tyre then follows the same format to w Thomas Aquinas integrated the g ideas of both Augustine and within the thirteenth-century debates at principles, rational justification, and justice. The relationship between additions and the synthesis of the g views are of central interest to. From there he proceeds to the historical and theological foundations of philosophical enquiry, placing David Hume’s theory of the passions and justice specific historical and social context.

In his analysis, MacIntyre has history of ideas and philosophical ideas and moral consensus (commitment of morals). His only chapter is used more to set off and the differences of the previous views from modernity than it is to substantiate analysis of liberalism.

With its entirely different philosophy, its rejection of a story of the good, and its rejection of discourse within a particular intension, ends in ethical relativism. In his analysis, MacIntyre has history of ideas and philosophical ideas and a sociology of knowledge. If we consider him here, he would have a valuable contribution to the sociology of ideas. But he adds, which appear to change the clarity of this work.

It seems to pulling back from the imperty discussion surrounding "foundationalism" and "the chronology." He examines what he more important and prior question of the historical traditions of enquiry and justification. His purpose in inadequacy of the Enlighten having discovered a priori unics independent of both history. He wishes to indicate how the first three above-mentioned topics within the context of their rational enquiry—which have they were dismissed by the Enlightenment.

is also trying to broaden the framework within which we think about the issue of justice and rational justification. Thus it is the social structure underlying rational enquiry that frames the philosophical discourse and response about the nature of justice.

However, what began as an interesting history of ideas in which MacIntyre traces the relationship between practical rationality and forms of justification on the one side with various moral claims to justice on the other, finally become a discussion of hermeneutics and the interpretation of meaning in different traditions. Here he responds to the two post-Enlightenment schools of thought: relativism (there is no truth, objectivity, or universal standard of rationality) and perspectivism (pluralism and incommensurability of truth-claims between different traditions). At times, he appears to borrow from the cultural hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer in a critique of Habermas’ theory of rationality. MacIntyre states clearly that his goal “is to provide an account of rationality presupposed by and implicit in the practice of those enquiry-bearing traditions” (p. 354).

The history of these traditions as distinctive “communities of discourse,” “practices of enquiry,” and “tradition-constitutive enquiries” from the Greeks to modern liberalism has thus been an introduction to a broader undertaking: the development of the formal aspects of rationality in the public discourse of intellectual traditions.

Though he does not explicitly say so, MacIntyre seems to be responding to Habermas’ pursuit of a theory of rationality inherent in discourse (discursive rationality and communicative interaction) by pursuing his own theory of formal rationality inherent in the history of Western “communities of discourse” found in the philosophical traditions. MacIntyre argues that only within modern liberalism is the public arena of discourse abandoned in favor of establishing ahistorical and associational principles, thereby undermining the very possibility of engaging in these rational “practices of enquiry.”

MacIntyre never answers his original question about a true account of justice and the corresponding everyday ethical concerns about it application. One can only speculate about MacIntyre’s intentions. Within the framework of the debates between the proponents of cultural hermeneutics and critical theory, he has decided to reestablish the links among consensus, traditions, and society. Though this is an enjoyable, superbly written work containing a great deal of information, the real purposes of chapters 18 to 20 remain unclear and undeveloped.

A more specific objection to MacIntyre’s work is that he missed an ideal opportunity for developing a tradition-bound or consensus theory of justice in his treatment of Aristotle and the distinctions made between justice, practical rationality (deliberation), and rational enquiry (dialectical method). Though he sees the polis as a condition for asking ethical and political questions and for deliberation, MacIntyre seems to reduce deliberation to a practical syllogism about technical ends. The result is that phronesis (practical wisdom) is turned into techné (technical knowledge). The opportunity of integrating Aristotle’s concepts of deliberation and public discourse in the Athenian polis is lost. Certainly this connection has its own etymological foundations in the relationship between deliberation (bouleusis) and public discourse (boulé). These ties can also be seen by comparing Book III, chapter 3 of the Nicomachean Ethics on deliberation and Book III, chapter 10 of the Politics on the epistemological reasons for public discourse within a true democracy. Thus, for MacIntyre the sociological is brought in as a general framework for understanding philosophical discourse, but not as the actual form and substance within which rationality and truth may be determined. He is still caught in the Kantian antinomies of individual and society, individual deliberation and social traditions, practical syllogism and intersubjective dialogue, first principles and “the fragility of goodness.”


Dmitri N. Shalin
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Rational choice theory, a mainstay of modern microeconomics, has many a virtue. It starts with simple assumptions, crafts on them increasingly complex propositions, and offers nontrivial predictions concerning possible courses of action. The problem with this theory is that it situates the actor in a
never-never land where our assumptions hold true, other factors are always equal, and actors behave as perfectly rational beings. Martin Hollis's book is simultaneously an ingenious critique of rational choice theory and a valiant attempt to safeguard its pertinent insights. What makes this philosophical essay interesting for sociologists is that the author summons homo sociologicus to avoid the traps into which homo economicus leads modern economic analysis.

Rational choice theory, Hollis argues, is based on assumptions that are too limiting. It presupposes a rational agent with "fully ordered preferences, perfect information and faultless computing powers" (p. 13). None of these assumptions holds true in the real world. Personal preferences are not always clearly ordered, and when they are, the ranking is subject to revision over time. Information about the possible consequences of rational action is notoriously hard to come by. And the individual's capacity to juggle in one's head all variables pertaining to a given choice is far more limited than the theory implies.

Equally troublesome is the fact that rational choice theory fails to consider the actor as a member of a community constrained by the choices others make. In a compelling example illustrating this point, Hollis invites readers to decide which course of action the rational motorist should take when he or she hears the forecast projecting traffic buildup on a road ahead. Should the driver continue or take an alternate route? The decision depends on what our motorist expects other drivers to do. If he or she thinks that other drivers familiar with the forecast would switch to an alternate route, the driver may decide to stay the course, since the alternate route might soon become more crowded than the main road. But then he or she might think that other drivers familiar with the forecast would switch to an alternate route, the driver may decide to stay the course, since the alternate route might soon become more crowded than the main road. Then he or she might think that other drivers familiar with the forecast would switch to an alternate route, the driver may decide to stay the course, since the alternate route might soon become more crowded than the main road. And so it goes. The game of rationality leads to infinite regress, with the solution to the problem of most rational action remaining indeterminate.

In his search for an answer to the paradoxes of rational choice theory, Hollis taps various sources, including Hegel's philosophy, Lukes' concept of power, Giddens' constitutional theory of society, and, most signaly, Weber's interpretive sociology. He is not prepared to conclude with Hegel that the World Spirit, in its infinite cunning and wisdom, weaves individual actions together according to the grand design of history. Yet he accepts his insight that individuals' choices produce systemic results largely unforeseen by individual actors. One such result is the appearance on the social scene of norms and institutions, which, according to Hollis, "can emerge as the unintended sum of intended consequences" (p. 48). Institutions are important not simply because they constrain, but also because they enable and empower actors by providing individuals with the rationales that can justify the chosen course of action in the eyes of the community. Rational choice theory effectively ignores this facet of rationality, the fact that individuals are not only profit maximizers driven by personal desires and preferences, but also role players who depend vitally on justifiable reasons for securing their private agendas. Without the institutionalized inventories of norms, rules, and rationales, our subjective desires would be perennially frustrated and the war of each against all would become a logical necessity.

This is not to suggest that the author intends to sacrifice the self-seeking homo economicus to the public-minded homo sociologicus. The individual, for Hollis, is an autonomous being, "his own artificer" or self as distinct from its role. The point is rather that the standards for judging an action's rationality cannot satisfactorily be gleaned from economics alone—a sociological corrective is needed. Which brings us to Weber's problematic of rationality.

The reason why Hollis finds Weberian sociology so congenial is obvious: both consider intentionality key to understanding social action, yet neither is prepared to equate the task of social science with identifying the subject's own reasons for action. Erklären and Verstehen must complement each other if social science is to be possible. Figuring out intentions and subjective motives comes in handy as the first step, to be followed by objectively analyzing stated reasons, which may or may not pass the test of rationality in light of the values prevalent in the community, the role the individual was enacting at the time, and the self he or she claimed to be. What Hollis is up to is laying out objective standards for judging how rational (or irrational) a course of action chosen by the individual is.
Not everything in Hollis's analysis squares off. Some strands in his argument tentatively outlined in earlier parts of the text fail to make an appearance at the grand finale. And the book as a whole, its overarching metaphor notwithstanding, is less than the sum of its parts. Still, all those interested in the problem of rationality and the way it is tackled by economists and sociologists today will find this slender volume delightful reading, full of fresh insights and exquisitely British wit.


GEORGE STEINMETZ
University of Chicago

This book adheres to the project set out by Durand’s teacher, the renowned historian Roland Mousnier, to investigate the nonconflictual aspects of social life. While most of Durand’s previous work has been on the French ancien régime, Les solidarités dans les sociétés humaines has a much broader geographical, temporal, and theoretical scope. Unfortunately, the book’s Weberian ambitions contrast sharply with the weakness of its theoretical approach and with the occasional thinness of its historical scholarship. Durand shows a remarkable degree of insulation from recent social theory and historical sociology in France or elsewhere, and fails to address the aporias that arise within his own work.

Durand’s apparent goal is to produce a conceptually arranged list of historical instances of solidaristic human relations. Through the sheer accretion of examples of solidarity (ranging from friendship through quality circles in U.S. factories) Durand urges the reader to reject “social manicheanism,” theories which would reduce social relations to (usually binary) conflict. The first objection which will be raised by any informed reader is that contemporary theories are hardly so narrowly manichean. Moreover, this is certainly an erroneous representation of Marxist theory, Durand’s primary target. After all, Western Marxism has focused on consent, hegemony, legitimacy, and the like, even to the point of neglecting conflict and coercion—as such critics as Perry Anderson have repeatedly pointed out. Durand similarly distorts the treatment of noncoercive social relations in other theories, and ignores even French authors such as Foucault and Durkheim (whose name is mentioned just once—and misspelled—in a footnote).

This would be less damaging if Durand were able to construct a compelling alternative account. His framework is based on a sequence of four ideal typical forms of human “solidarity” that are defined in only the most general terms: egalitarian and hierarchical solidarities, affinites (les solidarités), and loyalties (le loyauté). But he makes little comparison across forms, aside from the suggestion that solidarities and loyalties are more prevalent in traditional estate societies (sociétés d’ordre) than in more modern ones—a point which has been made in Durand’s and Mousnier’s earlier writings. Nor does Durand discuss the dynamics of transition from one form to another. Finally, although he multiplies subtypes of solidarity within each category, the antinomy conflict—solidarity is clearly too crude to exhaust the full spectrum of social relations: interpenetrated modes (e.g., consent backed by coercion, and vice versa) or other principles such as the “dull compulsion” of material conditions are not considered.

In the first chapter, Durand contests the indiscriminate application of the concept “social class” across historical periods. This is unobjectionable, even if it fails to counter recent reasservations of the usefulness of “class” in noncapitalist contexts (e.g., “New Class” theory, Geoffrey de Ste. Croix’s discussions of class in ancient Greece, and the work of Wright and Roemer). Yet this interest in limiting the use of “class” seems to assume that class implies conflict, whereas recent class theorists have consistently problematized the relations among class, class formation, and class consciousness. In the final section of this chapter, concerning the development of individuality and citizen-state relations, Durand proclaims his political faith in “right, liberty, and property” as an “indissoluble trinity” (Hayek), but fails to address the potential contradictions between liberty and his other valued good, solidarity.

Chapter 2 discusses a variety of forms of “egalitarian solidarity.” Here Durand laments the passing of truly “solidary societies,” which were “so different from the mass