

II

“VALUE-NEUTRALITY” IN GERMANY AND THE UNITED STATES

More than any other man of his generation Max Weber remains today influential as well as controversial. Neither intellectually nor politically are scholars done with the man and his work. However, his impact has not been steady over the five decades since his death. At various times Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies, Robert Michels, Vilfredo Pareto, and Sigmund Freud have attracted more attention and approbation. Among these members of the “generation of 1890”—as H. S. Hughes has called them—Durkheim emerges, in the long run, as Weber’s closest rival in sociology. In one respect his reception has outstripped Weber’s: he was incorporated with less strain into structural functionalism, the only contemporary “school” in American sociology that may deserve the label. It is indicative of this difference that the Parsonian or Durkheimian approach is often contrasted with the Weberian, usually as a juxtaposition of an integration versus a conflict model of society.¹

In their home countries, too, Weber and Durkheim differed in

¹ For an illuminating comparison, see Randall Collins, “A Comparative Approach to Political Sociology,” in Reinhard Bendix *et al.*, eds., *State and Society: A Reader in Comparative Political Sociology* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), 42–67.

Guenther Roth, “Max Weber’s Empirical Sociology in Germany and the United States: Tensions Between Partisanship and Scholarship,” *Central European History*, II:3, Sept. 1969, 196–215. A first draft of this essay was presented at the meeting of the American Historical Association, New York City, Dec. 29, 1968, in the session on “The Diffusion of Social Scientific Ideas in the Twentieth Century.” I wish to acknowledge the comments of Jeffrey Schevitz and Stephen Warner.