

Review of: "Werner Sombart's Longue Durée"

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This article potentially makes a welcome contribution to the recovery of Sombart's important place in classical sociology by reviewing nearly all the extant commentaries and critiques. In my view, its main claim to originality lies in discussing the most prominent 20th century scholars who have been influenced by Sombart, namely, Parsons, Boudon, Elias, Braudel, and Schumpeter. I think the essay could be more compellingly organized around how these figures took up Sombart's grand scheme of cultural history: from the origins of capitalism in the religious ethics of Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism to the rise of the warrior, burgher, and entrepreneur in the making of medieval and modern Europe. The similarities to and differences from Simmel and Veblen, and the critiques by Weber and later commentators, could be elaborated on along the way, and/or referred to in footnotes.

Rather than providing a literature review of Sombart's main works and their reception, the essay needs a stronger argument and a central thesis (with a corresponding title), e.g. the much broader scope of cultural sociology exemplified by Sombart's corpus than is evident from canonized classics like Marx, Weber, Simmel, and Durkheim. (I found final section on 'Sombart and Us' hard to follow, and in any case it could be made shorter and more to the point). The essay also needs careful editing for grammar and clarity (see my highlights attached); long sentences need to be simplified; and overall the discussion would be more compelling by bringing its most interesting or surprising points more into the foreground.