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Review

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Source: *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No. 4 (Dec., 1986), pp. 1320-1322

Published by: American Political Science Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1960872>

Accessed: 29-08-2016 16:33 UTC

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Stephen L. Esquith, in the book's final essay, tries to put all this into perspective by arguing that there was a powerful general unity between the works of Marx and Weber, but that, in spite of some general agreements, it would be a mistake "to conclude that . . . all their political differences have been exaggerated." (p. 314) It is not surprising that there were profound methodological similarities in Marx and Weber. After all, both were brilliant pupils of Hegel, working within his developmental paradigm (a point made by Scaff and Arnold). Yet, whatever their methodological affinities, it is too easy to forget the enormous political difference between the two.

This should give us pause about any Weber-Marx dialogue. Whatever Weber's politics were, they were not the politics of a revolutionary socialist. Whatever methodological similarities Weber and Marx might have had, we cannot but believe that their political choices were more important than their methodological choices. We social scientists, in our self-absorption, frequently forget the relative importance of method and politics. Previous literature on this question focused obsessively on methodological questions, and ignored the political. To a great extent, this collection of essays does not suffer from this defect, and for that it is to be praised. While trying to show us a methodological convergence, the authors do not use this insight to lay claim to a new theory of political convergence.

GEORGE FRIEDMAN

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**Making Sense of Marx.** By Jon Elster. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. Pp. xv + 556. \$49.50, cloth; \$15.95, paper.)

What of Marx remains valid today? This separation of the chaff from the wheat is the goal that Elster has set for himself in this new book. The task is not an easy one: it requires, besides mastery of Marx's voluminous production, knowledge of the most up-to-date theories concerning all the phenomena that Marx examined, which range from philosophy to sociology, through economics, political science, and history. Elster's achievement on each one of these fronts is remarkable.

*Making Sense of Marx* comprises a method-

ological introduction, two substantive parts, and a conclusion in which Elster provides a critical evaluation of Marx's work. The first part deals with issues relevant to philosophy and economics. Marx's views on human nature, social relations, alienation, the philosophy of history, exploitation, freedom, coercion, and justice are presented and critically discussed, together with his theories about technical change, the labor theory of value, the falling rate of profit, and capitalist crises. The most valid of Marx's views today, Elster argues, are those concerning technical change and exploitation. I will not summarize Elster's points on technical change (he has written a whole book on the subject). With respect to exploitation, he argues that the concept not only provides the grounds for normative criticism of capitalism, but also constitutes an explanation for social action. On the other hand, the labor theory of value has a congenital and fatal flaw: it assumes homogeneous labour.

The second part focuses on Marx's theory of economic history and the political issues of class struggle, the state, and ideologies. In the chapter concerning the Marxian theory of economic history, Elster examines the relationship between forces and relations of production and Cohen's argument about the centrality of functional explanation in Marx.

In the next chapter he examines the other candidate for the motive force of history: class struggle. Elster examines Marxian texts very closely in order to reconstruct a definition of class, then departs from them in order to examine what he considers the most important problem in the social sciences: why people cooperate. (p. 366) The question is raised from the concept of *class consciousness*, which Elster defines as the possibility of overcoming the free-rider problem. In the last section of the chapter, Elster focuses mainly on the political writings of Marx and examines the questions of class struggle and class coalitions, which he considers important Marxian contributions.

The last two chapters of this part of the book examine questions concerning two important aspects of class societies: the state and ideologies. What is the relationship of the state and ideologies to the dominant class? Is the state the instrument of the dominant class, or is it autonomous? Is the dominant ideology the ideology of the dominant class? The last ques-

tion provides an additional opportunity for further development of issues relevant to the nature of explanation in the social sciences and of endogenous belief formation.

So far I have summarized the book's systematic presentation and criticism of Marx's thoughts. It would be wrong to conclude from such a summary that the book is simply one more approach to Marx's contributions. If Elster can be criticized, it is not because he has been too servile to Marx, but because he holds strongly his own beliefs and tries to see Marx through them.

In fact, the book is original in several ways. It is concerned not with textual exegesis only (although it does not hesitate to expand in this direction when it is required), but with the internal coherence of Marx's theories, and with the comparison between those theories and reality. It does not deal with the ideas of other writers belonging to the Marxist tradition, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, and Gramsci are absent from the book. Instead, references to Cohen and Roemer (the other two editors of the *Studies in Marxism and Social Theory* series are very frequent. Another original aspect is the author's attempt to strike a delicate balance between defending and criticizing Marx's arguments. No doubt the mix will not please everybody. Questions like, "Then what remains out of Marx?" or "Then why refer to Marx at all?" will be heard from one or the other end of the ideological spectrum. Finally, the book attempts a very interesting synthesis between Marx's thought and rational actor approaches in the social sciences. For all these reasons, the reader has a feeling of participation in the first steps of the creation of a new subfield: the intersection between Marxism and rational choice.

Let us analyze this point. Elster is a methodological individualist (a principle rejected by many Marxists). He believes that social phenomena are in principle explicable in terms of the properties, goals, and beliefs of individuals. Where explanations based on microfoundations are not possible (as in the problem of collective action) a black-box explanation may be temporarily necessary, but "methodological collectivism can never be a desideratum" (p. 6).

How do these methodological lenses apply to the work of Marx? Elster rejects Marxian functional explanations because to be valid, a

feedback causal loop from the consequences to the causes has to be specified. In the absence of such a loop, explanations are either incomplete or false. This kind of "teleological" reasoning is very characteristic of Marx's philosophy of history, the theory of development of productive forces, and the theory of the political and ideological superstructures.

Based on this reasoning, Elster criticizes large parts of Marx's work as being either uninteresting or wrong. What remains from such a radical criticism? Elster argues that Marx has offered a fertile framework for analysis of social phenomena. It is a three-tiered scheme: first, there is a causal explanation of desires and beliefs of the actors; second, there is an intentional explanation of actions in terms of these desires and beliefs; third, there is a causal explanation of the aggregate outcome of these actions (note that the outcome might not have been intended by the actors). This third part of the explanation was pioneered by Marx, and it has become so standard in the social sciences that "few would think of referring to it as 'the Marxist method'" (p. 3).

According to Elster, the second part of the explanation—the intentional part—was not very well developed by Marx, whose analyses either do not include strategic interactions between actors, or are pre-game theory in nature. The reason is that Marx was relying very much on functional explanations. However, Elster argues, there are analyses of specific situations (in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Nardeon") or whole books (*The German Ideology*) written on methodological, individualistic premises.

Finally, the first part of causal explanations, which Elster calls "sub-intentional," was also developed by Marx. Again, the Marxist theory of ideologies lacks microfoundations, but in Marxian economic analyses, different agents get false beliefs because they generalize from locally valid views that hold only with a *ceteris paribus* clause. For Elster, this fallacy of composition "is perhaps the most powerful part of the Marxist methodology" (p. 19). An example is the falling tendency of the rate of profit in capitalism. Each capitalist can improve his situation by introducing labor-saving innovations, but if all capitalists introduce labor-saving innovations, the rate of profit falls. It seems to me that the situation can be accurately described as a Prisoners' Dilemma game be-

tween capitalists. Elster, however, develops the argument of endogenous belief formation, and shows instances of this phenomenon throughout the book.

In conclusion, *Making Sense of Marx* deals with Marxism and rational choice. As surprising as it may seem with respect to the intellectual history of the two research programs, it seems reasonable after second thought. After all, Marx himself was a rationalist and an English political economist, as well as a Hegelian and a functionalist sociologist. Elster's book makes the point that there is no intrinsic reason for the two traditions to be so far away from each other. On the contrary, they have much to gain from a mutual osmosis of their research agendas. *Making Sense of Marx* addresses itself not just to the intersection of people interested in Marx and in rational choice, but to their union, and to people who like to read books full of interesting ideas.

GEORGE TSEBELIS

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**Representation and Responsibility: Exploring Legislative Ethics.** Edited by Bruce Jennings and Daniel Callahan. (New York: Plenum Press, 1985. Pp. xvi + 332. \$39.50.)

Empirical political scientists who study legislatures have been hesitant to address questions of legislative ethics and morality head-on. Journalists, reformers, and an occasional political theorist have provided most explorations of the topic. Ethics has been avoided, both because political scientists have had bad experiences when they have ventured into advocating reform and because treatments of ethics have frequently concentrated on very narrow questions. *Representation and Responsibility* is an important volume that attempts to move the analysis of ethics to a level broader than a focus on criminality, and it does so in a way that self-consciously attempts to wed the empirical and the normative.

*Representation and Responsibility* is a collection of essays developed for a series of meetings at the Hastings Center in Ethics in 1982 and 1983. These papers set out

to explore the broad range of ethical responsibilities that arise in legislative life and in the

practice of political representation and to place those responsibilities in the context of recent changes in the electoral system and the legislative environment on both the federal and the state level. (p. xiii)

As with most collections, the usefulness of specific contributions varies considerably. On the whole, the collection is at its best when individual essays link questions of ethics to larger issues of representation. Not all of the essays make the link successfully, however. It is especially troublesome that the authors of the empirical and practical chapters talk past the authors of the theoretical essays on representation and ethics.

The most helpful theoretical essay is "The Theory of Legislative Ethics," by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson. They develop an analytical framework for discussing ethics by starting where they should: with representation. Theories of ethics, as with theories of representation, are "essentially contestable." Gutmann and Thompson aid our understanding by describing an analytical framework that stands up regardless of one's representational standard:

Legislative ethics cannot tell the representative whether to act as a trustee or delegate. . . . It follows that legislative ethics will grant considerable discretion to legislators in their choices of role and their decisions on policy. . . . The primary focus of legislative ethics thus becomes the legislative process itself, and the chief ethical duties of legislators concern making legislative discretion conform to political democracy. (pp. 173-74)

They argue that ethical behavior can be discussed in terms of autonomy, accountability, and responsibility. That is, legislative activity is said to be ethical to the extent that improper influences are minimized and information about legislative behavior is maximized, and that corporate responsibility for the state of the legislature is also maximized. One can argue over what a "proper" legislative influence is, for instance, but Gutmann and Thompson at least define the salient characteristics of ethical systems and provide a starting point and common standard for contention.

Few of the empirical essays on actual legislative behavior rely on a framework as fine as the one Gutmann and Thompson provide. This probably betrays the limited scope of the