . . . The Jews created the Ghetto, which from the non-Jewish point of view was a concession and a privilege and not the result of enmity. (2001b: 130)

Oelsner has claimed that, apart from Sombart, Wilhelm Roscher and Max Weber followed basically the same path in stereotyping the Jews as the commercial people *par excellence*. According to Roscher, the Western world owed three 'economic advances to the Jews: the taking of interest on principal; the *bona fide* protection of merchants who unwillingly purchased stolen goods . . . and finally the bill of exchange as a "world historical innovation" ' (Oelsner, 1962: 202) – none of which stand up to scrutiny:

> Roscher was the first of the leading economists to assign a definite economic preoccupation to the Jews, radically different from that of other groups, and which could be cast anew into sociological formulae. The notion of a historically determined Jewish occupation was epitomized by Max Weber in his concept of the Jewish pariah people – a position they supposedly assumed in the post-exile period. (Oelsner, 1962: 194)

It is true that Weber wholeheartedly agreed with Sombart's theory that the Jews played a conspicuous role in the evolution of the modern capitalistic system. He lists several distinctive economic achievements of the Jews from the Middle Ages to modern times:

> . . . moneylending, from pawnbroking to the financing of great states; certain types of commodity business, particularly retailing, peddling and produce trade of a distinctively rural type; certain branches of wholesale business; and trading in securities, above all the brokerage of stocks. (1968: 612)

While Weber argues that many of these were not Jewish inventions, he none the less stresses that 'one finds Jews involved in just these activities' – activities that were 'absent from the new and distinctive forms of modern capitalism, the rational organization of labor, especially production in an industrial enterprise of the factory type' (1968: 614). Weber sees the reason for this in the peculiar character of the Jews as a pariah people prohibited from agriculture, industry and manual labor by their religion. This transformed them into an urban commercial 'guest' people, especially prone to money trade. In addition, their religious ethic let them 'retain a double standard of morals which is characteristic of primordial economic practice in all communities: what is prohibited in relation to one's brothers is permitted in relation to strangers' (1968: 614).

Weber thus saw an ancient tribal dualism of in-group and out-group ethics in operation. However, he disagreed with Sombart on the role of Judaism for capitalist development. He saw Puritanism rather than Judaism as the prime cause for the modern 'spirit of capitalism' (1905a, 1905b). Based on his in-group–out-group model, Weber thought that the Jews limited themselves in their exchange relations and did not participate fully in social intercourse. This was a drawback for the process of modernization of German society. As Abraham argued, it is the Jews' religion that 'directs them to single out for especially "rationalistic" evaluation their relations with Gentiles, so long as their religious motivation remains viable' (1988: 359). As a consequence, Weber views the Jews alongside other *ständische* interests and groups as an obstacle to a fully developed modern class society. Although Weber identified himself with liberalism in Germany, enthusiasm for German nationalism in his day (which he also shared) excluded consideration of equal rights for religious minorities – Catholics and Jews (Abraham, 1988: 374). Oelsner even claims that

> Weber denied the existence of a Jewish working class as well as manufacturers, in Eastern Europe or in the countries of emigration, and he minimized the part played by Jews in industrial capitalist organization. All this fitted into his concept of pariah capitalism as contrasted to Puritan 'work capitalism'. (1962: 210–11)

Both Sombart and Weber agreed that there was a 'spirit of capitalism' based on a particular rationalism that came to fruition in the United States and England. France and the Latin peoples stand on the other side of 'spontaneity' and naïve enjoyment of life (Abraham, 1988: 363).[18]

As Oelsner shows in great detail, three basic claims of Weber, Sombart and others turn out to be myths: first, that the Jews had been money-lenders since early medieval times; second, that their religion prescribed taking higher interest from strangers than from their fellows; and, third, that Jews did not possess land or were not parts of the guilds. Moses Hoffmann was one of the first to make that information available 'in any Western language . . . [but] despite the evidence

furnished by Hoffmann himself he followed in many points the bias indicated by the title ["The Money Trade of the German Jews"[19]]' (Oelsner, 1962: 201). Based on Jewish religious sources and historical research, among which Hoffmann's book figures prominently, Oelsner concludes:

> All this was entirely unknown to Weber. His generalization on the double morality of in-group out-group ethics epitomized in Jewish moneylending which he considered to be a one-way street, only directed toward the Gentile – pariah capitalism pure and simple – is based on scanty knowledge of the facts, and must therefore be rejected.[20] If there was an in-group–out-group ethics it had its roots in the mutually exclusive creeds of the great denominations, Jewish, Islam, and Christian, each considering the other as strangers, disbeliever, and infidels. (1962: 197)

Why, then, this common confusion about the Jews' role in economic history? And why the benevolent attitude of many Jewish scholars towards Sombart's analysis of Judaism? Regarding the first question, Oelsner offers the following explanation: 'The drama of the Jews' fate, together with their minority position, "inflated their importance in the popular and scholastic imagination" ' (1962: 212, quoting Samuelson). We postpone the answer to the second question until the next section.

It thus appears that, all differences about the religious origins of capitalism notwithstanding, both Weber and Sombart basically shared the same view as regards the Jews as a self-segregating tribe with a special inclination towards trading and money-lending.[21] But Weber was not an anti-Semite. He was in favor of Jews being employed in university and supported actions in this respect. Abraham (1988: 376–7) claims that Weber's view on the integration of Jews into German society was much closer to the socialists' position than was Sombart's. While this may be correct, the portrayal of the socialist movement is problematic. It certainly was not free from anti-Semitism. Marx stated in 'On the Jewish Question' that 'the social emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of society from Judaism' (1975: 174), and practically all German and French socialists decried Jewry for its putative predominance in trade and finance (Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 95; cf. the quoted literature in his fn. 57). Ironically, the liberal professor of history Jakob Fries had introduced the argument, later taken up by Marx and others. While urging Jewish civic parity, Fries said that 'to improve the civic position of the Jews means to wipe out Jewry, to destroy the society of mendacious hucksters and merchants' (quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 94–5).[22] For Sombart, in 'moneylending all elements of workmanship, of labor in the sweat of one's brow were abandoned for the opportunity of making money without such efforts' (Oelsner, 1962: 202). The Jew is, 'whether by nature or through the course of historical development . . . the incarnation of the capitalist commercial spirit' (Sombart, 1902: 349, as quoted by Oelsner, 1962: 186).[23]

If there is no significant difference between Sombart and Weber as regards their judgment of Judaism, what can then account for their different post-war reception by the social science community? First of all, and obviously, Weber did not live long enough to be involved with the darkest chapter of German history. It may well be that his early death secured him his place in the pantheon of science. But this seems to be a faint possibility; for all we know, Weber was not a reactionary modernist, or an anti-Semite. He was strongly in favor of liberal democracy and did not express longings for a 'paradise lost'. Apart from these important differences, there are two more. The first concerns the attribution of blame, the second the issue of race.

Briefly put, although both authors had reservations about capitalist rationality, Sombart was much more expressive about it.[24] Where Weber would reflect about the 'iron cage' of modern society, the domination of bureaucracies and the reign of utilitarianism,[25] Sombart was not only espousing a golden age but also trying to identify the guilty party for ruining it. His obsession with the question of 'whodunnit?' led him to identify the Germans in his earlier work. After his nationalist turn around 1910, he put the blame on the Jews and there it remained. Sombart thus arrived at a clear-cut world-view that separated good and bad: those who earn their living in an honest and productive way and those who do so by dubious methods. This anti-Semitic juxtaposition between industrial capitalism and money capitalism was also expressed by the fascist movement in Weimar Germany, and lay at the basis of the extermination program of the Nazi rulers after their rise to power. In identifying the Puritan spirit as the main cause of capitalism, Weber assigned only a minor world-historical view to the Jews. In addition, he did not link the analysis of causes of capitalism to the attribution of guilt. That Calvinism had 'invented' capitalism does not lead Weber to condemn people of this creed. And how could he, being himself deeply imbued in Protestantism?[26]

The last difference concerns race as a category in the two authors' thought. While Weber did not engage in this discourse, Sombart never ceased to be interested in it. Both Weber and Sombart in their partly converging theoretical attempt to account for the origins of capitalism concur that the uniquely European capitalist spirit can be explained by reference not to a singular characteristic of European races (cf. Sombart, 1902: 379; Weber, 1905a: 23, n. 1) but to mental categories. Yet Sombart's affirmation of a socio-cultural account and his opposition to a 'racial' explanation remain characteristically ambivalent. In briefly assessing in the same context the role of the Jews in the genesis of capitalism, he remarks: 'One can be sure that the Jews have had a significant share in the genesis of capitalism. This follows from, among other things, their racial disposition' (1902: 390). In later publications, the same ambivalence becomes even more pronounced. Here Sombart goes a step further (e.g. 1903: 128–31) in liberally mixing what should be conceptualized as socio-cultural attributes of ethnic groups but what he presents as alleged racial traits.[27] At the same time, he assigns much

more room to the discussion of the role of Jews in these publications, prompting Weber (1988: 181) to cancel his initial explicit and general agreement with him on this matter.

Summing up our argument, it appears that Weber and Sombart largely agreed about the role of the Jews in economic history as being traders and money-lenders. They disagreed about the Jews' role in the development of capitalism, and about the role of race. While Sombart was beset with issues of race, Weber was not. Most importantly, Sombart seems to mix these contested issues with ethical and moral aspects. His analysis of causes of capitalism is thus joined by a discussion about the attribution of blame. Likewise, his discussion about the course of civilization is interspersed with arguments about 'superior' and 'inferior', 'mixed' and 'pure' races. Again, for Weber this was largely a non-issue. This leads us to the problem of scientific objectivity, or the fact–value distinction.

Sombart and the Problem of Facts and Values

After the foregoing discussion, it is surprising to learn that Sombart emphatically states that he refrains from any value judgment. In his introduction to *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (not included in the English translation), he insists that the book is purely scientific, states only the facts and withholds any value judgment (Sombart, 1911: xi). And in his book *Vom Menschen* (1938), he states with considerable seriousness that his study of the conditions for the possibility of human existence is a purely scientific one and refrains from any value judgments whatsoever, and is strictly immune to the kinds of political and cultural judgments found in 'metaphysical' anthropology. What is more, he even makes rather blatant value judgments that have become the hallmark of his thought. For example, he (1938: 148) declares as self-evident that the mass of people are esthetically inferior, that is, the mass are 'gemein, gewöhnlich, ordinär, banal, trivial', or he proclaims self-assuredly that those who are descendants of racially mixed parentage are generally more ugly in appearance that those from racially pure backgrounds. He repeats the assertion that among the contemporary sins of mankind is the willful destruction of the naturalness of human beings 'as any cultured person has to accept as self-evident' (1938: 22), or that modern technology destroys the fabric of social existence and degrades man to the level of a monkey (1938: 339).

We can now return to the question that was left open: Why did many scholars – Jewish and non-Jewish alike – appreciate Sombart's analysis?[28] We suggest that there is a misunderstanding going on that is explained by the confusion created by mixing facts and values in the Jewish–capitalist connection. We can unravel this confusion by distinguishing between a positive and negative judgment of capitalism, on the one hand, and an analysis of the Jews in economic history as either central or not important, on the other. Combining these two dimensions results in four possibilities: First, there are those who regard capitalism

in a negative light and the Jews' role as important (Sombart).[29] Second, there are those who regard capitalism in a positive light and the Jews' role as important (some Jewish scholars). Third, there are those who regard capitalism as probably bad but inevitable but see the role of the Jews as not important. (For the sake of the argument, let us put Weber in this category, even though there is room for speculation. This is why we write 'probably bad'.) Finally, there are those who regard capitalism as good and the role of the Jews as not important (mainstream economics?).[30] Jews like Mosse are proud of the achievements of Jews in economic history; therefore they applaud Sombart in his attempt to prove their beneficial role for the emergence and development of capitalism. It is telling that Mosse concludes his book with a quote from Sombart that emphasizes the beneficial consequences of the Jews for German economic development.

Sombart and Heidegger

Not surprisingly, Sombart unequivocally expresses his admiration and hopes for the Nazi regime early in its rule (cf. Lenger, 1994: 358). Any distance and disappointment toward the Nazi regime that Sombart may have expressed derives purely from the regime's failure to directly engage him in its policy decisions and implementation. The case of Heidegger and the case of Sombart appear to intersect and converge for the same reasons. Any distance they express in words and maybe even deeds articulates not alienation from the ideology of the regime but frustration with those officials who did not sufficiently honor and engage its strong intellectual forerunners and proponents, for example as highly competent experts in the practice of the regime. Sombart's advice in economic policy matters was not sought by the government. He listed his books and articles, beginning with his 1911 treatise on the Jews, as evidence that his anticipatory ideas were not then properly recognized.[31] But his frustration did not translate into a critique of the regime, or result in a protest against the removal of his successor Emil Lederer or one-time colleague Karl Mannheim from their chairs in April 1933. On the contrary, he accepted and even furthered the latter action, for example by expelling Lederer from the leadership of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*. Similarly, Sombart did his utmost to accomplish much the same for the German Sociological Association (cf. Lenger, 1994: 358–64) and remained a repeatedly honored scholar during the Nazi regime.

It is in a way surprising to see how much effort is invested in interpretations of Sombart's work designed to show that he really was not, did not mean to be, or somehow became an accidental proponent of racist and national-socialist ideology (cf. Lenger, 1994; Sapori, 1955). One of the common apologetic strategies among interpreters of Sombart's work, attitudes and behavior during the Nazi era, especially among European intellectuals and scholars, is to garner arguments and evidence from different, as some might however see it,

distinct phases of his writings to balance or offset ideas uttered at another time, namely during the Nazi period (e.g. Allodi, 1989: 478).

Why did Sombart not have a comeback like Heidegger did after the Second World War? Sombart pales into insignificance when compared with Heidegger's success to this day. Such a comparison seems obvious since both actively put themselves into the service of the fascist rulers in Hitler's Germany.[32] Both had certain intellectual affinities to the ideological basis of the new regime, which they eagerly welcomed. But only Heidegger enjoyed a considerable post-war success. This can easily be quantified by looking at citation figures, which show a characteristic difference in regards to historical periods.[33] While Sombart enjoyed his greatest success with his writings published before the two World Wars (those of the period 1887–1945 were cited about 300 times, twice as much as those published after the Second World War), Heidegger's success was primarily based on the English translation of *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*), which appeared in 1962. He scores around 150 citations with publications that appeared before 1945, but more than 2000 citations after the Second World War.[34] To be sure, Sombart's writings, apart from his main work, *Der moderne Kapitalismus* (which has never been translated in its entirety into English), have been re-issued since 1945, just as Heidegger's have been. *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* was published by Collier in 1962,[35] *The Quintessence of Capitalism* by Howard Fertig in 1967,[36] and *Luxury and Capitalism* by the University of Michigan Press in the same year,[37] and *Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?* by Macmillan in 1976.[38] While there was a market for his writings after the war, the reception was far less enthusiastic than in Heidegger's case.

How do we account for the difference between the reception of both authors? First of all, we must exclude several hypotheses. Heidegger did not 'convert' after the war to an 'anti-fascist'; as is well known, he refused to make a self-critical remark regarding his fascist past.[39] The late Sombart, for his part, did distance himself to some degree from the racist Nazi ideology in his last book, *Vom Menschen*. Contrary to Heidegger, he did not live through the Second World War, so how he would have reacted to expectations posed on him to 'renounce' remains open to speculation. In regards to anti-Semitic tendencies in their writings, we have seen that Sombart was ready to blame the Jews for the rise of capitalism and the destruction of the pre-modern social forms he cherished. While not particularly known for statements about Jews, Heidegger's silence regarding their extermination can be regarded as his greatest failure (Lyotard, 1990). In sum, it seems impossible to explain the differing post-war success of the two authors by claiming that one was politically or morally better (or worse) than the other.

We get somewhat closer to an explanation of the difference if we look at the intellectual climate of the post-Second World War period and the conditions that determined their contrasting receptions. Heidegger became fashionable in two related but distinct waves: existentialism and postmodernism. Anti-fascists like

Sartre made ample reference to his work, as did later postmodernists and deconstructivists like Derrida. Heidegger seems to provide a link between Greek philosophy, Nietzsche and the 20th century that many were keen to explore. Above all the renaissance of Nietzsche has probably contributed considerably to Heidegger's success to this day.[40] If Sombart, in turn, can be characterized as the mouthpiece of one classical figure, that figure was, of course, Marx. However, at all times, and particularly after the war, there were many Marxisms on offer – and Sombart's version was just one among very many, and one might even say it was not a very original or visible one.

What Remains?

After so much criticism, we would like to draw attention to those parts of Sombart's *oeuvre* that have survived the test of the time, at least in part. After all, we think there is more that justifies interest in his writings apart from his sinister statements about race, Judaism and capitalism.

We refer to two of what we consider very promising intellectual developments within the social sciences that could well lead to a significant re-evaluation of the value of Sombart's contribution. Both developments are related to the apparently incessant specialization within science. Indeed, they are related to, perhaps even a backlash against, the apparnetly incessant specialization within science as there is a growing realization that this increasing differentiation of modes of discourse within social science (let alone between social science and natural science) has, apart from its undoubtable benefits, also incurred significant intellectual and practical costs.

Following these growing sentiments within the social sciences, Sombart's contributions to the analysis of the modern economy, and what he considered his reflections in the field of the cultural sciences, may prove to be at least a part of a road back to renewed and invigorated debate with his broadly based reflections on the nature of modern society in general and the modern economy in particular.

More concretely, and first, *sociological discourse* in the past few decades has been increasingly separated from *economic discourse*. Economics has rarely competed with sociological knowledge.[41] In the process, as Robert Heilbroner (*New York Times*, 23 January 1999) is quick to note, it has squeezed out the term 'capitalism'; the word no longer appears in popular introductory economics textbooks.

Such distancing from each other could be conceived as only a matter of the increasing differentiation in as well as scientification of social science discourse. Economics lost interest in the analysis of social institutions while sociology conceded the study of socio-economic phenomena to economics (cf. Granovetter, 1990; Swedberg, 1987).[42] Economic analysis and sociology have both largely lost interest in the study of the societal and socio-economic impact of science and

technology.[43] And, against Sombart, economists and sociologists claim, independently of each other but committed to the same philosophical and methodological principles, that they have made considerable strides in advancing the cause of positive social science.

In light of current socio-economic and political conditions, however, it is less certain that such a state of affairs represents a proper cognitive priority and intellectual division of labor. The sociological contribution to the analysis of economic relations should not be merely peripheral, nor should the treatment of scientific and technical change be considered exogenous to economic analysis (cf. Dosi et al., 1988). As well, a number of voices have demanded a *rapprochement* between or unification of the social sciences. This is, however, hardly possible on the cognitive territory or under the intellectual auspices of *one* of the social science disciplines.[44] A 'unity' of the social sciences under these conditions amounts merely to a perpetuation of the status quo and not to interdisciplinarity.

Second, Werner Sombart's self-conception was consistently that of a contributor to development of cultural science (*Kulturwissenschaften*). His idea of cultural science was expansive and comprehensive indeed.[45] Using more contemporary terms, Sombart's self-conception encompasses much of the social sciences and some fields that can be included in the humanities. However, he insists that his contributions, including those on the modern economy, ought to be seen as reflections constitutive of the cultural sciences (see Sombart, 1938; 1959: 258). In the meantime, of course, interest in cultural studies from diverse disciplinary perspectives has grown considerably. One might anticipate that Sombart's distinctive approach and contribution to cultural science will be recognized before long as an intellectual precursor of cultural analysis and cultural studies.

His work on culture, consumption and luxury is still regarded as 'classic' (Roberts, 1998: 822). Several authors in the field of cultural history turn to his work for inspiration. For example, de Grazia refers to Veblen and Sombart in her discussion of the role of women in capitalist consumption; she describes both as 'eccentric and idiosyncratic'. In examining Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (published 1899) and Sombart's *Luxury and Capitalism* (1967), she, surprisingly, finds Sombart's approach far more convincing than Veblen's, even though Veblen was a 'deeply committed feminist' – a trait that cannot be attributed to Sombart. 'What prejudices Veblen's analysis is not antifeminism but his idolization of the sphere of production . . . [he] saw the fullness of life only in fulfilling the work instinct'; Sombart's analysis, in contrast, is 'seductive in its recognition of sensuous pleasures, and particularly that these have operated historically to refine and multiply the taste for consumer goods' (de Grazia, 1996: 21). Colin Campbell's interest in Sombart (see Campbell, 1987: 6–7) stems from his dissatisfaction with the social science literature on consumer behavior. According to Campbell, this field had been left almost exclusively to economists, who treat consumer behavior in an ahistorical framework of assumptions and consider it to be basically the same for all peoples at all times.

> Of the classical writers only Sombart has clearly elucidated what Trilling has called the 'pleasure–sensuality–luxury complex', and perceived that 'at base' a 'love of luxury' might derive from 'purely sensuous pleasures', with Scitovsky the only contemporary economist to attempt to pursue this line of thought. (Campbell, 1987: 59)

In his *Civilization and Capitalism*, Fernand Braudel discusses the role of luxury consumption in the emergence of modern capitalism. Marcel Mauss and Bachelard concurred that luxury was the great stimulus for capitalist development and accumulation. While Braudel seems to agree with this general statement, he casts some doubt on the more specific proposition that therefore the princely courts laid the foundations of early modern capitalism. He attributes this view to Sombart, who advanced it 'most forcefully'. Instead, Braudel argues, before the innovations of the 19th century, 'the many forms of luxury were not so much an element of growth as a sign of an economy failing to engage with anything', and a '*certain* kind of luxury was . . . a phenomenon or sign of sickness peculiar to the ancient regime' (1992: 186). Braudel thus dismissed out of hand Sombart's suggestion that there is a close connection between the insatiable patterns of consumption in early modern court life and the growth of capitalist production.

Chandra Mukerji defends Sombart against Braudel's criticism. She states: 'What Sombart recognizes quite correctly is that the court cultural system was deeply embedded in capitalist economic development' (1993: 439). She then examines business culture's development in the early modern period. The demand for luxury was connected not so much to a pursuit of comfort as to social ambition and mobility, a point also made by Norbert Elias (1983), who argued that the highly complex and expensive culture of consumption within the court was not only there to 'distract a bored aristocracy, but a central means by which Louis XIV controlled the French aristocracy' (Mukerji, 1993: 440). Aristocrats became especially passionate about assembling rare objects from round the world. The display of these objects, plants and animals prefigures Veblen's conspicuous consumption, although Veblen would (quite wrongly, in Mukerji's view) stress the point that this was wasteful consumption. According to Mukerji, conspicuous consumption

> . . . was a way to mark ranks where social stratification was unclear . . . social instability of the seventeenth century was reproduced within court society and helped to promote the extensive use of material culture for making social claims. In this society, knowing who to imitate in patterns of consumption and how to use prescribed fashions showed political shrewdness and made social life possible. (1993: 442)[46]

In Sombart's words:

> It is the court society which shapes the habits and manners of all good society: 'Paris apes the court,' says La Bruyère. Court society in turn is molded by the acknowledged favourite of the prince, who thus puts his stamp on all strata of society. The court favourite is above all the model which is copied by the ambitious woman of the town, the *grande cocotte*. At the outset, the latter almost becomes a competitor of her sister at court. (2001c: 184)

In summarizing Sombart's contribution, we can say that, despite his daft statements on race and nation, he had a sense for fine cultural distinctions and broad historical developments. If one looks today at his essay about 'The Economic Life of the Future' (1927), one is amazed how close some of his predictions are to reality, especially his vision that an Asian version of capitalism might emerge and his assertion that there is little difference between a stabilized and regulated capitalism and a mechanized and streamlined socialism. But perhaps most of all, his style is outstanding. As George Bernard Shaw (1946) remarked:

> . . . he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry him. Disprove his assertion after it is made, yet his style remains. . . . All the assertions get disproved sooner or later; and so we find the world full of a magnificent debris of artistic fossils, with the matter-of-fact credibility gone clean out of them, but the form still splendid.

C. Wright Mills used these words to describe the heritage of Veblen. They seem to fit Sombart equally well, as does his comment that in 'his case we cannot say that *all* "the matter-of-fact credibility" in his works has "gone clean out of them" ' (Mills, 1970: vii, our emphasis).

Notes

We would like to thank Michal Bodemann, Volker Meja, Alan Sica and Günter Büschges for their constructive suggestions and criticisms. Remaining errors are our own.

1. The celebrity status he had achieved can be fathomed from the obituary the *New York Times* published two days after his death (20 May 1941) and its editorial on Sombart published on 22 May 1941.

2. The canonical quote from Marx is as follows:

> In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real basis, on which rises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the

social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (1987: 263)

3. Sombart's major theme reiterates, of course, the importance of the hermeneutic perspective and the role of intentionality in the analysis of historical processes widely shared at the turn of the 20th century among major representatives of German cultural science, for example by Georg Simmel, Max Weber or Karl Lamprecht.

4. We follow the line of argument provided by Mendes-Flohr (1976) and Mitzman (1973).

5. Cited in Mendes-Flohr (1976: 91).

6. Translated by Keith Tribe in Hennis (1988: 209).

7. Cf. Ringer (1969), Röpke (1945), Sontheimer (1978) and Stern (1961) for earlier treatments of reactionary German intellectuals.

8. The writer Hugo von Hoffmansthal coined the term 'conservative revolution' in 1927. This was to capture the paradox prevalent within a movement whose followers 'sought to destroy the despised present in order to recapture an idealized past in an imaginary future', as Stern (1961: xvi) put it.

9. Röpke (1945: 71) calls these authors (including Sombart) 'perfumed fascists' who helped greatly to make Nazism acceptable to the German bourgeoisie and the academic youth. Harris listed the following parallels between the program of the Nazi Party and Sombart: '(1) the repudiation of nineteenth-century liberalism and its "atomistic" or individualistic conception of society; (2) the idealization of the Middle Ages; (3) the proposal to reconstruct society on the model of estates; and (4) folk nationalism and its corollary, pan-Germanism' (1942: 815–16).

10. Compare Siegfried Kracauer's (1990) review of Ernst Jünger's *Der Arbeiter, Herrschaft und Gestalt* (1932), in which he refers to the strong affinity in views between Sombart's characterization and assessment of bourgeois thought and Jünger's anti-bourgeois stance.

11. Cf. also the Italian futurists for a similar view (Hinz, 1985). (We are indebted to Pierre Lanfranchi for this suggestion.)

12. The development of Sombart's thinking is significantly influenced by his clear and repeated commitment to his contemporary Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936), especially Tönnies' dichotomy *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (first published in 1887; see also König, 1987b: 265–7). Excerpts from this book are included in Sombart's *Soziologie* (published by Sombart in 1923; cf. also Sombart, 1903: 89, 397).

13. Sombart's critique resonates with the distance and disdain of many German intellectuals at the time. Both Sombart and Adorno express very similar sentiments about the 'barbarian' New York City (cf. Lenger, 1994: 147–8; Adorno's letter to Walter Benjamin, cf. Adorno and Benjamin, 1994: 410).

14. Cf. Fetscher: 'It is perhaps no coincidence that Sombart became a Nazi later on while Weber was among those few Germans who were in favor of democracy even before 1914 . . .' (1962: 11).

15. Irving Horowitz argues that both Weber and Sombart did not include a political element within their analysis of Judaism and therefore could not explain real world events of the 20th century: 'That is why Sombart in particular fell into disrepute. His analysis did not explain the political

inspiration for German anti-Semitism nor the blockage of its Jews to the political process' (1986: 22). This may be true but does not account for the different fate of Weber.

16. The relevant documents in the case of Max Weber, previously in parts at least somewhat difficult to access, are now part of his *Collected Works* (cf. Weber, 1993). Mitzman is convinced that it is not by chance that Robert Michels, Max Weber and Werner Sombart, 'after an initial flirtation – of greater or lesser duration and intensity – with socialism, became, in later stages of their development, either ideological predecessors or apologists of fascism' (1985:145–6). (Cf. the debate between Klingemann [1997] and Käsler [1997].)

17. 'Despite its scholarly presentation, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* is clearly an ideological exercise, preparatory to the Germanophilia that would distinguish Sombart's later work. . . . By demonstrating that fundamentally "Puritanism is Judaism", Sombart argues that Weber should have localized the spirit of capitalism in Judaism' (Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 88, 87).

18. Therefore, 'his slap against Sombart becomes an odd farce', as Oelsner (1962: 210–11) remarks.

19. 'Der Geldhandel der deutschen Juden im Mittelalter', *Staats- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Untersuchungen*, Heft 152, 1910. It is curious that Hoffman wrote a favorable review of Sombart's book *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, where he states that 'Sombart is by no means an anti-semite and has the best intentions. . . . His book will not only be the book of the season but the standard work on Jews and Judaism' (quoted in Mendes-Flohr, 1976: 88, fn. 6).

20. However, Weber (1968: 313) also says that some of these techniques of trading and money-lending were invented in the Orient (probably Babylonia) and only introduced by the Jews to the Occident.

21. Consider the following quote from Weber's discussion of the economic ethos in Judaism: 'The specifically urban, yet inassimilable and international character of Judaism, which was the same in ancient and in later times, has two causes' (1968 : 1202). The 'causes' Weber mentions are, first, the persistence of messianic hopes despite the destruction of the hierocracy and, second, ritual motives.

22. Fishman (1989) mentions also the influence of Moses Hess, although neither Fries nor Hess is mentioned in Marx's text.

23. 'Had not Karl Marx himself – gleefully quoted by Sombart – argued the virtual identity of the terms "Jew" and "capitalist"?' remarks Mosse (1987: 398).

24. Turner claims that Weber's personal sense of tragedy was 'part of a general *Kulturpessimismus* in German intellectual life which had its roots in Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Simmel' (1992: 240). There are reasons to cast doubt on this reading (cf. Breuer, 1996).

25. At times, Weber would also criticize Protestant recklessness and intolerance and praise Confucian grace and dignity (cf. Breuer, 1996: 240).

26. One may still agree with Horowitz, who states that classical sociological positions in Germany reveal an 'unabashed archaic quality. They present a simplistic approach to cultural survival by reducing such issues to psychic properties and cultural propensities' (1986: 20). What is more, the fate of the Jews is to be understood not in economic, but in political terms: it is the role of the state that determined their degree of participation in the economy and their survivability in totalitarian systems, 'whatever their economics' – Jews suffered in capitalist Nazi Germany as in the socialist Soviet Union.

27. Sombart (1903) mentions dominance of will-power, egotism and abstract mentality in the Jewish race (quoted in Mosse, 1987: 14).

28. There are many examples from different times: Mendes-Flohr (1976: 87, fn. 6) mentions Mendelsohn and a book by George Mosse, written in 1964. Meanwhile, Werner Mosse has published a large monograph (1987) where he quotes Sombart on the functional role of the Jews for the development of capitalism: if the Jew did not exist, he would have to be invented. Mosse comments: 'But the Jew (luckily for the German economy) did not have to be invented. He was already to be found in Germany in numbers at the dawn of the age of early industrialization able and ready' (1987: 27).

29. In his book *Deutscher Sozialismus* (translated as *A New Social Philosophy*), he leaves no doubt that capitalism is the work of the devil:

> Only he who believes in the power of the devil can understand what has taken place in western Europe and America in the last hundred and fifty years. For what we have experienced can be explained only as the work of the devil. (1937: 5)

30. It should be noted that this typology does not map the whole spectrum of positions. There are, after all, scholars who aim at deconstructing the stereotypes about Jewishness (Oelsner, Mendes-Flohr) since they consider the demagogic political use to which these stereotypes can (and have been) put.

31. See Werner Sombart's letter to Johannes Plenge dated 24 September 1993 (Plenge papers, Library, University of Bielefeld).

32. There is a slight difference in their respective behavior towards colleagues threatened by the regime. While Sombart did nothing to support them (as mentioned earlier), Heidegger tried to protect two colleagues from expulsion from the university in 1934 (Ott, 1994: 207).

33. Figures according to the database collected in the *Social Science Citation Index*.

34. Figures are even higher if one looks at the database *Arts and Humanities*.

35. First German edition: *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, Leipzig, 1911.

36. First German edition: *Der Bourgeois*, Munich, 1913, reprinted in Berlin, 1987.

37. First German edition, *Luxus und Kapitalismus*, Munich and Leipzig, 1913; second edition, 1922 (German reprint as *Liebe, Luxus und Kapitalismus*, Berlin, 1983).

38. First German edition: *Warum gibt es in den Vereinigten Staaten keinen Sozialismus?*, Tübingen, 1906.

39. More precisely, while his whole later work can be seen as an attempt to digest the Nazi involvement on a theoretical level (some would say to rationalize it) – and therefore he did say something – he remained silent in respect to the Holocaust (cf. Singer, 1993).

40. Co-citation analysis reveals that authors citing Nietzsche were also heavily citing Freud, Foucault, Heidegger, Habermas, Derrida, Weber and Marx – but not Sombart.

41. In the course of the persistent intellectual differentiation of sociological and economic knowledge, flashes of mutual signs of recognition and attention across the entrenched disciplinary boundaries can be characterized, at best, by shared expressions of irritation and disbelief. For example,

sociologists have expressed quite pronounced amazement about the restrictive assumptions in economic models of the rational basis of social conduct. Conversely, economists have been exasperated by such critiques and have proceeded to extend their analysis to issues considered by sociologists to be squarely located within the domain of sociological inquiry.

42. For example, as Christopher Freeman and his colleagues resolutely stress:

> The development of industrialized economies cannot be reduced to statistics of the growth of GNP, of industrial production, of capital stock, investment, employment etc., valuable though these statistics undoubtedly are. Underlying these statistical aggregates are the growth of entirely new industries and technologies and are the decline of old ones and many social and institutional changes in the structure of industry and government. (1982: ix)

43. With some notable exceptions, of course. See Bijker et al. (1986), Dasgupta and David (1994), Latour and Woolgar (1986) and Stephan (1996); naturally, authors in the tradition of historical materialism never lost interest in the topic.

44. Hirshleifer's observations are exemplary of this type of perspective and the typical (discipline-bound) intellectual conditions under which such unity is to be achieved:

> *There is only one social science*. What gives economics its imperialist invasive power is that *our* analytical categories – scarcity, cost, preferences, opportunities, etc. – are truly universal categories. Even more important is our structured organization of these concepts into the distinct yet intertwined processes of optimization on the individual decision level and equilibrium on the social level of analysis. (1985: 53, emphasis added)

Sombart is not immune to discipline-bound visions of interdisciplinarity when he argues, for instance, that sociology is the science of social conduct, and since economic conduct is social conduct, then economics must be sociology (see Sombart, 1959: 659).

45. We cite for illustrative purposes one of Sombart's repeated definitions, that of the 'nature' of cultural analysis:

> Aufgabe aller Kulturwissenschaften ist es nun, Mittel und Wege zu finden, die von ihnen bearbeiteten Kulturerscheinungen in ihrer geschichtlichen Besonderheit zu erfassen. Es gilt, ein bestimmtes Kulturgebiet dadurch gleichsam wissenschaftsreif zu machen, daß man lernt, durch Heraushebung seiner historischen Konkretheit seine Stellung in der Geschichte zu bestimmen und es in seiner Eigenart von anderen Verwirklichungen derselben Kulturidee zu unterscheiden. Das erreicht man abermals mit Hilfe einer an den Tatbestand herangetragenen Idee, die aber in diesem Falle keine abgrenzende, sondern eine gestaltende Funktion auszuüben berufen ist. (Sombart, 1959 : 653)

In the case of linguistics such an idea may be the 'inner form of language,' in theology it is the idea of the dogma, in the arts it is the concept of style, and in economics according to Sombart it is the notion of an economic system such as capitalism.

46. Appadurai joins Mukerji in stating that a materialist consumer culture oriented around products and goods from all over the world was the 'prerequisite for the technological revolution of industrial capitalism' – not its result (Appadurai, 1986: 37).

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