

The Peculiar Political Logic of Max Weber

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Murdoch
University

2009

Submitted by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

Liam Stone

Abstract

This thesis argues that Max Weber's peculiar political logic consists of three modes of thought: a civil philosophy of politics and nationalism; a reduction of politics to sovereign power; and a control of society's role in politics. To demonstrate these modes of thought, the thesis compares Weber with the civil philosopher Christian Thomasius and finds strong similarities in their respective uses of political and civil ethics. It compares Weber with the legal philosopher Carl Schmitt and argues that both thinkers based their politics on a sovereign power that is at once exceptional, extra-legal, extra-moral and extra-sociological.

The thesis appeals to contemporary context by summarising and dividing the Weber scholarship into three categories. In doing so, it avoids the trend in secondary literature of conflating Weber's political logic with his social theory and sociological methodology, and instead argues that his political logic must be assessed in terms of its own merits as well as the ideas of other political thinkers.

The thesis encourages more assessment of Weber's political logic along these lines by summarising Weber's various responses to the 'social question'. Ultimately, the thesis provides a new understanding of Weber's analysis of the social and its role in politics.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Gary Wickham for his unfaltering support and belief in my ability to successfully complete this thesis. Gary, I know you aren't fond of compliments, but you deserve at least one for providing me with much inspiration through your sober, dedicated and unique pursuit of knowledge, your inimitable charisma and your cheeky, engaging and sometimes forceful approach to colleagues and friends. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you. Thanks mate and cheers!

I would like to thank the most beautiful, enigmatic and admirable woman in the world, my future wife, Jodie Hine, for her encouragement and support during the last stages of completing this thesis. Jodie you bring so much light into my world. I hope that this thesis gives something back to you for all the difficult times you have gone through supporting me and encouraging me during the final stages. I love you, gorgeous.

I would like to thank my colleagues for their support and advice on various sections of this thesis, particularly Barbara Evers, Rachel Kitchens, Jo Goodie, Kirsten Harley, Eric Whittle, Andy Stebbins and Angela Leahy.

To my good friend Dr. Steeg Hoeksema for his support and understanding of the stress of it all.

Finally, Mum, Dad, Ray and Nan, I love you all very much.

Publications

The following papers relevant to the research have been published or presented at conferences:

Stone, L. 2008. 'Civil and National Duty: Christian Thomasius's Ethics of *Decorum* and Max Weber's Ethics of Conviction and Responsibility' in S. Eliaeson and R. Kalleberg (eds.), *Academics as Public Intellectuals*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 49-64.

Stone, L. 2005. 'Max Weber's Cameralistic Social Policy' presented at the 37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology in Stockholm, Sweden (June 2005).