

# Review of: "Werner Sombart's *Longue Durée*"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review of: *Werner Sombart's Longue Durée* by João Carlos Graça.

Let me start by saying that I think this is a very thorough and interesting article. I have quibbles, not substantive criticisms. For example, I do not think Werner Sombart has disappeared, for sure. Google Scholar abounds with references to his work, and to critical articles about him, including recently (e.g., Eicholz, 2022), so I suspect that to say he is overlooked does need some nuance. Overlooked by whom, and more exactly where?

In relation to Sombart's 'pioneer' use of the term 'capitalist', I think a fair few Marxists would take issue with that, myself included. There are so many texts from which to choose to support the argument that Marx took capitalism seriously as a cultural and organisational form, way beyond simply a matter of economic relations, that it is almost impossible to choose, but Axelos (1961) might be a fruitful point of comparison with Sombart on this point, and indeed Lefebvre (1974) in terms of the periodisation of capitalism, which is scarcely unique to Sombart. One might envisage a useful table inserted at this point, comparing Sombart's periodisation to that of others.

It is also tempting to ask for some actual criticism of Sombart, here and there. For example, if wars help generate capitalism (rather than just *sustain* it, a difference that is overlooked here), then it is also perfectly fair to recognise that historically, wars have also led to the temporary rejection of capitalism, most obviously World War One and Russia, but also the Vietnam War, and arguably at least to some extent World War Two and the United Kingdom. Similarly, notwithstanding the apparently endless popularity of Sun Tzu in business studies, Sombart's parallel between warrior and commercial values can be, and has been, questioned, especially in regard to innovation, but also competition. What of the other drivers of capitalism, too, that Sombart ignores, such as its geographic, maritime dimension? (Campling & Colás, 2021).

As to the love of luxury, I think it would be useful to include reference to Gaston Bachelard's work, and it would be especially interesting to read the author's views on the relationship between Sombart and more recent texts that examine luxury in more depth (e.g., Iannone, 2018; Roberts & Armitage, 2019).

There are also a few typos here and there, I think as a translation issue: 'a detailed examination', not 'a detailed exam'. 'Brilliance', not 'brilliancy'. 'in the 1930s an author as...' should be 'in the 1930s such an author as...', whilst the author I think meant the phrase 'and in which phases exactly' to mean 'and in exactly those words'. And there are also — fortunately in my view — no 'authoresses', just authors. I also suggest deleting the word "rather" everywhere as the nuances of its meaning in English are sometimes the opposite of what the author intends, i.e., it is used critically. Assuming the intention is to publish in an English-language journal, it would very definitely be worthwhile having the text

proof-read by an English first-language speaker, ideally a professional editor.

Finally, in saying ‘as it deserves’, or ‘vastly surpassing his mentor’, there should be the qualification, ‘as I argue’, rather than making an assertion, especially the specific one from which the paper derives its purpose. Sombart after all was accused of being ‘sketchy and impressionistic’ by no less a character than Joseph Schumpeter, whilst Ludwig von Mises allegedly said of him that he ‘never knew any ambition other than to draw attention to himself and to make money’ (Stehr & Grundman, 2001:xii). We all have our heroes, but when writing academic articles, we do need to show why they are so.

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