

## **Bringing Schmoller to America: Notes on the Translation of “The Idea of Justice in Political Economy”\***

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### **Abstract**

We examine the historical background of the translation and subsequent publication of Gustav Schmoller’s “The Idea of Justice in Political Economy” in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. The first of Schmoller’s writings which was translated into English, we use archival correspondence – predominantly between one of the translators, Ernst von Halle, and Schmoller – to reconstruct the proceedings leading to its appearance in February 1894. In a further step, we highlight the role that the British economic historian William J. Ashley played in contributing to additional translations of Schmoller’s work. Finally, we engage in the debate as to why comparatively little of Schmoller’s work has been translated into English and suggest that in addition to historical dynamics related to World War I leading to the breakdown of ties between Germany and America, there were also very personal reasons – especially for both von Halle and Ashley – not to work together with the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

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## Introduction

Gustav Schmoller's "The Idea of Justice in Political Economy" – which serves as the basis for this Special Issue – was the first of Schmoller's writings to be translated into English and published in an English-speaking journal. In the early 1890s, there was a concerted effort by several leading economists in the United States and Great Britain to make Schmoller's work more popular and accessible to an English-speaking audience. The purpose of this article is to highlight these efforts and to provide the historical context and background surrounding the translation of Schmoller's article and its publication in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* in 1894.

In tracing these historical steps, we proceed in the following manner. First, we touch upon correspondence from Ernst von Halle, one of the two translators of the article under investigation, to Schmoller. We discuss attempts and motivations to publish some of Schmoller's work in the recently formed *Journal of Political Economy* in May of 1893. Following the unknown reasons why publication did not move forward with the Chicago-based journal, we focus on letters from Leo S. Rowe, one of the later presidents of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS) who was affiliated with the *Annals* at the time and wished to solicit an article by Schmoller for publication in his journal, in a second step. Third, we investigate the reasons why additional translations of Schmoller's work were limited despite continued interest on behalf of journal editors. We discuss the relationship between Schmoller and William J. Ashley, a British economic historian who would go on to translate a work by Schmoller later published by Macmillan.

### First Inquiries from Chicago

When Ernst von Halle wrote Gustav von Schmoller on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1893, to gauge his reaction and seek permission to translate his articles for an English-speaking journal, Schmoller's work was known to several economists in Britain and the United States.<sup>1</sup> Alfred Marshall, for example, had written favorably of Schmoller in the 1890s (cf. Hodgson 2006, 164). In the United States, similarly, the historicists who founded the American Economic Association (AEA) in 1885 were familiar with Schmoller's work (Goldstein 1993, 89), and economists who were or would become leading figures of American Institutionalism had been influenced significantly by Schmoller's writing (Mitchell 1949, 196).

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<sup>1</sup> At the time, the translator's name was Ernst Levy. As early as 1888, Levy, who was born into a Jewish family of attorneys, had been baptized and converted to Christianity in order to improve his prospects for a professorship in Germany. It was not until 1894 that he received approval to change his name to his grandmother's maiden name: Ernst von Halle (Sielemann 2015, 72–75).

And yet to understand Schmoller at the time meant that he had to be read in German. This was not as problematic as it might seem today, since – as we will discuss in the following sections – many Americans in the field were proficient in German at the time.

Distraught with the state of economic science, however, served as an impetus to translate Schmoller's work. J. Laurence Laughlin, a widely-read economist who was the department chairman at the newly formed University of Chicago and the founding editor of the *Journal of Political Economy*, lamented in the first article of the first issue on "The Study of Political Economy in the United States" that despite the growing interest in social questions in society, "vast masses of even intelligent people know little or nothing as to the scope, method, and principles of scientific economic work" (1892, 3). As a result, he argued for the need to address the prevalent fallacies and misinterpretations that were commonplace in economics. It was thus with the aim of making the study of economics more *scientific* that he, a critic of the motivations underlying the founding of the AEA, welcomed its shift to become more inclusive. He writes:

Organized in the beginning by a group of men who felt that their views had not had respectful attention, and hoping to forward in this country the doctrines of German origin in favor of the new historical method in economics and the principle of state interference, so familiar to the European mind, their membership was originally confined to those largely in agreement with those views... Gradually, however, the association became broader and withdrew any required subscription to particular phases of belief... This action is significant in showing that out of discussion, calmer thinking, and deeper scholarship, American economists have found much more in common, both as regards method and the attitude of the state toward industry, than had been originally supposed. Personal considerations have given way to larger views of scholarship and to a higher interest in the development of economic study throughout the country (*ibid.*, 11).

Irrespective of his personal politics and his political allegiances to the Republican Party, Laughlin was a consummate academic and sought scientific advancement instead of the promotion of his own political commitments. It was with this mindset that he brought professors with whom he disagreed significantly (like Thorstein Veblen) to the department (cf. Nef 1967, 780–81), and it led Laughlin to be interested in making Schmoller's work better known despite some of the criticism that becomes apparent in the quote above. Laughlin certainly was critical of the German Historical School in several respects, but he nevertheless argued strongly in favor of the necessity of induction as an integral part of economics, praising those advocating the historical method for their "valuable service, through the insistence on the verification of reasoning by facts, with the result that all statistical data are now more carefully and extensively gathered" (1892, 18). This approach and the goal of enabling better scholarship, specifically, was the journal's *raison d'être* as a venue for the study of practical problems.

Laughlin and other professors at the Department of Political Economy at the University of Chicago were acquainted with von Halle, an academic admirer of Schmoller's from Germany, who was in Chicago in 1893. They inquired with him whether he would translate some of Schmoller's writing to be published in the *Journal of Political Economy*. Concerned about Schmoller's reception in the United States, von Halle notes in his letter that Schmoller's reputation was largely based on hearsay as language difficulties impeded broader audiences to develop an accurate understanding of Schmoller's thought. An article published in the second issue of the journal for which Laughlin had assumed editorship provoked the ire of von Halle in particular. In the essay entitled "Economics at Berlin and Vienna" (1893), Henry Roger Seager, a graduate student who spent time studying in Halle, Berlin and Vienna from 1891–1893, described and contrasted his experiences studying economics in Germany and Austria. Seager was ardently devoted to Karl Menger's thought, due to which von Halle felt that he mischaracterized Schmoller's thinking, describing Seager's contribution in correspondence to Schmoller as a "rather deficient essay which will hardly have contributed to a better understanding of your work" (1893, 24).<sup>2</sup>

Seager describes his experiences with and views on Schmoller and Adolph Wagner in Berlin in some detail, contrasting them with Karl Menger and Eugen Böhm-Bawerk in Vienna. He does praise Schmoller's approach in certain instances, characterizing "his particular method of treatment ... [as] exactly at home and the fruitfulness of its application in the hands of such a master need not be dwelt upon" (Seager 1893, 251). However, this rare praise is juxtaposed over and against criticism of Schmoller, whom he criticizes for treating matters of political economy as descriptive, noting that "[a]t this point came the crucial test for Schmoller's theory of method, and at this point, it seemed to me, his theory broke down conspicuously" (*ibid.*, 250).<sup>3</sup> He levels his most damning critique against Schmoller on the issue of value and price, writing that "[i]n this part of his lectures the student meets only confusion, loose definitions, description instead of careful analysis, and conclusions arrived at, no one knows exactly why. His elucidation of the action of demand and supply in fixing price seemed to me especially unhappy" (*ibid.*, 250).

Likely frustrated by what he perceived as unfair criticism and exposition of Schmoller's views, von Halle suggests that he and a fellow translator would start with his articles on the division of labor and later translate "Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Unternehmung," (1890b; 1890c; 1891a; 1891b; 1891c; 1892; 1893a; 1893b) requesting Schmoller's permission to move forward with their work (1893, 25).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The translations of all archival materials not written in English are ours.

<sup>3</sup> Seager goes on to state that Schmoller „has been able to make a showing of strength upon his side in the *Methodenstreit* which his position hardly warrants" (*ibid.*, 251).

This request was likely received favorably by Schmoller, as he had already adopted an academic fascination with the United States in his early work that would last throughout his life. Of particular interest were the country's political economy and social policy (Schmoller 1866), and, writing at the end of the American Civil War, he was especially swayed by the unity of the American nation-state – a hope he also had for Germany (cf. Kreis 1999, 92). Indeed, his academic interest in the United States persisted throughout his career, noting that “in spite of never having been in America ... [I entertained] countless relationships to Americans ... and have sought to read as much about America as time and opportunity allowed” (Schmoller 1904a, 1478, translation ours).

Moreover, his allure was also rooted in the burgeoning development of the discipline in the United States. Noting that the United States did not traditionally have a significant impact in terms of a homegrown school of political economy, Schmoller praised the development of the past decades in which important professorships, scientific associations, and journals emerged that were more closely aligned with the German and Austrian style of political economy than with the British style (1911, 452).

Yet von Halle's recommendation never moved forward – neither did the translations of these articles proceed, nor did any translation of a different Schmoller article for the *Journal of Political Economy* ensue. It is not clear from the correspondence from von Halle to Schmoller what the reasons triggering the abandonment of this goal were, and since Schmoller's replies to von Halle are not preserved any hypothesis is historical conjecture. Only a few months later, however, von Halle and a co-translator would complete their work for a different journal. To the request for publication by the editors we shall now turn.

### **Edmund James and Leo S. Rowe Publish the “The Idea of Justice in Political Economy”**

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1893, Leo S. Rowe, a lecturer in public law at the University of Pennsylvania who was affiliated with the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, wrote Schmoller a letter requesting permission to translate some of his work for the journal. Rowe had spent some time in Berlin in the early 1890s, as had Edmund James, the founder and president of the AAPSS which published the journal. James had studied historical economics under Johannes Conrad in Halle (1875–1877), and with Schmoller himself having been in Halle before departing for Strasbourg earlier in the decade, it is plausible to assume that James would likely have made

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<sup>4</sup> Von Halle is referencing Schmoller's work “Die Thatsachen der Arbeitsteilung” (1889) and “Das Wesen der Arbeitsteilung und der sozialen Klassenbildung” (1890a).

the acquaintance of Schmoller at some point during his stay in Germany.<sup>5</sup> Influenced by his German teachers, he later penned an article that would first bring the German school of historical economics to an American audience (Solberg 1999, 813). Under James' editorship, Rowe suggested that they translate "Ueber einige Grundfragen des Rechts und der Volkswirtschaft," (Schmoller 1875) posing the question if Schmoller wished to make any changes to the article before they began their work. Alternatively, he offered to hold off on the translation in the case that Schmoller was working on a new article pertaining to a similar topic which he may wish to have published in the United States (1893, 40).

Schmoller responded to Rowe in a letter that has not been preserved the following month, likely recommending the translation of "Die Volkswirtschaft, die Volkswirtschaftslehre und ihre Methode" (1893c) instead. Rowe's reply from December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1893, indicates that the journal was happy to translate the proposed article and that they would work "to make your writing available to the American audience after this publication" (1893, 37). This publication of the agreed-upon article never proceeded, but at the end of the letter Rowe inserts a postscript informing him of his intention to publish an article on Schmoller's "work and position in German Political Economy," adding that he had acquired "everything which was commercially available." He ends his letter by specifically requesting that Schmoller send him prints of three papers: "1) Die Gerechtigkeit in der Volkswirtschaft [the translation of which would become "The Idea of Justice in Political Economy"], 2) Der Preussische Staat und die Sociale Frage, 3) the two final parts of 'Geschichte der Unternehmung'" (*ibid.*, 37).<sup>6</sup>

It was in this letter that the request was first made concerning the "Idea of Justice" article, which would appear in print in February 1894 only two months after Rowe's second letter. Why the editors chose to commission this particular

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<sup>5</sup> The seminar of Johannes Conrad at the University of Halle became a gathering place where many who would later become intellectual leaders in American economics were trained. For instance, Henry Carter Adams, Richard T. Ely, Simon N. Patten, Roland Falkner, Joseph French Johnson, Henry R. Seager, Frank Albert Fetter and Samuel McCune Lindsay all studied under Conrad at one time or another (cf. Herbst 1972, 14). James' connection to Schmoller dates back at least to 1883 when, while conducting research in Germany, he inquires whether Schmoller would be holding any lectures or seminars in Berlin which he could attend, adding that he was "keen on making the personal acquaintance of the excellent men from the world of Political Economy" (1883, 22–23). James was indeed grateful to Schmoller and his German professorial colleagues for "the extraordinary good-will and kindness which the German professors as a class have shown to American students as a class, who have had the opportunity to sit at their feet in so many departments of instruction" (quoted in Grimmer-Solem 2016, 419).

<sup>6</sup> The full name of the articles requested are "Die Gerechtigkeit in der Volkswirtschaft" (1881), "Die sociale Frage und der preussische Staat" (1874) and "Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Unternehmung" (1893a; 1893b).

article, as opposed to their original plan to translate different articles, is not entirely certain, but it is known from Arthur Spiethoff, one of Schmoller's well-known research assistants that "his essay on Justice in Political Economy was particularly important to him, and that he considered it to be his best work" (1918, 24, translation ours). Thus, it is likely that von Halle had already been working on the translation at the time of the request by Rowe, since Schmoller could easily have been interested in the publication of "his best work." Either way, von Halle, who translated the article together with the young German-American Carl Lincoln Schurz, the son of a German emigré who had become prominent in American politics at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did not expound much on the completed translation in subsequent letters.<sup>7</sup> He did make sure that Schmoller received twelve copies of the translated version and sent Schmoller Schurz' address in the United States in case he wished to thank him for his work (von Halle 1894b, 20–21).

Von Halle touched on several other topics in his letters to Schmoller as well, ranging from his own academic research to inquiring about dates for meetings of the *Verein für Socialpolitik* on behalf of distinguished economists like Frank William Taussig and Francis Amasa Walker. He also inquired with Schmoller on behalf of William Ashley, an English economic historian and proponent of historical economics, about his attempt to receive a professorship in Edinburgh, Scotland. It is to the relationship between Ashley and Schmoller, and their significance for translating additional writings by Schmoller that we shall now turn.

### **William J. Ashley and the (Failed) Attempt for Further Schmoller Translations**

On October 22th, 1894, von Halle sent Schmoller a six-page letter that the AAPSS had not yet succeeded in soliciting a translator for the article "Die Volkswirtschaft, die Volkswirtschaftslehre und ihre Methode," which Schmoller had sent to Rowe in January of the same year. The academics associated with the *Annals* from the University of Pennsylvania, as von Halle notes, did not view themselves as sufficiently competent to undertake the task "since the majority of American economists [...] know far too little German and philosophy" (1894d, 15). Rowe and Samuel McCune Lindsay, also a later president of

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<sup>7</sup> In the translation of the article, von Halle's co-translator is mistakenly called Carl L. Schutz. Only an examination of the correspondence between von Halle and Schmoller (1894b, 21) sheds light on the circumstance that the second translator is indeed the son of the far more famous Carl Schurz (1829–1906). The elder Schurz fled Germany as a supporter of the 1848/49 revolution and would later first be elected to the United States Senate and then appointed Secretary of the Interior in the Rutherford B. Hayes administration.

the AAPSS, were desperately looking for a suitable translator. Von Halle, however, was about to embark upon a research trip to the American South with the intention of gathering further information regarding the “cotton industry in the Southern states under slave and free labor” to be followed by voyage to Germany (*ibid.*; cf. von Halle 1894c). Having to turn down the offer to translate additional writings of Schmoller, von Halle proposed that they contact Schmoller’s “most sympathetic admirer” in the United States: William James Ashley (1894d, 17).

As a British-born economic historian, William J. Ashley succeeded in attaining international acclaim as a scholar and teacher. Influenced heavily by his teachers Arnold Toynbee and Henry J. Sumner Maine at Oxford University, Ashley also spent significant time in Germany in the early 1880s where his thought was shaped by the German Historical School (cf. Usher 1938, 155). “With great gratitude and respect” for Schmoller, he describes his situation in England as not having “sympathy with the prevalent economic orthodoxy pursuing the abstract method, [and] feels himself very isolated” (Ashley 1887, 25).<sup>8</sup> A first professorship for Political Economy and Constitutional History at the University of Toronto, in which he dedicated his inaugural lecture – “What is Political Science?” – to Gustav Schmoller, would be followed by his move to Harvard University where the university first established a professorship for Economic History.<sup>9</sup> In the English-speaking world, where “economic history was tolerated rather than esteemed for its own sake,” it was the first chair of its kind (Usher 1938, 159–160).

In April 1894, roughly six months prior to the AAPSS’s search for a suitable translator to succeed von Halle and work on additional Schmoller translations, von Halle met Ashley at Harvard. Von Halle attended Ashley’s “highly interesting lectures on economic history” (1894a, 23) and translated together with Ashley the latter’s inaugural lecture at Harvard – “On the Study of Economic History” – into German with the hope of publishing it in this very journal (1894b, 20). Likely due to the collaborative efforts between von Halle, Schmoller and Ashley, Rowe and Lindsay sought to solicit the Englishman for the translation. Their efforts were, however, in vain. In correspondence to Schmoller, von Halle speculates that Ashley had severed all ties with the AAPSS because following the completion of a contribution from Ashley for the *Annals*, they responded to the Brit’s inquiry that “it is not policy of the Academy to remunerate articles for the journal” (1894d, 15). Von Halle was aware of this due to

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<sup>8</sup> Ashley’s opening in the letter to Schmoller is in German, only to switch to English following the first two sentences, explaining that “I can read German, but not write it without difficulties” (*ibid.*, 25).

<sup>9</sup> Addressing Schmoller, Ashley notes in his dedications of *Surveys, Historic and Economic*: “I feel for a dozen years I have received more stimulus and encouragement from your writings than from those of any other” (1900, vi).



this involvement in the translation of “The Idea of Justice,” but he nevertheless came to a biting verdict in his letter to Schmoller on October 22, 1894:

The Academy is a respectable institution, but gradually I have discovered that they run quite a lot of advertisements and that it behaves both commercially and scientifically quite *American* (*ibid.*, 15, emphasis added).

It requires only little imagination that the refusal by Ashley as well as von Halle’s developing view on the AAPSS contributed to the fact that additional writings by Schmoller did not appear in the *Annals*.

In the same letter, von Halle informed Schmoller of his intention to work together with Ashley on a large volume of 500–600 pages to be published with Macmillan. The volume was meant to entail translations of Schmoller’s most important articles, such as “Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Unternehmung,” (1890b; 1890c; 1891a; 1891b; 1891c; 1892; 1893a; 1893b) articles on the division of labor as well as on the economic policy of Frederick the Great (von Halle 1894d, 16). These plans never came to fruition. Von Halle spent much of his time following his return to Germany with publishing his findings from his travels through the American South. In 1897, he completed his habilitation in Berlin and subsequently became a spokesperson for Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz in the navy. This was followed in 1899 by a non-tenured professorship at the University of Berlin.

Ashley, on the other hand, did translate a chapter from Schmoller’s work on Frederick the Great under the title “The Mercantile System and its Historical Significance” (1896) with Macmillan.<sup>10</sup> The article was published in the series “Economic Classics,” edited by Ashley, and is the longest of Schmoller’s writings in English. In addition to “The Idea of Justice” (1894) and “Schmoller on Class Conflicts in General” (1915), this article constituted the third and final work by Schmoller to be translated during his lifetime. There were other attempts to make Schmoller’s writing available in English, for example with Ashley’s compatriot Francis Y. Edgeworth, who, as founding editor of *The Economic Journal*, had considered the publication of one of his articles in the journal he managed. A misunderstanding between the two and a third interlocutor associated with Edgeworth who had originally made the request for a manuscript, however, led to the abandonment of this plan (cf. Higgs 1894; Edgeworth 1895a; Edgeworth 1895b).<sup>11</sup>

As for Ashley, in 1901 he would return to England to take up a professorship at the University of Birmingham. He certainly holds a special place among

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<sup>10</sup> The original German title is “Studien ueber die wirtschaftliche Politik Friedrichs des Großen und Preußens ueberhaupt von 1680 – 1786” (1884).

<sup>11</sup> Schmoller had offered a manuscript which had already been published elsewhere in a different language. Edgeworth believed that he was receiving a new manuscript to be published in *The Economic Journal*.

English-speaking academics in that among all the English economic historians, “perhaps only Ashley was fully in sympathy with the German historicist aim of laying a foundation for a new and historical economic theory to be derived inductively from patient historical research” (Koot 1980, 202). Similarly, Joseph Schumpeter described Ashley as “more than any other English economist [similar] to the German professional type of that time” (1954, 822). Indeed, he went on to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Berlin in 1910 and, somewhat unsurprisingly, Ashley was the only English-speaking author who would contribute to a *laudatio* on behalf of Schmoller’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.<sup>12</sup>

### **Conclusion: Reasons for Schmoller’s Ephemeral Appearance in the English-Speaking Literature**

Contrary to von Halle’s and Ashley’s intentions, the translation of a larger volume of Schmoller’s collected works did not proceed. Neither have the “Kleine Schriften,” (Schmoller 1985) which in six volumes of individual essays span more than 5000 printed pages, been translated into English, nor are the two volumes of his magnum opus “Grundriß der Allgemeinen Volkswirtschaftslehre” (Schmoller 1900 and 1904b) available in English today. Up to World War I this paucity of English translations only had a marginal impact on Schmoller’s international influence. As stated above, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century many American students of political economy spent time studying at German universities, about half of whom spent at least one semester in Berlin. From only 55 American students attending university in Berlin in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that number rose sharply in the succeeding decades – in the 1880s, for example, 1,345 American students were in attendance at the University of Berlin (Herbst 1972, 16). This circumstance as well as the requirement of competency in a foreign language for successful completion of a Ph.D. in economics in the United States at the time meant that most well-educated American economists were able to read Schmoller in the original German, thereby mitigating the acute necessity for English translations (cf. Senn 1989, 262–63).<sup>13</sup> It is fair to say that despite the shortage of translations, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Schmoller’s thought had reached its peak of diffusion within the scientific community not only in Germany, but also in the United States.

Schmoller was *en vogue*, engendering considerable interest in the translation of his work. Intellectual luminaries like Alfred Marshall had communicated

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<sup>12</sup> “The Present Position of Political Economy in England” (Ashley 1908).

<sup>13</sup> This is corroborated by the fact that we find references to and citations of Schmoller in the writings of John Commons, Edwin Seligman, Frank Taussig and Thorstein Veblen (cf. Hodgson 2006, 168).

their support for the translation of works by Schmoller, describing it as “very important and desirable in English” (Swan Sonnenschein & Co. 1895) and noting that “the more I knew of the work of Sir W. J. Ashley and the late Professor Schmoller, the warmer became my regard for them (Marshall 1919, 8). Schmoller was held in such high esteem in the American academy that he had been voted to receive an honorary doctorate from Yale University in 1901, with Henry Farnam, a later president of the American Economic Association, inquiring with Schmoller whether he would be able to travel to New Haven for the award (1901). This intended accolade (never actually awarded to Schmoller) represents the general spirit of how he was regarded and aligns with the sentiment expressed by J. Laurence Laughlin that he was as famous in America as in Germany (1908, 74).<sup>14</sup>

World War I changed the situation completely. Direct connections of American economists to members of the German Historical School came to an end as “[t]he Great War dismembered university communities in literal and figurative ways” (Irish 2015, 196), and in the 1930s Schmoller’s thought would receive an attack in the Anglophone literature through Lionel Robbins and Friedrich Hayek, who “established [the belief] that Schmoller and his followers were largely against theoretical approaches in economics” (Hodgson 2006, 172). This ascription was sustained in much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as English became the *lingua franca* and foreign language competency was struck as a requirement for aspiring doctoral students in economics in the United States. As a result, the number of academics who could actually read Schmoller in the original German dwindled in the English-speaking world. Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to undervalue the influence of Schmoller’s focus: he was of interest at the time because of the importance of the topics he investigated; the theoretical focus of inductive methods; his dominance in the development of German economics; the circumstance that many would-be American economists were studying in Germany during that time; and his social attitudes which appeared to be a moderate *mélange* of reform while being respectful of the value of existing social institutions. As a result, it is fair to say that economists with vastly different commitments are building upon the foundations Schmoller helped to lay, even though they may not know any of Schmoller’s work itself (Senn 1989, 283–84).

Precisely these reasons are likely also the motivations why there was such significant interest in translating Schmoller’s work in the 1890s. Laughlin, James and Edgeworth – all managing editors of respected academic journals – were focused on making his writing accessible to English readers because they recognized his contributions to the discipline. Yet, in part, we find answers to the question as to why the translations were limited in scope in personal explanations. The number of persons displaying the required language abilities and

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<sup>14</sup> We wish to thank Erik Grimmer-Solem for making us aware of this correspondence.

academic credentials to undertake such a task were limited to begin with. Among those who were in question, von Halle was preoccupied with his aim of receiving a professorship in his native Germany and thus did not have the time to work on further translations; Ashley's personal vendetta with the AAPSS ensured that he was not available to conduct translations for the *Annals* and sought other venues to make the work of the man he admired better known; and a general sense of the "Americanness" of the journal's operating procedure made those with the necessary competences queasy of collaborating with their American publishing counterparts.

But it would also be a gross exaggeration to suggest that it was *merely* these personal explanations or the language difficulties which impeded translations of Schmoller into English. Scientific paradigms or schools of thought can be intensely durable and offer a "stickiness" within the academy, making their replacement altogether unlikely – or at least difficult – to achieve. When a paradigm *does* decline, however, as in the case of historicism in economics, the speed with which "old thinking" can fall out of favor, be viewed as obsolete, no longer be properly understood, and then forgotten can itself be surprising (see Caldwell 2004, chapter 4 for a discussion of the decline of the Historical School). Hence, the changes the war brought about and the more restricted interaction this led to between German and American intellectuals is a remarkably important point. But looking a few decades further we can determine that while reasons pertaining to language contribute to the dearth of translations, so does the circumstance that increasingly few people will likely still have *understood* Schmoller, even only a short time after historicism was disregarded for the study of economics.<sup>15</sup>

This has self-reinforcing consequences. Both these individual circumstances as well as the development of the discipline as a whole in the direction of increasing mathematical formalization led to the absence, for the most part, of translations of Schmoller's writing. This, in turn, certainly also contributed to and accelerated his disappearance in academic discourse in the second half of the twentieth century. The non-availability of his writing in English meant that far fewer academics could have engaged his thinking, even if they had been so inclined. Isolated calls for the translations of Schmoller's writing (e.g. Balabkins 1987) during this time largely went unheard. But with this backdrop, it may be surprising that he now appears to be making a comeback. Especially in the fields of business administration and business history, he is being rediscovered for both his thinking on the role of entrepreneurship as well as his influence on the development of case methods, the latter of which would be developed more systematically at the Harvard Business School, where one of his doctoral students, Edwin F. Gay, was the first dean (cf. Wadhvani 2010; cf. Kipping, Kurosawa and Wadhvani 2017). More than a hundred years after ad-

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<sup>15</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer for making us aware of this point.

mirers of Schmoller first initiated translations of his work, he is now receiving a further look – and with that the discussions of the usefulness and feasibility of translating his work may arise anew.

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