

Sven Eliaeson

Gateways to Modernity: Niccolo Machiavelli and Max Weber

The Birth of Occidental Rationality

Abstract: Gateways to Modernity: Niccolo Machiavelli and Max Weber. The Birth of Occidental Rationality. Heinz Steinert's recent work on Max Weber's Calvinist thesis is challenging and thought provoking, but hardly convincing. There are reasons to believe that Weber's views on the birth of Modernity will survive also this assault. Steinert, however, brings in a methodological dimension about how to interpret classics in the proper pursuit of intellectual history, in the search for a pragmatic balance between formative experiences, context and tradition.

Niccolo Machiavelli and Max Weber are both manifestations of Modernity, in different epochs. There are amazingly many affinities between them. They both need to be understood and interpreted in context, yet being significant in a long line in intellectual history, characterized by anti-metaphysics, calculability and demise of natural law. Weber's value-philosophy makes ready soil for rationalization of value-hierarchies, further developed by Gunnar Myrdal in his social engineering. Machiavelli's amazing modernity is an embryonic early bird to instrumental means-end rational policy analysis and part of a tradition with Thomas Hobbes, Samuel Pufendorf and Jeremy Bentham as important way-stations. This tradition has many opponents. Steinert is right in most of his criticism of Weber's analysis but has not much new to add, except a more clear emphasis on the Bismarckian *Kulturkampf* against cosmopolitan forces, such as Marxism and Catholicism, as main elements in Weber's context.

Key Words: Modernity, Western rationality, secularization, Machiavelli, nation-building, *Kulturkampf*, Max Weber

Preamble

Heinz Steinert's *Max Webers unwiderlegbare Fehlkonstruktionen. Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* invites to many arguments, about the nature of the genesis of modern capitalism, the irreversible rationalization as the destiny of the West and the Rest of the world as well, and the rational actor model as an anti-ideal-type (or ideal ideal-type, an interpretation with lots of supportive evidence in Weber's methodological essays, in particular from 1908 and 1913), presentism vs. contextualism in the understanding of a classic author, the evidence problems of counterfactuals, and configurations of Modernity.

What I find particularly challenging is how to navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis of presentism/retrospectivism on the one hand and contextualism/"historicism" on the other – and here the problems of interpretation raised by Steinert's attack on Weber can be seen as an illuminating case. Tradition and Long lines¹ in intellectual history open for a pragmatic balance.

Max Weber has served as a 'sparring partner' to the modern Multi-modernity paradigm, although Alfred Weber and Eric(h) Voegelin are more direct sources of inspiration, to Eisenstadt, Arnason and Wittrock.² There are several *Weichenstellungen* along the roads to our predicament of late Modernity. Ideas are admittedly best interpreted in their contexts, as argued by the Cambridge school of "Ideas in Context". In the strict and hardly realistic program of Quentin Skinner we should ideally even forget everything that happened after the period under study and restrict ourselves to be "recording angels". A better understanding of the "Quentin Skinner and his Critics"-nexus results in less of erratic chronocentrism and posthumous hijacking of classics for presentist purposes, a recurrent phenomenon in the case of Max Weber.³ Yet it is hard to imagine that we could fully escape our own language community. Possibly long lines in intellectual history is a way to find an appropriate balance between our concerns of today, in our search for identity by help of classics, and avoiding erroneous "creative extensions" (e.g. Talcott Parsons) of "dead white Europeans males", for natural reasons more concerned with their problems than our problems of today. Machiavelli and Weber are both significant manifestations of Modernity, with lots of similarities, such as nation building and also methodological precepts of a modern "scientific" kind. There are early birds, such as Marsilius of Padua and Thomas Aquinas.⁴

Introduction

Steinert's title might promise more than delivered; Weber's "Calvinist thesis" might be impossible to confront with tests but from that does not follow that it is an erratic construction.

Steinert emphasizes that Weber's focus shifted between 1904, 1905 and 1920, from the birth of capitalism to the broader issue of birth of Modernity. „Nicht Kapitalismus sei spezifisch für den ‚Okzident‘, sondern dieser Rationalismus auf allen Gebieten mit der Tendenz zu einer zunehmenden ‚Rationalisierung‘“.⁵ Rationalization is the main category under which the rest is to become subsumed. Calvinism and predestination and how to explain Fordism is important but does not exhaust Weber's theme, which is, moreover, dictated by contextual concerns, as part of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* against cosmopolitan movements such as Marxism and Catholicism. This might be the main achievement of Steinert: that he contextualizes more nuanced than is mostly done in Anglo-Saxon secondary literature, where there are natural limits to what might have fertile soil in a readership not familiar with German domestic politics. This has inhibited progress in issues of interpretation where context evidently matters.

Modernization is a concept which is often characterized by rationalization, secularization, mass mobilization (democratization), bureaucratization, industrialization and individualization, all indicating a still on-going transformation process starting around 1500 with some "early birds" during the era of the Gregorian Popes. How these indicators relate to each other not lucid, and secularization is mostly seen as a main feature, the meaning of which is disputed. Moreover, concepts of modernization and rationalization appear as overlapping. For one bridge-building overview of German Modernization from American horizon, see Randall Collins.⁶

There are many contributions starting "Max Weber and ..." ... and then fill in almost whatever you wish. It is thus amazing that nobody really as yet wrote about the many affinities between Max Weber and Niccolò Machiavelli, as two prominent representatives of Western Modernization, from two formative periods, four centuries apart.⁷ Both connect past and present and they both promote the breakthrough to Modernity. Modern capitalist rationality had its origin or at least take-off in the West. Weber's Calvinist thesis is a dominant hypothesis, still going strong. It does not exclude other paths to modern rationality, with "Fordism", calculability and rule of law. Singapore offers one example of this.

Weber and Machiavelli are both anti-natural law thinkers with the rational actor model as basic metaphor and their contributions could be subsumed under the common label secularization of social thought.

The structure of their analyses is instrumental means-end-rationality. They can both be seen as proto-rational-choice thinkers.

Nevertheless they are both time-bound and must be interpreted in their respective historical context, which can be characterized as “nation-building” or in Machiavelli’s case rather state formation, a rational establishment of the monopoly of violence in a specific territory.

Contingency, timing, the successful combination of *virtu* and *fortuna*, is important to both. To catch the right moment is crucial in the art of politics.⁸ Rationality helps, but not all the way. The contractarian individual utility approach of both thinkers are in contrast to sociological thinking which really has its take off with the Four stages theories in Scottish Enlightenment and with Samuel Pufendorf as an early bird. There are other early birds, such as Marsilius of Padua and Thomas Aquinas.⁹

It is true that “theory plus a dash of history (the reading of a canonical author from the past according to a present-day theoretical agenda) does not produce history”.¹⁰ It is equally true that social scientists today are normally driven by a search for identity and roots when approaching the classics, even if it is clear that classics are not up-to-date guides.

I would suggest that what I call “Whiggish” contextualism is a reasonable balance between Quentin Skinner and his Critics.¹¹ We have had enough of both creative extensions of Weber and his methodological precepts and of “Lazarus-approaches” as well (“What would Weber today ...? ... if reawakened from the dead ones”). Skinner’s mementoes for the proper pursuit of intellectual history cannot be ignored, but would in programmatic use (un-thinking everything we know about what happened later) produce very arid results.

Steinert’s work has aroused reactions and is a bouncy and eloquent rhetoric attack against Weber’s central thesis, even almost claiming that no Protestant ethic exists. Otherwise most points Steinert makes are no doubt well founded, and hard to refute. They are, however, hardly innovative and he kicks in already wide open doors. Yet his book has relevance for the perennial issue of the nature and birth of Occidental Modernity and inherent problems of interpretation. That social science is a battle-field for concept formation is a well-known fact, and Modernity is a central and vague and contested concept.

To account for and elaborate common traits in the oeuvres of Machiavelli and Weber might be one way to catch the core of Modernity – and provide a critical perspective on challengers such as the Multi-Modernity approach, often spoken of as a new paradigm, answering to a less Western ethnocentric and more universal or global approach in science history.

There are strong affinities between the methodological precepts of Weber and Machiavelli, two thinkers of Modernity from two stages of its development. Weber does not refer a whole lot to Machiavelli but it is a significant formative early influences.

Misunderstanding Weber – and Machiavelli

Already at the age of twelve years Weber was reading Machiavelli. “I have looked at uncle Julian Schmidt’s books (Julian Schmidt was a liberal author of a widely read *History of German Literature*, a friend of Gustav Freytag, my remark, SE) and glanced through Herder’s *Cid*; now I am busy with reading Machiavelli’s *Principe ...*”¹²

Machiavelli (“Old Nic”, “Murderous Machiavelli”) is a misunderstood public intellectual *avant la lettre* who has generated lots of reactions for or against, and who has many followers, only to mention modern management literature. He has a high omnipresence in Germany in the late 19th century. One reaction against him is the German migrant scholar J. P. Mayer who spent the war years during WW2 in England. He deals with Machiavelli’s role for Weber in a way bordering on “guilt by association”.

J. P. Mayer’s purpose in laying bare the Machiavelli-link in Weber seems to be to place him in a tradition of “neo-Machiavellism”, from a standpoint of Christian morals. Although Mayer has a lot of admiration for Weber’s scholarship he insists that Weber “was never able to free himself from the ‘blood and iron’ pattern” and stresses Weber’s inability to see through his own prejudices, “as his acceptance of the power-state idea ... prove”¹³

Several commentators later carry on similar lines of criticism. Wolfgang Mommsen writes, referring to Mayer: „Max Weber has been accused of teaching the German nation a ‚new Machiavellism of the steel age’ because of these views (power primacy, my remark) and because of his uncompromising support of the power state“ and further „Like Machiavelli, Max Weber assumed that power took primacy in the conflict of duties and idolized the model of those citizens who, in Machiavelli’s words, ‚held the greatness of their native city to be of greater importance than the salvation of their souls’“¹⁴

Mayer and Mommsen basically share a tendency to moralistic criticism, although Mommsen is more subtle and elaborated. The religious echoes in Mayer are absent in Mommsen, who appears more as a moralistic liberal with a natural law tendency. They also judge the relationship differently. Speaking of “Realpolitik” Mayer says: “Bismarck’s example made Max Weber understand the lessons of Machiavelli’s *Principe*”¹⁵ Mommsen interprets this in another fashion, in criticizing Mayer for „nai-

ven Gleichschaltung von Realpolitik mit machiavellistischer Gesinnungslosigkeit, die Weber scharf bekämpfte”.¹⁶

Mommsen does not make full justice to Machiavelli but has a more nuanced view of the influences Weber picks up from the Florentine scholar. Weber’s Machiavellism is by both Mommsen and Mayer interpreted rather derogatory and related to two interrelated features in Weber’s thought, i.e. his pronounced stress on *Machtstaat* and *Machtinstinkte* and the supposed tension between his strong patriotism and his ethics of responsibility.

The relationship between Weber and Machiavelli is also noticed by French scholars, like Raymond Aron and Eugene Fleischmann, in a similar vein. We seemingly need a more cognitive understanding of Weber’s and Machiavelli’s projects and methodological affinities. Although Weber is a fountainhead for competing sociologies he is also an anti-sociologist within sociology, part of a much longer tradition, of secularization of social thought.

The many parallels are intriguing for several reasons, e.g. their relevance for how to approach classic authors. Context evidently matters, as Quentin Skinner and other scholars claim. But classics cannot be *reduced* to their contexts, and evidently other factors are at work, such as formative experiences and tradition. Weber wrote in a “proto-rational choice”-tradition, and Machiavelli might in fact have founded that tradition, without any intention to do so; he was rather living in a realm of Ancient republicanism and very old virtues, typical of a city state world, although with Capitalism in its cradle in Florence and rational so called Double (Italian) bookkeeping invented, early forms of trade unions shaping up, etc.

Calculability and rational actor-paradigm is a significant step towards the secularization of social thought. Machiavelli and Weber carry straws to the same stack.

To avoid uncontrolled value-intrusion is crucial in instrumental means-end-rational policy science promoting postulated goals. Machiavelli and Weber pioneer such endeavours.

Scientific value-relativism: J. P. Mayer implies a conflict between Weber’s emphasis on objectivity in social science, and Weber’s own value-commitments. This is not downright wrong – Weber had a dual syndrome between scientific creed and political engagement: “two souls are dwelling in my bosom” is a Faustian expression, which could well apply to Weber, who sometimes spoke of politics as his “secret love”.¹⁷

However, there is an element of “political reductionism” in this sort of criticism of Weber, in so far as it erroneously implies something about the cognitive qualities of Weber’s analyses. It fails to catch the universal methodological core of Weber’s contribution. A certain lack of acquaintance with the methodological meaning of

Weber's views on value-relation (*Wertbeziehung*) is part of the background, the political agenda overshadowing the scientific one. Weber might partly have caused this himself, since his famous "twin lectures"¹⁸ do express a more blunt view on value freedom – more in line with the one assumed by his vulgar critics – than one finds in Weber's more sophisticated methodological essays, in particular the Objectivity essay from 1904, and also the *Sinn der Wertfreiheit*-essay from 1917, texts in which value freedom is qualified to value relation or value-orientation. Values as such, somewhat paradoxically, serve the purpose of objectivity and intersubjectivity, through being made explicit.

Weber's value relativism is developed as a qualification from value freedom to value relevance which is not immediately manifest in the twin-lectures.

Steinert reflects upon Weber's value-aspect-choice methodology, as I call it with a nebulous but pedagogic term, and the use of *Wertgesichtspunkten*, invoking H. H. Bruun's (2001) authority.¹⁹ This is central to my concern.

"Vorbemerkung", at the very beginning of GARS, is one key text to the understanding of Weber's intentions in his comparative sociology of religion and the uniqueness of Occidental culture and science, especially the first couple of pages, where he also invokes the authority of Machiavelli, to envision the difference between Western rationalism and India. He stresses the lack of rational conceptualization in "The Rest" and modern science as specific to the West. Moreover, rational calculation and capitalism go hand in hand. Rational book-keeping is only one noteworthy example of the rationality that emerges during the Renaissance.

Weber shares the same notion in applied value philosophy that later on is developed by Gunnar Myrdal and Arnold Brecht,²⁰ that values are indispensable as points of departure for cognitive inquiry but that the explicit use of values as tools for selection from vast reality at the same time is a remedy against uncontrolled value intrusion (value bias). The procedure becomes part of the standard positions of mainstream social science, as well as history, as a way to cope with matters of selection and intersubjectivity. The so called scientific value relativism is a virulent doctrine, resisting many critiques. Weber had a part in laying down the foundations of modern instrumental policy science, means-end-analyses rationalizing value-hierarchies. He is a link in the chain between Saint-Simonian social engineering and the piecemeal social engineering of the 1930s, except for the Enlightenment optimism of progress, not attuned to Weber's dark "iron cage"-vision, of our modern "squirrel's wheel". Philosophically the gulf-doctrine between "is" and "ought" could be traced back to the radical anti-metaphysics in Hume and perhaps even Occam. Philosophy is ahead of its applications.

However, not until the days of the great *Methodenstreit* and the ensuing crisis of historicism that Troeltsch²¹ – Weber's good friend and neighbour – defines, are the

consequences for cumulative science really taken into account, by Weber and his contemporaries.

The inherent predicament of relativism and value-incommensurability²² that follows from historicism is a hard blow to any belief in objective time-less norms and natural law thinking. The historicists themselves did not always see this and could adhere to objective values. However, since the main meaning – the core – of historicism is the denial of the universal character of laws and norms, instead stressing the culture-bound historicity and uniqueness of both, this in Germany most dominant tradition was very vulnerable, having something to explain in order to preserve reliability. This generated the crisis that Weber responded to, in his methodological essays after his recovery from his own nervous crisis.

It is notable that several scholars at about the same time expressed related albeit not identical views on the important matter of objective norms. In the North we refer to Axel Hägerström, who in fact launched the negative value-ontology in a more systematic and consequent way than anybody else, in his famous inauguration speech from 1911, in which he says “there is no science in morals, only about morals”.²³ Hägerström’s so called value-nihilism or emotive value-philosophy is very consequent, combining a negative value-ontology with a non-cognitivist value-sentence theory. As Aleksander Peczenik remarks in his “Introduction” to an edited volume based on the transaction at the IVR (The International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy) conference in Lund summer 2003: “Hägerström’s critical philosophy is not easy to refute”.²⁴ I have not seen any successful refutation.

In Finland Edvard Westermarck’s anthropological relativism contributes to the same scepticism regarding firm moral norms to be proven scientific with regard to theoretical “validity”. Westermarck, who spent a lot of time in Morocco and Cambridge, UK, wrote about the variations in norm systems, a subject matter that had been on the agenda since Thomas Aquinas and (more so) Marsilius of Padua – but not really before – and causing problems of identity within the realm of social science. The “Death of God” in Enlightenment generated tensions between knowledge and belief (faith). Even if the peak of this today also post-Modern theme occurs in the early 1900s, there is fertile soil in philosophy, already through various Scottish moralists and Hume in particular. Moreover, the theme is with us very much today, in post-Modern agony of choice and incommensurability between various “good” values, a problem agenda we also find in Isaiah Berlin’s work.²⁵ The anxiety and necessity of choice is our post-Enlightenment destiny.

In Vienna Hans Kelsen’s legal positivism is well attuned to this anti-natural law trend, even if Kelsen himself maintained that laws are also morally binding – and not merely conventions and regularities. It is in my view noteworthy that Weber, Kelsen, Hägerström and Westermarck were quite contemporary and rather inde-

pendent of each other. They knew, however, of each other to some – limited – extent. Hägerström and Kelsen had a confrontation in a debate that Professor Lagerroth in Lund arranged. Weber was somewhat familiar with Westermarck.

There are differences between Weber and for instance Hägerström. While the latter holds that values are neither true nor false, or in a sharper variation always false, Weber rather says that we cannot say whether they are true or false, by scientific means. The consequences for cognitive science – in contrast to in moral philosophy – are the same in both cases but Weber's neo-Kantian infinite regress has the door a little bit open for future advancement into what is today regarded as metaphysical realms; that the border between science and meta-physics could be altered in an to us un-known future. Hägerström is much more programmatic in his anti-metaphysical stance. Both could, however, be subsumed under the same general doctrine of *scientific value-relativism*. The structure of what I would call “normative empirical theory”, i.e. means-end-rationality from explicit points of departures that cannot be proven, but have to be postulated, satisfies in both cases the view that one cannot scientifically legitimately derive an “ought” from an “is” – or the reverse. We need value-objectives but cannot find them. This makes ready soil for the Weber-Myrdal pragmatic solution.

Since Weber holds that one cannot prove the validity or truth of a value – in contrast to his mentor Rickert who manifests a lingering value-objectivism somewhat inconsistent with his own philosophy – Weber makes no attempts to justify his own national liberal position. In recent years H. H. Bruun has returned to the Weber-Rickert nexus, drawing on new material, the so called Nervi fragments, as noted by Steinert.²⁶ Bruun is convincingly moving the research frontier towards the end of the road of this perennial Iris-apple within Weberology.

Weber's point of view is postulated, as the starting point, which is needed for his rational means-end-analyses. The structure of normative empirical theory, early policy science, if we wish, is at hand already in *Freiburger Antrittsrede*, a decade before it is explicitly developed in Weber's methodological essays. It is in fact embryonic already in Machiavelli's work, for that matter.

In reality one finds competing value-hierarchies, and science is of no help in our choosing between them, since pure value judgments, for example understood in terms of “good” or “bad”, have no real reference. They cannot be intersubjectively operationalized in the same sense as statements concerning for instance size or temperature. The impossibility to make rational choices between ultimate values could be characterized as the polytheist dilemma in post-Enlightenment, creating the existentialist anxiety of choice so well expressed by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard on the level of general philosophy – and finding its methodological expression in Weber's “value-aspect-choice-methodology” (“perspectivism”).

Scientific value-relativism could be seen as a “smallest common denominator” for a number of similar positions, as our short presentation of Weber vs. Hägerström has exemplified. The polemic front in common is against natural law thinking. In the case of Machiavelli four centuries earlier it is more appropriate to speak about a-natural law thinking. In the case of Gunnar Myrdal the choice is institutionalized, since his demand that values serving as points of departure should be *significant* and *relevant* to the social context in which it functions is a restriction that in his case is operationalized in terms of ideologies of parties or goals of social movements, a top-down social engineering peaking in the period 1930–86. Weber rather saw the professor as the one to generate or manifest the proper cultural values. In fact, nation and culture are very close in Weber’s preferences, since he felt that the dignity of the human being was the basic concern, and that the German cultural creed had a special mission here, between East and West.

Scientific value relativism is also ecumenical in the sense that it does not really presuppose a definite answer to the old chestnut question whether social thought should be primarily a normative or cognitive undertaking, it rather regulates the proper relationship between the two realms, in order to promote cognitive knowledge and adjust to scientific criteria, such as testability.

In paradoxically utilizing values as the very selection criteria that enables intersubjectivity Weber’s scientific value-relativism in fact does what J. P. Mayer claims he was ignorant of. Mayer writes that: “The substance of Weber’s world consists of an unbridgeable tension between values and science. He has misinterpreted Socrates and Plato for whom values and science were *inseparably* bound together.”²⁷ Now Weber’s qualification from *Wertfreiheit* to *Wertbeziehung* – the concept he takes over from Rickert and elaborates – means precisely this, building a bridge over the gap between is and ought.

There is a long tradition of anti-metaphysics, embryonic in Machiavelli and via Hobbes, Hume and Bentham built into today’s social science as a *modus vivendi*-standard position. The gulf between is and ought has a bridge and its name is rational action-model, the ideal-type we in fact find in Weber’s methodological essays.

Weber’s Calvinist-thesis is a rational reconstruction of Puritan rationality with its unintended consequences, to explain the origin of capitalism, one major feature of Modernity, which is a stepwise “historical individual” in many guises.

Especially in the US – the homeland of Fordism – there is an industry of comparative studies with Weber’s thesis as point of departure, in the search for the independent variable. „Die ‚protestantische Ethik‘ ist, ohne viel Theologie, längst identisch mit dem ‚amerikanischen Traum‘. Die ‚Weber-These‘ lebt weiter und ist plausibel, weil sie in einer banalisierten Form der (säkularisierten) Wirtschaftstreligion in der USA entspricht.“²⁸ The real estate capitalist Donald Trump becomes an indica-

tor of Weber's Calvinist thesis in its American guise.²⁹ But the historical philosophical scope of Weber's thesis is much broader, a grand narrative of Western rationalization. Moreover, Steinert's study promotes a shift from the American dream of entrepreneurialism to a context of cultural cleavages within Germany. One might say that in the categories of Quentin Skinner Weber's work is performative, and a political contribution to the Kulturkampf.

Tradition

The numerous *parallels between Weber and Machiavelli* (see Appendix 1) illustrate a methodological dilemma, as well as the lingering relevance of old and dead thinkers. There are so many striking parallels between Machiavelli and Weber. They are significant, indicating that context has to be supplemented by tradition, for the full understanding and best interpretation. They both contribute to the same long term project, which I call the *Long line of secularization* (see Appendix 2) characterized by anti-natural law and calculability and with the rational economic actor as main metaphor or "model" (ideal-type). The "long line of secularization" as an organizing notion violates a pure contextualism (what Skinner himself would rather target as textualism) and yet appears as clarifying in our search for identity and roots, which might be the rationale for dealing with "Dead White European Males" in any case. Machiavelli and Weber have survived and reach out to ever changing readerships in new generations. Nation-building is the main policy-concern of both.

In the case of Florentine thinkers in early Modernity/late Medieval times they were innocently unaware of the dangers of chronocentrism, since they conceived of their city state as a natural continuation of Greek Antiquity, the step between Athens and Florence was not a dramatic one. The time span between Machiavelli's Italy and Weber's Germany is more pronounced.

To repeat, there are two waves of Modernization and secularization/rationalization. The Renaissance and the Reformation give birth to individualism and the rational actor model, while Scottish Enlightenment gives birth to sociology, a significant younger project than the one Machiavelli, Hobbes and Weber was engaged in, responding to an arising interest in learning what goes on below the surface of industrialized capitalist society.

Rational and contractarian approach is not sociology, which deals with phenomena "beneath", although James Coleman has made impressive efforts to apply rational calculated action also to such phenomena as stock market panic and lynch mobs.³⁰

Weber is not really a founding father of sociology, as Parsons suggests in a wishful creative extension that, however, saved Weber for posterity. He is merely an

“adopted father”. The discipline of sociology hardly existed in Weber’s days. He only hesitantly and gradually becomes a “sociologist”. His academic profession is *Volks-wirtschaftslehre* or *Nationalökonomie* but he has a background as a lawyer (his first position was as a teacher in commercial law in Berlin) and of course he is a historian, as almost all German mandarins in the younger historical school. As late as in *Wissenschaft als Beruf* Weber characterizes himself as a political economist, already in the second sentence. He can at least be seen as a proto-rational choice thinker, just as Swedberg and Norkus conceive of him.³¹

While sociology has its roots in Scottish Enlightenment and so called Four stage theories, of Ferguson, Millar and Smith, Weber belongs to an older and perhaps stronger tradition, going back to early Modernity, with Machiavelli as an “early bird” and Hobbes as the real “Newton”, anticipating themes on the agenda for also Parsons and Habermas. Today rational-choice is the most elaborate version of the long tradition to which both Machiavelli and Weber belong. This is in a way a continuation of the old *Methodenstreit*, which is recurring. Weber sides with Menger’s marginalism in order to help Schmoller’s historicists. This might be both arguable and debateable but there is lots of supportive evidence.³²

Obviously Quentin Skinner would be unhappy with such a construction as the long line of secularization, with its risks for teleology; he would find it too “whig-ish”. It has to be kept in mind that there is no inherent goal in intellectual history – but in all times several optional alternatives.

The demise of natural law is a very slow process and both Machiavelli and Weber are acting in hostile environments, in the sense that there is an ever recurring tendency to “backdoor-normativism”. Machiavelli had Savonarola’s theocracy as proximate background, and Weber had value-rational state idealists, such as Treitschke.

Hobbes and Bentham are working in the same direction as are Machiavelli and Weber, only to mention two more prominent cases. It is quite possible to integrate even such thinkers as Locke and Rousseau in the same line of thought, although this obviously calls for some “Procrustean” *ad hoc*-arguments about their proper interpretation. Hutchinson and Mandeville definitely are steps forward in the secularizing direction.

Despite some terminological confusion Hobbes’s utilitarian arguments really mean only secularized natural law. There is no need for any natural law notions in his Newtonian system of political analysis. God is moved from the context of discovery to the context of justification. Natural law remains as merely an empty label for our basic instincts in short and brutish lives in the state of war, with its fear.

Bentham is very explicit in his criticism of natural law and definitely marks a further step from *jus* to *lex*, in his characterization of natural law as nonsense on stilts and right and wrong as fictitious entities. The paradigm that is in common

to Machiavelli, Hobbes (and Pufendorf), Bentham, Weber – and later on Gunnar Myrdal – is really a manifestation of what is today labelled as modern policy science, with rational economic man as a basic model (“cost-benefit” analysis). Rational calculation is an important thread in common to all scholars in this tradition.

It is more a *rule*-making than a *law*-making activity, which is clear for instance from Weber’s Objectivity-essay. A pure nomothetic approach, in which reality exclusively is regarded as phenomena to be explained, is evidently more rare in the field of social science: indeed Popper and Hempel themselves would not argue for it. The Popper-Hempel covering law could always be applied – but how seminal?

The Norm-sender Problem

A common problem to Weber and Machiavelli should be “Who is the norm-sender?” or, differently formulated, where to find the point of departure, the “entrance-value” that the procedure of instrumental analysis calls for? Weber does not discuss the validity of his own value-preferences – but he never hides them, quite the contrary. His inaugural speech (*Freiburger Antrittsrede* from the mid-1890s) is illustrative in this sense, with its vehement nationalist and bourgeois tone, yet never allowed to distort instrumentality in policy recommendations.³³ In fact the clear policy recommendation, which the combination of explicit values and “sociological” analysis allow for, is a step forward from previous activities within the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*. Although the relative importance of nationalism vs. liberalism over the years in Weber’s hierarchies of values is a matter of interpretation it is still clear that he adheres to these values without any claim to validity. From the retrospective perspective of “post-1989” Weber’s allegiances might appear as offensive. This was, however, hardly the case in the *Gründerjahre* of Wilhelmine Germany. In fact, the way in which Weber differs from his more value-rational nationalistic colleagues is precisely through the instrumentality of his arguments, that he managed to “hold his horses”, control his value engagement when it could hurt the instrumentality of his means-end-analyses. That his “Faustian” predicament was a strain on his nerves is clear, for instance when he quarrels with Schumpeter in a coffee house in Vienna – and leaves in anger, even forgetting his hat, as witnessed by Felix Somary.³⁴

Nationalism appears to be the “top-value” in Weber, at least his liberalism is not of the absolute kind; as a normative creed. It is coloured by the failures of 1848 in Frankfurt am Main and the legacy of the Bismarckian *Obrigkeitsstaat*. The historical roots are much deeper, only to mention Napoleon’s role for modern liberal constitutionalism as reflected in the famous letter to brother Jerome, when he became king

of Westphalia. The Bavarian historian Thomas Nipperdey has covered Napoleon's very complex role for German state formation.³⁵

If scientific objectivity is to be obtained with the help of values as criteria of selection when abstracting from vast reality what is of importance in the specific case – which is the actual procedure in Weber's ideal-type methodology with its individual rationality – the values could, however, not be chosen arbitrarily.

This opens for various solutions to perennial problems, of polytheism and significance/relevance. The individual is stuck in an existentialist dilemma, once “God is dead”, as the encyclopaedians of Enlightenment said. Firm norms are a remedy against frustration. Yet, we have to live with the pessimistic insight that “is” and “ought” are separated, in the sense that the latter cannot be derived from the former, without some unproved ultimate value as “arbitrary” vehicle in the value-relation that structures social reality. The individual has to take on the responsibility of his own value-choices, thus creating meaning, which is necessary to avoid pure post-modernist disorientation (Nietzsche and Kierkegaard).³⁶

As Weber (as well as later on Myrdal) demonstrates there is no necessary connection between personal value-preferences and the conduct of intersubjective normative theory, providing recommendations for actions instrumental to accomplish defined goals. Rationalizing value-hierarchies should preferably be relevant for some significant actors, e.g. social and/or political movements.

The professors had a task in identifying with the pan-German national enterprise and articulate the steering ideas of the new nation. Weber could find his values in culture; so did Rickert, who in places lapses back into lingering natural law, not consistent with the basic character of the value philosophy of “The father of historical relativism”, as Rickert is called. Weber's high esteem of German culture as a top-value is expressed in “Wahlrecht und Demokratie”.³⁷

The way in which Weber differs from Myrdal is intriguing. Myrdal in brief represents a more institutionalized mode of catching value points of departure, with a role for parties and organizations to make his values relevant and significant. Myrdal's views on objectivity are a derivation of Weber and Hägerström.

Machiavelli was not aware of the methodological problems that Weber and Myrdal dealt with – but still nevertheless provided their practical solutions in a realm which Aquinas and Marsilius left to be filled, making the ruler the purchaser of his handbook in statecraft. This is one aspect of Machiavelli's “amazing modernity”.

It is not that clear to which extent Machiavelli reflected over the norm-sender problem. Notable is that his actual procedure does not violate the instrumentality of his policy science, i.e. for instance his recommendations how to unify Italy or create

stable government. Machiavelli does not speak about God, which is in sharp contrast to almost all previous analyses.

God is *mentioned* by Machiavelli. There are no reasons to believe that he was not a religious man, only to note that God has no place in his very secular analysis, where the aim is inner-worldly in a sense that would be rather alien to Medieval analysts.

Towards the background of Steinert's criticism of Weber's stress on the Puritan legacy in the Modernist take off one might observe that there is no Puritan element in Northern Italy; yet the city states in Tuscany being cradles for modern capitalism, with trade unions and textile industry, etc.

His line of reasoning has a secular and instrumental tone, which simply sounds new; he actually appears as centuries in advance of his own time. Yet his policy studies are an adequate answer to the Florentine situation, with dangerous and demanding neighbours, both Italian and foreign, and constitutional instability, a leadership and a legitimacy problem.

His diplomatic experiences, conversations with Cesare Borgia, and negotiations with neighbouring powers, the French king, etc, provided the inner-worldly aims, not quite to become fulfilled until 1870, with the capture of Rome. The tight relation to societal context is central to a realistic appreciation of Machiavelli's contribution to the development of social analysis.

The classics and their historicity: The combination of time-less validity and time-bound tasks are in common to Weber and Machiavelli. They try to answer (similar) questions of their respective days in a way that has a methodological perennial relevance and still need fuel from the immediate societal surrounding, with its agenda of nation building and legitimation of power.

True, Machiavelli as a pioneer in modern social science calls for some symptomatic reading. What we find are indicators of embryonic character. One example would be the passages in which Machiavelli relates Borgia's way of "killing three birds with one stone", when he kills his commanding officer, which makes the people happy, simultaneously scared and grateful, as well as eliminates a potential power rival. This is described in a very famous quotation in *The Prince* towards the end of chapter VII:

"When the duke occupied the Romagna he found it under the rule of weak masters, who rather plundered their subjects than ruled them, and gave them more cause for disunion than for union, so that the country was full of robbery, quarrels, and every kind of violence; and so, wishing to bring back peace and obedience to authority, he considered it necessary to give it a good governor. Thereupon he promoted Messer Ramiro d'Orco (de Lorqua), a swift and cruel man, to whom he gave

the fullest power. This man in a short time restored peace and unity with the greatest success. Afterwards the duke considered that it was not advisable to confer such excessive authority, for he had no doubt but that he would become odious, so he set up a court of judgment in the country, under a most excellent president, wherein all cities had their advocates. And because he knew that the past severity had caused some hatred against himself, so, to clear himself in the minds of the people, and gain them entirely to himself, he desired to show that, if any cruelty had been practised, it had not originated with him, but in the natural sternness of the minister. Under this pretence he took Ramiro and one morning caused him to be executed and left on the piazza at Cesena with the block and a bloody knife at his side. The barbarity of this spectacle caused the people to be at once satisfied and dismayed.”

This passage is telling, because of its instrumentality; it is means-end rational policy science, in an ambience with weak institutions.

The absolute rule and the creation of a strong secularized state (*res publica*) are part of Machiavelli's context, in the aftermath of Savonarola's theocracy. His rough ruler by no means is a Leviathan, instead being a produce of a democratic milieu, in the sense that the people in at least a mediated way is an instance of legitimacy. One might manipulate the people but tyranny is pointless and unstable. Weber's views on the charismatic leader in the plebiscitary leadership democracy are at least in affinity with Machiavelli's *Prince*. The central Machiavellian concepts of *Virtu* and *Fortuna* are parallel to indicators of charismatic leadership in Weber.

Both Machiavelli and Weber reflects their respective *Zeitgeist* but with a preserved core of universal validity (at least in the Occident, which however become ever more universal, with the diffusion of Western rationality). Like Machiavelli Weber lived in an era in search for national identity. His value-system is time-typical, albeit still relevant today, in the post 1989 predicament. Germany was politically retarded, for various reasons, only to mention the 30 Years war, Napoleon's destruction of the representative system of the First Reich, etc.

Machiavelli's *The Prince* as a useful manual for statecraft seems to mark a break with previous thinking

Machiavelli unlike Weber did not have a domesticized bourgeoisie to be disappointed at. He had to turn to *Il Principe* as the beneficiary or agent of his theoretical efforts. Weber with his charismatic leader as a remedy against the petrification in the iron cage comes up in the end with a similar solution. The power vacuum after the fall of Bismarck had to be filled. Weber advocated a combination of strong leadership and parliamentary control, which was a variation of parliamentarian rule adjusted to the particular circumstances created by *deutscher Sonderweg* and the failure of liberalism in 1848. The Weberian notion of plebiscitary leadership democracy has caused much confusion. One reason is of course that Adolf Hitler might in retro-

spect be seen as an example of the plebiscitary leader Weber called for. To Weber, however, contemporaries such as Lloyd George and Gladstone were the paradigmatic cases.

Weber's *British influences* are clearly exposed in one of his "twin-lectures", *Politik als Beruf*, where he extensively deals with Gladstone, calling him "der Diktator des Wahlschlachtfeldes" and imposing a "Cäsaristisch-plebiszitäres Element in der Politik": "Das faszinierende der ethischen Gehalt seiner Politik und vor allem an den ethischen Character seiner Persönlichkeit war es, der diese Maschine so schnell zum Siege über die Honoratioren führte".³⁸ Guenther Roth even writes about Weber that: "Manchmal klang er halb englisch".³⁹ The relation between Germany and the UK is an intriguing theme in its own right. In Weber's case it is also another formative factor of importance for the proper interpretation of his *oeuvre*, due to his family history, with a branch of the family tree in fact being British residents, as Roth has documented in several works.⁴⁰

Moreover, Carlyle's romantic leader is another early British example, which Weber certainly was aware of. Now, these influences do not settle the question of similarities and differences between Weber and his British mentors. Weber's suggestions to modernized state forms are pragmatic and imprinted by the German background that generated a more pessimistic (Aron) or aristocratic (W. Mommsen) liberalism than the British are used to.

Machiavelli and Weber share a lack of principle allegiances to one particular constitution; they are both adjustable to changing realities. They are sometimes republicans and sometimes monarchists. They *do* take matters of responsibility and calculability seriously. In Wilhelmine Germany the Kanzler was responsible to the Kaiser and not the parliament and Bismarck really treated the Reichstag as an austere countryside school teacher treated a bunch of not too receptive children. Bismarck was himself hit by this old fashioned form of authoritarian rule when the new Kaiser soon fired him, with a disastrous power vacuum to follow, as well as irresponsible hazardous rule. Weber wanted parliamentary rule introduced in Germany but in a fashion that had fertile soil given the background of the experiences of the German bourgeoisie.⁴¹

This is one possible interpretation of Weber's lack of democratic creed in the Anglo-American manner, a relativistic attitude that is moreover well attuned to his basic anti-natural law position. One might say that to both Machiavelli and Weber democracy is *Brauch* rather than *Sitte*.

Both Machiavelli and Weber are easily historicized – to place in a context, as it happened with several similarities despite the centuries between them. They are both also historicists in important respects, from a methodological point of view. Weber deliberately picks his values from history and culture and so his solution to

the norm-sender problem that we noticed above is a historicist solution. Machiavelli is much affected by Antiquity and in fact Florence in his days displays a remarkable revival of Greek thought, with a Neo-Platonic academy and a political life, which is to quite some extent modelled after the city-states in Greece. That is part of the Renaissance. The notion of citizen creed in common to Weber and Machiavelli smacks of old Roman virtues. Historicism is a “mixed hat” and in this context I only want to note the historicist features in both thinkers, as in contrast to their ability to maintain our attention over the centuries, to remain alive and “bouncy”.⁴²

Both Machiavelli’s and Weber’s work in important respects nevertheless marks a “break” with historicism. In the case of Machiavelli he launches almost premature a mode of analyses that is universal and well in line with marginalist economics.

Weber’s methodological response to the crisis of historicism, from 1904 onwards, is a sort of helping hand to the historicist side in the aftermath of the *Methodenstreit* between Schmoller and Menger, albeit simultaneously a transcendence of their limitations, in terms of lucid and accountable criteria for abstraction and selection that could serve as a remedy to uncontrolled value-intrusion in social science, what Myrdal later spoke of as “bias”. Since Weber takes part in the general resistance to unity of science his ambiguity is natural – but leaves room for various later interpretations.⁴³ His ideal-type is a tool for historical investigation but serves as a paradigm for later social research of various denominations. In the case of Machiavelli one might add that historicism⁴⁴ in his days rather provided arguments for a secularized approach to social analyses. Yet, the core of historicism as such seemingly makes it not well attuned to secular science; in the case this implies timeless universal criteria and methodological rules.

Weber’s ideal type is often mystified and it is noteworthy that the formulation “einseitige Steigerung” only appears once in his collected methodological work, while he in several of his methodological essays demonstrates the marginal utility model as a prototype, with its isomorphic relation between concept and reality.

Historicism as a problematic notion: There are at least two inconsistencies in historicism exposing it for criticism. No matter its mainly idiographical and inductivist character, stressing the uniqueness of historical phenomena, many a historicist turned – nevertheless – to history in order to find precisely timeless, objective, essential meaning, alien to his own approach. We find such attitudes in Ranke and Schmoller, as well as in neo-Kantians like Rickert later on. The inherent relativism in historicism really is a hard blow to value objectivism in general and natural law thinking in particular. Some historicists still continued to look for eternal cultural values. One way to put it is that the historicists did not quite see the full consequences of their own approach. This lingering “Drang nach Wertung” is even more para-

doxical in the case of the neo-Kantians, since they provide the tool with which Max Weber goes beyond historicism, towards more intersubjectivity and cumulativeness – less “impressionism”.

It might be puzzling but is still the case that the combination of historicism and value-objectivism – both targets for Weber’s methodological renewal – is a frequent albeit not very logical combination; also that natural law thinkers and historicists consequently both could be value-objectivists. This, however, does not alter my general long trend of secularization, already visible as a potential realm in Thomas Aquinas, more visible in the embryonic methodological achievements of Machiavelli, then advancing with Hobbes and Pufendorf and exploding at the last turn of centuries, with the parallel and largely independent works by Weber, Hägerström, Westermarck and Kelsen.

No matter the methodological “bold” character of any comparison between Weber and Machiavelli I still suggest that it might be fertile to the understanding of Machiavelli’s role in social science, as well as to recent debate on the proper interpretation of Weber’s views on science vs. politics.

Concluding remarks

Basically – and this is the basis for their significant role in the history of social science doctrines – Machiavelli and Weber are both deliberated from natural law metaphysics, Weber explicitly and Machiavelli rather being a-natural law. The structure of their analyses is imprinted by *calculability*, allowing for testability, and the *rational economic actor* is the basic metaphor.

This early “rational choice” differs in kind from the more purely sociological tradition, which is created in Scottish Enlightenment and then furthered by Saint-Simon/Comte and later Durkheim and Simmel. But this is an altogether different story.

The antagonism between *homo sociologicus* and *homo economicus* is a long story – and *homo economicus* manifests an anti-sociological tradition within sociology, of which sociology is full. If the intrusion of the rational actor model into ever more areas of analyses of the social is a gain or not is not evaluated in this essay, which attempts a diagnosis without a prescription. The rational actor paradigm is a strong paradigm and more amorphous disciplines are very vulnerable; yet it is a weak paradigm too, since it might generate a lot of hypotheses and predictions, but hardly explain anything. It is an attractive model but weak as a theory.

Weber is not a paradigmatic classic in the Kuhnian sense but rather a mediator with an extremely strategic position in the history of social thought. Steinert exemp-

lifies with the less well-known Lujo Brentano whose scholarship on early capitalism was as sophisticated as Weber's, but less cited, while Weber provoked a voluminous debate already during his lifetime.⁴⁵

Rational science, missing in India and other previous high cultures, is the core of irreversible Western rationality – the “squirrel's wheel” that conquered the whole world. How this could happen so rapidly is a challenge for historians to explain.

Weber's “bold conjecture” might have many flaws but has undoubtedly played a significant role, nourished by the American experience, where it is easy to find many walking “ideal-types” of flesh and blood, as supportive evidence.⁴⁶ Criticizing Weber for flaws in his empirical supportive evidence is really shooting at a sitting bird; in addition it is easy to list anomalies calling for ad hoc-reasoning. In case we are more interested in the birth of modern capitalism than Weber's significance for our search for identity I think both Werner Sombart and R. K. Merton might be more rewarding reading.⁴⁷

Returning to Steinert, he is right in telling us that such grand narratives – as well as grand theories – are irrefutable, unable to meet Popperian criteria for falsification. However, this is a rather obvious and trivial point. Weber might agree, since his main intellectual life project was to gather further supportive evidence for his thesis, in his comparative sociology of religion.⁴⁸

Most of Steinert's criticism of Weber appears as hard to refute, although there are no new sensational revelations. Already Kurt Samuelsson documented flaws in Weber's empirical supportive evidence.⁴⁹ Typical for Weber is that he sometimes is on the border of plagiarism, like in the case of his dependence of Ferdinand Kürnberger's *Der Amerikamüde*, in the vivid depictions of urban entrepreneurial life in the USA.⁵⁰

The value of Steinert's book is the emphasis on the German historical context, which – and rightly so – goes beyond what is common practice in America. Trans-Atlantic reciprocity is a significant theme, in particular in the case of Weber, the reception of whom was retarded in Germany and meanwhile cultivated in the USA, promoted by migrants such as Sorokin and others. Steinert's book here has bridge-building qualities. This calls for a translation into English. Methodologically it is easy to note that contextualization is a necessity for full and congenial interpretation of an old text. In reality it is difficult to market such an ambition in a situation when sociologists don't know much about history and historians by nature are a bit alien to theory, manifesting a main divide over the last two centuries, and central in famous *Methodenstreit* as well.

One example: The gap to bridge is obvious in the case of such a Weberian concept as “Plebiscitary leadership democracy”, where it makes sense to relate to the Legacy from Bismarck, illiberalism among the German *Bildungsbürgertum*, and the

concept of delayed nation and perhaps Napoleon's ambiguous role – but somewhere there we are confronted with limits if one realistically wishes to reach out to an American undergraduate readership, so the Westphalian peace, LIMES, etc. has to be largely left out, due to didactic concerns. To go into details about German federalism and the constitutional capabilities of the Kaiser in Prussia vs. in the new Germany as a whole is also doomed to be seeding on the flat rock.

However, Steinert shows convincingly the impact of *Deutscher Sonderweg* on Weber's Calvinist thesis (Kulturkampf and Kulturprotestantismus). Still today the religious factor is far more important in German social and political life than it is conceivable for a, for instance, secularized Swede to understand. Some of the most enlightening recent works on the manifestations of the cultural conflicts in Germany in late 19th century are not yet translated, only to mention Gangolf Hübinger.⁵¹

We can safely assume that Weber's Huguenot roots makes him sensitive for the role of Puritanism, which is moreover also quite in line with Bismarck's state-building, based on common value-assumptions imprinted by non-Catholic Prussian traditions. Weber's thesis is a contemporary act in politics as well. Weber moreover got the Puritan ethic with the Mother's milk, Helene being extremely religious. Despite being primarily a scholar in jurisprudence and early Agrarian history Max was more knowledgeable in theological issues than most of his contemporaries.

Far more details, following the vein of the Cambridge school of contextualism, are needed, also since the close context was so obvious for those involved at the time – tensions between nation building and international movements, such as Marxism and Catholicism – that they tend to be "apocryphal" when later generations only see the text. It seems that the same policy concerns inspire Weber 1905 and 1920 as already in his Freiburger Antrittsrede 1895, with its anti-Catholic tendency.

Moreover, Steinert is very comprehensive in his treatment of Weber's views on the birth of Capitalist irreversible rationalization (Modernization). His criticism seems to be on the whole fair and right, even if grumpy in tone and somewhat exaggerated, if he believes that Weber's thesis is refuted and not only not possible to refute by test.

Since Weber argued for a thesis he could not be expected to be a master prototype for path dependency of Modernization, and is of course today also rather a sparring partner to the multi-modernity paradigm, as we find it in works by Eisenstadt, Arnason, Wittrock and others.⁵²

Some of Steinert's criticism follows along well-trodden paths. The language gulf has its imprints and the Anglo-Saxon discourse is infected by language "parochialism", only taking into account what is translated, even if Anglo-Saxons like to contemplate the proper interpretation of some common concepts, such as *Angst* and *Beruf*. In the case of Weber's sociology of religion English language imperialism has

been damaging since the revised final edition of 1920 and the debate Weber himself was involved in (extensively documented by Johannes Winkelmann) has not been taken into account, until rather late.⁵³

On the other hand, Bill Swatos jr has documented how Weber's most likely misunderstood what his hillbilly relatives in Mt. Airy, NC, told him, about sects and civic associational life and entrepreneurialism.⁵⁴ However, Weber's misunderstanding might be a lucky mistake, making something more explicit in an ideal-typical manner of *Steigerung*. This is a case of trans-Atlantic reciprocity and what Claus Offe calls *Selbstbetrachtung aus der Ferne*,⁵⁵ that in this case Weber's Benjamin Franklin-inspired understanding about trust and economic success might be quite correct even if supportive evidence murky.

In general Weber's Sect-essay is a very good shortcut to understanding the Calvinist thesis, in contrast to the work on the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which makes torturous reading.⁵⁶

Steinert's book is part of several Weberian discourses but the most challenging, I would argue, is the search for optimal balancing between contextualizing the past from the vantage point of a present day research agenda. Modernity is a gradual process.

The perhaps most important point in Steinert's work is, again, the shift from Weber 1905 to the more general culturalist Weber of 1920, from the birth of capitalism to the more general birth of Occidental rationalization/secularization.

Weber's path-breaking thesis about Puritanism and Modern "take off" have good hopes to survive both Steinert's attack as those by competing notions, by multi-Modernity thinkers and anti-secularists. Nevertheless Steinert reduces trans-Atlantic misunderstandings and contributes to a more informed debate in matters of interpretation.

Notes

1 See Appendix 2.

2 See for instance Johann P. Arnason and Björn Wittrock, eds., *Eurasian Transformations, Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries: Crystallizations, Divergences, Renaissances*, Leyden and Boston 2004.

3 Skinner has written several methodological essays and his work on early Modernity is important for "meat on bones" for Machiavelli's context, see especially Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, Vol. 1, *The Renaissance*, Cambridge, UK 1978. For an overview of Quentins Skinner's methodological precepts and warnings for various fallacies, see for instance Erik Åsard, *Quentin Skinner and his Critics. Some Notes on a Methodological Debate*, in: *Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 1987, No 2, 101–116. An eloquent text often used in graduate student teaching is Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Centrality of the Classics*, in: Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner, eds., *Social Theory Today*, Stanford 1987, 11–57.

- 4 Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf are strategic scholars between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, in the long process of secularization and demise of natural law to rational choice, which I have dealt with in other contexts, this far only in Swedish. Thomas Aquinas is the peak of natural law, yet with a space for the autonomous study of society.
- 5 Heinz Steinert, *Max Webers unwiderlegbare Fehlkonstruktionen. Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Frankfurt am Main u. New York 2010, 29.
- 6 Randall Collins, *German-Bashing and the Theory of Democratic Modernization*, in: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 24 (1995), 1–19.
- 7 One recent exception is Ralph Jeremias, *Vernunft und Charisma. Die Begründung der Politischen Theorie bei Dante und Machiavelli – im Blick Max Webers*, Konstanz 2005.
- 8 See for instance Kari Palonen, *Das „Webersche Moment“: zur Kontingenz des Politischen*, Opladen 1988, and J G A Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, Princeton 1975.
- 9 Thomas Hobbes and Samuel Pufendorf are strategic scholars between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, in the long process of secularization from natural law to rational choice, which I have dealt with in other contexts, this far only in Swedish.
- 10 In Peter Ghosh, *A Historian Reads Max Weber. Essays on the Protestant Ethic*, Wiesbaden 2008, here quoted from Dirk Kaesler's recent *Sammelbesprechung over recent Weber literature*, in: *Philosophie und Soziologie*, Nr. 1. Jänner 2011.
- 11 See Sven Eliaeson, *Max Weber's Methodologies. Interpretation and critique*, Cambridge, UK 2002, especially "Methodological Appendix", 123–129.
- 12 Max Weber, *Jugendbriefe*, Tübingen 1936, 3.
- 13 J P Mayer, *Max Weber and German Politics*, London 1944, 27 and 91. Ilse Dronberger, *The Political Thought of Max Weber*, New York 1971, 341 f. Mayer is perhaps best remembered as an expert on Tocqueville and the scholar who discovered young Marx' so called Paris manuscripts. He spent the WW2 years in England and is inspired by the natural law thinking both Weber and Machiavelli oppose. Mayer has also written a standard exposition of the history of political ideas which has been widely in use in the Spanish speaking world.
- 14 Wolfgang Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik 1890–1920*, Tübingen 1974 (1959), 48.
- 15 Mayer, *Max Weber*, 16.
- 16 Mommsen, *Max Weber*, 45, see also 44 and 48.
- 17 In a letter of January 17, 1919 to Mina Tobler; cf. Weber 1988, 19, n.53.
- 18 *Politik als Beruf* and *Wissenschaft als Beruf* are not really twins, since the first one was held in January 1919 and the latter in November 1917, which is now well documented. For original sources see GPS and GAW.
- 19 Steinert, *Fehlkonstruktionen*, 179. H H Bruun, *Weber on Rickert: From Value Relation to Ideal Type*, in: *Mirrors and Windows. Essays in the History of Sociology*, ed. by Janusz Mucha et al., Torun 2001. Also published in: *Max Weber Studies* 1/2 (2001), 93–105.
- 20 Myrdal, however, does not admit Weber's role for his "explicit value premises", combining Weber and Hägerström, which is clear for instance in his article in *Ekonomisk Tidskrift* (1931) "Kring den praktiska nationalekonomins problem" (On the practical problems in political economy). Brecht's *Political Theory. The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Princeton 1959) is a magisterial work; the canons of scientific value-relativism being its main message. See especially 221–231. For Mayer's views concerning Weber's objectivity see for instance Mayer, *Max Weber*, 27 and 84–90. His natural law predilections are exposed in several instances. On page 90 he writes that: "Weber is aware of a deadly conflict (between absolute ethic or ethic of conviction vs ethic of responsibility, my remark, SE), but without belief in ONE God his solution must remain vague and dangerous". Mayer mixes up the consequences and the validity of Weber's position. And on pages 92 f. we can read that: "Weber had not a philosophical mind, and it is perhaps tragic this great spokesman of the German bourgeoisie was satisfied to rely on Rickert's 'philosophy of values', to provide him with a philosophic foundation for his political sociology. The effort to overcome the empty character of Rickert's philosophy of values, which had been undertaken by Max Scheler, exerted no influence on Weber's mind, though he might have found in Scheler's philosophical ethic a firmly founded hierarchy of values, amongst which 'the nation' was by no means the highest." Mayer provides an appropriate point of departure for reflections upon the nature of the affinities between Weber's and Machiavelli's methodological precepts and problem agendas.

- 21 Troeltsch wrote on the crisis of historicism. His work on the problems of historicism was published in the early 1920s but he and Max Weber had for long discussed the problems generated by post-Enlightenment polytheism on an every-day basis.
- 22 For a serious philosophical treatment of the polytheistic problem of value-incommensurability, see Mogens Blegvad, 'Value' in Turn-of-the-Century Philosophy and Sociology, in: Danish Yearbook of Philosophy 26 (1991), 51–96.
- 23 Axel Hägerström, Religion and Philosophy, London 1964, has one available translation of Hägerström's inaugural speech from 1911. See also Sven Eliaeson et al., Axel Hägerström and Modern Social Thought. Oxford Forthcoming.
- 24 Aleksander Peczenik, Ed., Proceedings of the 21st IVR World Congress, Lund 2003, Part 1: Justice, ARSP (Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie) Beiheft 95, Stuttgart 2004, 7.
- 25 Michael Ignatieff, Isaiah Berlin. A Life, New York 1998. See also Steven Lukes' interview in: Salman-gundi Nr. 120 (1998) and Hans-Peter Müller, Romantischer Realismus. Isaiah Berlins Botschaft, in: Merkur H. 599 (2000).
- 26 Bruun, Weber, 93–95, and Steinert, Fehlkonstruktionen, note 6. See also Eliaeson, Value-orientation and the secularization of post-enlightenment social science, in: History of the Human Sciences 25/3 (2012), 3–31.
- 27 Mayer, Max Weber, 86.
- 28 Steinert, Fehlkonstruktionen, 23.
- 29 Ibid, n 7.
- 30 James Coleman, Foundations of Social Theory, Cambridge, Mass. 1994.
- 31 See Richard Swedberg, Max Weber and the Idea of Economic Sociology, Princeton 1998; Zenonas Norkus, Max Weber und Rational Choice, Marburg 2001.
- 32 This is a pregnant observation already in Bernhard Pfister, Die Entwicklung zum Idealtypus. Eine methodologische Untersuchung über das Verhältnis von Theorie und Geschichte bei Menger, Schmoller und Max Weber, Tübingen 1928. Talcott Parsons – Weber's most "Puritan" exegete – is also well aware of this crucial influence, which is a recurrent theme in modern Weberology.
- 33 Max Weber, Der Nationalstaat und die Volkswirtschaftspolitik. Akademische Antrittsrede, Freiburg im Breisgau and Leipzig 1895, also in GPS. Weber's applies his own methodological precepts before his ideal type for rationalizing value hierarchies is explicitly developed.
- 34 Felix Somary, Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben, Zürich 1959, 170 ff.
- 35 Thomas Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866, München 1983.
- 36 Robert Bellah's Beyond Belief (New York 1970) is an interesting work over modern chaos in the field of meaning. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, New York 1987, could also be read from this perspective of value-polytheism as our destiny, with resulting "empty" life-spheres.
- 37 Max Weber, Political Writings. Ed by Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs. Cambridge, UK 1994, orig. 1917.
- 38 Weber, GPS, 523.
- 39 Guenther Roth, Zur Entstehungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte von Max Webers 'Protestantische Ethik', in: Karl Heinrich Kaufhold et al., Max Weber und seine "Protestantische Ethik". Vademecum zu einem Klassiker der Geschichte ökonomischer Rationalität, Düsseldorf 1992, 48.
- 40 The British contacts and family ties are played down in Marianne Weber's writings, possibly due to patriotic reasons. They are quite visible in young Weber's travel-letters to Mother Helene, kept in the Weber Nachlaß in Geheime Preussische Staatsarchiv, Berlin-Dahlem (the Weber collection which used to be in Merseburg, DDR).
- 41 See for instance Sven Eliaeson, Max Weber and Plebiscitary Democracy, in: Ralph Schroeder, ed., Max Weber, Democracy and Modernization, London and New York 1998, 47–60.
- 42 For instance Jerzy Topolski, Methodology of History, Dordrecht 1976, and Jerzy Szacki, On So-Called Historicism in the Social Sciences, in: Jerzy J Wiatr, ed., Polish Essays in the Methodology of the Social Sciences, Dordrecht, Boston and London 1979, speak about at least half a dozen meanings of historicism. The core of historicism is the denial of the possibility of timeless norms and laws, a stress on the uniqueness of social phenomena.
- 43 There appears to be many "Webers", a macro-sociological one (Parsons), a phenomenological one (Schütz), an empirical one (Lazarsfeld & Oberschall), an existentialist one (Jaspers), a political phi-

- losophy one (Hennis), etc. See Sven Eliaeson, *Max Weber's Methodologies. Interpretation and Critique*. Cambridge, UK 2002.
- 44 I still have Machiavelli's *History of Florence* in mind, as well as his books over Titus Livius' history of Rome. The very term historicism is young, Herder being the mid-wife of the concept. See Iggers's article on "Historicism" in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. Avoid Popper's book *The Poverty of Historicism*, with its eccentric definitions (I restrict my critical attitude to Popper's definitions, the content might be all right but not the labels).
- 45 Steinert, *Fehlkonstruktionen*, 82.
- 46 I have in fact met several of them myself, among my many trans-Atlantic relatives.
- 47 Werner Sombart: *Der Moderne Kapitalismus: historisch-systematische Darstellung des gesamteuropäischen Wirtschaftslebens von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. München & Leipzig 1928. See also Robert King Merton, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England*, Atlantic Highlands and Brighton 1978, orig. in: *Osiris* 4/2 (1938) as "Studies on the history and philosophy of science, and on the history of learning and culture".
- 48 The Logic is the same as in J. S. Mill's canons for comparative research and in Weber's famous letter to von Below. In order to further support his thesis he has to go through all other religions with a rational structure where modern capitalism did not occur, which does not exhaust the topic either, since it could have occurred in China and the original cumulation of capital in fact partly occurred in Central Asian monasteries, if Randall Collins is to be believed. See his *Weberian Sociological Theory*, Cambridge, UK 1986.
- 49 Kurt Samuelsson, *Ekonomi och Religion*, Stockholm 1957. Criticizing Weber for flaws in his empirical supportive evidence is really shooting at a sitting bird; in addition it is easy to list anomalies calling for ad hoc-reasoning.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 58.
- 51 Gangolf Hübinger und Wolfgang Mommsen, Hg, *Intellektuelle im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, Frankfurt am Main 1993.
- 52 Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five roads to Modernity*. Cambridge, UK, 1992, is more interesting for European Modernity and its path dependency.
- 53 Max Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik II. Kritiken und Antikritiken*, hg. v. Johannes Winckelmann, München und Hamburg 1968.
- 54 William H. Swatos Jr., *Sects and Success: Missverstehen in Mt. Airy*, in: *Sociological Analysis* 43/4 (1982), 375–380.
- 55 Claus Offe, *Reflections on America: Tocqueville, Weber and Adorno in the United States*, transl. by Patrick Camiller, Cambridge, UK 2005. Orig. in German.
- 56 Max Weber, *Churches and Sects in North America*, translated and introduced by Colin Loader and Jeffrey Alexander, in: *Sociological Theory* 3/1 (1985), 1–13.

Appendix 1:

There are numerous affinities (a weak concept) between Max Weber and Machiavelli.

1. They are both “rational actors”. *Zweckrationalität* or means-end-rationality, is the main characteristic of their instrumental manuals for statecraft.
2. They are examples of *Realpolitik*, with little of wishful thinking obscuring their mapping of social and political reality.
3. They have a brutal clarity in their prose, as in Weber’s letters to Michels or Machiavelli’s narrative of Cesare Borgia’s way of disposing of his leading officer Messer Remirro in Romagna, or Weber’s definition of the state and its monopoly on legal violence.
4. The decisive role of violence in politics is recognized by both, power and force being intertwined concepts.
5. They are both in a sense ‘historicists’, in the way they rely on historical lessons, in particular in their ‘republican’ writings.
6. They are both nationalists – or rather patriots, to avoid an anachronism – in their explicit engagement for establishing a stable state power.
7. This manifests *raison d’état* and state idealism, as explicit normative elements in their endeavour.
8. “Double moral” is of course a famous element too, or rather a “functional view” of belief systems as important for social peace and legitimacy. This is strangely in common not only to Parsons but also to anti-democratic elitists such as Plato and Leo Strauss.
9. They are both “democrats”, of sort, in the sense that the people are a decisive instance for bringing about legitimacy.
10. They are thus both “relativists” in terms of validity of values. This partly follows from their historicism which is promoting relativism, just as Troeltsch was concerned about. Ultimate values have no cognitive truth content.
11. Charisma is an important element to both, although Machiavelli does not use the very word, rather speaks about reputation.

Appendix 2:

The Long Line of Secularization

The problem of meaning gradually moved from religious to innerworldly sphere	Rational accounting	Paradox: Erosion of natural law coincides with the diffusion of natural rights	Competing ideologies (innerworldly religions)
Augustinus	Thomas Aquinas	Hobbes (Pufendorf)	Max Weber
Religious vs pagan	Machiavelli Luther Emergence of an autonomous political science in Early Modernity	Bentham (Concepts such as "right" and "wrong" are "fictitious entities") Natural law is "Nonsense on stilts" Hume	Modern social science Proto-rational choice
Marsilius	Innerworldly purposes	Utilitarianism	James Buchanan Gary Becker
Church vs state	Utilism, Individual self-interest	Gulf doctrine, facts vs values, (is vs ought) Scientific value-relativism Ed. Westermarck	Gunnar Myrdal Modern policy analysis Rational choice
Certain autonomy for study of positive law in Thomas, relativism in Marsilius	Secularized natural law "Legal positivism" God degraded from context of discovery to context of justification	From <i>jus to lex</i> Legal positivism	Perspectivistic recommendations for action, non deterministic "laws" Rationalization of value hierarchies
	Nation building as a purpose in its own right		Popper's fallibilism Testability
			The rational actor ("economic man")

CALCULABILITY and ANTI-NATURAL LAW are central elements in this trend, with the rational economic actor as central metaphor/model