

**From 'A Torso with a Wrong Head' to
'Five Disjointed Body-Parts without a Head':
A Critique of the Editorial Policy for
Max Weber Gesamtausgabe I/22**

Hiroshi Orihara*
(Translated by Yoshiro Yano)

Abstract

The 'old manuscript' previously known as the latter part(s) of _____, is ongoingly published as the _____) Volume I/22. However, the present _____ editorial policy is based on serious flaws, which will tear the remaining 'torso' ('old manuscript') into 'five disjointed body-parts without a Head'. Instead, both from textual facts (such as the forward/backward references) and from situational facts, it should be concluded that: (1) even though its publication was abandoned, the 'old manuscript' was nearly completed, and has high internal coherence (2) The 'old manuscript' should be sorted in the order of Weber's 'disposition of 1914', placing the article 'Some categories for Interpretative Sociology' at the start, as the correct 'head' of the 'torso'.

Keywords: Max Weber, _____ (_____), Interpretive Sociology.

Introduction

*The Complete Works of Max Weber*¹ has entered upon the phase of publishing volume I/22: *Economy and Society. The Economy and the Social Orders and Powers. Posthumous Work.*

From 1909/10 to 1914, Max Weber had written a manuscript for his contribution to the 'Outline of Social Economics'.² After the First World War, in 1919/20, he undertook a radical revision of the old manuscript

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1. _____, hereafter cited as 'W'.

2. _____, hereafter cited as 'S'. See appendix 2 for the entire project.

and intended to publish the first few chapters of the revised new version. However, because of his sudden death in June 1920, he could not write the succeeding chapters.

Marianne Weber edited the completed chapters as 'Part I' of a book entitled *Economy and Society*, and the posthumous bulky old manuscript was edited as 'Part II/III'. From 1956, the second editor, Johannes Winckelmann, published the fourth and fifth editions. He accepted Marianne Weber's 'One Book with Two Parts' composition' but rearranged her 'Part II/III' into his new 'Part II'.

The MWG volume I/22 is the newest edition of the old manuscript, which has five sub-volumes with the titles: 1. 'Communities', 2. 'Religious Communities', 3. 'Law', 4. 'Domination', and 5. 'The City'. The first, second and fifth sub-volumes are already published.

In this paper, I would like to show that the editorial policy for MWG I/22 as a whole suffers from two serious flaws.

First, we cannot see clearly from the 'Overview of the Text of Economy and Society by the Editors of the Max Weber Gesamtausgabe' (Baier *et al.* 2000)³, how the editors grasp the old manuscript as a whole. Accordingly, the 'Overview' does not show the basis on which they divide the whole old manuscript [hereafter OM] into the five sub-volumes. Nor does it clarify the reason for arranging them in that order.

Secondly, MWG I/22 lacks the author's conceptual introduction that is indispensable for reading the OM as a whole. The editors say that the volume is not 'a collection of unrelated texts or "specialized sociologies"', but possesses 'a conceptual unity' ('Overview': 111). However, they do not clarify any unified vision of what this 'conceptual unity' actually consists of, and on what basic concepts that 'unity' rests.

Metaphorically speaking, in the previous first to fifth editions, the OM was edited as 'A Torso with a Wrong Head'. As stated above, these five editions have treated Max Weber's *revised new* version as 'Part I' and placed the OM as 'Part II/III' or 'Part II' *after* that. Because of this *reversed* placement, readers have been urged to read the concrete chapters of the OM with the help of the *altered new* basic concepts.⁴ The fact is, as it will be proven later, the basic concepts applied to the OM have been

3. Hereafter cited as 'Overview' (Baier *et al.* 2000: 104-14; original in Weber 1999: vii-xvii).

4. 'Sociological Basic Concepts' (*Soziologische Grundbegriffe*), Chapter 1 of 'Part I', hereafter cited as 'Basic Concepts'. (Translated as 'Basic Sociological Terms' in *Economy and Society*, Weber 1978: 3-62.)

formulated in his essay 'Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology'⁵ which was written at the same time as the OM, but published separately in 1913 in the journal *Logos*.

Therefore, it was reasonable to expect that this time the MWG would provide an edition of the OM as an integrated whole, together with the essay on its basic categories. However, as I see it, the MWG edition has instead dis-integrated the OM into 'Five Disjointed Body-Parts without a Head'. It is true, that the three published sub-volumes are fully equipped with expository comments on the theoretical backgrounds and relevant historical facts. With regard to these points, each volume has made remarkable progress. However, the MWG volume I/22 *in its entirety* is, so to speak, nothing but a collection of fragments without a pivot. So long as the volume is left as it is, the readers cannot see the *inter-relationship* between the sub-volumes and grasp the *systematic composition* of the whole OM with the help of the *basic concepts* – i.e. the 'Categories' essay – that was particular to the OM at the time of its composition.⁶

In the following, I would like to criticize these two problems of the entire editorial policy of the MWG I/22 in detail, and offer in their stead my own views.

1. *OM as a Nearly Completed, Integrated Whole*

1.1. *Dubious MWG Editors' Division and Arrangement of the OM*

Max Weber left the OM as a posthumous work with unfinished portions. Most parts of the handwritten or typewritten manuscript itself, as well as his direction concerning how to treat it, have not been transmitted to us. In these circumstances, it might seem that we cannot reasonably expect the editors to reconstruct the OM as an integrated whole. However, even if we admit the situation to be very difficult, it is impermissible for us to treat the OM expediently and arbitrarily. If the editors divide the OM in *some* way and arrange the sub-volumes in *some* order, they must clarify the criteria for division and arrangement with clear reasons, and follow the criteria consistently. Moreover, such criteria must try to suit the author's original intention and design.

5. Hereafter cited as 'Categories'. (Translated as 'Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology', Weber 1981: 151-80.)

6. In addition, this volume has a main title 'Economy and Society' and a subtitle 'The Economy and the Social Orders and Powers'. On this selection of the title, there had been a discord of opinion between one editor, Wolfgang J. Mommsen (Mommsen 1999: 36), and another, Wolfgang Schluchter (Schluchter 1998: 340-41). I cannot see how this problem was solved. In my view, there is no reason to adopt Mommsen's assertion that the main title should be 'Economy and Society' (Orihara 2002: 6-8).