made have been borrowed by the understanding. It ordinarily seems that they should have a human character only when they are conceived under human forms;[xxi] but even the most impersonal and the most anonymous are nothing else than objectified sentiments.

It is only by regarding religion from this angle that it is possible to see its real significance. If we stick closely to appearances, rites often give the effect of purely manual operations: they are anointings, washings, meals. To consecrate something, it is put in contact with a source of religious energy, just as to-day a body is put in contact with a source of heat or electricity to warm or electrize it; the two processes employed are not essentially different. Thus understood, religious technique seems to be a sort of mystic mechanics. But these material manoeuvres are only the external envelope under which the mental operations are hidden. Finally, there is no question of exercising a physical constraint upon blind and, incidentally, imaginary forces, but rather of reaching individual consciousnesses of giving them a direction and of disciplining them. It is sometimes said that inferior religions are materialistic. Such an expression is inexact. All religions, even the crudest, are in a sense spiritualistic: for the powers they put in play are before all spiritual, and also their principal object is to act upon the moral life. Thus it is seen that whatever has been done in the name of religion cannot have been done in vain: for it is necessarily the society that did it, and it is humanity that has reaped the fruits. . . .

II

Thus there is something eternal in religion which is destined to survive all the particular symbols in which religious thought has successively enveloped itself. There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality. Now this moral remaking cannot be achieved except by the means of reunions, assemblies and meetings where the individuals, being closely united to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments; hence come ceremonies which do not differ from regular religious ceremonies, either in their object, the results which they produce, or the processes employed to attain these results. What essential difference is there between an assembly of Christians celebrating the principal dates of the life of Christ, or of Jews remembering the exodus from Egypt or the promulgation of the decalogue, and a reunion of citizens commemorating the promulgation of a new moral or legal system or some great event in the national life?. . .

In summing up, then, we must say that society is not at all the illogical or a-logical, incoherent and fantastic being which it has too often been considered. Quite on the contrary, the collective consciousness is the highest form of the psychic life, since it is the consciousness of the consciousnesses. Being placed outside of and above individual and local contingencies, it sees things only in their permanent and essential aspects, which it crystallizes into communicable ideas. At the same time that it sees from above, it sees farther; at every moment of time, it embraces all known reality; that is why it alone can furnish the mind with the moulds which are applicable to the totality of things and which make it possible to think of them. It does not create these moulds artificially; it finds them within itself; it does nothing but become conscious of them . . .

Discussion Questions

1. Define mechanical and organic solidarity. Do these concepts help explain the division of labor in your family of origin? In your current (or most recent) place of employment? How so or why not? Be specific.

2. Discuss the various types of suicide that Durkheim delineates using specific examples. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the notion that different *types* of suicide prevail in "modern" as opposed to "traditional" societies? Give concrete examples.

3. Define and compare and contrast Marx's concept of alienation and Durkheim's concept of anomie. How exactly do these concepts overlap? How are they different?

4. Discuss Durkheim's notion of collective conscience. Why is it, that is, how can it be, that the collective conscience is *not* just a "sum" of individual consciousnesses? Use concrete examples to explain.

5. Discuss specific moments of collective effervescence that you have experienced (e.g., concerts, church, etc.). What particular symbols and rituals were called up and used to arouse this social state?

4 Max Weber (1864–1920)

Max Weber

Key Concepts

- *Verstehen*
- Ideal types
- Protestant ethic
- Calling
- Iron cage
- Rationalization
- Bureaucracy
- Authority
- Charisma
- Class, status, and party

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development it might well be truly said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."

—Weber ([1904–05] 1958:182)

From the course requirements necessary to earn your degree, to the paperwork and tests you must complete in order to receive your driver's license, to the record keeping and mass of files that organize most every business enterprise, our everyday life is channeled in large measure through formalized, codified procedures. Indeed, in Western cultures few aspects of life have been untouched by the general tendency toward rationalization and the adoption of methodical practices. So, whether it's developing a long-term financial plan for one's business, following the advice written in sex manuals, or even planning for one's own death, little in modern life is left to chance. It was toward an examination of the causes and consequences of this "disenchantment" of everyday life that Max Weber's wide-ranging work crystallized. In this chapter, we explore Weber's study of this general trend in modern society as well as other aspects of his writings. But while Weber did not self-consciously set out to develop a unified theoretical model, making his intellectual path unlike that followed by both Marx and Durkheim, it is this characteristic of his work that has made it a continual wellspring of inspiration for other scholars. Perhaps

the magnitude of Weber's impact on the development of sociology is captured best by the prominent social theorist, Raymond Aron, who described Weber as "the greatest of the sociologists" (Aron [1965] 1970:294).

A Biographical Sketch

Max Weber, Jr., was born in Erfurt, Germany, in 1864. He was the eldest of eight children born to Max Weber, Sr., and Helene Fallenstein Weber, although only six survived to adulthood. Max Jr. was a sickly child. When he was four years old, he became seriously ill with meningitis. Though he eventually recovered, throughout the rest of his life he suffered the physical and emotional aftereffects of the disease, most apparently anxiety and nervous tension. From an early age, books were central in Weber's life. He read whatever he could get his hands on, including Kant, Machiavelli, Spinoza, Goethe, and Schopenhauer, and he wrote two historical essays before his 14th birthday. But Weber paid little attention in class and did almost no work for school. According to his widow Marianne, although "he was not uncivil to his teachers, he did not respect them. . . . If there was a gap in his knowledge, he went to the root of the matter and then gladly shared what he knew" (Marianne Weber [1926] 1975:48).

In 1882, at 18 years old, Weber took his final high school examinations. His teachers acknowledged his outstanding intellectual accomplishments and thirst for knowledge, but expressed doubts about his "moral maturity." Weber went to the University of Heidelberg for three semesters and then completed one year of military service in Strasbourg. When his service ended, he enrolled at the University of Berlin and, for the next eight years, lived at his parents' home. Upon passing his first examination in law in 1886, Weber began work as a full-time legal apprentice. While working as a junior barrister, he earned a PhD in economic and legal history in 1889. He then took a position as lecturer at the University of Berlin.

Throughout his life, Weber was torn by the personal struggles between his mother and his father. Weber admired his mother's extraordinary religious piety and devotion to her family, and loathed his father's abusive treatment of her. At the same time, Weber admired his father's intellectual prowess and achievements and reviled his mother's passivity. Weber followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a lawyer and joining the same organizations as his father had at the University of Heidelberg. Like his father, he was active in government affairs as well. As a member of the National Liberal Party, Max Sr. was elected to the Reichstag (national legislature) and later appointed by Chancellor Bismarck to the Prussian House of Deputies. For his part, Max Jr. was a committed nationalist and served the government in numerous capacities, including as a delegate to the German Armistice Commission in Versailles following Germany's defeat in World War I. But he was also imbued with a sense of moral duty quite similar to that of his mother. Weber's feverish work ethic—he drove himself mercilessly, denying himself all leisure—can be understood as an inimitable combination of his father's intellectual accomplishments and his mother's moral resolve.

In 1893, at the age of 29, Weber married Marianne Schnitger, a distant cousin, and finally left his childhood home. Today, Marianne Weber is recognized as an important feminist, intellectual, and sociologist in her own right. She was a popular public speaker on social and sexual ethics and wrote many books and articles. Her most influential works, *Marriage and Motherhood in the Development of Law* (1907) and *Women and Love* (1935), examined feminist issues and the reform of marriage. However, Marianne is known best as the intellectual partner of her husband. She and Max made a conscious effort to establish an egalitarian relationship, and worked together on intellectual projects. Interestingly, Marianne referred to Max as her "companion" and implied that theirs was an unconsummated marriage. (It is rumored that Max had a long-lasting affair with a woman of Swiss nobility who was a member of the Tobleron family.) Despite her own intellectual accomplishments, Marianne's 700-page treatise, *Max Weber: A Biography,* first published in 1926, has received the most attention, serving as the central source of biographical information on her husband (and vital to this introduction as well).

In 1894, Max Weber joined the faculty at Freiburg University as a full professor of economics. Shortly thereafter, in 1896, Weber accepted a position as chair of economics at the University of Heidelberg, where he first began his academic career. But in 1897, he suffered a serious nervous breakdown.

According to Marianne, the breakdown was triggered by the inexorable guilt Weber experienced after his father's sudden death. Just seven weeks before he died, Weber had rebuked his father over his tyrannical treatment of his mother. The senior Weber had prohibited his wife Helene from visiting Max and Marianne at their home in Heidelberg without him. When he and Helene showed up together for the visit, his son forced him to leave. Unfortunately, that was the last time father and son ever spoke.

Weber experienced debilitating anxiety and insomnia throughout the rest of his life. He often resorted to taking opium in order to sleep. Despite resigning his academic posts, traveling, and resting, the anxiety could not be dispelled. Nevertheless, he had spurts of manic intellectual activity and continued to write as an independent scholar. In 1904, Weber traveled to the United States and began to formulate the argument of what would be his most celebrated work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber [1904–05] 1958).

After returning to Europe, Weber resumed his intellectual activity. He met with the brilliant thinkers of his day, including Werner Sombart, Paul Hensel, Ferdinand Tönnies, Ernst Troeltsch, and Georg Simmel (see Chapter 6). He helped establish the Heidelberg Academy of the Sciences in 1909 and the Sociological Society in 1910 (Marianne Weber [1926] 1975:425). However, Weber was still plagued by compulsive anxiety. In 1918, he helped draft the constitution of the Weimar Republic while giving his first university lectures in 19 years at the University of Vienna. He suffered tremendously, however, and turned down an offer for a permanent post (Weber 1958:23). In 1920, at the age of 56, Max Weber died of pneumonia. Marianne lived for another 34 years and completed several important manuscripts left unfinished at her husband's death.

Intellectual Influences and Core Ideas

Weber's work encompasses a wide scope of substantive interests. Most, if not all, of his writing has had a profound impact on sociology. As such, an attempt to fully capture the breadth and significance of his scholarship exceeds the limitations of a single chapter. Nevertheless, we can isolate several aspects of his work that, taken together, serve as a foundation for understanding the impetus behind much of his writing. To this end, we divide our discussion in this section into two major parts: (1) Weber's view of the science of sociology and (2) his engagement with the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Karl Marx.

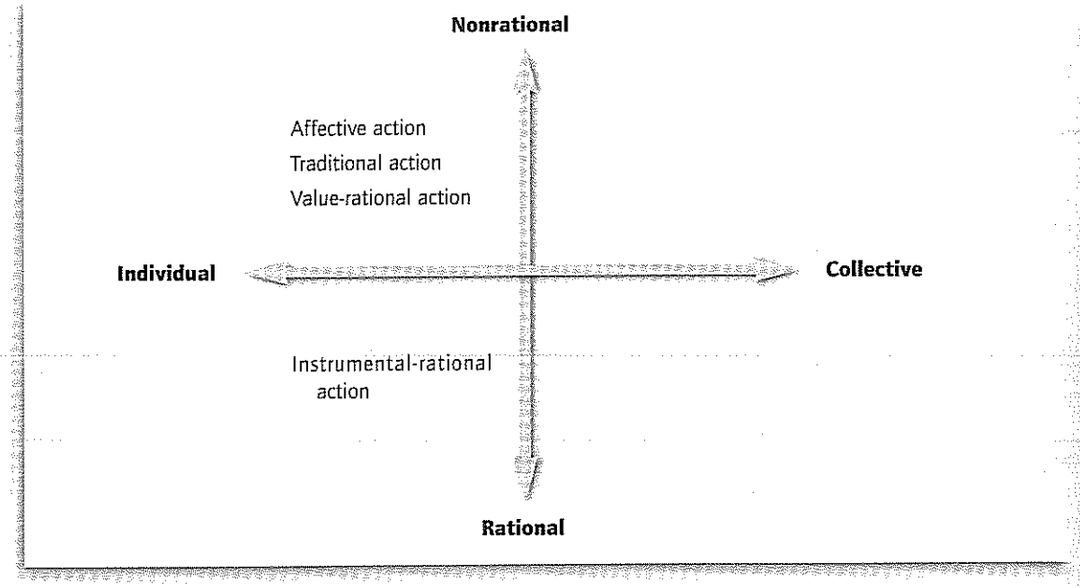
Sociology

Weber defined sociology as "a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects" (Weber 1947:88). In casting "interpretive understanding," or ***Verstehen***, as the principal objective, Weber's vision of sociology offers a distinctive counter to those who sought to base the young discipline on the effort to uncover universal laws applicable to all societies. Thus, unlike Durkheim, who analyzed objective, sui generis "social facts" that operated independently of the individuals making up a society, Weber turned his attention to the subjective dimension of social life, seeking to understand the states of mind or motivations that guide individuals' behavior.

In delimiting the subject matter of sociology, Weber further specified "social action" to mean that which, "by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course" (Weber 1947:88). Such action can be either observable or internal to the actor's imagination, and it can involve a deliberate intervening in a given situation, an abstaining of involvement, or acquiescence. The task for the sociologist is to understand the meanings individuals assign to the contexts in which they are acting and the consequences that such meanings have for their conduct.

To systematize interpretive analyses of meaning, Weber distinguished four types of social action. In doing so, he clearly demonstrates his multidimensional approach to the problem of action (see Figure 4.1). First is *instrumental-rational action.* Such action is geared toward the efficient pursuit of goals through

Figure 4.1 Weber's Four Types of Social Action



calculating the advantages and disadvantages associated with the possible means for realizing them. Under this category would fall the decision of a labor union to strike in order to bargain for greater employment benefits. Rehearsing one's performance for an upcoming job interview is another example of instrumental-rational action.

Like instrumental-rational action, *value-rational action* involves the strategic selection of means capable of effectively achieving one's goals. However, value-rational action is pursued as an end in itself, not because it serves as a means for achieving an ulterior goal. As such, it "always involves 'commands' or 'demands" that compel the individual to follow a line of conduct for its own sake—because it is the "right" thing to do (Weber 1947:116). Examples of this type of action include risking arrest to further an environmental cause, or refraining from cheating on exams.

The third type of social action outlined by Weber is *traditional action,* where behaviors are determined by habit or long-standing custom. Here, an individual's conduct is shaped not by a concern with maximizing efficiency or commitment to an ethical principle, but rather by an unreflective adherence to established routines. This category includes religious rites of passage such as confirmations and bar mitzvahs, singing the national anthem at the start of sporting events, and eating turkey at Thanksgiving with one's family.

The fourth type is *affective action,* which is marked by impulsiveness or a display of unchecked emotions. Absent from this behavior is the calculated weighing of means for a given end. Examples of affective action are a baseball player arguing an umpire's called strike or parents crying at their child's wedding ceremony.

It is important to point out that in everyday life a given behavior or course of conduct is likely to exhibit characteristics of more than one type of social action. Thus, a person may pursue a career in social work not only because it is a means for earning a salary, but also because he or she is committed to the goal of helping others as a value in its own right. Weber's categories of social action, then, serve as **ideal types** or analytical constructs against which real-life cases can be compared. Such "pure" categories are not realized in concrete cases but instead are a conceptual yardstick for examining differences and similarities, as well as causal connections, between the social processes under investigation. Thus, "ideal" refers to an emphasis on particular aspects of social life specified by the researcher, not to a value judgment as to whether something is "good" or "bad." As you will read in the selections that follow, Weber's work is guided in large measure by constructing ideal types. For instance, his essay on bureaucracy

consists in the main of a discussion of the ideal characteristics of such an organization. Similarly, his essay on the three forms of domination involves isolating the features specific to each ideal type, none of which actually exists in pure form.

Weber's notion of sociology as an interpretive science based on *Verstehen* (understanding) and his focus on constructing ideal types marks his ties to important intellectual debates that were taking shape in German universities (Bendix 1977). At the heart of the debates was the distinction drawn between the natural and social sciences, and the methodologies appropriate to each. The boundary separating biology, chemistry, and physics from history, economics, psychology, and sociology was an outgrowth of German Idealism and the philosophy of **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804). Kant argued that the realm of mind and "spirit" was radically different from the external, physical world of objects. According to Kant, because individuals create meaning and ultimately are free to choose their course of action, it is not possible to construct universal laws regarding human behavior. As a result, social life is not amenable to scientific investigation. On the other hand, absent of consciousness, objects and processes occurring in the natural world are open to scientific analysis and the development of general laws regarding their actions.

Among the scholars grappling with the implications of the Kantian division were the historical economists **Wilhelm Dilthey** (1833–1911) and **Heinrich Rickert** (1863–1936), whose work would have a profound impact on Weber. It was Dilthey who articulated the view that historical studies, and the social sciences more generally, should seek to *understand* particular events and their relationship to the specific contexts in which they occur. The task of history, then, is to interpret the subjective meanings actors assign to their conduct, not to search for causal explanations couched in terms of universal laws. According to Dilthey, any attempt to produce general causal laws regarding human behavior would not capture the unique historical conditions that shaped the events in question or a society's development. Moreover, such efforts would fail to study the very things that separate social life from the physical world of objects—human intent and motivation. Unlike the natural sciences and their analyses of the regularities governing observable objects and events, the social sciences aim to understand the internal states of actors and their relationship to behaviors.

In Weber's own definition of sociology, quoted above, we clearly see his indebtedness to Dilthey's work. Following Dilthey, Weber cast the social sciences as a branch of knowledge dedicated to developing an interpretive understanding of the subjective meanings actors attach to their conduct. However, Weber maintained a view not shared by Dilthey—that the social sciences, like the natural sciences, are conducted by making use of abstract and generalizing concepts. Here lies the impetus behind Weber's development of ideal types as a method for producing generalizable findings based on the study of historically specific events. For Weber, scientific knowledge is distinguished from nonscientific analyses not on the basis of the subject matter under consideration but rather on how such studies are carried out. Thus, in constructing ideal types of action, Weber argued that analyses of the social world were not inherently less scientific or generalizable than investigations of the physical world. Nevertheless, Weber's Verstehen approach led him to contend that the search for universal laws of human action would lose sight of what is human—the production of meaningful behavior as it is grounded within a specific historical context.

It is in his notion of ideal types that we find Weber's links to the work of Heinrich Rickert. As a neo-Kantian thinker, Rickert accepted the distinction between the natural and social sciences as self-evident. However, he saw the differences between the two branches of knowledge as tied to the method of inquiry appropriate to each, not to any inherent differences in subject matter, as did Dilthey. According to Rickert, regardless of whether an investigator is trying to understand the meanings that motivate actors or attempting to uncover universal laws that govern the world of physical objects, they would study both subjects by way of concepts. Moreover, it is through the use of concepts that the investigator is able to select the aspects of the social or natural world most relevant to the purpose of her inquiry. The difference between the sciences lies, then, in *how* concepts are used to generate knowledge.

While the natural sciences used concepts as a way to generate abstract principles that explain the uniformities that shape the physical world, Rickert maintained that concepts used in the social sciences are best directed toward detailing the particular features that account for the uniqueness of an event or a

society's development. In short, for Rickert the natural sciences were driven by the deductive search for universal laws. On the other hand, the social sciences were committed to producing inductive descriptions of historically specific phenomena.

For example, in subjecting molecules to changes in temperature and pressure, a physicist is interested in explaining the molecules' reactions in terms of causal laws whose validity is not restricted to any specific time or setting. Conversely, social scientists studying episodes of protests, for instance, should seek to understand why individuals chose to act and how the cultural and institutional contexts shaped their behaviors. But because the contexts in which, for instance, the French Revolution, the Boston Tea Party, and the women's suffrage movement occurred were historically unique, it is not possible to formulate generalized explanations of protests on the basis of such specific, unreplicable events. Attempts to do so would require a level of conceptual abstraction that would necessarily lose sight of the particulars that made the events historically meaningful.

Weber's use of ideal types as a method for framing his analyses stems in important respects from Rickert's discussions on the role of concepts in the sciences. However, he did not share Rickert's view that the social sciences are unable to construct general causal explanations of historical events or societal development. Here, Weber sought to forge a middle ground between the generating of abstract laws characteristic of the natural sciences and the accumulation of historically specific facts that some contended must guide the social sciences. To this end, he cast the determination of causality as an attempt to establish the *probability* that a series of actions or events are related or have an *elective affinity*. Hence, Weber's notion of causality is fundamentally different from the conventional scientific usage, which sees it as the positing of invariant and necessary relationships between variables. According to Weber, the complexities of social life make it unamenable to formulating strict causal arguments such as those found in the natural sciences. While it can be stated that temperatures above 32 degrees Fahrenheit (x) will cause ice to melt (y), such straightforward, universal relationships between variables cannot be isolated when analyzing social processes; individual conduct and societal developments are not carried out with the constancy and singular causal "elegance" that characterizes the physical world. Thus, a sociologist cannot say with the same degree of certainty that an increase in educational attainment (x) will cause a rise in income (y), because while this relationship between the two variables may be probable; it is not inevitable. One need only keep in mind that a university professor with a PhD typically makes far less money than a corporate executive with a bachelor's degree. As a result, sociologists should set out to determine the set of factors that, when taken together, have an elective affinity with a particular outcome. Armed with ideal types, the sociologist can then develop general arguments that establish the probable relationship between a combination of causes and a particular consequence.

Of Nietzsche and Marx

> The honesty of a contemporary scholar . . . can be measured by the position he takes vis-à-vis Nietzsche and Marx. Whoever fails to acknowledge that he could not carry out the most important part of his own work without the work done by both . . . deceives himself and others. The intellectual world in which we live is a world which to a large extent bears the imprint of Marx and Nietzsche.[1]

Such were the words spoken by Max Weber to his students shortly before his death. While his vision of sociology as a discipline was shaped in large measure by his links to German Idealism and the controversies surrounding historical studies, his substantive interests bear important connections to the work of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and Karl Marx (1818–1883).

Evidencing his connection to Nietzsche, a major theme running throughout the whole of Weber's work is **rationalization**. By rationalization, Weber was referring to an ongoing process in which social interaction

[1]Quoted in Antonio (1995:3).

and institutions become increasingly governed by methodical procedures and calculable rules. Thus, in steering the course of societal development, values, traditions, and emotions were being displaced in favor of formal and impersonal bureaucratic practices. While such practices may breed greater efficiency in obtaining designated ends, they also lead to the "disenchantment of the world" where "there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation" (Weber [1919] 1958:139).

Few domains within modern Western societies have escaped from the trend toward rationalization. For instance, music became thoroughly codified by the 1500s with the development of scales derived from mathematical formulas and tonal and rhythmic notation. While musical improvisation by no means disappeared, it henceforth was based on underlying systematized principles of melody and harmony. The visual arts likewise became codified according to principles of perspective, composition, and color against which the avant-garde purposively rebels (and is thus no less subject to). Sex as an "irrational" bodily pleasure or as a rite tied to orgiastic rituals has been replaced by sex as a rational practice necessary for procreation. And procreation has itself come under increasing scientific control as advances in birth control and in vitro fertilization make it possible to plan when a birth will occur, to circumvent a person's natural infertility, and even to prenatally select specific traits. The transformation of sex was itself part of the broader displacement of magical belief systems by doctrinal religions, which were themselves later marginalized by an instrumental, scientific worldview. With each step, the work of fortune and fate, and mysterious and unknown powers were further removed from everyday life. The pantheon of gods and spirits that once ruled the universe would be distilled and simplified into the one all-knowing, omnipotent God, who would eventually lose his throne to the all-seeing telescope. And finally, Weber places special emphasis on the changes to social life brought on by the rationalization of capitalistic economic activity, as you will read later.

The ambivalence with which Weber viewed the process of rationalization stems from the loss of ultimate meaning that accompanied the growing dominance of an instrumental and scientific orientation to life. While science can provide technological advances that enable us to address more efficiently *how* to do things, it cannot provide us with a set of meanings and values that answer the more fundamental question: *Why?* Unlike those who saw in the Enlightenment's debunking of magical superstitions and religious beliefs the road to progress, Weber maintained that rationalization—and the scientific, calculative outlook in which it is rooted—does not generate "an increased and general knowledge of the conditions under which one lives" (Weber [1919] 1958:139). They offer, instead, techniques empty of ultimate meaning.

Weber's reluctance to champion the progress brought by science and technological advances was influenced by Nietzsche's own nihilistic view of modernity expressed most boldly in his assertion "God is dead" (Nietzsche). Nietzsche's claim reflected his conviction that the eclipse of religious and philosophical absolutes brought on by the rise of science and instrumental reasoning had created an era of nihilism or meaninglessness. Without religious or philosophical doctrines to provide a foundation for moral direction, life itself would cease to have an ultimate purpose. No longer could ethical distinctions be made between what one ought to do and what one can do (Nietzsche [1919] 1958).

Weber was unwilling to assign a determinative end to history, however. Whether or not the spiritual void created by the disenchantment of the modern world would continue was, for him, an open question. The search for meaning—which Weber saw as the essence of the human condition—carried out in a meaningless world sparked the rise of charismatic leaders who were capable of offering their followers purpose and direction in their lives. (See "The Types of Legitimate Domination" in this chapter's Readings.) Ruling over others by virtue of their professed "state of grace," such figures were capable of radically transforming the existing social order. Weber's depiction of the power of charismatic leaders, with their ability to transcend the conventions and expectations imposed by the social order, bears important similarities to Nietzsche's notion of the *Übermensch*, or "superman." For Nietzsche, the fate of humanity and what is truly human lay in the hands of the *Übermenschen*, who alone are capable of overcoming the moral and spiritual bankruptcy that he believed corrupted the modern age (Nietzsche [1883] 1978).

Significant Others

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900): Is God Dead?

It is difficult to overstate the influence that the work of German philosopher and social critic Friedrich Nietzsche has had on twentieth-century thought. From theologians and psychologists, to philosophers and sociologists, to poets and playwrights, Nietzsche's ideas have penetrated virtually every domain of modern intellectual culture. It was not until after his death, however, that he would earn such acclaim, for during his life his writings attracted but the smallest of audiences.

Beset with a host of physical ailments, and stricken by a complete mental breakdown at the age of 45, Nietzsche, nevertheless, managed to develop a number of themes that would usher in a thoroughgoing critique of seemingly unassailable truths. Rejecting the Enlightenment notion that reason offers the pathway to human emancipation, Nietzsche believed that the essence of humanity lies in emotional and physical experiences. Moreover, he repudiated Christianity's ascetic ethic as a renunciation or avoidance of life, and championed, instead, the embracing of all that life offers, even the most tragic of sufferings, as the ultimate expression of greatness.

The man who declared, "God is dead" and who argued that truth, values, and morals are not based on some intrinsic, ahistorical criteria, but, instead, are established by the victors in the unending struggle for power, did not enter the canon of liberal academia without controversy. Owing to the intentional distortions and forgeries of some of his writing by his sister, Elisabeth, Nietzsche was often interpreted as an anti-Semitic fascist. Though he abhorred such hatred as "slavish" and "herd-like," Hitler's Third Reich reinvented Nietzsche's notion of the "will to power" and the Übermensch or "superman" as a justification for its military aggression and genocidal practices. Fortunately, contemporary scholars of Nietzsche's work have corrected many of Elisabeth's falsities, allowing the true intention of his piercing, original insights into modern culture to be realized.

In addition to drawing inspiration from Nietzsche's work, much of Weber's writing reflects a critical engagement with and extension of Marx's theory of historical materialism.[2] As we noted in Chapter 2, Marx saw class struggles as the decisive force in the evolution of history. Class struggles were, in turn, the inevitable outcome of the inherent contradictions found in all precommunist economic systems. While finding much convincing in Marx's argument, Weber nevertheless did not embrace it in its entirety. In constructing his own theoretical framework, Weber departed from Marx in a number of respects, three of which we outline here.

First, Weber maintained that social life did not evolve according to some immanent or necessary law. Thus, unlike Marx, Weber did not foresee a definitive "end of prehistory" toward which social evolution progressed. Instead, he saw the future of modern society as an open question, the answer to which it is impossible to foretell. This position, coupled with his view that rationalizing processes had transformed modern society into an "iron cage" (p. 137), accounts for Weber's unwillingness to accept a utopian vision of humanity's future.

[2]It is important to point out that Weber's critique of Marx was based more on secondary interpretations of Marx's work than on a thorough, firsthand encounter with his writings, since much of it was unavailable. In Weber's time, and continuing today, Marx was (is) often miscast by his followers and critics alike as an economic determinist. Perhaps more accurately, then, Weber was responding to a "crude," reductionist version of Marxism.

Second, he contended that the development of societies could not be adequately explained on the basis of a single or primary causal mechanism. The analysis of economic conditions and class dynamics alone could not capture the complex social and cultural processes responsible for shaping a society's trajectory. In particular, Weber maintained that Marx, in emphasizing economic factors and class-based interests, underestimated the role that *ideas* play in determining a society's course of development. On this point, Weber sought to incorporate Marx's argument into his own work while offering what he saw as a necessary corrective, remarking, "Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest" (Weber [1915] 1958:280).

Acknowledging the powerful sway that "interests" hold over individuals as they chart their course of action, Weber nevertheless argued that ideas play a central role in shaping the paths along which interests are realized. He saw ideas as independent cultural forces and not as a reflections of material conditions or the existing mode of production. As the source for constructing meaning and purposeful lines of action, ideas are not simply one element among others confined to the "superstructure." Instead, they serve as the bases on which individuals carve out possible avenues of action, and, more dramatically, when advanced by a charismatic leader, ideas can inspire revolution.

A third difference lies in where the two theorists located the fundamental problems facing modern industrial society. As you read previously, Marx identified capitalism as the primary source of humanity's inhumanity. The logic of capitalism necessarily led to the exploitation of the working class as well as to the alienation of the individual from his work, himself, and others. For Weber, however, it was not capitalism but the process of rationalization and the increasing dominance of bureaucracies that threatened to destroy creativity and individuality. By design, bureaucratic organizations—and the rational procedures that govern them—routinize and standardize people and products. Though making for greater efficiency and predictability in the spheres of life they have touched, the impersonality of bureaucracies, their indifference to difference, has created a "cold" and empty world. (See Weber's essay "Bureaucracy," excerpted in this chapter's Readings.)

Not surprisingly, then, Weber, unlike many of his contemporaries, did not see in socialism the cure for society's ills. In taking control of a society's productive forces, socialist forms of government would only further bureaucratize the social order, offering a poor alternative to capitalism. Indeed, Weber believed capitalism was a "better" economic system to the extent that its competitiveness allowed more opportunities to express one's individuality and creative impulses. Clearly, Weber did not embrace Marx's or his followers' calls for a communist revolution, because such a movement, to the extent that it led to an expansion of the scope of bureaucracies, would accelerate the hollowing out of human life.

Significant Others

Robert Michels (1876–1936): The Iron Law of Oligarchy

Political activist and sociologist, Robert Michels is best known for his studies on the organization of political parties. Influenced by the ideas of his teacher and mentor, Max Weber, Michels argued that all large-scale organizations have a tendency to evolve into hierarchical bureaucracies regardless of their original formation and ultimate goals. Even organizations that adopt an avowedly democratic agenda are inevitably subject to this "iron law of oligarchy" because leadership is necessarily transferred to an elite decision-making body.

Michels developed his argument in *Political Parties* (1911) in which he examined the organizational structures of western European socialist trade unions and political parties. During the late 1800s, the democratic ethos was particularly strong within these revolutionary socialist parties whose

(Continued)

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principal aim was to overthrow aristocratic or oligarchic regimes and replace them with governing bodies controlled directly by the people. Despite their intent on destroying elite rule—the rule of the many by the few—these parties were themselves unable to escape the tendency toward oligarchy.

Michels advanced his ideas in part as a response to his disillusionment with the German Social Democratic Party. An active member of the party, he witnessed firsthand its growing political conservatism. (Michels was censured by German government authorities for his political radicalism, compelling him to take positions at universities in Italy and Switzerland.) Established in the 1870s as an advocate for the working class, the Marxist-inspired party abandoned its revolutionary program soon after its formation, as its ambitions to wrest control of the means of production into the hands of the people was replaced by the conservative goals of increasing its membership, amassing funds for its war chest, and winning electoral seats in the German legislature through which piecemeal reform might be gained. Considered a vanguard of the proletariat revolution, this dramatic shift in party tactics signaled a rejection of Marxist principles and the abandonment of the struggle for realizing an ideal democracy where workers controlled their labor and freedom from want existed throughout society.

What led to the cooptation of this and similarly driven parties' ideals? The answer lies in the working classes' lack of economic and political power. In order to effect democratic change, the otherwise powerless working-class individuals must first organize; their strength as a movement is directly related to their strength in numbers. Numbers, however, require representation through individual delegates who are entrusted by the mass to act on its behalf. Despite Marx's utopian promise, the growth in numbers necessary to achieve power makes it impossible for the people to exercise direct control over their destinies. Instead, the success of working-class parties hinges on creating an organization committed to representing its interests: "Organization is . . . the source from which the conservative currents flow over the plain of democracy, occasioning there disastrous floods and rendering the plain unrecognizable" (Michels [1911] 1958:26). The inevitable rise of an organization brings with it the equally inevitable need for technical expertise, centralized authority, and a professional staff to ensure its efficient functioning. Bureaucratization transforms the party from a means to an end, to an end in itself. The preservation of the organization itself becomes the essential aim, and its original democratic ambitions are preserved only in talk, because aggressive action against the state would surely threaten its continued existence.

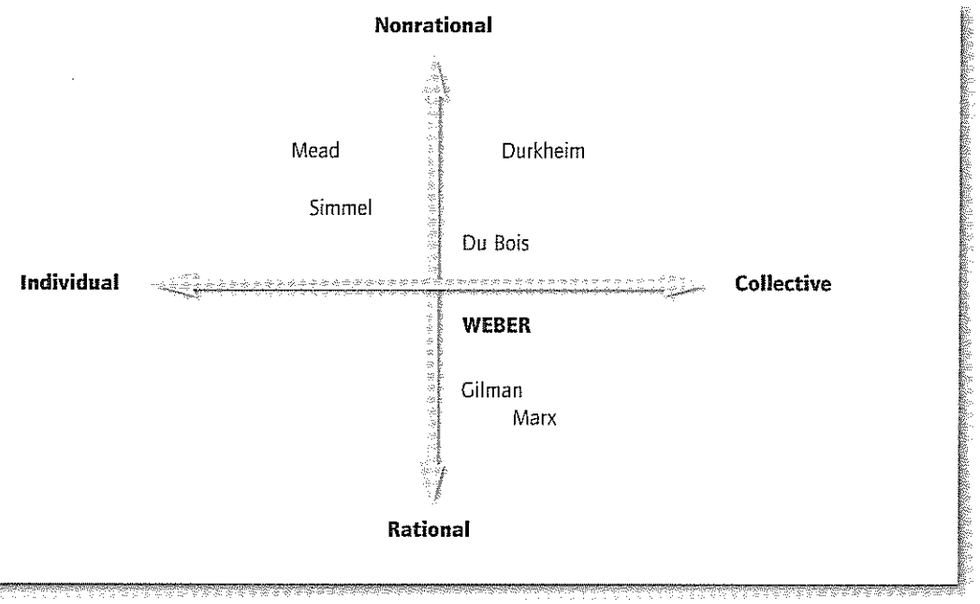
Thus, while "[d]emocracy is inconceivable without organization" (Michels [1911] 1958:25), the inherently oligarchic and bureaucratic nature of party organizations saps its revolutionary zeal and replaces it with the pursuit of disciplined, cautious policies intended to defend its own long-term interests, which do not necessarily coincide with the interests of the class it represents. As Michels notes, it would seem

> society cannot exist without a "dominant" or "political" class [that] . . . constitutes the only factor of sufficiently durable efficacy in the history of human development. . . . [T]he state, cannot be anything other than the organization of a minority. It is the aim of this minority to impose upon the rest of society a "legal order," which is the outcome of the exigencies of dominion and of the exploitation of the mass of helots effected by the ruling minority, and can never be truly representative of the majority. The majority is thus permanently incapable of self-government. Even when the discontent of the masses culminates in a successful attempt to deprive the bourgeoisie of power, this is . . . effected only in appearance; always and necessarily there springs from the masses a new organized minority which raises itself to the rank of a governing class. Thus the majority of human beings, in a condition of eternal tutelage, are predestined by tragic necessity to submit to the dominion of a small minority, and must be content to constitute the pedestal of an oligarchy. (Michels [1911] 1958:406, 407)

WEBER'S THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Weber's work is avowedly multidimensional. This is depicted in Figure 4.2 by his positioning relative to the other theorists discussed in this text. He explicitly recognized that individual action is channeled through a variety of motivations that encompass both rationalist and nonrationalist dimensions. Moreover, his definition of sociology as a science aimed at the interpretive understanding of social action squarely places the individual and his or her conduct at the center of analysis. Complementing this position are Weber's substantive interests that led him to study religious idea systems, institutional arrangements, class and status structures, forms of domination, and broad historical trends; in short, elements aligned with the collective dimension of social life.

Figure 4.2 Weber's Basic Theoretical Orientation



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Of course, not every essay incorporates elements from each of the four dimensions. For instance, Weber's discussion of bureaucracy (excerpted in this chapter's Readings) focuses on the administrative functions and rules that account for the efficiency and impersonality that mark this organizational form. As a result, he emphasizes the structural or collectivist aspects of bureaucracies and how they work down to shape a given individual's behaviors and attitudes within them. Thus, you will find Weber remarking, "The individual bureaucrat cannot squirm out of the apparatus into which he has been harnessed. . . . [H]e is only a small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march" (Weber [1925d] 1978:988). Weber's interest, then, lies here in describing the bureaucratic apparatus replete with its institutionalized demands for technical expertise and leveling of social differences.[3]

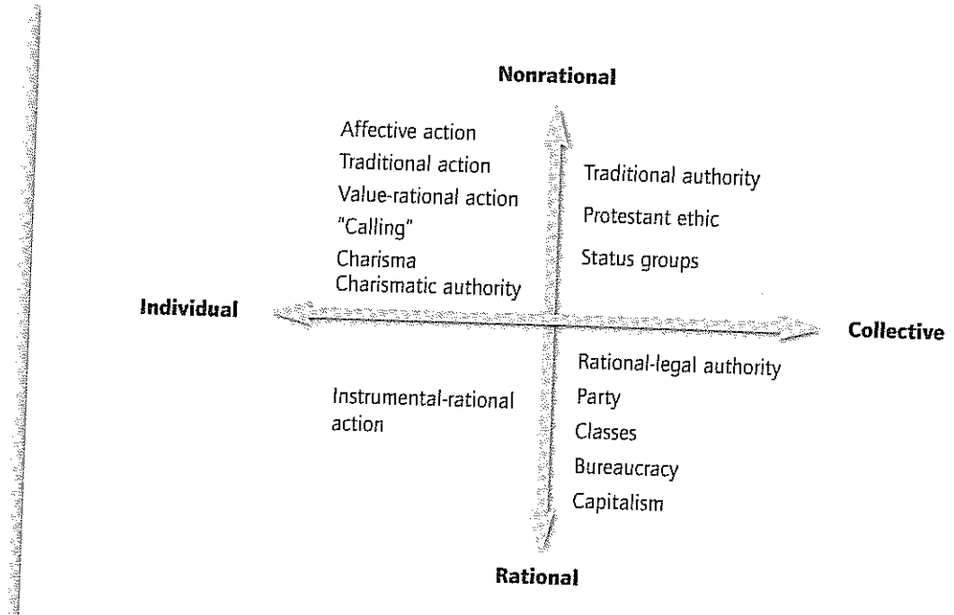
[3]While Weber's approach is clearly multidimensional, it is due to arguments like the one expressed in his essay on bureaucracy that we position the body of his work "off-center," ultimately in the collectivist/rationalist quadrant of our diagram. In the end, his emphasis lies in examining the rationalizing (i.e., rationalist) processes that have shaped the development of modern Western institutions (i.e., collectivist).

In Figure 4.3, we have highlighted a number of key concepts found in our preceding remarks or in the primary selections that follow. From the chart, it is readily apparent that Weber's theoretical orientation spans each of the four dimensions. Because some of these concepts were discussed previously (for instance, those regarding the types of action) and others will be addressed later in our introductions to the selections, we will restrict our comments in this section to a single example that underscores Weber's multidimensional approach.

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–05), Weber discusses the importance of the **calling** in motivating individuals to pursue worldly success. A doctrine first espoused by the Protestant reformer **Martin Luther** (1483–1546), the idea that each individual has a calling or "life-task" has its roots in a religious quest for salvation. In terms of our theoretical map, then, the calling reflects a nonrationalist orientation to action. The actions of the religiously faithful were motivated by the *moral* obligation to perform the duties of his labor to the best of his abilities. Here, the individual's actions are inspired by his desire to glorify God and thus gain confidence in the certainty of His grace, not by a desire to accumulate wealth as a means for purchasing material goods. Moreover, the calling is an individualist concept. It serves as the basis on which individuals make sense of their life circumstances as they chart their chances for attaining worldly success and eternal salvation.

Weber's analysis of the calling, however, was not tied solely to an examination of how religious ideas motivate individual conduct. For Weber, the significance of the calling also lies in its fueling a dramatic social transformation: the growth and eventual dominance of capitalism and the accompanying rationalization of much of social life. While oversimplifying his argument, Weber contended that the development of modern forms of capitalism was tied to the ascetic lifestyle demanded by the pursuit of one's calling. Originally a religious injunction to lead a life freed from the "temptations of the flesh," the secularization of the calling was a major force contributing to the explosive growth of capitalism in the West as businesses were increasingly organized on the basis of impersonal, methodical practices aimed at the efficient

Figure 4.3 Weber's Core Concepts



production of goods and services. Profit was now sought not to ensure one's state of grace, but because it was in one's self-interest to do so. Stripped of its religious impulses and spiritual moorings, the calling was further transformed into an overarching rationalist orientation to action that, as we remarked earlier, introduced methodical and calculative procedures into not only economic practices, but also into numerous spheres of life including politics, art, and sex, to name only a few.

Last, Weber's argument reveals a decidedly collectivist element as well. The ascetic ideals lying at the heart of the **Protestant ethic** were carried into the practical affairs of economic activity and social life more generally. This unleashed the process of rationalization, disenchanting Western society and creating an **iron cage** from which the individual is left with little power to escape. The dominance of capitalism and impersonal, bureaucratic forms of organization was a collective force that determined the life-chances of the individual. This dynamic is illustrated in the following passage taken from *The Protestant Ethic* and with which we end this section:

> The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day [sic] determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. ([1904–05] 1958:181)

Readings

In the selections that follow you will be introduced to five of Weber's most influential writings. In the first reading, excerpts from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber 1904–05) offer Weber's analysis of the relationship between Protestantism and the economic and cultural life of modern Western society. In the second reading, from "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," Weber expands this theme in an examination of the psychological motivations underlying the "world religions." In the third reading, Weber investigates the crosscutting sources of power: class, status, and party. A parallel theme is addressed in the fourth selection, "The Types of Legitimate Domination," in which Weber outlines three distinct types of domination or authority. Finally, in "Bureaucracy," we end with Weber's description of bureaucracy, the predominant form of modern social organizations.

Introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Beyond doubt, one of the most influential sociology books ever written, *The Protestant Ethic* masterfully captures the two subjects that preoccupied Weber's intellectual activities: (1) the rationalizing tendencies so prevalent in Western society and (2) the role of ideas in shaping them. In addressing these twin issues, Weber argues that a religious belief system, intended to explain the path to a transcendent eternal salvation, paradoxically fueled the creation of a secular world in which "material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history" (Weber [1904–05] 1958:181).

Unlike Marx, who viewed religion as "the opiate of masses," or as an ideology that served the economic interests of the ruling class, and unlike Durkheim, who saw in religion humanity's worship of itself, Weber saw in religious beliefs a system of meaning aimed at explaining the existence of suffering and evil in the world. For Weber, such explanations have a profound impact on individuals' actions, and consequently on the broader social order. Of particular import is whether in addressing these ultimate

issues, a belief system orients its adherents toward a "mastery" of the world or a mystical or contemplative escape from it. Thus, Protestantism, and Calvinism in particular, demanded that its followers serve as the "instruments" of God in order to fashion the world in His image. Conversely, Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism required their faithful to become "vessels" for the divine spirit in order to commune with otherworldly cosmic powers. The active engagement with the external, secular world called for by the Protestant belief system functioned as a potent impetus for social change, while the inward search for spiritual awakening characteristic of the major Eastern religions proved to be a socially conservative force.

In developing a scientifically based account of the independent role religious ideas can play in shaping the social order and, in particular, economic systems, Weber offered a powerful critique of Marxist theories of capitalism. As we discussed previously, he saw in historical materialism a one-sided causal interpretation, and, in several passages of *The Protestant Ethic,* you will read Weber clearly setting his sights on piercing this doctrine. As a counter to Marx's emphasis on property relations and class struggle, Weber maintained that the extraordinarily methodical *attitude* that characterized Protestant asceticism was integral to the rise and eventual dominance of Western capitalism.[1] Thus, Weber sought to demonstrate that not only "material" factors but also "ideal" factors can be instrumental in producing social change. In doing so, he sparked one of the most important and enduring debates in the history of sociology.

Having already highlighted several key elements of *The Protestant Ethic* when we outlined Weber's theoretical orientation, we briefly call attention to the book's main ideas. Weber traced the rise of individualism to the late sixteenth century and the Protestant Reformation, which, among other things, redefined the nature of the relationship between man and God. Led by **Martin Luther** (1483–1546), the Protestant Reformers insisted that each individual must methodically strive to realize a moral and righteous life each and every day in all their practical activities, as a constant expression of their devotion to the glorification of God. This methodical individualism challenged the previously dominant religious practice in which a handful of religious professionals (clergy) performed rituals in order to appease the gods either on behalf of the whole society or on behalf of those who paid them for their services. But Luther maintained that these token, periodic rituals (for instance, the Catholic confessional) or occasional "good works" could never placate or gain the favor of a great and all-powerful God. Instead, it was the duty of each to *submit* to the will of God through faithful dedication to his calling. It was demanded of rich and poor alike to be content with their lot, for it was God's unfathomable will that had assigned to each his station in life.

With its emphasis on submission and faith, Luther's view of the calling, like the Catholicism it rebelled against, promoted a traditional economic ethic that discouraged both laboring and profit seeking beyond what had long been established through custom. Workers and merchants sought simply to maintain the level of productivity and standard of living associated with the vocation in which they were engaged. However, in the hands of later Puritans leaders, the meaning of the calling was transformed. Under **John Calvin** (1509– 1564) and **Richard Baxter** (1615– 1691), the calling was interpreted as God's commandment to *work* for His divine glory. With submission and faith no longer sufficient for gaining confidence in one's salvation, how could the believer know that he was fulfilling his calling and thus might be one of His elect? Existing beyond the influence of mortals, only God knows who will be saved; there could be no certainty of proof of one's state of grace. The best one could hope for was a divinely granted sign.

[1]Significantly, Weber's central point was not that the Protestant ethic caused the emergence and growth of Western capitalism. Protestantism alone was not sufficient for creating this profound economic change. Rather, he argued that Protestant asceticism combined with a number of other important structural and social factors to produce the dominance of Western capitalism. In particular, Weber pointed to the separation of business pursuits from the home; the development of rational bookkeeping methods; technological advances in methods of production, distribution, and communication; the development of a rational legal system based on impersonal, formal rules; and, most importantly, the rational organization of free labor.

And that sign?: success and profit in worldly affairs, the pursuit of which was now religiously enjoined. Baxter stated the injunction thusly, "If God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way . . . If you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be God's steward, and to accept His gifts and use them for Him when He requireth it" (Weber [1904–05] 1958:162). Profit was now understood to be a visible blessing from God that allowed the faithful to answer the most burning of all questions: Am I saved? Possessed by this "new spirit," one's predestined, eternal fate was now tied to the success of his conduct in work, a sphere of activity that was catapulted to the center of the believer's existence.

It was not success itself that offered proof, however. Rather, it was *how* success was achieved that marked a person as one of God's elect. Baxter cautioned his followers that "You may labour to be rich for God, though not for the flesh and sin" (Weber [1904–05] 1958:162). In this proscription lies the seeds for the subjective disposition that would ignite the growth of capitalism. Wealth served as confirmation of one's salvation only if it did not lead to idleness or the enjoyment of luxuries. Profitableness, moreover, was best guaranteed when economic pursuits were carried out on the basis of methodical and rational planning. Thus, ascetic restrictions on consumption were combined with the religiously derived compulsion to increase one's wealth. The ethical imperative to save and invest one's wealth would become the spiritual foundation for the spread of capitalism.

It would not be long, however, before the rational pursuit of wealth and bureaucratic structures necessary to modern capitalism would render obsolete the religious ethic that first had imbued work with a sense of meaning and purpose.[2] Chained by unquenchable consumption, modern humanity is now left to live in a disenchanted world where "material goods have gained an increasing and finally inexorable power over the lives of men" (Weber [1904–05] 1958:180). "In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.' But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage" (ibid.:181).

And what of the iron cage today? Consider some statistics from the U.S. Commerce Department and the Federal Reserve Board: The average household is saddled with a credit card debt of $8,000, while the nation's credit card debt currently stands at $880 million. Not including home mortgages, in 2003, the average household was faced with more than $18,000 in total debt. As a nation, consumer debt soared to nearly 2 trillion dollars, an increase of 40 percent from 1998's total. Not surprisingly, personal savings rates have declined. After essential expenditures, Americans saved 9 percent of their disposable income during the 1980s. This rate fell to 5 percent during the 1990s, and in 2006 Americans registered a negative savings rate (–1 percent) for the first time since the Great Depression. Currently, 40 percent of Americans spend more than they earn. Far from being a "light cloak," our "care for external goods" has become central to our personal identity and sense of self. We define ourselves through the cars we drive, the clothes we wear, the places we vacation, and the neighborhoods we live in rather than through a sense of ultimate purpose or meaning to life. Whether it's trying to keep up with the Joneses or to distinguish ourselves from the herd, we are in continual "need" of new and better products, the purchasing of which requires ever-longer working hours in order to earn more money, so we can spend more money. To keep pace with the growing accumulation of products, over the last 50 years the average home size has doubled. Still, we can't seem to fit everything in so we hire companies to organize our closets and garages, or, when that fails, we pay to pack our "unessential" belongings into one of the thousands of self-storage spaces that dot the landscape. Like Marx's views on the fetishism of commodities and Veblen's notion of conspicuous consumption, the iron cage has imprisoned us in the pursuit of the "lifestyles of the rich and famous" whether or not we can afford to live like the affluent.

[2]One need merely note the spread of capitalism to countries and regions of the world that have not been exposed in any significant degree to Protestantism.

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1904)

Max Weber

The Spirit of Capitalism

In the title of this study is used the somewhat pretentious phrase, the spirit of capitalism. What is to be understood by it? The attempt to give anything like a definition of it brings out certain difficulties which are in the very nature of this type of investigation. . . .

Thus, if we try to determine the object, the analysis and historical explanation of which we are attempting, it cannot be in the form of a conceptual definition, but at least in the beginning only a provisional description of what is here meant by the spirit of capitalism. Such a description is, however, indispensable in order clearly to understand the object of the investigation. For this purpose we turn to a document of that spirit which contains what we are looking for in almost classical purity, and at the same time has the advantage of being free from all direct relationship to religion, being thus, for our purposes, free of preconceptions.

"Remember, that time is money. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad, or sits idle, one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon that the only expense; he has really spent, or rather thrown away, five shillings besides.

"Remember, that *credit* is money. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me the interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. This amounts to a considerable sum where a man has good and large credit, and makes good use of it.

"Remember, that money is of the prolific, generating nature. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again it is seven and threepence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding-sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, destroys all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds."

"Remember this saying, *The good paymaster is lord of another man's purse.* He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare. This is sometimes of great use. After industry and frugality, nothing contributes more to the raising of a young man in the world than punctuality and justice in all his dealings; therefore never keep borrowed money an hour beyond the time you promised, lest a disappointment shut up your friend's purse for ever.

"The most trifling actions that affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or eight at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day; demands it, before he can receive it, in a lump.

"It shows, besides, that you are mindful of what you owe; it makes you appear a careful as well as an honest man, and that still increases your credit.

"Beware of thinking all your own that you possess, and of living accordingly. It is a mistake that many people who have credit fall into. To prevent this, keep an exact account for some time both of your expenses and your income. If you take the pains at first to mention particulars, it will have this good effect: you will discover how wonderfully small, trifling expenses mount up to large sums, and will discern what might have been, and may for the future be saved, without occasioning any great inconvenience.

"For six pounds a year you may have the use of one hundred pounds, provided you are a man of known prudence and honesty.

"He that spends a groat a day idly, spends idly above six pounds a year, which is the price for the use of one hundred pounds.

"He that wastes idly a groat's worth of his time per day, one day with another, wastes the privilege of using one hundred pounds each day.

"He that idly loses five shillings' worth of time, loses five shillings, and might as prudently throw five shillings into the sea.

"He that loses five shillings, not only loses that sum, but all the advantage that might be made by turning it in dealing, which by the time that a young man becomes old, will amount to a considerable sum of money."

It is Benjamin Franklin who preaches to us in these sentences, the same which Ferdinand Kürnberger satirizes in his clever and malicious *Picture of American Culture* as the supposed confession of faith of the Yankee. That it is the spirit of capitalism which here speaks in characteristic fashion, no one will doubt, however little we may wish to claim that everything which could be understood as pertaining to that spirit is contained in it. Let us pause a moment to consider this passage, the philosophy of which Kürnberger sums up in the words, "They make tallow out of cattle and money out of men." The peculiarity of this philosophy of avarice appears to be the ideal of the honest man of recognized credit, and above all the idea of a duty of the individual toward the increase of his capital, which is assumed as an end in itself. Truly what is here preached is not simply a means of making one's way in the world, but a peculiar ethic. The infraction of its rules is treated not as foolishness but as forgetfulness of duty. That is the essence of the matter. It is not mere business astuteness, that sort of thing is common enough, it is an ethos. *This* is the quality which interests us. . . .

Now, all Franklin's moral attitudes are coloured with utilitarianism. Honesty is useful, because it assures credit; so are punctuality, industry, frugality, and that is the reason they are virtues. A logical deduction from this would be that where, for instance, the appearance of honesty serves the same purpose, that would suffice, and an unnecessary surplus of this virtue would evidently appear to Franklin's eyes as unproductive waste. And as a matter of fact, the story in his autobiography of his conversion to those virtues, or the discussion of the value of a strict maintenance of the appearance of modesty, the assiduous belittlement of one's own deserts in order to gain general recognition later, confirms this impression. According to Franklin, those virtues, like all others, are only in so far virtues as they are actually useful to the individual, and the surrogate of mere appearance is always sufficient when it accomplishes the end in view. It is a conclusion which is inevitable for strict utilitarianism. The impression of many Germans that the virtues professed by Americanism are pure hypocrisy seems to have been confirmed by this striking case. But in fact the matter is not by any means so simple. Benjamin Franklin's own character, as it appears in the really unusual candidness of his autobiography, belies that suspicion. The circumstance that he ascribes his recognition of the utility of virtue to a divine revelation which was intended to lead him in the path of righteousness, shows that something more than mere garnishing for purely egocentric motives is involved.

In fact, the *summum bonum* of this ethic, the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life, is above all completely devoid of any eudæmonistic, not to say hedonistic, admixture. It is thought of so purely as an end in itself, that from the point of view of the happiness of, or utility to, the single individual, it appears entirely transcendental and absolutely irrational. Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs. This reversal of what we should call the natural relationship, so irrational from a naïve point of view, is evidently as definitely a leading principle of capitalism as it is foreign to all peoples not under capitalistic influence. At the same time it expresses a type of feeling which is closely connected with certain religious ideas. If we thus ask, *why* should "money be made out of men," Benjamin Franklin himself, although he was a colourless deist, answers in his autobiography with a quotation from the Bible, which his strict Calvinistic father drummed into him again and again in his youth: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings" (Prov. xxii. 29). The earning of money within the modern economic order is, so long as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling; and this virtue and proficiency are, as it is now not difficult to see, the real Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic, as expressed in the passages we have quoted, as well as in all his works without exception.

And in truth this peculiar idea, so familiar to us to-day, but in reality so little a matter of course, of one's duty in a calling, is what is most characteristic of the social ethic of capitalistic culture, and is in a sense the fundamental basis of it. It is an obligation which the individual is supposed to feel and does feel towards the content of his professional activity, no matter in what it consists, in particular no matter whether it appears on the surface as a utilization of his personal powers, or only of his material possessions (as capital).

Of course, this conception has not appeared only under capitalistic conditions. On the contrary, we shall

later trace its origins back to a time previous to the advent of capitalism. Still less, naturally, do we maintain that a conscious acceptance of these ethical maxims on the part of the individuals, entrepreneurs or labourers, in modern capitalistic enterprises, is a condition of the further existence of present-day capitalism. The capitalistic economy of the present day is an immense cosmos into which the individual is born, and which presents itself to him, at least as an individual, as an unalterable order of things in which he must live. It forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action. The manufacturer who in the long run acts counter to these norms, will just as inevitably be eliminated from the economic scene as the worker who cannot or will not adapt himself to them will be thrown into the streets without a job.

Thus the capitalism of to-day, which has come to dominate economic life, educates and selects the economic subjects which it needs through a process of economic survival of the fittest. But here one can easily see the limits of the concept of selection as a means of historical explanation. In order that a manner of life so well adapted to the peculiarities of capitalism could be selected at all, i.e. should come to dominate others, it had to originate somewhere, and not in isolated individuals alone, but as a way of life common to whole groups of men. This origin is what really needs explanation. Concerning the doctrine of the more naïve historical materialism, that such ideas originate as a reflection or superstructure of economic situations, we shall speak more in detail below. At this point it will suffice for our purpose to call attention to the fact that without doubt, in the country of Benjamin Franklin's birth (Massachusetts), the spirit of capitalism (in the sense we have attached to it) was present before the capitalistic order. . . . It is further undoubted that capitalism remained far less developed in some of the neighbouring colonies, the later Southern States of the United States of America, in spite of the fact that these latter were founded by large capitalists for business motives, while the New England colonies were founded by preachers and seminary graduates with the help of small bourgeois, craftsmen and yoemen, for religious reasons. In this case the causal relation is certainly the reverse of that suggested by the materialistic standpoint.

But the origin and history of such ideas is much more complex than the theorists of the superstructure suppose. The spirit of capitalism, in the sense in which we are using the term, had to fight its way to supremacy against a whole world of hostile forces. A state of mind such as that expressed in the passages we have quoted from Franklin, and which called forth the applause of a whole people, would both in ancient times and in the Middle Ages have been proscribed as the lowest sort of avarice and as an attitude entirely lacking in self-respect. It is, in fact, still regularly thus looked upon by all those social groups which are least involved in or adapted to modern capitalistic conditions. This is not wholly because the instinct of acquisition was in those times unknown or undeveloped, as has often been said. Nor because the *auri sacra fames,* the greed for gold, was then, or now, less powerful outside of bourgeois capitalism than within its peculiar sphere, as the illusions of modern romanticists are wont to believe. The difference between the capitalistic and pre-capitalistic spirits is not to be found at this point. The greed of the Chinese Mandarin, the old Roman aristocrat, or the modern peasant, can stand up to any comparison. And the *auri sacra fames* of a Neapolitan cab-driver or *barcaiuolo,* and certainly of Asiatic representatives of similar trades, as well as of the craftsmen of southern European or Asiatic countries, is, as anyone can find out for himself, very much more intense, and especially more unscrupulous than that of, say, an Englishman in similar circumstances. . . .

The most important opponent with which the spirit of capitalism, in the sense of a definite standard of life claiming ethical sanction, has had to struggle, was that type of attitude and reaction to new situations which we may designate as traditionalism. . . .

One of the technical means which the modern employer uses in order to secure the greatest possible amount of work from his men is the device of piece-rates. In agriculture, for instance, the gathering of the harvest is a case where the greatest possible intensity of labour is called for, since, the weather being uncertain, the difference between high profit and heavy loss may depend on the speed with which the harvesting can be done. Hence a system of piece-rates is almost universal in this case. And since the interest of the employer in a speeding-up of harvesting increases with the increase of the results and the intensity of the work, the attempt has again and again been made, by increasing the piece-rates of the workmen, thereby giving them an opportunity to earn what is for them a very high wage, to interest them in increasing their own efficiency. But a peculiar difficulty has been met with surprising frequency: raising the piece-rates has often had the result that not more but less has been accomplished in the same time, because the worker reacted to the increase not by increasing but by decreasing the amount of his work. A man, for instance, who at the rate of 1 mark per acre mowed 2½ acres per day and earned 2½ marks, when the rate was raised to 1.25 marks per acre mowed, not 3 acres, as he might easily have done, thus earning 3.75 marks, but only 2 acres, so that he could still earn the 2½ marks to which he was accustomed. The opportunity of earning more was less attractive than that of working less. He did not ask: how much can I earn in a day if I do as much work as possible? but: how much must I work in order to earn the wage, 2½ marks, which I earned before and which takes care of my traditional needs? This is an example of what is here meant by traditionalism. A man does not "by nature" wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose. Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labour by increasing its intensity, it has encountered the immensely stubborn resistance of this leading trait of pre-capitalistic labour. And to-day it encounters it the more, the more backward (from a capitalistic point of view) the labouring forces are with which it has to deal.

Another obvious possibility, to return to our example, since the appeal to the acquisitive instinct through higher wage-rates failed, would have been to try the opposite policy, to force the worker by reduction of his wage-rates to work harder to earn the same amount than he did before. Low wages and high profits seem even to-day to a superficial observer to stand in correlation; everything which is paid out in wages seems to involve a corresponding reduction of profits. That road capitalism has taken again and again since its beginning. For centuries it was an article of faith, that low wages were productive, i.e. that they increased the material results of labour so that, as Pieter de la Cour, on this point, as we shall see, quite in the spirit of the old Calvinism, said long ago, the people only work because and so long as they are poor.

But the effectiveness of this apparently so efficient method has its limits. Of course the presence of a surplus population which it can hire cheaply in the labour market is a necessity for the development of capitalism. But though too large a reserve army may in certain cases favour its quantitative expansion, it checks its qualitative development, especially the transition to types of enterprise which make more intensive use of labour. Low wages are by no means identical with cheap labour. From a purely quantitative point of view the efficiency of labour decreases with a wage which is physiologically insufficient, which may in the long run even mean a survival of the unfit. . . . Low wages fail even from a purely business point of view wherever it is a question of producing goods which require any sort of skilled labour, or the use of expensive machinery which is easily damaged, or in general wherever any great amount of sharp attention or of initiative is required. Here low wages do not pay, and their effect is the opposite of what was intended. For not only is a developed sense of responsibility absolutely indispensable, but in general also an attitude which, at least during working hours, is freed from continual calculations of how the customary wage may be earned with a maximum of comfort and a minimum of exertion. Labour must, on the contrary, be performed as if it were an absolute end in itself, a calling. But such an attitude is by no means a product of nature. It cannot be evoked by low wages or high ones alone, but can only be the product of a long and arduous process of education. To-day, capitalism, once in the saddle, can recruit its labouring force in all industrial countries with comparative ease. In the past this was in every case an extremely difficult problem. And even to-day it could probably not get along without the support of a powerful ally along the way, which, as we shall see below, was at hand at the time of its development. . . .

Now, how could activity, which was at best ethically tolerated, turn into a calling in the sense of Benjamin Franklin? The fact to be explained historically is that in the most highly capitalistic centre of that time, in Florence of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the money and capital market of all the great political Powers, this attitude was considered ethically unjustifiable, or at best to be tolerated. But in the backwoods small bourgeois circumstances of Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century, where business threatened for simple lack of money to fall back into barter, where there was hardly a sign of large enterprise, where only the earliest beginnings of banking were to be found, the same thing was considered the essence of moral conduct, even commanded in the name of duty. To speak here of a reflection of material conditions in the ideal

superstructure would be patent nonsense. What was the background of ideas which could account for the sort of activity apparently directed toward profit alone as a calling toward which the individual feels himself to have an ethical obligation? For it was this idea which gave the way of life of the new entrepreneur its ethical foundation and justification. . . .

Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism

In order to understand the connection between the fundamental religious ideas of ascetic Protestantism and its maxims for everyday economic conduct, it is necessary to examine with especial care such writings as have evidently been derived from ministerial practice. For in a time in which the beyond meant everything, when the social position of the Christian depended upon his admission to the communion, the clergyman, through his ministry, Church discipline, and preaching, exercised and influence (as a glance at collections of *consilia, casus conscientiæ,* etc., shows) which we modern men are entirely unable to picture. In such a time the religious forces which express themselves through such channels are the decisive influences in the formation of national character.

For the purposes of this chapter, though by no means for all purposes, we can treat ascetic Protestantism as a single whole. But since that side of English Puritanism which was derived from Calvinism gives the most consistent religious basis for the idea of the calling, we shall, following our previous method, place one of its representatives at the centre of the discussion. Richard Baxter stands out above many other writers on Puritan ethics, both because of his eminently practical and realistic attitude, and, at the same time, because of the universal recognition accorded to his works, which have gone through many new editions and translations. He was a Presbyterian and an apologist of the Westminster Synod, but at the same time, like so many of the best spirits of his time, gradually grew away from the dogmas of pure Calvinism. . . . His *Christian Directory* is the most complete compendium of Puritan ethics, and is continually adjusted to the practical experiences of his own ministerial activity. In comparison we shall make use of Spener's *Theologische Bedenken,* as representative of German Pietism, Barclay's *Apology* for the Quakers, and some other representatives of ascetic ethics, which, however, in the interest of space, will be limited as far as possible.

Now, in glancing at Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest,* or his *Christian Directory,* or similar works of others, one is struck at first glance by the emphasis placed, in the discussion of wealth and its acquisition, on the ebionitic elements of the New Testament. Wealth as such is a great danger; its temptations never end, and its pursuit is not only senseless as compared with the dominating importance of the Kingdom of God, but it is morally suspect. Here asceticism seems to have turned much more sharply against the acquisition of earthly goods than it did in Calvin, who saw no hindrance to the effectiveness of the clergy in their wealth, but rather a thoroughly desirable enhancement of their prestige. Hence he permitted them to employ their means profitably. Examples of the condemnation of the pursuit of money and goods may be gathered without end from Puritan writings, and may be contrasted with the late mediæval ethical literature, which was much more open-minded on this point.

Moreover, these doubts were meant with perfect seriousness; only it is necessary to examine them somewhat more closely in order to understand their true ethical significance and implications. The real moral objection is to relaxation in the security of possession, the enjoyment of wealth with the consequence of idleness and the temptations of the flesh, above all of distraction from the pursuit of a righteous life. In fact, it is only because possession involves this danger of relaxation that it is objectionable at all. For the saints' everlasting rest in the next world; on earth man must, to be certain of his state of grace, "do the works of him who sent him, as long as it is yet day." Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the definite manifestations of His will.

Waste of time is thus the first and in principle the deadliest of sins. The span of human life is infinitely short and precious to make sure of one's own election. Loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours, is worthy of absolute moral condemnation. It does not yet hold, with Franklin, that time is money, but the proposition is true in a certain spiritual sense. It is infinitely valuable because every hour lost is lost to labour for the glory of God. Thus inactive contemplation is also valueless, or even directly reprehensible if it is at the expense of one's daily work. For it is less pleasing to God than the active performance of His will in a calling. Besides, Sunday is provided for that, and, according to Baxter, it is always those who are not diligent in their callings who have no time for God when the occasion demands it.

Accordingly, Baxter's principal work is dominated by the continually repeated, often almost passionate preaching of hard, continuous bodily or mental labour. It is due to a combination of two different motives. Labour is, on the one hand, an approved ascetic technique, as it always has been in the Western Church, in sharp contrast not only to the Orient but to almost all monastic rules the world over. It is in particular the specific defence against all those temptations which Puritanism united under the name of the unclean life, whose rôle for it was by no means small. The sexual asceticism of Puritanism differs only in degree, not in fundamental principle, from that of monasticism; and on account of the Puritan conception of marriage; its practical influence is more far-reaching than that of the latter. For sexual intercourse is permitted, even within marriage, only as the means willed by God for the increase of His glory according to the commandment, "Be fruitful and multiply." Along with a moderate vegetable diet and cold baths, the same prescription is given for all sexual temptations as is used against religious doubts and a sense of moral unworthiness: "Work hard in your calling." But the most important thing was that even beyond that labour came to be considered in itself the end of life, ordained as such by God. St. Paul's "He who will not work shall not eat" holds unconditionally for everyone. Unwillingness to work is symptomatic of the lack of grace. . . .

[Not] only do these exceptions to the duty to labour naturally no longer hold for Baxter, but he holds most emphatically that wealth does not exempt anyone from the unconditional command. Even the wealthy shall not eat without working, for even though they do not need to labour to support their own needs, there is God's commandment which they, like the poor, must obey. For everyone without exception God's Providence has prepared a calling, which he should profess and in which he should labour. And this calling is not, as it was for the Lutheran, a fate to which he must submit and which he must make the best of, but God's commandment to the individual to work for the divine glory. This seemingly subtle difference had far-reaching psychological consequences, and became connected with a further development of the providential interpretation of the economic order which had begun in scholasticism.

The phenomenon of the division of labour and occupations in society had, among others, been interpreted by Thomas Aquinas, to whom we may most conveniently refer, as a direct consequence of the divine scheme of things. But the places assigned to each man in this cosmos follow *ex causis naturalibus* and are fortuitous (contingent in the Scholastic terminology). The differentiation of men into the classes and occupations established through historical development became for Luther, as we have seen, a direct result of the divine will. The perseverance of the individual in the place and within the limits which God had assigned to him was a religious duty. . . .

But in the Puritan view, the providential character of the play of private economic interests takes on a somewhat different emphasis. True to the Puritan tendency to pragmatic interpretations, the providential purpose of the division of labour is to be known by its fruits. . . .

But the characteristic Puritan element appears when Baxter sets at the head of his discussion the statement that "outside of a well-marked calling the accomplishments of a man are only casual and irregular, and he spends more time in idleness than at work," and when he concludes it as follows: "and he [the specialized worker] will carry out his work in order while another remains in constant confusion, and his business knows neither time nor place . . . therefore is a certain calling the best for everyone." Irregular work, which the ordinary labourer is often forced to accept, is often unavoidable, but always an unwelcome state of transition. A man without a calling thus lacks the systematic, methodical character which is, as we have seen, demanded by worldly asceticism.

The Quaker ethic also holds that a man's life in his calling is an exercise in ascetic virtue, a proof of his state of grace through his conscientiousness, which is expressed in the care and method with which he pursues his calling. What God demands is not labour in itself, but rational labour in a calling. In the Puritan concept of the calling the emphasis is always placed on this methodical character of worldly asceticism, not, as with Luther, on the acceptance of the lot which God has irretrievably assigned to man.

Hence the question whether anyone may combine several callings is answered in the affirmative, if it is useful for the common good or one's own, and not injurious to anyone, and if it does not lead to unfaithfulness in one of the callings. Even a change of calling is by no means regarded as objectionable, if it is not thoughtless and is made for the purpose of pursuing a calling more pleasing to God, which means, on general principles, one more useful.

It is true that the usefulness of a calling, and thus its favour in the sight of God, is measured primarily in moral terms, and thus in terms of the importance of the goods produced in it for the community. But a further, and, above all, in practice the most important, criterion is found in private profitableness. For if that God, whose hand the Puritan sees in all the occurrences of life, shows one of His elect a chance of profit, he must do it with a purpose. Hence the faithful Christian must follow the call by taking advantage of the opportunity. "If God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or to any other), if you refuse this, and choose the less gainful way, you cross one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be God's steward, and to accept His gifts and use them for Him when He requireth it: you may labour to be rich for God, though not for the flesh and sin."

Wealth is thus bad ethically only in so far as it is a temptation to idleness and sinful enjoyment of life, and its acquisition is bad only when it is with the purpose of later living merrily and without care. But as a performance of duty in a calling it is not only morally permissible, but actually enjoined. The parable of the servant who was rejected because he did not increase the talent which was entrusted to him seemed to say so directly. To wish to be poor was, it was often argued, the same as wishing to be unhealthy; it is objectionable as a glorification of works and derogatory to the glory of God. Especially begging, on the part of one able to work, is not only the sin of slothfulness, but a violation of the duty of brotherly love according to the Apostle's own word.

The emphasis on the ascetic importance of a fixed calling provided an ethical justification of the modern specialized division of labour. In a similar way the providential interpretation of profit-making justified the activities of the business man. The superior indulgence of the seigneur and the parvenu ostentation of the nouveau riche are equally detestable to asceticism. But, on the other hand, it has the highest ethical appreciation of the sober, middle-class, self-made man. "God blesseth His trade" is a stock remark about those good men who had successfully followed the divine hints. The whole power of the God of the Old Testament, who rewards His people for their obedience in this life, necessarily exercised a similar influence on the Puritan who, following Baxter's advice, compared his own state of grace with that of the heroes of the Bible, and in the process interpreted the statements of the Scriptures as the articles of a book of statutes. . . .

Let us now try to clarify the points in which the Puritan idea of the calling and the premium it placed upon ascetic conduct was bound directly to influence the development of a capitalistic way of life. As we have seen, this asceticism turned with all its force against one thing: the spontaneous enjoyment of life and all it had to offer. . . .

As against this the Puritans upheld their decisive characteristic, the principle of ascetic conduct. For otherwise the Puritan aversion to sport, even for the Quakers, was by no means simply one of principle. Sport was accepted if it served a rational purpose, that of recreation necessary for physical efficiency. But as a means for the spontaneous expression of undisciplined impulses, it was under suspicion; and in so far as it became purely a means of enjoyment, or awakened pride, raw instincts or the irrational gambling instinct, it was of course strictly condemned. Impulsive enjoyment of life, which leads away both from work in a calling and from religion, was as such the enemy of rational asceticism, whether in the form of seigneurial sports, or the enjoyment of the dance-hall or the public-house of the common man. . . .

The theatre was obnoxious to the Puritans, and with the strict exclusion of the erotic and of nudity from the realm of toleration, a radical view of either literature or art could not exist. The conceptions of idle talk, of superfluities, and of vain ostentation, all designations of an irrational attitude without objective purpose, thus not ascetic, and especially not serving the glory of God, but of man, were always at hand to serve in deciding in favour of sober utility as against any artistic tendencies. This was especially true in the case of decoration of the person, for instance clothing. That powerful tendency toward uniformity of life, which to-day so immensely aids the capitalistic interest in the standardization of production, had its ideal foundations in the repudiation of all idolatry of the flesh. . . .

Although we cannot here enter upon a discussion of the influence of Puritanism in all these directions, we should call attention to the fact that the toleration of pleasure in cultural goods, which contributed to purely aesthetic or athletic enjoyment, certainly always ran up against one characteristic limitation: they must not cost anything. Man is only a trustee of the goods which have come to him through God's grace. He must, like the servant in the parable, give an account of every penny entrusted to him, and it is at least hazardous to spend any of it for a purpose which does not serve the glory of God but only one's own enjoyment. What person, who keeps his eyes open, has not met representatives of this

view-point even in the present? The idea of a man's duty to his possessions, to which he subordinates himself as an obedient steward, or even as an acquisitive machine, bears with chilling weight on his life. The greater the possessions the heavier, if the ascetic attitude toward life stands the test, the feeling of responsibility for them, for holding them undiminished for the glory of God and increasing them by restless effort. The origin of this type of life also extends in certain roots, like so many aspects of the spirit of capitalism, back into the Middle Ages. But it was in the ethic of ascetic Protestantism that it first found a consistent ethical foundation. Its significance for the development of capitalism is obvious.

This worldly Protestant asceticism, as we may recapitulate up to this point, acted powerfully against the spontaneous enjoyment of possessions; it restricted consumption, especially of luxuries. On the other hand, it had the psychological effect of freeing the acquisition of goods from the inhibitions of traditionalistic ethics. It broke the bonds of the impulse of acquisition in that it not only legalized it, but (in the sense discussed) looked upon it as directly willed by God. The campaign against the temptations of the flesh, and the dependence on external things, was, as besides the Puritans the great Quaker apologist Barclay expressly says, not a struggle against the rational acquisition, but against the irrational use of wealth.

But this irrational use was exemplified in the outward forms of luxury which their code condemned as idolatry of the flesh, however natural they had appeared to the feudal mind. On the other hand, they approved the rational and utilitarian uses of wealth which were willed by God for the needs of the individual and the community. They did not wish to impose mortification on the man of wealth, but the use of his means for necessary and practical things. The idea of comfort characteristically limits the extent of ethically permissible expenditures. It is naturally no accident that the development of a manner of living consistent with that idea may be observed earliest and most clearly among the most consistent representatives of this whole attitude toward life. Over against the glitter and ostentation of feudal magnificence which, resting on an unsound economic basis, prefers a sordid elegance to a sober simplicity, they set the clean and solid comfort of the middle-class home as an ideal.

On the side of the production of private wealth, asceticism condemned both dishonesty and impulsive avarice. What was condemned as covetousness, Mammonism, etc., was the pursuit of riches for their own sake. For wealth in itself was a temptation. But here asceticism was the power "which ever seeks the good but ever creates evil"; what was evil in its sense was possession and its temptations. For, in conformity with the Old Testament and in analogy to the ethical valuation of good works, asceticism looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God's blessing. And even more important: the religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life which we have here called the spirit of capitalism.

When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save. The restraints which were imposed upon the consumption of wealth naturally served to increase it by making possible the productive investment of capital. . . .

As far as the influence of the Puritan outlook extended, under all circumstances—and this is, of course, much more important than the mere encouragement of capital accumulation—it favoured the development of a rational bourgeois economic life; it was the most important, and above all the only consistent influence in the development of that life. It stood at the cradle of the modern economic man.

To be sure, these Puritanical ideals tended to give way under excessive pressure from the temptations of wealth, as the Puritans themselves knew very well. With great regularity we find the most genuine adherents of Puritanism among the classes which were rising from a lowly status, the small bourgeois and farmers, while the *beati possidentes,* even among Quakers, are often found tending to repudiate the old ideals. It was the same fate which again and again befell the predecessor of this worldly asceticism, the monastic asceticism of the Middle Ages. In the latter case, when rational economic activity had worked out its full effects by strict regulation of conduct and limitation of consumption, the wealth accumulated either succumbed directly to the nobility, as in the time before the Reformation, or monastic discipline threatened to break down, and one of the numerous reformations became necessary.

In fact the whole history of monasticism is in a certain sense the history of a continual struggle with

the problem of the secularizing influence of wealth. The same is true on a grand scale of the worldly asceticism of Puritanism. The great revival of Methodism, which preceded the expansion of English industry toward the end of the eighteenth century, may well be compared with such a monastic reform. We may hence quote here a passage from John Wesley himself which might well serve as a motto for everything which has been said above. For it shows that the leaders of these ascetic movements understood the seemingly paradoxical relationships which we have here analysed perfectly well, and in the same sense that we have given them. He wrote:

> "I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionately increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this—this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; *we must exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich.*"

There follows the advice that those who gain all they can and save all they can should also give all they can, so that they will grow in grace and lay up a treasure in heaven. It is clear that Wesley here expresses, even in detail, just what we have been trying to point out.

As Wesley here says, the full economic effect of those great religious movements, whose significance for economic development lay above all in their ascetic educative influence, generally came only after the peak of the purely religious enthusiasm was past. Then the intensity of the search for the Kingdom of God commenced gradually to pass over into sober economic virtue; the religious roots died out slowly, giving way to utilitarian worldliness. . . .

A specifically bourgeois economic ethic had grown up. With the consciousness of standing in the fullness of God's grace and being visibly blessed by Him, the bourgeois business man, as long as he remained within the bounds of formal correctness, as long as his moral conduct was spotless and the use to which he put his wealth was not objectionable, could follow his pecuniary interests as he would and feel that he was fulfilling a duty in doing so. The power of religious asceticism provided him in addition with sober, conscientious, and unusually industrious workmen, who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God.

Finally, it gave him the comforting assurance that the unequal distribution of the goods of this world was a special dispensation of Divine Providence, which in these differences, as in particular grace, pursued secret ends unknown to men. Calvin himself had made the much-quoted statement that only when the people, i.e. the mass of labourers and craftsmen, were poor did they remain obedient to God. In the Netherlands (Pieter de la Court and others), that had been secularized to the effect that the mass of men only labour when necessity forces them to do so. This formulation of a leading idea of capitalistic economy later entered into the current theories of the productivity of low wages. Here also, with the dying out of the religious root, the utilitarian interpretation crept in unnoticed, in the line of development which we have again and again observed . . .

Now naturally the whole ascetic literature of almost all denominations is saturated with the idea that faithful labour, even at low wages, on the part of those whom life offers no other opportunities, is highly pleasing to God. In this respect Protestant Asceticism added in itself nothing new. But it not only deepened this idea most powerfully, it also created the force which was alone decisive for its effectiveness: the psychological sanction of it through the conception of this labour as a calling, as the best, often in the last analysis the only means of attaining certainty of grace. And on the other hand it legalized the exploitation of this specific willingness to work, in that it also interpreted the employer's business activity as a calling. It is obvious how powerfully the exclusive search for the Kingdom of God only through the fulfilment of duty in the calling, and the strict asceticism which Church discipline naturally imposed, especially on the propertyless classes, was bound to affect the productivity of labour in the capitalistic sense of the word. The treatment of labour as a calling became as characteristic of the modern worker as the corresponding attitude toward acquisition of the business man. It was a perception of this situation, new at his time, which caused so able an observer as Sir William Petty to attribute the economic power of Holland in the seventeenth century to the fact that the very numerous dissenters in that country (Calvinists and Baptists) "are for the most part thinking, sober men, and such as believe that Labour and Industry is their duty towards God." . . .

One of the fundamental elements of the spirit of modern capitalism, and not only of that but of all modern culture: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling, was born—that is what this discussion has sought to demonstrate—from the spirit of Christian asceticism. One has only to re-read the passage from Franklin, quoted at the beginning of this essay, in order to see that the essential elements of the attitude which was there called the spirit of capitalism are the same as what we have just shown to be the content of the Puritan worldly asceticism, only without the religious basis, which by Franklin's time had died away. The idea that modern labour has an ascetic character is of course not new. Limitation to specialized work, with a renunciation of the Faustian universality of man which it involves, is a condition of any valuable work in the modern world; hence deeds and renunciation inevitably condition each other today. This fundamentally ascetic trait of middle-class life, if it attempts to be a way of life at all, and not simply the absence of any, was what Goethe wanted to teach, at the height of his wisdom, in the *Wanderjahren,* and in the end which he gave to the life of his *Faust.* For him the realization meant a renunciation, a departure from an age of full and beautiful humanity, which can no more be repeated in the course of our cultural development than can the flower of the Athenian culture of antiquity.

The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into this mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt. In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage.

Since asceticism undertook to remodel the world and to work out its ideals in the world, material goods have gained an increasing and finally an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history. To-day the spirit of religious asceticism—whether finally, who knows?—has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer. The rosy blush of its laughing heir, the Enlightenment, seems also to be irretrievably fading, and the idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs. Where the fulfilment of the calling cannot directly be related to the highest spiritual and cultural values, or when, on the other hand, it need not be felt simply as economic compulsion, the individual generally abandons the attempt to justify it at all. In the field of its highest development, in the United States, the pursuit of wealth, stripped of its religious and ethical meaning, tends to become associated with purely mundane passions, which often actually give it the character of sport.

No one knows who will live in this cage in the future, or whether at the end of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals, or, if neither, mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."

But this brings us to the world of judgments of value and of faith, with which this purely historical discussion need not be burdened. The next task would be rather to show the significance of ascetic rationalism, which has only been touched in the foregoing sketch, for the content of practical social ethics, thus for the types of organization and the functions of social groups from the conventicle to the State. Then its relations to humanistic rationalism, its ideals of life and cultural influence; further to the development of philosophical and scientific empiricism, to technical development and to spiritual ideals would have to be analysed. Then its historical development from the mediæval beginnings of worldly asceticism to its dissolution into pure utilitarianism would have to be traced out through all the areas of ascetic religion. Only then could the quantitative cultural significance of ascetic Protestantism in its

relation to the other plastic elements of modern culture be estimated.

Here we have only attempted to trace the fact and the direction of its influence to their motives in one, though a very important point. But it would also further be necessary to investigate how Protestant Asceticism was in turn influenced in its development and its character by the totality of social conditions, especially economic. The modern man is in general, even with the best will, unable to give religious ideas a significance for culture and national character which they deserve. But it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interest of historical truth.

Introduction to "The Social Psychology of the World Religions"

In this essay, Weber extends his analysis developed in *The Protestant Ethic* by taking up five major world religions—Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity—to address more generally the relationship between religion and "economic ethics." (He was completing his studies on Judaism when he died.) In doing so, he again provides an account of religious experience that diverges from those offered by Marx and Durkheim. Drawing a contrast with Marxist views, Weber asserts that religion is not a "simple 'function' of the social situation of the stratum which appears as its characteristic bearer" nor does it represent "the stratum's 'ideology' [nor is it] a 'reflection' of a stratum's material or ideal interest-situation" (Weber 1958:269–70). Religion, instead, shapes economic, practical behavior just as much as such behavior shapes religious doctrines. Most importantly, religions address the psychological need of the fortunate to legitimate their good fortune, while for the less fortunate they offer the promise of a future salvation. While this "religious need" may be universal, the form in which it is met varies across different social strata (warriors, peasants, political officials, intellectuals, "civic") that exhibit an affinity for particular religious worldviews. Nevertheless, these worldviews have their own impact on behavior that cannot be understood simply as a reflection of its bearer's material position. This is particularly the case for religious virtuosos whose quest for salvation is guided by authentically spiritual motives. For the devout, actively proving oneself as an instrument or tool of God's will, communing contemplatively with the cosmic love of Nirvana, or striving for orgiastic ecstasy, represents genuine religious aims that cannot be reduced to some sort of underlying "distorted" class interest. Nor can the motives of the devout be understood as misguided intentions to deify society or as expressions of the collective conscience, as Durkheim would contend.

Weber also notes how religions have fostered the "rationalization of reality." Offering a promise of redemption, whether it be from social oppression, evil spirits, the cycle of rebirths, human imperfections, or any number of other forces, all religions counter a "senseless" world with the belief that "the world in its totality is, could, and should somehow be a meaningful 'cosmos'" (Weber 1958:281). The specific religious form of meaning is derived from a "systematic and rationalized 'image of the world" that determines "'[f]rom what' and 'for what' one wished to be redeemed and . . . 'could be' redeemed" (ibid.:280). Religion declares that the world is not a playground for chance; instead, it is ruled by reasons and fates that can be "known." Knowing how to redeem oneself and how to obtain salvation requires that one knows how the world "works." In devising answers for such concerns, religions have developed along two primary paths: "exemplary" prophecy and "emissary" prophecy.

Exemplary prophecy is rooted in the conception of a supreme, impersonal being accessible only through contemplation, while emissary prophecy conceives of a personal God who is vengeful and loving, forgiving and punishing, and who demands of the faithful active, ethical conduct in order to serve

His commandments. Though the masses may be religiously "unmusical," the religiosity of the devout (monks, prophets, shamans, ascetics) nevertheless "has been of decisive importance for the development of the way of life of the masses," particularly with regard to regulating practical, economic activity (Weber 1958:289). Thus, religions grounded in an exemplary prophecy (e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism) lead adherents away from workaday life by seeking salvation through extraordinary psychic states attained through mystical, orgiastic, or ecstatic experiences. The virtuoso's hostility toward economic activity discourages this-worldly practical conduct by viewing it as "religiously inferior," a distraction from communing with the divine. Absent from the contemplative, mystical "flight from the world" is any psychological motivation to engage in worldly action as a path for redemption. As a result, a rationalized economic ethic remains underdeveloped.

Conversely, religions based on an emissary prophecy (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam) require the devout to actively fashion the world according to the will of their god. Not contemplative "flight from," but, rather, ascetic "work in" this world is the path for redemption according this prophecy. Seeking mystical union with the cosmos is understood here as an irrational act of hedonism that devalues the God-created world. The virtuoso is instead compelled to "prove" himself as a worthy instrument of God through the ethical quality of his everyday activity. This psychological imperative leads to the development of rational, economic ethic that transforms work into a "holy," worldly calling. Everyday life is here the setting for the "methodical and rationalized routine-activities of workaday life in the service of the Lord" (Weber 1958:289). Yet, as Weber argued in *The Protestant Ethic,* this worldview, while faithful to God's commandments and devoted to creating His Kingdom on earth, leads to a thoroughgoing "disenchantment of the world."

"The Social Psychology of the World Religions" (1915)

Max Weber

By "world religions," we understand the five religions or religiously determined systems of life-regulation which have known how to gather multitudes of confessors around them. The term is used here in a completely value-neutral sense. The Confucian, Hinduist, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamist religious ethics all belong to the category of world religion. A sixth religion, Judaism, will also be dealt with. It is included because it contains historical preconditions decisive for understanding Christianity and Islamism, and because of its historic and autonomous significance for the development of the modern economic ethic of the Occident—a significance, partly real and partly alleged, which has been discussed several times recently. . . .

What is meant by the "economic ethic" of a religion will become increasingly clear during the course of our presentation. . . . The term "economic ethic" points to the practical impulses for action which are founded in the psychological and pragmatic contexts of religions. The following presentation may be sketchy, but it will make obvious how complicated the structures and how many-sided the conditions of a concrete economic ethic usually are. Furthermore, it will show that externally similar forms of economic organization may agree with very different economic ethics and, according to the unique character of their economic ethics, how such forms of economic organization may produce very different historical results. An economic ethic is not a simple "function" of a form of economic organization; and just as little does the reverse hold, namely, that economic ethics unambiguously stamp the form of the economic organization.

No economic ethic has ever been determined solely by religion. In the face of man's attitudes towards the world—as determined by religious or other (in our sense) "inner" factors—an economic ethic has, of course, a high measure of autonomy. Given factors of economic geography and history determine this measure of autonomy in

SOURCE: Translation of the Introduction to The Economic Ethic of the World Religions by Max Weber, 1915.

the highest degree. The religious determination of life-conduct, however, is also one—note this—only one, of the determinants of the economic ethic. Of course, the religiously determined way of life is itself profoundly influenced by economic and political factors operating within given geographical, political, social, and national boundaries. We should lose ourselves in these discussions if we tried to demonstrate these dependencies in all their singularities. Here we can only attempt to peel off the directive elements in the life-conduct of those social *strata* which have most strongly influenced the practical ethic of their respective religions. These elements have stamped the most characteristic features upon practical ethics, the features that distinguish one ethic from others; *and,* at the same time, they have been important for the respective economic ethics. . . .

It is not our thesis that the specific nature of a religion is a simple "function" of the social situation of the stratum which appears as its characteristic bearer, or that it represents the stratum's "ideology," or that it is a "reflection" of a stratum's material or ideal interest-situation. On the contrary, a more basic misunderstanding of the standpoint of these discussions would hardly be possible.

However incisive the social influences, economically and politically determined, may have been upon a religious ethic in a particular case, it receives its stamp primarily from religious sources, and, first of all, from the content of its annunciation and its promise. Frequently the very next generation reinterprets these annunciations and promises in a fundamental fashion. Such reinterpretations adjust the revelations to the needs of the religious community. If this occurs, then it is at least usual that religious doctrines are adjusted to *religious needs.* Other spheres of interest could have only a secondary influence; often, however, such influence is very obvious and sometimes it is decisive.

For every religion we shall find that a change in the socially decisive strata has usually been of profound importance. On the other hand, the type of a religion, once stamped, has usually exerted a rather far-reaching influence upon the life-conduct of very heterogeneous strata. In various ways people have sought to interpret the connection between religious ethics and interest-situations in such a way that the former appear as mere "functions" of the latter. Such interpretation occurs in so-called historical materialism—which we shall not here discuss—as well as in a purely psychological sense. . . .

In treating suffering as a symptom of odiousness in the eyes of the gods and as a sign of secret guilt, religion has psychologically met a very general need. The fortunate is seldom satisfied with the fact of being fortunate. Beyond this, he needs to know that he has a *right* to his good fortune. He wants to be convinced that he "deserves" it, and above all, that he deserves it in comparison with others. He wishes to be allowed the belief that the less fortunate also merely experience his due. Good fortune thus wants to be "legitimate" fortune.

If the general term "fortune" covers all the "good" of honor, power; possession, and pleasure, it is the most general formula for the service of legitimation, which religion has had to accomplish for the external and the inner interests of all ruling men, the propertied, the victorious, and the healthy. In short, religion provides the theodicy of good fortune for those who are fortunate. This theodicy is anchored in highly robust ("pharisaical") needs of man and is therefore easily understood, even if sufficient attention is often not paid to its effects. . . .

The annunciation and the promise of religion have naturally been addressed to the masses of those who were in need of salvation. They and their interests have moved into the center of the professional organization for the "cure of the soul," which, indeed, only therewith originated. The typical service of magicians and priests becomes the determination of the factors to be blamed for suffering, that is, the confession of "sins." At first, these sins were offenses against ritual commandments. The magician and priest also give counsel for behavior fit to remove the suffering. The material and ideal interests of magicians and priests could thereby actually and increasingly enter the service of specifically *plebeian* motives. A further step along this course was signified when, under the pressure of typical and ever-recurrent distress, the religiosity of a "redeemer" evolved. This religiosity presupposed the myth of a savior, hence (at least relatively) of a *rational* view of the world. Again, suffering became the most important topic. The primitive mythology of nature frequently offered a point of departure for this religiosity. The spirits who governed the coming and going of vegetation and the paths of celestial bodies important for the seasons of the year became the preferred carriers of the myths of the suffering, dying, and resurrecting god to needful men. The resurrected god guaranteed the return of good fortune in this world or the security of happiness in the world beyond. . . .

The need for an ethical interpretation of the "meaning" of the distribution of fortunes among men increased with the growing rationality of conceptions of the world. As the religious and ethical reflections upon the world were increasingly rationalized and primitive, and magical notions were eliminated, the theodicy of suffering encountered increasing difficulties. Individually "undeserved" woe was all too frequent; not "good" but "bad" men succeeded—even when "good" and "bad" were measured by the yardstick of the master stratum and not by that of a "slave morality."

One can explain suffering and injustice by referring to individual sin committed in a former life (the migration of souls), to the guilt of ancestors, which is avenged down to the third and fourth generation, or—the most principled—to the wickedness of all creatures *per se.* As compensatory promises, one can refer to hopes of the individual for a better life in the future in this world (transmigration of souls) or to hopes for the successors (Messianic realm), or to a better life in the hereafter (paradise). . . .

The distrust of wealth and power, which as a rule exists in genuine religions of salvation, has had its natural basis primarily in the experience of redeemers, prophets, and priests. They understood that those strata which were "satiated" and favored in this world had only a small urge to be saved, regardless of the kind of salvation offered. Hence, these master strata have been less. "devout" in the sense of salvation religions. The development of a rational religious ethic has had positive and primary roots in the inner conditions of those social strata which were less socially valued.

Strata in solid possession of social honor and power usually tend to fashion their status-legend in such a way as to claim a special and intrinsic quality of their own, usually a quality of blood; their sense of dignity feeds on their actual or alleged being. The sense of dignity of socially repressed strata or of strata whose status is negatively (or at least not positively) valued is nourished most easily on the belief that a special "mission" is entrusted to them; their worth is guaranteed or constituted by an *ethical imperative,* or by their own functional *achievement.* Their value is thus moved into something beyond themselves, into a "task" placed before them by God. One source of the ideal power of ethical prophecies among socially disadvantaged strata lies in this fact. . . .

Psychologically considered, man in quest of salvation has been primarily preoccupied by attitudes of the here and now. The puritan *certitudo salutis,* the permanent state of grace that rests in the feeling of "having proved oneself," was psychologically the only concrete object among the sacred values of this ascetic religion. The Buddhist monk, certain to enter Nirvana, seeks the sentiment of a cosmic love; the devout Hindu seeks either Bhakti (fervent love in the possession of God) or apathetic ecstasy. The Chlyst with his radjeny, as well as the dancing Dervish, strives for orgiastic ecstasy. Others seek to be possessed by God and to possess God, to be a bridegroom of the Virgin Mary, or to be the bride of the Savior. The Jesuit's cult of the heart of Jesus, quietistic edification, the pietists' tender love for the child Jesus and its "running sore," the sexual and semi-sexual orgies at the wooing of Krishna, the sophisticated cultic dinners of the Vallabhacharis, the gnostic onanist cult activities, the various forms of the *unio mystica,* and the contemplative submersion in the All-one—these states undoubtedly have been sought, first of all, for the sake of such emotional value as they directly offered the devout. In this respect, they have in fact been absolutely equal to the religious and alcoholic intoxication of the Dionysian or the soma cult; to totemic meat-orgies, the cannibalistic feasts, the ancient and religiously consecrated use of hashish, opium, and nicotine; and, in general, to all sorts of magical intoxication. They have been considered specifically consecrated and divine because of their psychic extraordinariness and because of the intrinsic value of the respective states conditioned by them. . . .

The two highest conceptions of sublimated religious doctrines of salvation are "rebirth" and "redemption." Rebirth, a primeval magical value, has meant the acquisition of a new soul by means of an orgiastic act or through methodically planned asceticism. Man transitorily acquired a new soul in ecstasy; but by means of magical asceticism, he could seek to gain it permanently. The youth who wished to enter the community of warriors as a hero, or to participate in its magical dances or orgies, or who wished to commune with the divinities in cultic feasts, had to have a new soul The heroic and magical asceticism, the initiation rites of youths, and the sacramental customs of rebirth at important phases of private and collective life are thus quite ancient. The means used in these activities varied, as did their ends: that is, the answers to the question, "For what should I be reborn?" . . .

The kind of empirical state of bliss or experience of rebirth that is sought after as the supreme value by a religion has obviously and necessarily varied according to the character of the stratum which was foremost in adopting it. The chivalrous, warrior class, peasants, business classes, and intellectuals with literary education have naturally pursued different religious tendencies. As will become evident, these tendencies have not by themselves determined the psychological character

of religion; they have, however, exerted a very lasting influence upon it. The contrast between warrior and peasant classes, and intellectual and business classes, is of special importance. Of these groups, the intellectuals have always been the exponents of a rationalism which in their case has been relatively theoretical. The business classes (merchants and artisans) have been at least possible exponents of rationalism of a more practical sort. Rationalism of either kind has borne very different stamps, but has always exerted a great influence upon the religious attitude.

Above all, the peculiarity of the intellectual strata in this matter has been in the past of the greatest importance for religion. At the present time, it matters little in the development of a religion whether or not modern intellectuals feel the need of enjoying a "religious" state as an "experience," in addition to all sorts of other sensations, in order to decorate their internal and stylish furnishings with paraphernalia guaranteed to be genuine and old. A religious revival has never sprung from such a source. In the past, it was the work of the intellectuals to sublimate the possession of sacred values into a belief in "redemption." The conception of the idea of redemption, as such, is very old, if one understands by it a liberation from distress, hunger, drought, sickness, and ultimately from suffering and death. Yet redemption attained a specific significance only where it expressed a systematic and rationalized "image of the world" and represented a stand in the face of the world. For the meaning as well as the intended and actual psychological quality of redemption has depended upon such a world image and such a stand. Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the "world images" that have been created by "ideas" have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest. "From what" and "for what" one wished to be redeemed and, let us not forget, "could be" redeemed, depended upon one's image of the world.

There have been very different possibilities in this connection: One could wish to be saved from political and social servitude and lifted into a Messianic realm in the future of this world; or one could wish to be saved from being defiled by ritual impurity and hope for the pure beauty of psychic and bodily existence. One could wish to escape being incarcerated in an impure body and hope for a purely spiritual existence. One could wish to be saved from the eternal and senseless play of human passions and desires and hope for the quietude of the pure beholding of the divine. One could wish to be saved from radical evil and the servitude of sin and hope for the eternal and free benevolence in the lap of a fatherly god. One could wish to be saved from peonage under the astrologically conceived determination of stellar constellations and long for the dignity of freedom and partaking of the substance of the hidden deity. One could wish to be redeemed from the barriers to the finite, which express themselves in suffering, misery and death, and the threatening punishment of hell, and hope for an eternal bliss in an earthly or paradisical future existence. One could wish to be saved from the cycle of rebirths with their inexorable compensations for the deeds of the times past and hope for eternal rest. One could wish to be saved from senseless brooding and events and long for the dreamless sleep. Many more varieties of belief have, of course, existed. Behind them always lies a stand towards something in the actual world which is experienced as specifically "senseless." Thus, the demand has been implied: that the world order in its totality is, could, and should somehow be a meaningful "cosmos." This quest, the core of genuine religious rationalism, has been borne precisely by strata of intellectuals. The avenues, the results, and the efficacy of this metaphysical need for a meaningful cosmos have varied widely. Nevertheless, some general comments may be made.

The general result of the modern form of thoroughly rationalizing the conception of the world and of the way of life, theoretically and practically, in a purposive manner, has been that religion has been shifted into the realm of the irrational. This has been the more the case the further the purposive type of rationalization has progressed, if one takes the standpoint of an intellectual articulation of an image of the world. This shift of religion into the irrational realm has occurred for several reasons. On the one hand, the calculation of consistent rationalism has not easily come out even with nothing left over. In music, the Pythagorean "comma" resisted complete rationalization oriented to tonal physics. The various great systems of music of all peoples and ages have differed in the manner in which they have either covered up or bypassed this inescapable irrationality or, on the other hand, put irrationality into the service of the richness of tonalities. The same has seemed to happen to the theoretical conception of the world, only far more so; and above all, it has seemed to happen to the rationalization of practical life. The various great ways of leading a rational and methodical life have been characterized by irrational presuppositions, which have been accepted simply as "given" and which have been incorporated into such ways of life. What these presuppositions have been is historically and socially determined, at least to a very large extent, through the peculiarity of those strata that have been the carriers of the ways of life during its formative and decisive period. The *interest* situation of these strata, as determined socially and psychologically, has made for their peculiarity, as we here understand it.

Furthermore, the irrational elements in the rationalization of reality have been the *loci* to which the irrepressible quest of intellectualism for the possession of supernatural values has been compelled to retreat. That is the more so the more denuded of irrationality the world appears to be. The unity of the primitive image of the world, in which everything was concrete magic, has tended to split into rational cognition and mastery of nature, on the one hand, and into "mystic" experiences, on the other. The inexpressible contents of such experiences remain the only possible "beyond," added to the mechanism of a world robbed of gods. In fact, the beyond remains an incorporeal and metaphysical realm in which individuals intimately possess the holy. Where this conclusion has been drawn without any residue, the individual can pursue his quest for salvation only as an individual. This phenomenon appears in some form, with progressive intellectualist rationalism, wherever men have ventured to rationalize the image of the world as being a cosmos governed by impersonal rules. Naturally it has occurred most strongly among religions and religious ethics which have been quite strongly determined by genteel strata of intellectuals devoted to the purely cognitive comprehension of the world and of its "meaning." This was the case with Asiatic and, above all, Indian world religions. For all of them, contemplation became the supreme and ultimate religious value accessible to man. Contemplation offered them entrance into the profound and blissful tranquillity [sic] and immobility of the All-one. All other forms of religious states, however, have been at best considered a relatively valuable *Ersatz* for contemplation. This has had far-reaching consequences for the relation of religion to life, including economic life, as we shall repeatedly see. Such consequences flow from the general character of "mystic" experiences, in the contemplative sense, and from the psychological preconditions of the search for them.

The situation in which strata decisive for the development of a religion were active in practical life has been entirely different. Where they were chivalrous warrior heroes, political officials, economically acquisitive classes, or, finally, where an organized hierocracy dominated religion, the results were different than where genteel intellectuals were decisive.

The rationalism of hierocracy grew out of the professional preoccupation with cult and myth or—to a far higher degree—out of the cure of souls, that is, the confession of sin and counsel to sinners. Everywhere hierocracy has sought to monopolize the administration of religious values. They have also sought to bring and to temper the bestowal of religious goods into the form of "sacramental" or "corporate grace," which could be ritually bestowed only by the priesthood and could not be attained by the individual. The individual's quest for salvation or the quest of free communities by means of contemplation, orgies, or asceticism, has been considered highly suspect and has had to be regulated ritually and, above all, controlled hierocratically. From the standpoint of the interests of the priesthood in power, this is only natural.

Every body of *political* officials, on the other hand, has been suspicious of all sorts of individual pursuits of salvation and of the free formation of communities as sources of emancipation from domestication at the hands of the institution of the state. Political officials have distrusted the competing priestly corporation of grace and, above all, at bottom they have despised the very quest for these impractical values lying beyond utilitarian and worldly ends. For all political bureaucracies, religious duties have ultimately been simply official or social obligations of the citizenry and of status groups. . . .

It is also usual for a stratum of *chivalrous* warriors to pursue absolutely worldly interests and to be remote from all "mysticism." Such strata, however, have lacked—and this is characteristic of heroism in general—the desire as well as the capacity for a rational mastery of reality. The irrationality of "fate" and, under certain conditions, the idea of a vague and deterministically conceived "destiny" (the Homeric *Moira*) has stood above and behind the divinities and demons who were conceived of as passionate and strong heroes, measuring out assistance and hostility, glory and booty, or death to the human heroes.

Peasants have been inclined towards magic. Their whole economic existence has been specifically bound to nature and has made them dependent upon elemental forces. They readily believe in a compelling sorcery directed against spirits who rule over or through natural forces, or they believe in simply buying divine benevolence. Only tremendous transformations of life-orientation have succeeded in tearing them away from this universal and primeval form of religiosity. Such transformations have been derived either from

other strata or from mighty prophets, who, through the power of miracles, legitimize themselves as sorcerers. Orgiastic and ecstatic states of "possession," produced by means of toxics or by the dance, are strange to the status honor of knights because they are considered undignified. Among the peasants, however, such states have taken the place that "mysticism" holds among the intellectuals.

Finally, we may consider the strata that in the western European sense are called "civic," as well as those which elsewhere correspond to them: artisans, traders, enterprisers engaged in cottage industry, and their derivatives existing only in the modern Occident. Apparently these strata have been the most ambiguous with regard to the religious stands open to them. And this is especially important to us. . . .

Of course, the religions of all strata are certainly far from being unambiguously dependent upon the character of the strata we have presented as having special affinities with them. Yet, at first sight, civic strata appear, in this respect and on the whole, to lend themselves to a more varied determination. Yet it is precisely among these strata that elective affinities for special types of religion stand out. The tendency towards a *practical* rationalism in conduct is common to all civic strata; it is conditioned by the nature of their way of life, which is greatly detached from economic bonds to nature. Their whole existence has been based upon technological or economic calculations and upon the mastery of nature and of man, however primitive the means at their disposal. The technique of living handed down among them may, of course, be frozen in traditionalism, as has occurred repeatedly and everywhere. But precisely for these, there has always existed the possibility—even though in greatly varying measure—of letting an *ethical* and rational regulation of life arise. This may occur by the linkage of such an ethic to the tendency of technological and economic rationalism. Such regulation has not always been able to make headway against traditions which, in the main, were magically stereotyped. But where prophecy has provided a religious basis, this basis could be one of two fundamental types of prophecy which we shall repeatedly discuss: "exemplary" prophecy, and "emissary" prophecy.

Exemplary prophecy points out the path to salvation by exemplary living, usually by a contemplative and apathetic-ecstatic life. The emissary type of prophecy addresses its *demands* to the world in the name of a god. Naturally these demands are ethical; and they are often of an active ascetic character.

It is quite understandable that the more weighty the civic strata as such have been, and the more they have been torn from bonds of taboo and from divisions into sibs and castes, the more favorable has been the soil for religions that call for action in this world. Under these conditions, the preferred religious attitude could become the attitude of active asceticism, of God-willed *action* nourished by the sentiment of being God's "tool," rather than the possession of the deity or the inward and contemplative surrender to God, which has appeared as the supreme value to religions influenced by strata of genteel intellectuals. In the Occident the attitude of active asceticism has repeatedly retained supremacy over contemplative mysticism and orgiastic or apathetic ecstasy, even though these latter types have been well known in the Occident. . . .

In the missionary prophecy the devout have not experienced themselves as vessels of the divine but rather as instruments of a god. This emissary prophecy has had a profound elective affinity to a special conception of God: the conception of a supra-mundane, personal, wrathful, forgiving, loving, demanding, punishing Lord of Creation. Such a conception stands in contrast to the supreme being of exemplary prophecy. As a rule, though by no means without exception, the supreme being of an exemplary prophecy is an impersonal being because, as a static state, he is accessible only by means of contemplation. The conception of an active God, held by emissary prophecy, has dominated the Iranian and Mid-Eastern religions and those Occidental religions which are derived from them. The conception of a supreme and static being, held by exemplary prophecy, has come to dominate Indian and Chinese religiosity.

These differences are not primitive in nature. On the contrary, they have come into existence only by means of a far-reaching sublimation of primitive conceptions of animist spirits and of heroic deities which are everywhere similar in nature. Certainly the connection of conceptions of God with religious states, which are evaluated and desired as sacred values, have also been strongly influential in this process of sublimation. These religious states have simply been interpreted in the direction of a different conception of God, according to whether the holy states, evaluated as supreme, were contemplative mystic experiences or apathetic ecstasy, or whether they were the orgiastic possession of god, or visionary inspirations and "commands." . . .

The rational elements of a religion, its "doctrine," also have an autonomy: for instance, the Indian doctrine of Kharma, the Calvinist belief in predestination, the Lutheran justification through faith, and the Catholic doctrine of sacrament. The rational religious pragmatism of salvation, flowing from the nature of the images of God and of the world, have under certain conditions had far-reaching results for the fashioning of a practical way of life.

These comments presuppose that the nature of the desired sacred values has been strongly influenced by the nature of the external interest-situation and the corresponding way of life of the ruling strata and thus by the social stratification itself. But the reverse also holds: wherever the direction of the whole way of life has been methodically rationalized, it has been profoundly determined by the ultimate values toward which this rationalization has been directed. These values and positions were thus *religiously* determined. Certainly they have not always, or exclusively, been decisive; however, they have been decisive in so far as an *ethical* rationalization held sway, at least so far as its influence reached. As a rule, these religious values have been also, and frequently absolutely, decisive. . . .

The empirical fact, important for us, that men are *differently qualified* in a religious way stands at the beginning of the history of religion. This fact had been dogmatized in the sharpest rationalist form in the "particularism of grace," embodied in the doctrine of predestination by the Calvinists. The sacred values that have been most cherished, the ecstatic and visionary capacities of shamans, sorcerers, ascetics, and pneumatics of all sorts, could not be attained by everyone. The possession of such faculties is a "charisma," which, to be sure, might be awakened in some but not in all. It follows from this that all intensive religiosity has a tendency toward a sort of *status stratification,* in accordance with differences in the charismatic qualifications. "Heroic" or "virtuoso" religiosity is opposed to mass religiosity. By "mass" we understand those who are religiously "unmusical"; we do not, of course, mean those who occupy an inferior position in the secular status order. . . .

Now, every hierocratic and official authority of a "church"—that is, a community organized by officials into an institution which bestows gifts of grace—fights principally against all virtuoso-religion and against its autonomous development. For the church, being the holder of institutionalized grace, seeks to organize the religiosity of the masses and to put its own officially monopolized and mediated sacred values in the place of the autonomous and religious status qualifications of the religious virtuosos. By its nature, that is, according to the interest-situation of its officeholders, the church must be "democratic" in the sense of making the sacred values generally accessible. This means that the church stands for a universalism of grace and for the ethical sufficiency of all those who are enrolled under its institutional authority. Sociologically, the process of leveling constitutes a complete parallel with the political struggles of the bureaucracy against the political privileges of the aristocratic estates. As with hierocracy, every full-grown political bureaucracy is necessarily and in a quite similar sense "democratic"—namely, in the sense of leveling and of fighting against status privileges that compete with its power. . . .

The religious virtuosos saw themselves compelled to adjust their demands to the possibilities of the religiosity of everyday life in order to gain and to maintain ideal and material mass-patronage. The nature of their concessions have naturally been of primary significance for the way in which they have religiously influenced everyday life. In almost all Oriental religions, the virtuosos allowed the masses to remain stuck in magical tradition. Thus, the influence of religious virtuosos has been infinitely smaller than was the case where religion has undertaken ethically and generally to rationalize everyday life. This has been the case even when religion has aimed precisely at the masses and has cancelled however many of its ideal demands. Besides the relations between the religiosity of the virtuosos and the religion of the masses, which finally resulted from this struggle, the peculiar nature of the concrete religiosity of the virtuosos has been of decisive importance for the development of the way of life of the masses. This virtuoso religiosity has therefore also been important for the economic ethic of the respective religion. The religion of the virtuoso has been the genuinely "exemplary" and practical religion. According to the way of life his religion prescribed to the virtuoso, there have been various possibilities of establishing a rational ethic of everyday life. The relation of virtuoso religion to *workaday life* in the locus of the economy has varied, especially according to the peculiarity of the sacred values desired by such religions.

Wherever the sacred values and the redemptory means of a virtuoso religion bore a contemplative or orgiastic-ecstatic character, there has been no bridge between religion and the practical action of the workaday world. In such cases, the economy and all other action in the world has been considered religiously inferior, and no psychological motives for worldly

action could be derived from the attitude cherished as the supreme value. In their innermost beings, contemplative and ecstatic religions have been rather specifically hostile to economic life. Mystic, orgiastic, and ecstatic experiences are extraordinary psychic states; they lead away from everyday life and from all expedient conduct. Such experiences are, therefore, deemed to be "holy." With such religions, a deep abyss separates the way of life of the laymen from that of the community of virtuosos. The rule of the status groups of religious virtuosos over the religious community readily shifts into a magical anthropolatry; the virtuoso is directly worshipped as a Saint, or at least laymen buy his blessing and his magical powers as a means of promoting mundane success or religious salvation. As the peasant was to the landlord, so the layman was to the Buddhist and Jainist bhikshu: ultimately, mere sources of tribute. Such tribute allowed the virtuosos to live entirely for religious salvation without themselves performing profane work, which always would endanger their salvation. Yet the conduct of the layman could still undergo a certain ethical regulation, for the virtuoso was the layman's spiritual adviser, his father confessor and *directeur de l'âme*. Hence, the virtuoso frequently exercises a powerful influence over the religiously "unmusical" laymen; this influence might not be in the direction of his (the virtuoso's) own religious way of life; it might be an influence in merely ceremonious, ritualist, and conventional particulars. For action in this world remained in principle religiously insignificant; and compared with the desire for the religious end, action lay in the very opposite direction.

In the end, the charisma of the pure "mystic" serves only himself. The charisma of the genuine magician serves others.

Things have been quite different where the religiously qualified virtuosos have combined into an ascetic sect, striving to mould life in this world according to the will of a god. To be sure, two things were necessary before this could happen in a genuine way. First, the supreme and sacred value must not be of a contemplative nature; it must not consist of a union with a supra-mundane being who, in contrast to the world, lasts forever; nor in a *unia mystica* to be grasped orgiastically or apathetic-ecstatically. For these ways always lie apart from everyday life and beyond the real world and lead away from it. Second, such a religion must, so far as possible, have given up the purely magical or sacramental character of the *means* of grace. For these means always devalue action in this world as, at best, merely relative in their religious significance, and they link the decision about salvation to the success of processes which are *not* of a rational everyday nature.

When religious virtuosos have combined into an active asceticist sect, two aims are completely attained: the disenchantment of the world and the blockage of the path to salvation by a flight from the world. The path to salvation is turned away from a contemplative "flight from the world" and towards an active ascetic "work in this world." If one disregards the small rationalist sects, such as are found all over the world, this has been attained only in the great church and sect organizations of Occidental and asceticist Protestantism. The quite distinct and the purely historically determined destinies of Occidental religions have co-operated in this matter. Partly the social environment exerted an influence, above all, the environment of the stratum that was decisive for the development of such religion. Partly, however—and just as strongly—the intrinsic character of Christianity exerted an influence: the supra-mundane God and the specificity of the means and paths of salvation as determined historically, first by Israelite prophecy and the Thora doctrine.

The religious virtuoso can be placed in the world as the instrument of a God and cut off from all magical means of salvation. At the same time, it is imperative for the virtuoso that he "prove" himself before God, as being called *solely* through the ethical quality of his conduct in this world. This actually means that he "prove" himself to himself as well. No matter how much the "world" as such is religiously devalued and rejected as being creatural and a vessel of sin, yet psychologically the world is all the more affirmed as the theatre of God-willed activity in one's worldly "calling." For this inner-worldly asceticism rejects the world in the sense that it despises and taboos the values of dignity and beauty, of the beautiful frenzy and the dream, purely secular power, and the purely worldly pride of the hero. Asceticism outlawed these values as competitors of the kingdom of God. Yet precisely because of this rejection, asceticism did not fly from the world, as did contemplation. Instead, asceticism has wished to rationalize the world ethically in accordance with God's commandments. It has therefore remained oriented towards the world in a more specific and thoroughgoing sense than did the naive "affirmation of the world" of unbroken humanity, for instance, in Antiquity and in lay-Catholicism. In inner-worldly asceticism, the grace and the chosen state of the religiously qualified man prove themselves in everyday life. To be sure, they do so not in the everyday life as it is given, but in methodical and rationalized routine-activities of workaday life in the service of the Lord. Rationally raised into a vocation, everyday conduct becomes the locus for proving one's state of grace. The Occidental sects of the religious virtuosos have fermented the methodical rationalization of conduct, including economic conduct. These sects have not constituted valves for the longing to escape from the senselessness of work in this world, as did the Asiatic communities of the ecstatics: contemplative, orgiastic, or apathetic. . . .

We have to remind ourselves in advance that "rationalism" may mean very different things. It means one thing if we think of the kind of rationalization the systematic thinker performs on the image of the world: an increasing theoretical mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts. Rationalism means another thing if we think of the methodical attainment of a definitely given and practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means. These types of rationalism are very different, in spite of the fact that ultimately they belong inseparately together. . . .

"Rational" may also mean a "systematic arrangement." In this sense, the following methods are rational: methods of mortificatory or of magical asceticism, of contemplation in its most consistent forms—for instance, in *yoga*—or in the manipulations of the prayer machines of later Buddhism.

In general, all kinds of practical ethics that are systematically and unambiguously oriented to fixed goals of salvation are "rational," partly in the same sense as formal method is rational, and partly in the sense that they distinguish between "valid" norms and what is empirically given.

Introduction to "The Distribution of Power Within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party"

In "Class, Status, Party," we again find Weber engaged in an implicit debate with Marx. While Marx saw interests, and the power to realize them, tied solely to class position, Weber saw the two as flowing from several sources. In fact, he argued that distinct interests and forms of power were connected to economic **classes, status** groups, and political **parties.** (See Table 4.1.) The result is a discarding of Marx's model in favor of a more complex view of how interests shape individuals' actions and the organization of societies.

Weber begins this essay with a definition of power, a definition that to this day guides work in political sociology. He defines it as "the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others" (Weber [1925b] 1978:926). Such chances, however, are not derived from a single source, nor is power valued for any one particular reason. Power may be exercised for economic gain, to increase one's "social honor" (or **status),** or for its own sake. Moreover, power stemming from one source, for instance economic power, may not translate into other domains. Thus, a person who has achieved substantial economic wealth through criminal activity will not have a high degree of status in the general society. Conversely, academics have a relatively high degree of status, but little economic power. Whatever power intellectuals have stems from their social honor, not from their ability to "realize their own will" through financial influence.

This essay is significant not only for its picture of the crosscutting sources of interests and power. Weber also offers here a distinct definition of class as well as his conception of status groups and parties. Recall that for Marx classes are based on a group's more or less stable relationship to the means of production (owners of capital versus owners of labor power). For Weber, however, classes are not stable groups or "communities" produced by existing property relations. Instead, they are people who share "life chances" or possibilities that are determined by "economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income" within the commodity and labor markets (Weber [1925b] 1978:927). While recognizing with Marx that "property" and "lack of property" form the basic distinction between classes, Weber

Table 4.1 Weber's Notion of Class, Status, and Party

		ORDER: Individual	ORDER: Collective
ACTION	Nonrational	Status	*Status Groups:* "A specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*."
	Rational	Interests	*Class:* People who share "life chances" or possibilities that are "determined by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income."
			Party: Aimed at "influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be."

nevertheless argued that classes are themselves the product of a shared "class situation"—a situation that reflects the type and amount of exchanges one can pursue in the market.

Status groups, on the other hand, are communities. The fate of such communities is determined not by their chances on the commodity or labor markets, however, but by "a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*" (Weber [1925b] 1978:932, emphasis in the original). Such "honor" is expressed through "styles of life" or "conventions" that identify individuals with specific social circles. Race, ethnicity, religion, taste in fashion and the arts, and occupation have often formed a basis for making status distinctions. More than anything, membership in status groups serves to restrict an individual's chances for social interaction. For instance, the selection of marriage partners has frequently depended on a potential mate's religion or ethnicity. Even in modern, "egalitarian" societies like the United States, interracial marriages are relatively uncommon.

Additionally, regardless of possessing significant economic power or material wealth, one's race or religion can either close or open a person to educational and professional opportunities, as well as to membership in various clubs or associations.[1] Indeed, once membership into a style of life or institution can be bought, its ability to function as an expression of social honor or sign of exclusivity is threatened. This dynamic can be seen in shifting fashions in clothes and tastes in music, as well as in the democratization of education whereby proper "breeding" is no longer a prerequisite for getting a college diploma.

The third domain from which distinct interests are generated and power is exercised is the "legal order." Here, "'parties' reside in the sphere of power" (Weber [1925b] 1978:938). They include not only explicitly political groups, but also rationally organized groups more generally. As such, parties are characterized by the strategic pursuit of goals and the maintenance of a staff capable of implementing their objectives. Moreover, they are not necessarily tied to either class or status group interests, but are aimed instead at "influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be" (ibid.). Examples of parties include labor unions, which, through bureaucratic channels and the election of officers, seek to win economic benefits on behalf of workers, and, of course, the Republican and Democratic parties, which pursue legislative action that alternates between serving the class interests of their constituents (e.g., tax policy, trade regulations) and the interests of varying status groups (e.g., affirmative action, abortion rights, and gun control).

[1]During the early years of unionizing in the United States, trade unions were segregated racially, and at times ethnically. Thus, while sharing a common "class situation," workers, nevertheless, were divided by status group memberships. Some sociologists and labor historians have argued that the overriding salience of racial (i.e., status group) divisions fractured the working class, preventing workers from achieving more fully their class-based interests. Similar arguments have been made with regard to the feminist movement. In this case, white, middle-class women are charged with forsaking the plight of nonwhite and lower-class women in favor of pursuing goals that derive from their unique class situation.

"The Distribution of Power Within the Political Community: Class, Status, Party" (1925)

Max Weber

A. *Economically determined power and the status order.*

The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. In general, we understand by "power" the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.

"Economically conditioned" power is not, of course, identical with "power" as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued for its own sake. Very frequently the striving for power is also conditioned by the social honor it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honor: The typical American Boss, as well as the typical big speculator, deliberately relinquishes social honor. Quite generally, "mere economic" power, and especially "naked" money power, is by no means a recognized basis of social honor. Nor is power the only basis of social honor. Indeed, social honor, or prestige, may even be the basis of economic power, and very frequently has been. Power, as well as honor, may be guaranteed by the legal order, but, at least normally, it is not their primary source. The legal order is rather an additional factor that enhances the chance to hold power or honor; but it cannot always secure them.

The way in which social honor is distributed in a community between typical groups participating in this distribution we call the "status order." The social order and the economic order are related in a similar manner to the legal order. However, the economic order merely defines the way in which economic goods and services are distributed and used. Of course, the status order is strongly influenced by it, and in turn reacts upon it.

Now: "classes," "status groups," and "parties" are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.

B. *Determination of class situation by market situation.*

In our terminology, "classes" are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for social action. We may speak of a "class" when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, insofar as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. This is "class situation."

It is the most elemental economic fact that the way in which the disposition over material property is distributed among a plurality of people, meeting competitively in the market for the purpose of exchange, in itself creates specific life chances. The mode of distribution, in accord with the law of marginal utility, excludes the non-wealthy from competing for highly valued goods; it favors the owners and, in fact, gives to them a monopoly to acquire such goods. Other things being equal, the mode of distribution monopolizes the opportunities for profitable deals for all those who,

provided with goods, do not necessarily have to exchange them. It increases, at least generally, their power in the price struggle with those who, being propertyless, have nothing to offer but their labor or the resulting products, and who are compelled to get rid of these products in order to subsist at all. The mode of distribution gives to the propertied a monopoly on the possibility of transferring property from the sphere of use as "wealth" to the sphere of "capital," that is, it gives them the entrepreneurial function and all chances to share directly or indirectly in returns on capital. All this holds true within the area in which pure market conditions prevail. "Property" and "lack of property" are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. It does not matter whether these two categories become effective in the competitive struggles of the consumers or of the producers.

Within these categories, however, class situations are further differentiated: on the one hand, according to the kind of property that is usable for returns; and, on the other hand, according to the kind of services that can be offered in the market. Ownership of dwellings; workshops; warehouses; stores; agriculturally usable land in large or small holdings—a quantitative difference with possibly qualitative consequences; ownership of mines; cattle; men (slaves); disposition over mobile instruments of production, or capital goods of all sorts, especially money or objects that can easily be exchanged for money; disposition over products of one's own labor or of others' labor differing according to their various distances from consumability; disposition over transferable monopolies of any kind—all these distinctions differentiate the class situations of the propertied just as does the "meaning" which they can give to the use of property, especially to property which has money equivalence. Accordingly, the propertied, for instance, may belong to the class of rentiers or to the class of entrepreneurs.

Those who have no property but who offer services are differentiated just as much according to their kinds of services as according to the way in which they make use of these services, in a continuous or discontinuous relation to a recipient. But always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the *market* is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate. Class situation is, in this sense, ultimately market situation. The effect of naked possession *per se,* which among cattle breeders gives the non-owning slave or serf into the power of the cattle owner, is only a fore-runner of real "class" formation. However, in the cattle loan and in the naked severity of the law of debts in such communities for the first time mere "possession" as such emerges as decisive for the fate of the individual; this is much in contrast to crop-raising communities, which are based on labor. The creditor-debtor relation becomes the basis of "class situations" first in the cities, where a "credit market," however primitive, with rates of interest increasing according to the extent of dearth and factual monopolization of lending in the hands of a plutocracy could develop. Therewith "class struggles" begin.

Those men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g., slaves, are not, however, a class in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a status group.

C. *Social action flowing from class interest*

According to our terminology, the factor that creates "class" is unambiguously economic interest, and indeed, only those interests involved in the existence of the market. Nevertheless, the concept of class-interest is an ambiguous one: even as an empirical concept it is ambiguous as soon as one understands by it something other than the factual direction of interests following with a certain probability from the class situation for a certain average of those people subjected to the class situation. The class situation and other circumstances remaining the same, the direction in which the individual worker, for instance, is likely to pursue his interests may vary widely, according to whether he is constitutionally qualified for the task at hand to a high, to an average, or to a low degree. In the same way, the direction of interests may vary according to whether or not social action of a larger or smaller portion of those commonly affected by the class situation, or even an association among them, e.g., a trade union, has grown out of the class situation, from which the individual may expect promising results for himself. The emergence of an association or even of mere social action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon.

The class situation may be restricted in its efforts to the generation of essentially *similar* reactions, that is to say, within our terminology, of "mass behavior." However, it may not even have this result. Furthermore, often merely amorphous social action emerges. For example, the "grumbling" of workers known in ancient Oriental ethics: The moral disapproval of the workmaster's conduct, which in its practical significance was probably equivalent to an increasingly typical phenomenon of precisely the latest industrial development, namely, the slowdown of laborers by virtue of tacit agreement. The degree in which "social action" and possibly associations emerge from the mass behavior of the members of a class is linked to general cultural conditions, especially to those of an intellectual sort. It is also linked to the extent of the contrasts that have already evolved, and is especially linked to the transparency of the connections between the causes and the consequences of the class situation. For however different life chances may be, this fact in itself, according to all experience, by no means gives birth to "class action" (social action by the members of a class). For that, the real conditions and the results of the class situation must be distinctly recognizable. For only then the contrast of life chances can be felt not as an absolutely given fact to be accepted, but as a resultant from either (1) the given distribution of property, or (2) the structure of the concrete economic order. It is only then that people may react against the class structure not only through acts of intermittent and irrational protest, but in the form of rational association. There have been "class situations" of the first category (1), of a specifically naked and transparent sort, in the urban centers of Antiquity and during the Middle Ages; especially then when great fortunes were accumulated by factually monopolized trading in local industrial products or in foodstuffs; furthermore, under certain conditions, in the rural economy of the most diverse periods, when agriculture was increasingly exploited in a profit-making manner. The most important historical example of the second category (2) is the class situation of the modern proletariat.

D. *Types of class struggle*

Thus every class may be the carrier of any one of the innumerable possible forms of class action, but this is not necessarily so. In any case, a class does not in itself constitute a group (Gemeinschaft). To treat "class" conceptually as being equivalent to "group" leads to distortion. That men in the same class situation regularly react in mass actions to such tangible situations as economic ones in the direction of those interests that are most adequate to their average number is an important and after all simple fact for the understanding of historical events. However, this fact must not lead to that kind of pseudo-scientific operation with the concepts of class and class interests which is so frequent these days and which has found its most classic expression in the statement of a talented author, that the individual may be in error concerning his interests but that the class is infallible about its interests.

If classes as such are not groups, nevertheless class situations emerge only on the basis of social action. However, social action that brings forth class situations is not basically action among members of the identical class; it is an action among members of different classes. Social actions that directly determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneur are: the labor market, the commodities market, and the capitalistic enterprise. But, in its turn, the existence of a capitalistic enterprise presupposes that a very specific kind of social action exists to protect the possession of goods *per se,* and especially the power of individuals to dispose, in principle freely, over the means of production: a certain kind of legal order. Each kind of class situation, and above all when it rests upon the power of property *per se,* will become most clearly efficacious when all other determinants of reciprocal relations are, as far as possible, eliminated in their significance. It is in this way that the use of the power of property in the market obtains its most sovereign importance.

Now status groups hinder the strict carrying through of the sheer market principle. In the present context they are of interest only from this one point of view. Before we briefly consider them, note that not much of a general nature can be said about the more specific kinds of antagonism between classes (in our meaning of the term). The great shift, which has been going on continuously in the past, and up to our times, may be summarized, although at a cost of some precision: the struggle in which class situations are effective has progressively shifted from consumption credit toward, first, competitive struggles in the commodity market and then toward wage disputes on the labor market. The class struggles of Antiquity—to the extent that they were genuine class struggles and not struggles between status groups—were initially carried on by peasants and perhaps also artisans threatened by debt bondage and struggling against urban creditors. . . .

The propertyless of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages protested against monopolies, pre-emption, forestalling, and the withholding of goods from the market in order to raise prices. Today the central issue is the determination of the price of labor. The transition is represented by the fight for access to the market and for the determination of the price of products. Such fights went on between merchants and workers in the putting-out system of domestic handicraft during the transition

to modern times. Since it is quite a general phenomenon we must mention here that the class antagonisms that are conditioned through the market situations are usually most bitter between those who actually and directly participate as opponents in price wars. It is not the rentier, the share-holder, and the banker who suffer the ill will of the worker, but almost exclusively the manufacturer and the business executives who are the direct opponents of workers in wage conflicts. This is so in spite of the fact that it is precisely the cash boxes of the rentier, the shareholder, and the banker into which the more or less unearned gains flow, rather than into the pockets of the manufacturers or of the business executives. This simple state of affairs has very frequently been decisive for the role the class situation has played in the formation of political parties. For example, it has made possible the varieties of patriarchal socialism and the frequent attempts—formerly, at least—of threatened status groups to form alliances with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

E. *Status honor*

In contrast to classes, *Stände* (status groups) are normally groups. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined "class situation," we wish to designate as *status situation* every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of neighborhood associations, it is often simply the richest who is the "chieftain." However, this often is only an honorific preference. For example, in the so-called pure modern democracy, that is, one devoid of any expressly ordered status privileges for individuals, it may be that only the families coming under approximately the same tax class dance with one another. This example is reported of certain smaller Swiss cities. But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a class situation. On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. This equality of social esteem may, however, in the long run become quite precarious. The equality of status among American gentlemen, for instance, is expressed by the fact that outside the subordination determined by the different functions of business, it would be considered strictly repugnant—wherever the old tradition still prevails—if even the richest boss, while playing billiards or cards in his club would not treat his clerk as in every sense fully his equal in birthright, but would bestow upon him the condescending status-conscious "benevolence" which the German boss can never dissever from his attitude. This is one of the most important reasons why in America the German clubs have never been able to attain the attraction that the American clubs have.

In content, status honor is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific *style of life* is expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle. Linked with this expectation are restrictions on social intercourse (that is, intercourse which is not subservient to economic or any other purposes). These restrictions may confine normal marriages to within the status circle and may lead to complete endogamous closure. Whenever this is not a mere individual and socially irrelevant imitation of another style of life, but consensual action of this closing character, the status development is under way.

In its characteristic form, stratification by status groups on the basis of conventional styles of life evolves at the present time in the United States out of the traditional democracy. For example, only the resident of a certain street ("the Street") is considered as belonging to "society," is qualified for social intercourse, and is visited and invited. Above all, this differentiation evolves in such a way as to make for strict submission to the fashion that is dominant at a given time in society. This submission to fashion also exists among men in America to a degree unknown in Germany; it appears as an indication of the fact that a given man puts forward a *claim* to qualify as a gentleman. This submission decides, at least *prima facie,* that he will be treated as such. And this recognition becomes just as important for his employment chances in swank establishments, and above all, for social intercourse and marriage with "esteemed" families, as the qualification for dueling among Germans. As for the rest, status honor is usurped by certain families resident for a long time, and, of course, correspondingly wealthy (e.g., F.F.V., the First Families of Virginia), or by the actual or alleged descendants of the "Indian Princess" Pocahontas, of the Pilgrim fathers, or of the Knickerbockers, the members of almost inaccessible sects and all sorts of circles setting themselves apart by means of any other characteristics and badges. In this case stratification is purely conventional and rests largely on usurpation (as does almost all status honor in its beginning). But the road to legal privilege, positive or negative, is easily traveled as soon as a certain stratification of the social order has in fact been "lived in" and has achieved stability by virtue of a stable distribution of economic power.

F. *Ethnic segregation and caste*

Where the consequences have been realized to their full extent, the status group evolves into a closed caste. Status distinctions are then guaranteed not merely by conventions and laws, but also by religious sanctions. This occurs in such a way that every physical contact with a member of any caste that is considered to be lower by the members of a higher caste is considered as making for a ritualistic impurity and a stigma which must be expiated by a religious act. In addition, individual castes develop quite distinct cults and gods.

In general, however, the status structure reaches such extreme consequences only where there are underlying differences which are held to be "ethnic." The caste is, indeed, the normal form in which ethnic communities that believe in blood relationship and exclude exogamous marriage and social intercourse usually associate with one another. Such a caste situation is part of the phenomenon of pariah peoples and is found all over the world. These people form communities, acquire specific occupational traditions of handicrafts or of other arts, and cultivate a belief in their ethnic community. They live in a diaspora strictly segregated from all personal intercourse, except that of an unavoidable sort, and their situation is legally precarious. Yet, by virtue of their economic indispensability, they are tolerated, indeed frequently privileged, and they live interspersed in the political communities. The Jews are the most impressive historical example.

A status segregation grown into a caste differs in its structure from a mere ethnic segregation: the caste structure transforms the horizontal and unconnected coexistences of ethnically segregated groups into a vertical social system of super- and subordination. Correctly formulated: a comprehensive association integrates the ethnically divided communities into one political unit. They differ precisely in this way: ethnic coexistence, based on mutual repulsion and disdain, allows each ethnic community to consider its own honor as the highest one; the caste structure brings about a social subordination and an acknowledgement of "more honor" in favor of the privileged caste and status groups. This is due to the fact that in the caste structure ethnic distinctions as such have become "functional" distinctions within the political association (warriors, priests, artisans that are politically important for war and for building, and so on). But even pariah peoples who are most despised (for example, the Jews) are usually apt to continue cultivating the belief in their own specific "honor," a belief that is equally peculiar to ethnic and to status groups.

However, with the negatively privileged status groups the sense of dignity takes a specific deviation. A sense of dignity is the precipitation in individuals of social honor and of conventional demands which a positively privileged status group raises for the deportment of its members. The sense of dignity that characterizes positively privileged status groups is naturally related to their "being" which does not transcend itself, that is, it is related to their "beauty and excellence" (οἰκεῖον ἔργον). Their kingdom is "of this world." They live for the present and by exploiting their great past. The sense of dignity of the negatively privileged strata naturally refers to a future lying beyond the present, whether it is of this life or of another. In other words, it must be nurtured by the belief in a providential mission and by a belief in a specific honor before God. The chosen people's dignity is nurtured by a belief either that in the beyond "the last will be the first," or that in this life a Messiah will appear to bring forth into the light of the world which has cast them out the hidden honor of the pariah people. This simple state of affairs, and not the resentment which is so strongly emphasized in Nietzsche's much-admired construction in the *Genealogy of Morals,* is the source of the religiosity cultivated by pariah status groups. . . .

For the rest, the development of status groups from ethnic segregations is by no means the normal phenomenon. On the contrary. Since objective "racial differences" are by no means behind every subjective sentiment of an ethnic community, the question of an ultimately racial foundation of status structure is rightly a question of the concrete individual case. Very frequently a status group is instrumental in the production of a thoroughbred anthropological type. Certainly status groups are to a high degree effective in producing extreme types, for they select personally qualified individuals (e.g., the knighthood selects those who are fit for warfare, physically and psychically). But individual selection is far from being the only, or the predominant, way in which status groups are formed: political membership or class situation has at all times been at least as frequently decisive. And today the class situation is by far the predominant factor. After all, the possibility of a

style of life expected for members of a status group is usually conditioned economically.

G. *Status privileges*

For all practical purposes, stratification by status goes hand in hand with a monopolization of ideal and material goods or opportunities, in a manner we have come to know as typical. Besides the specific status honor, which always rests upon distance and exclusiveness, honorific preferences may consist of the privilege of wearing special costumes, of eating special dishes taboo to others, of carrying arms—which is most obvious in its consequences—, the right to be a dilettante, for example, to play certain musical instruments. However, material monopolies provide the most effective motives for the exclusiveness of a status group; although, in themselves, they are rarely sufficient, almost always they come into play to some extent. Within a status circle there is the question of intermarriage: the interest of the families in the monopolization of potential bridegrooms is at least of equal importance and is parallel to the interest in the monopolization of daughters. The daughters of the members must be provided for. With an increased closure of the status group, the conventional preferential opportunities for special employment grow into a legal monopoly of special offices for the members. Certain goods become objects for monopolization by status groups, typically, entailed estates, and frequently also the possession of serfs or bondsmen and, finally, special trades. This monopolization occurs positively when the status group is exclusively entitled to own and to manage them; and negatively when, in order to maintain its specific way of life, the status group must not own and manage them. For the decisive role of a style of life in status honor means that status groups are the specific bearers of all conventions. In whatever way it may be manifest, all stylization of life either originates in status groups or is at least conserved by them. Even if the principles of status conventions differ greatly, they reveal certain typical traits, especially among the most privileged strata. Quite generally, among privileged status groups there is a status disqualification that operates against the performance of common physical labor. This disqualification is now "setting in" in America against the old tradition of esteem for labor. Very frequently every rational economic pursuit, and especially entrepreneurial activity, is looked upon as a disqualification of status. Artistic and literary activity is also considered degrading work as soon as it is exploited for income, or at least when it is connected with hard physical exertion. An example is the sculptor working like a mason in his dusty smock as over against the painter in his salon-like studio and those forms of musical practice that are acceptable to the status group.

H. *Economic conditions and effects of status stratification.*

The frequent disqualification of the gainfully employed as such is a direct result of the principle of status stratification, and of course, of this principle's opposition to a distribution of power which is regulated exclusively through the market. These two factors operate along with various individual ones, which will be touched upon below.

We have seen above that the market and its processes knows no personal distinctions: "functional" interests dominate it. It knows nothing of honor. The status order means precisely the reverse: stratification in terms of honor and styles of life peculiar to status groups as such. The status order would be threatened at its very root if mere economic acquisition and naked economic power still bearing the stigma of its extra-status origin could bestow upon anyone who has won them the same or even greater honor as the vested interests claim for themselves. After all, given equality of status honor, property *per se* represents an addition even if it is not overtly acknowledged to be such. Therefore all groups having interest in the status order react with special sharpness precisely against the pretensions of purely economic acquisition. In most cases they react the more vigorously the more they feel themselves threatened. . . . Precisely because of the rigorous reactions against the claims of property *per se*, the "parvenu" is never accepted, personally and without reservation, by the privileged status groups, no matter how completely his style of life has been adjusted to theirs. They will only accept his descendants who have been educated in the conventions of their status group and who have never besmirched its honor by their own economic labor.

As to the general *effect* of the status order, only one consequence can be stated, but it is a very important one: the hindrance of the free development of the market. This occurs first for those goods that status groups directly withhold from free exchange by monopolization, which may be effected either legally or conventionally. For example, in many Hellenic cities during the "status era" and also originally in Rome, the inherited estate (as shown by the old formula for placing spendthrifts under a guardian) was monopolized, as were the estates of knights, peasants, priests, and especially the clientele of the craft and merchant guilds. The market is restricted, and the power of naked property *per se*, which gives its stamp to class formation, is pushed into the background. The results of this process can be most varied. Of course, they do not necessarily weaken the contrasts in the economic situation. Frequently they strengthen these contrasts, and in any case, where stratification by status permeates a community as strongly as was the case in all political communities of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages, one can never speak of a genuinely free market competition as we understand it today. There are wider effects than this direct exclusion of special goods from the market. From the conflict between the status order and the purely economic order mentioned above, it follows that in most instances the notion of honor peculiar to status absolutely abhors that which is essential to the market: hard bargaining. Honor abhors hard bargaining among peers and occasionally it taboos it for the members of a status group in general. Therefore, everywhere some status groups, and usually the most influential, consider almost any kind of overt participation in economic acquisition as absolutely stigmatizing.

With some over-simplification, one might thus say that classes are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods; whereas status groups are stratified according to the principles of their *consumption* of goods as represented by special styles of life.

An "occupational status group," too, is a status group proper. For normally, it successfully claims social honor only by virtue of the special style of life which may be determined by it. The differences between classes and status groups frequently overlap. It is precisely those status communities most strictly segregated in terms of honor (viz., the Indian castes) who today show, although within very rigid limits, a relatively high degree of indifference to pecuniary income. However, the Brahmins seek such income in many different ways.

As to the general economic conditions making for the predominance of stratification by status, only the following can be said. When the bases of the acquisition and distribution of goods are relatively stable, stratification by status is favored. Every technological repercussion and economic transformation threatens stratification by status and pushes the class situation into the foreground. Epochs and countries in which the naked class situation is of predominant significance are regularly the periods of technical and economic transformations. And every slowing down of the change in economic stratification leads, in due course, to the growth of status structures and makes for a resuscitation of the important role of social honor.

I. *Parties*

Whereas the genuine place of classes is within the economic order, the place of status groups is within the social order, that is, within the sphere of the distribution of honor. From within these spheres, classes and status groups influence one another and the legal order and are in turn influenced by it. *"Parties"* reside in the sphere of power. Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social power, that is to say, toward influencing social action no matter what its content may be. In principle, parties may exist in a social club as well as in a state. As over against the actions of classes and status groups, for which this is not necessarily the case, party-oriented social action always involves association. For it is always directed toward a goal which is striven for in a planned manner. This goal may be a cause (the party may aim at realizing a program for ideal or material purposes), or the goal may be personal (sinecures, power, and from these, honor for the leader and the followers of the party). Usually the party aims at all these simultaneously. Parties are, therefore, only possible within groups that have an associational character, that is, some rational order and a staff of persons available who are ready to enforce it. For parties aim precisely at influencing this staff, and if possible, to recruit from it party members.

In any individual case, parties may represent interests determined through class situation or status situation, and they may recruit their following respectively from one or the other. But they need be neither purely class nor purely status parties; in fact, they are more likely to be mixed types, and sometimes they are neither. They may represent ephemeral or enduring structures. Their means of attaining power may be quite varied, ranging from naked violence of any sort to canvassing for votes with coarse or subtle means: money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, and so on to the rougher or more artful tactics of obstruction in parliamentary bodies.

The sociological structure of parties differs in a basic way according to the kind of social action which they struggle to influence; that means, they differ according to whether or not the community is stratified by status or by classes. Above all else, they vary according to the structure of domination. For their leaders normally deal with its conquest. In our general terminology, parties are not only products of

modern forms of domination. We shall also designate as parties the ancient and medieval ones, despite the fact that they differ basically from modern parties. Since a party always struggles for political control (*Herrschaft*), its organization too is frequently strict and "authoritarian." Because of these variations between the forms of domination, it is impossible to say anything about the structure of parties without discussing them first. Therefore, we shall now turn to this central phenomenon of all social organization.

Before we do this, we should add one more general observation about classes, status groups and parties: The fact that they presuppose a larger association, especially the framework of a polity, does not mean that they are confined to it. On the contrary, at all times it has been the order of the day that such association (even when it aims at the use of military force in common) reaches beyond the state boundaries. This can be seen in the [interlocal] solidarity of interests of oligarchs and democrats in Hellas, of Guelphs and Ghibellines in the Middle Ages, and within the Calvinist party during the age of religious struggles; and all the way up to the solidarity of landlords (International Congresses of Agriculture), princes (Holy Alliance, Karlsbad Decrees [of 1819]), socialist workers, conservatives (the longing of Prussian conservatives for Russian intervention in 1850). But their aim is not necessarily the establishment of a new territorial dominion. In the main they aim to influence the existing polity.

Introduction to "The Types of Legitimate Domination"

In this selection, Weber defines three "ideal types" of legitimate domination: **rational** or **legal authority**, **traditional authority**, and **charismatic authority**. (See Table 4.2.) As abstract constructs, none of the ideal types actually exists in pure form. Instead, public authority is based on some mixture of the three types. Nevertheless, social systems generally exhibit a predominance of one form or another of domination.

Before briefly describing the forms of legitimate authority, we first need to clarify Weber's definition of legitimacy. By "legitimacy," Weber was referring to the belief systems on which valid commands issuing from authority figures are based. Such belief systems supply the justifications and motives for demanding obedience and allow those in authority to rightfully exercise domination over others. It is to these justifications that authority figures turn when seeking to legitimate their actions and the actions of those subjected to their commands.

Photo 4.1a William Jefferson Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States.

Modern states are ruled through rational-legal authority. This form of domination is based on the rule of rationally established laws. Legitimacy thus rests "on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands" (Weber [1925c] 1978:215). Obedience is owed not to the person who exercises authority, but to the office or position in which authority is vested. It is the impersonal, legal order that vests the superior with the authority to demand compliance, a right that is ceded on vacating the office. Once retired, a police officer or judge is but another civilian and as such no longer has the power to enforce the law.

Traditional authority is the authority of "eternal yesterday." It rests on an "established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions" (ibid.:215). This is the rule of kings and tribal chieftains. Leadership is attained not on the basis of impersonally measured merit, but on lines of heredity or rites of passage. Subjects owe their allegiance not to bureaucratically imposed rules and laws that are open to change, but to their personal "master" whose demands for compliance and loyalty are legitimated by sacred, inviolable traditions.

Weber's third type of authority derives from the **charisma** possessed by the leader. Demands for obedience are legitimated by the leader's "gift of grace," which is demonstrated through extraordinary feats, acts of heroism, or revelations—in short, the miracles of heroes and prophets. Like traditional authority, loyalty is owed to the person and not to an office defined through impersonal rules. But unlike traditional authority, legitimacy is not based on appeals to sacred traditions or on the exalting of "what has always been." Instead, compliance from "disciples" is demanded on the basis of the "conception that it is the duty of those subject to charismatic authority to recognize its genuineness and to act accordingly" ([1925c] 1978:242).

History is replete with charismatic leaders who have inspired intense personal devotion to themselves and their cause. From Jesus and Muhammad, Joan of Arc and Gandhi, to Napoleon and Hitler, such leaders have proved to be a powerful force for social change, both good and bad. Indeed, in its rejection of both tradition and rational, formal rules, charismatic authority, by its very nature, poses a challenge to existing political order. In breaking from history as well as objective laws, charisma is a creative force that carries the commandment: "It is written, but I say unto you."

Photo 4.1b England's Queen Victoria (1819–1901)

Embodiments of legitimate domination: President Clinton exercised rational-legal authority; Queen Victoria ruled on the basis of traditional authority; Mahatma Gandhi possessed charismatic authority.

However, the revolutionary potential of charismatic authority makes it inherently unstable. Charisma lasts only as long as its possessor is able to provide benefits to his followers. If the leader's prophecies are proved wrong, if enemies are not defeated, if miraculous deeds begin to "dry up," then his or her legitimacy will be called into question. On the other hand, even if such deeds or benefits provide a continued source of legitimacy, the leader at some point will die. With authority resting solely in the charismatic individual, the movement he inspired will collapse along with his rule, unless designs for a successor are developed. Often, the transferring of authority eventually leads to the "routinization of charisma" and the transformation of legitimacy into either a rational-legal or traditional type—witness the Catholic Church.

Photo 4.1c Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), India's Past Spiritual and Political Leader.

Table 4.2 Weber's Types of Legitimate Domination

		ORDER	
		Individual	Collective
ACTION	Nonrational	*Charismatic:* "Gift of grace" of leader	*Traditional:* "Established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions"
	Rational		*Rational-Legal:* "Belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands"

"The Types of Legitimate Domination" (1925)

Max Weber

Domination and Legitimacy

Domination was defined as the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons. It thus does not include every mode of exercising "power" or "influence" over other persons. Domination ("authority") in this sense may be based on the most diverse motives of compliance: all the way from simple habituation to the most purely rational calculation of advantage. Hence every genuine form of domination implies a minimum of voluntary compliance, that is, an *interest* (based on ulterior motives or genuine acceptance) in obedience.

Not every case of domination makes use of economic means; still less does it always have economic objectives. However, normally the rule over a considerable number of persons requires a staff, that is, a *special* group which can normally be trusted to execute the general policy as well as the specific commands. The members of the administrative staff may be bound to obedience to their superior (or superiors) by custom, by affectual ties, by a purely material complex of interests, or by ideal (*wertrationale*) motives. The quality of these motives largely determines the type of domination. *Purely* material interests and calculations of advantages as the basis of solidarity between the chief and his administrative staff result, in this as in other connexions, in a relatively unstable situation. Normally other elements, affectual and ideal, supplement such interests. In certain exceptional cases the former alone may be decisive. In everyday life these relationships, like others, are governed by custom and material calculation of advantage. But custom, personal advantage, purely affectual or ideal motives of solidarity, do not form a sufficiently reliable basis for a given domination. In addition there is normally a further element, the belief in *legitimacy.*

Experience shows that in no instance does domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy. But according to the kind of legitimacy which is claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, and the mode of exercising authority, will all differ fundamentally. Equally fundamental is the variation in effect. Hence, it is useful to classify the types of domination according to the kind of claim to legitimacy typically made by each. In doing this, it is best to start from modern and therefore more familiar examples. . . .

The Three Pure Types of Authority

There are three pure types of legitimate domination. The validity of the claims to legitimacy may be based on:

1. Rational grounds—resting on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority).
2. Traditional grounds—resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority); or finally,
3. Charismatic grounds—resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority).

In the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order. It extends to the persons exercising the authority of office under it by virtue of the formal legality of their commands and only within the scope of authority of the office. In the case of traditional authority, obedience is owed to the *person* of the chief who occupies the traditionally sanctioned position of authority and who is (within its sphere) bound by tradition. But here the obligation of obedience is a matter of personal loyalty within the area of accustomed obligations. In the case of charismatic authority, it is the charismatically qualified leader as such who is obeyed by virtue of personal trust in his revelation, his heroism or his exemplary qualities so far as they fall within the scope of the individual's belief in his charisma. . . .

SOURCE: Originally published in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* by Max Weber. Translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons, edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons.

Legal Authority With a Bureaucratic Staff

Legal Authority: The Pure Type

Legal authority rests on the acceptance of the validity of the following mutually inter-dependent ideas.

1. That any given legal norm may be established by agreement or by imposition, on grounds of expediency or value-rationality or both, with a claim to obedience at least on the part of the members of the organization. This is, however, usually extended to include all persons within the sphere of power in question—which in the case of territorial bodies is the territorial area—who stand in certain social relationships or carry out forms of social action which in the order governing the organization have been declared to be relevant.
2. That every body of law consists essentially in a consistent system of abstract rules which have normally been intentionally established. Furthermore, administration of law is held to consist in the application of these rules to particular cases; the administrative process in the rational pursuit of the interests which are specified in the order governing the organization within the limits laid down by legal precepts and following principles which are capable of generalized formulation and are approved in the order governing the group, or at least not disapproved in it.
3. That thus the typical person in authority, the "superior," is himself subject to an impersonal order by orienting his actions to it in his own dispositions and commands. (This is true not only for persons exercising legal authority who are in the usual sense "officials," but, for instance, for the elected president of a state.)
4. That the person who obeys authority does so, as it is usually stated, only in his capacity as a "member" of the organization and what he obeys is only "the law." (He may in this connection be the member of an association, of a community, of a church, or a citizen of a state.)
5. In conformity with point 3, it is held that the members of the organization, insofar as they obey a person in authority, do not owe this obedience to him as an individual, but to the impersonal order. Hence, it follows that there is an obligation to obedience only within the sphere of the rationally delimited jurisdiction which, in terms of the order, has been given to him. . . .

The purest type of exercise of legal authority is that which employs a bureaucratic administrative staff. Only the supreme chief of the organization occupies his position of dominance (*Herrenstellung*) by virtue of appropriation, of election, or of having been designated for the succession. But even *his* authority consists in a sphere of legal "competence." The whole administrative staff under the supreme authority then consist, in the purest type, of individual officials (constituting a "monocracy" as opposed to the "collegial" type, which will be discussed below) who are appointed and function according to the following criteria:

1. They are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations.
2. They are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices.
3. Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense.
4. The office is filled by a free contractual relationship. Thus, in principle, there is free selection.
5. Candidates are selected on the basis of technical qualifications. In the most rational case, this is tested by examination or guaranteed by diplomas certifying technical training, or both. They are *appointed,* not elected.
6. They are remunerated by fixed salaries in money, for the most part with a right to pensions. Only under certain circumstances does the employing authority, especially in private organizations, have a right to terminate the appointment, but the official is always free to resign. The salary scale is graded according to rank in the hierarchy; but in addition to this criterion, the responsibility of

the position and the requirements of the incumbent's social status may be taken into account.

7. The office is treated as the sole, or at least the primary, occupation of the incumbent.

8. It constitutes a career. There is a system of "promotion" according to seniority or to achievement, or both. Promotion is dependent on the judgment of superiors.

9. The official works entirely separated from ownership of the means of administration and without appropriation of his position.

10. He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office.

This type of organization is in principle applicable with equal facility to a wide variety of different fields. It may be applied in profit-making business or in charitable organizations, or in any number of other types of private enterprises serving ideal or material ends. It is equally applicable to political and to hierocratic organizations. With the varying degrees of approximation to a pure type, its historical existence can be demonstrated in all these fields. . . .

Traditional Authority: The Pure Type

Authority will be called traditional if legitimacy is claimed for it and believed in by virtue of the sanctity of age-old rules and powers. The masters are designated according to traditional rules and are obeyed because of their traditional status (*Eigenwürde*). This type of organized rule is, in the simplest case, primarily based on personal loyalty which results from common upbringing. The person exercising authority is not a "superior," but a personal master, his administrative staff does not consist mainly of officials but of personal retainers, and the ruled are not "members" of an association but are either his traditional "comrades" or his "subjects." Personal loyalty, not the official's impersonal duty, determines the relations of the administrative staff to the master.

Obedience is owed not to enacted rules but to the person who occupies a position of authority by tradition or who has been chosen for it by the traditional master. The commands of such a person are legitimized in one of two ways:

A. partly in terms of traditions which themselves directly determine the content of the command and are believed to be valid within certain limits that cannot be overstepped without endangering the master's traditional status;

B. partly in terms of the master's discretion in that sphere which tradition leaves open to him; this traditional prerogative rests primarily on the fact that the obligations of personal obedience tend to be essentially unlimited.

Thus there is a double sphere:

A. that of action which is bound to specific traditions;

B. that of action which is free of specific rules.

In the latter sphere, the master is free to do good turns on the basis of his personal pleasure and likes, particularly in return for gifts—the historical sources of dues (*Gebühren*). So far as his action follows principles at all, these are governed by considerations of ethical common sense, of equity or of utilitarian expediency. They are not formal principles, as in the case of legal authority. The exercise of power is oriented toward the consideration of how far master and staff can go in view of the subjects' traditional compliance without arousing their resistance. When resistance occurs, it is directed against the master or his servant personally, the accusation being that he failed to observe the traditional limits of his power. Opposition is not directed against the system as such—it is a case of "traditionalist revolution."

In the pure type of traditional authority it is impossible for law or administrative rule to be deliberately created by legislation. Rules which in fact are innovations can be legitimized only by the claim that they have been "valid of yore," but have only now been recognized by means of "Wisdom" [the *Weistum* of ancient Germanic law]. Legal decisions as "finding of the law" (*Rechtsfindung*) can refer only to documents of tradition, namely to precedents and earlier decisions. . . .

In the pure type of traditional rule, the following features of a bureaucratic administrative staff are absent:

A. a clearly defined sphere of competence subject to impersonal rules,

B. a rationally established hierarchy,

C. a regular system of appointment on the basis of free contract, and orderly promotion,

D. technical training as a regular requirement,

E. (frequently) fixed salaries, in the type case paid in money. . . .

Charismatic Authority

The term "charisma" will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a "leader." In primitive circumstances this peculiar kind of quality is thought of as resting on magical powers, whether of prophets, persons with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, leaders in the hunt, or heroes in war. How the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical, aesthetic, or other such point of view is naturally entirely indifferent for purposes of definition. What is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his "followers" or "disciples." . . .

I. It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma. This recognition is freely given and guaranteed by what is held to be a proof, originally always a miracle, and consists in devotion to the corresponding revelation, hero worship, or absolute trust in the leader. But where charisma is genuine, it is not this which is the basis of the claim to legitimacy. This basis lies rather in the conception that it is the duty of those subject to charismatic authority to recognize its genuineness and to act accordingly. Psychologically this recognition is a matter of complete personal devotion to the possessor of the quality, arising out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope. . . .

II. If proof and success elude the leader for long, if he appears deserted by his god or his magical or heroic powers, above all, if his leadership fails to benefit his followers, it is likely that his charismatic authority will disappear. This is the genuine meaning of the divine right of kings (*Gottesgnadentum*). . . .

III. An organized group subject to charismatic authority will be called a charismatic community (*Gemeinde*). It is based on an emotional form of communal relationship (*Vergemeinschaftung*). The administrative staff of a charismatic leader does not consist of "officials"; least of all are its members technically trained. It is not chosen on the basis of social privilege nor from the point of view of domestic or personal dependency. It is rather chosen in terms of the charismatic qualities of its members. The prophet has his disciples; the warlord his bodyguard; the leader, generally, his agents (*Vertrauensmänner*). There is no such thing as appointment or dismissal, no career, no promotion. There is only a call at the instance of the leader on the basis of the charismatic qualification of those he summons. There is no hierarchy; the leader merely intervenes in general or in individual cases when he considers the members of his staff lacking in charismatic qualification for a given task. There is no such thing as a bailiwick or definite sphere of competence, and no appropriation of official powers on the basis of social privileges. There may, however, be territorial or functional limits to charismatic powers and to the individual's mission. There is no such thing as a salary or a benefice.

Disciples or followers tend to live primarily in a communistic relationship with their leader on means which have been provided by voluntary gift. There are no established administrative organs. In their place are agents who have been provided with charismatic authority by their chief or who possess charisma of their own. There is no system of formal rules, of abstract legal principles, and hence no process of rational judicial decision oriented to them. But equally there is no legal wisdom oriented to judicial precedent. Formally concrete judgments are newly created from case to case and are originally regarded as divine judgments and revelations. From a substantive point of view, every charismatic authority would have to subscribe to the proposition, "It is written . . . but I say unto you . . ." The genuine prophet, like the genuine military leader and every true leader in this sense, preaches, creates, or demands *new* obligations—most typically, by virtue of revelation, oracle, inspiration, or of his own will, which are recognized by the members of the religious, military, or party group because they come from such a source. Recognition is a duty. When such an authority comes into conflict with the competing authority of another who also claims charismatic

sanction, the only recourse is to some kind of a contest, by magical means or an actual physical battle of the leaders. In principle, only one side can be right in such a conflict; the other must be guilty of a wrong which has to be expiated.

Since it is "extra-ordinary," charismatic authority is sharply opposed to rational, and particularly bureaucratic, authority, and to traditional authority, whether in its patriarchal, patrimonial, or estate variants, all of which are everyday forms of domination; while the charismatic type is the direct antithesis of this. Bureaucratic authority is specifically rational in the sense of being bound to intellectually analysable rules; while charismatic authority is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules. Traditional authority is bound to the precedents handed down from the past and to this extent is also oriented to rules. Within the sphere of its claims, charismatic authority repudiates the past, and is in this sense a specifically revolutionary force. It recognizes no appropriation of positions of power by virtue of the possession of property, either on the part of a chief or of socially privileged groups. The only basis of legitimacy for it is personal charisma so long as it is proved; that is, as long as it receives recognition and as long as the followers and disciples prove their usefulness charismatically. . . .

IV. Pure charisma is specifically foreign to economic considerations. Wherever it appears, it constitutes a "call" in the most emphatic sense of the word, a "mission" or a "spiritual duty." In the pure type, it disdains and repudiates economic exploitation of the gifts of grace as a source of income, though, to be sure, this often remains more an ideal than a fact. It is not that charisma always demands a renunciation of property or even of acquisition, as under certain circumstances prophets and their disciples do. The heroic warrior and his followers actively seek booty; the elective ruler or the charismatic party leader requires the material means of power. The former in addition requires a brilliant display of his authority to bolster his prestige. What is despised, so long as the genuinely charismatic type is adhered to, is traditional or rational everyday economizing, the attainment of a regular income by continuous economic activity devoted to this end. Support by gifts, either on a grand scale involving donation, endowment, bribery and honoraria, or by begging, constitute the voluntary type of support. On the other hand, "booty" and extortion, whether by force or by other means, is the typical form of charismatic provision for needs. From the point of view of rational economic activity, charismatic want satisfaction is a typical anti-economic force. It repudiates any sort of involvement in the everyday routine world. It can only tolerate, with an attitude of complete emotional indifference, irregular, unsystematic acquisitive acts. In that it relieves the recipient of economic concerns, dependence on property income can be the economic basis of a charismatic mode of life for some groups; but that is unusual for the normal charismatic "revolutionary." . . .

V. In traditionalist periods, charisma is *the* great revolutionary force. The likewise revolutionary force of "reason" works from *without:* by altering the situations of life and hence its problems, finally in this way changing men's attitudes toward them; or it intellectualizes the individual. Charisma, on the other hand, *may* effect a subjective or *internal* reorientation born out of suffering, conflicts, or enthusiasm. It may then result in a radical alteration of the central attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the different problems of the "world." In prerationalistic periods, tradition and charisma between them have almost exhausted the whole of the orientation of action.

The Routinization of Charisma

In its pure form charismatic authority has a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures. The social relationships directly involved are strictly personal, based on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities. If this is not to remain a purely transitory phenomenon, but to take on the character of a permanent relationship, a "community" of disciples or followers or a party organization or any sort of political or hierocratic organization, it is necessary for the character of charismatic authority to become radically changed. Indeed, in its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only *in statu nascendi.* It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both.

The following are the principal motives underlying this transformation: (a) The ideal and also the material interests of the followers in the continuation and the continual reactivation of the community, (b) the still stronger ideal and also stronger material interests of the members of the administrative staff, the disciples, the party workers, or others in continuing their relationship. Not only this, but they have an interest in continuing it in such a way that both from an ideal and a material point of view, their own position is put on a stable everyday basis. This means, above all, making it possible to participate in normal family relationships or at least to enjoy a secure social position in place of the kind of discipleship which is cut off from ordinary worldly connections, notably in the family and in economic relationships.

These interests generally become conspicuously evident with the disappearance of the personal charismatic leader and with the problem of *succession.* The way in which this problem is met—if it is met at all and the charismatic community continues to exist or now begins to emerge—is of crucial importance for the character of the subsequent social relationships. . . .

Concomitant with the routinization of charisma with a view to insuring adequate succession, go the interests in its routinization on the part of the administrative staff. It is only in the initial stages and so long as the charismatic leader acts in a way which is completely outside everyday social organization, that it is possible for his followers to live communistically in a community of faith and enthusiasm, on gifts, booty, or sporadic acquisition. Only the members of the small group of enthusiastic disciples and followers are prepared to devote their lives purely idealistically to their call. The great majority of disciples and followers will in the long run "make their living" out of their "calling" in a material sense as well. Indeed, this must be the case if the movement is not to disintegrate.

Hence, the routinization of charisma also takes the form of the appropriation of powers and of economic advantages by the followers or disciples, and of regulating recruitment. This process of traditionalization or of legalization, according to whether rational legislation is involved or not, may take any one of a number of typical forms. . . .

For charisma to be transformed into an everyday phenomenon, it is necessary that its anti- economic character should be altered. It must be adapted to some form of fiscal organization to provide for the needs of the group and hence to the economic conditions necessary for raising taxes and contributions. When a charismatic movement develops in the direction of prebendal provision, the "laity" becomes differentiated from the "clergy"—derived from κλῆρος, meaning a "share"—, that is, the participating members of the charismatic administrative staff which has now become routinized. These are the priests of the developing "church." Correspondingly, in a developing political body—the "state" in the rational case—vassals, benefice-holders, officials or appointed party officials (instead of voluntary party workers and functionaries) are differentiated from the "tax payers." . . .

It follows that, in the course of routinization, the charismatically ruled organization is largely transformed into one of the everyday authorities, the patrimonial form, especially in its estate-type or bureaucratic variant. Its original peculiarities are apt to be retained in the charismatic status honor acquired by heredity or office- holding. This applies to all who participate in the appropriation, the chief himself and the members of his staff. It is thus a matter of the type of prestige enjoyed by ruling groups. A hereditary monarch by "divine right" is not a simple patrimonial chief, patriarch, or sheik; a vassal is not a mere household retainer or official. Further details must be deferred to the analysis of status groups.

As a rule, routinization is not free of conflict. In the early stages personal claims on the charisma of the chief are not easily forgotten and the conflict between the charisma of the office or of hereditary status with personal charisma is a typical process in many historical situations.

Introduction to "Bureaucracy"

In this essay, Weber defines the "ideal type" of bureaucracy, outlining its unique and most significant features. The salience of Weber's description lies in the fact that bureaucracies have become the dominant

form of social organization in modern society. Indeed, bureaucracies are indispensable to modern life. Without them, a multitude of necessary tasks could not be performed with the degree of efficiency required for serving large numbers of individuals. For instance, strong and effective armies could not be maintained, the mass production of goods and their sale would slow to a trickle, the thousands of miles of public roadways could not be paved, hospitals could not treat the millions of patients in need of care, and establishing a university capable of educating 20,000 students would be impossible. Of course, all of these tasks and countless others are themselves dependent on a bureaucratic organization capable of collecting tax dollars from millions of people.

Despite whatever failings particular bureaucracies may exhibit, the form of organization is as essential to modern life as the air we breathe. In accounting for the ascendancy of bureaucracies, Weber is clear:

> The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has also been its purely *technical* superiority over any other form of organization. . . . Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration. . . . As compared with all [other] forms of administration, trained bureaucracy is superior on all these points. (Weber [1925d] 1978:973, emphasis in the original)

A number of features ensure the technical superiority of bureaucracies. First, authority is hierarchically structured, making for a clear chain of command. Second, selection of personnel is competitive and based on demonstrated merit. This reduces the likelihood of incompetence that can result from appointing officials through nepotism or by virtue of tradition. Third, a specialized division of labor allows for the more efficient completion of assigned tasks. Fourth, bureaucracies are governed by formal, impersonal rules that regulate all facets of the organization. As a result, predictability of action and the strategic planning that it makes possible are better guaranteed.

As the epitome of the process of rationalization, however, Weber by no means embraced unequivocally the administrative benefits provided by bureaucracies. While in important respects, bureaucracies are dependent on the development of mass democracy for their fullest expression, they nevertheless create new elite groups of experts and technocrats. Moreover, he contended that their formal rules and procedures led to the loss of individual freedom.[1] For those working in bureaucracies (and countless do), Weber saw the individual "chained to his activity in his entire economic and ideological existence" (Weber [1925d] 1978:988). The bureaucrat adopts as his own the detached, objective attitudes on which the efficiency and predictability of bureaucracies depend. Operating "'[w]ithout regard for persons . . . [b]ureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is 'dehumanized,' the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation" (ibid.:975). Whether as an employee or as a client, who among us has not been confronted with the faceless impersonality of a bureaucracy immune to the "special circumstances" that, after all, make up the very essence of our individuality?

[1]As we noted earlier, Weber's analysis of bureaucratic organizations offers an important critique of Marx's perspective. While Marx argued that capitalism is the source of alienation in modern society, Weber saw the source lying in bureaucracies and the rational procedures they embody. Additionally, in recognizing that bureaucracies create elite groups of technocrats who pursue their own professional interests, Weber also suggested that such organizational leaders (i.e., state officials) do not necessarily advance the interests of a ruling capitalist class. A related theme can likewise be found in "Class, Status, Party."

"Bureaucracy" (1925)

Max Weber

Characteristics of Modern Bureaucracy

Modern officialdom functions in the following manner:

I. There is the principle of official *jurisdictional areas,* which are generally ordered by rules, that is, by laws or administrative regulations. This means:

1. The regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure are assigned as official duties.
2. The authority to give the commands required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means, physical, sacerdotal, or otherwise, which may be placed at the disposal of officials.
3. Methodical provision is made for the regular and continuous fulfillment of these duties and for the exercise of the corresponding rights; only persons who qualify under general rules are employed.

In the sphere of the state these three elements constitute a bureaucratic *agency,* in the sphere of the private economy they constitute a bureaucratic *enterprise.* Bureaucracy, thus understood, is fully developed in political and ecclesiastical communities only in the modern state, and in the private economy only in the most advanced institutions of capitalism. Permanent agencies, with fixed jurisdiction, are not the historical rule but rather the exception. This is even true of large political structures such as those of the ancient Orient, the Germanic and Mongolian empires of conquest, and of many feudal states. In all these cases, the ruler executes the most important measures through personal trustees, table-companions, or court-servants. Their commissions and powers are not precisely delimited and are temporarily called into being for each case.

II. The principles of *office hierarchy* and of channels of appeal (*Instanzenzug*) stipulate a clearly established system of super- and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones. Such a system offers the governed the possibility of appealing, in a precisely regulated manner, the decision of a lower office to the corresponding superior authority. With the full development of the bureaucratic type, the office hierarchy is *monocratically* organized. The principle of hierarchical office authority is found in all bureaucratic structures: in state and ecclesiastical structures as well as in large party organizations and private enterprises. It does not matter for the character of bureaucracy whether its authority is called "private" or "public."

When the principle of jurisdictional "competency" is fully carried through, hierarchical subordination—at least in public office—does not mean that the "higher" authority is authorized simply to take over the business of the "lower." Indeed, the opposite is the rule; once an office has been set up, a new incumbent will always be appointed if a vacancy occurs.

III. The management of the modern office is based upon written documents (the "files"), which are preserved in their original or draft form, and upon a staff of subaltern officials and scribes of all sorts. The body of officials working in an agency along with the respective apparatus of material implements and the files makes up a *bureau* (in private enterprises often called the "counting house," *Kontor*).

In principle, the modern organization of the civil service separates the bureau from the private domicile of the official and, in general, segregates official activity from the sphere of private life. Public monies and equipment are divorced from the private property of the official. This condition is everywhere the product of a long development. Nowadays, it is found in public as well as in private enterprises; in the latter, the principle extends even to the entrepreneur at the top. In principle, the *Kontor* (office) is separated from the

household, business from private correspondence, and business assets from private wealth. The more consistently the modern type of business management has been carried through, the more are these separations the case. The beginnings of this process are to be found as early as the Middle Ages.

It is the peculiarity of the modern entrepreneur that he conducts himself as the "first official" of his enterprise, in the very same way in which the ruler of a specifically modern bureaucratic state [Frederick II of Prussia] spoke of himself as "the first servant" of the state. The idea that the bureau activities of the state are intrinsically different in character from the management of private offices is a continental European notion and, by way of contrast, is totally foreign to the American way.

IV. Office management, at least all specialized office management—and such management is distinctly modern—usually presupposes thorough training in a field of specialization. This, too, holds increasingly for the modern executive and employee of a private enterprise, just as it does for the state officials.

V. When the office is fully developed, official activity demands the *full working capacity* of the official, irrespective of the fact that the length of his obligatory working hours in the bureau may be limited. In the normal case, this too is only the product of a long development, in the public as well as in the private office. Formerly the normal state of affairs was the reverse: Official business was discharged as a secondary activity.

VI. The management of the office follows *general rules,* which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned. Knowledge of these rules represents a special technical expertise which the officials possess. It involves jurisprudence, administrative or business management.

The reduction of modern office management to rules is deeply embedded in its very nature. The theory of modern public administration, for instance, assumes that the authority to order certain matters by decree—which has been legally granted to an agency—does not entitle the agency to regulate the matter by individual commands given for each case, but only to regulate the matter abstractly. This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor, which, as we shall see, is absolutely dominant in patrimonialism, at least in so far as such relationships are not fixed by sacred tradition.

The Position of the Official Within and Outside of Bureaucracy

All this results in the following for the internal and external position of the official:

I. Office Holding as a Vocation

That the office is a "vocation" (*Beruf*) finds expression, first, in the requirement of a prescribed course of training, which demands the entire working capacity for a long period of time, and in generally prescribed special examinations as prerequisites of employment. Furthermore, it finds expression in that the position of the official is in the nature of a "duty" (*Pflicht*). This determines the character of his relations in the following manner: Legally and actually, office holding is not considered ownership of a source of income, to be exploited for rents or emoluments in exchange for the rendering of certain services, as was normally the case during the Middle Ages and frequently up to the threshold of recent times, nor is office holding considered a common exchange of services, as in the case of free employment contracts. Rather, entrance into an office, including one in the private economy, is considered an acceptance of a specific duty of fealty to the purpose of the office (*Amtstreue*) in return for the grant of a secure existence. It is decisive for the modern loyalty to an office that, in the pure type, it does not establish a relationship to a *person,* like the vassal's or disciple's faith under feudal or patrimonial authority, but rather is devoted to *impersonal* and *functional* purposes. These purposes, of course, frequently gain an ideological halo from cultural values, such as state, church, community, party or enterprise, which appear as surrogates for a this-worldly or other-worldly personal master and which are embodied by a given group.

The political official—at least in the fully developed modern state—is not considered the personal servant of a ruler. Likewise, the bishop, the priest and the preacher are in fact no longer, as in early Christian times, carriers of a purely personal charisma, which offers other-worldly sacred values under the personal mandate of a master, and in principle responsible only to him, to everybody who appears worthy of them and asks for them. In spite of the partial survival of the old theory, they have become officials in the service of a functional purpose, a purpose which in the present-day "church" appears at once impersonalized and ideologically sanctified.

II. The Social Position of the Official

A. Social esteem and status convention. Whether he is in a private office or a public bureau, the modern official, too, always strives for and usually attains a distinctly elevated *social esteem* vis-à-vis the governed. His social position is protected by prescription about rank order and, for the political official, by special prohibitions of the criminal code against "insults to the office" and "contempt" of state and church authorities.

The social position of the official is normally highest where, as in old civilized countries, the following conditions prevail: a strong demand for administration by trained experts; a strong and stable social differentiation, where the official predominantly comes from socially and economically privileged strata because of the social distribution of power or the costliness of the required training and of status conventions. The possession of educational certificates or patents . . . is usually linked with qualification for office; naturally, this enhances the "status element" in the social position of the official. Sometimes the status factor is explicitly acknowledged; for example, in the prescription that the acceptance of an aspirant to an office career depends upon the consent ("election") by the members of the official body. . . .

Usually the social esteem of the officials is especially low where the demand for expert administration and the hold of status conventions are weak. This is often the case in new settlements by virtue of the great economic opportunities and the great instability of their social stratification: witness the United States.

B. Appointment versus election: Consequences for expertise. Typically, the bureaucratic official is appointed by a superior authority. An official elected by the governed is no longer a purely bureaucratic figure. Of course, a formal election may hide an appointment—in politics especially by party bosses. This does not depend upon legal statutes, but upon the way in which the party mechanism functions. Once firmly organized, the parties can turn a formally free election into the mere acclamation of a candidate designated by the party chief, or at least into a contest, conducted according to certain rules, for the election of one of two designated candidates.

In all circumstances, the designation of officials by means of an election modifies the rigidity of hierarchical subordination. In principle, an official who is elected has an autonomous position vis-à-vis his superiors, for he does not derive his position "from above" but "from below," or at least not from a superior authority of the official hierarchy but from powerful party men ("bosses"), who also determine his further career. The career of the elected official is not primarily dependent upon his chief in the administration. The official who is not elected, but appointed by a master, normally functions, from a technical point of view, more accurately because it is more likely that purely functional points of consideration and qualities will determine his selection and career. As laymen, the governed can evaluate the expert qualifications of a candidate for office only in terms of experience, and hence only after his service. Moreover, if political parties are involved in any sort of selection of officials by election, they quite naturally tend to give decisive weight not to technical competence but to the services a follower renders to the party boss. This holds for the designation of otherwise freely elected officials by party bosses when they determine the slate of candidates as well as for the free appointment of officials by a chief who has himself been elected. The contrast, however, is relative: substantially similar conditions hold where legitimate monarchs and their subordinates appoint officials, except that partisan influences are then less controllable.

Where the demand for administration by trained experts is considerable, and the party faithful have to take into account an intellectually developed, educated, and free "public opinion," the use of unqualified officials redounds upon the party in power at the next election. Naturally, this is more likely to happen when the officials are appointed by the chief. The demand for a trained administration now exists in the United States, but wherever, as in the large cities, immigrant votes are "corralled," there is, of course, no effective public opinion. Therefore, popular election not only of the administrative chief but also of his subordinate officials usually endangers, at least in very large administrative bodies which are difficult to supervise, the expert qualification of the officials as well as the precise functioning of the bureaucratic mechanism, besides weakening the dependence of the officials upon the hierarchy. The superior qualification and integrity of Federal judges appointed by the president, as over and against elected judges, in the United States is well known, although both types of officials are selected primarily in terms of party considerations. The great changes in American metropolitan administrations demanded by reformers have been effected essentially by elected mayors working with an apparatus of officials who were appointed by them. These reforms have thus come

about in a "caesarist" fashion. Viewed technically, as an organized form of domination, the efficiency of "caesarism," which often grows out of democracy, rests in general upon the position of the "caesar" as a free trustee of the masses (of the army or of the citizenry), who is unfettered by tradition. The "caesar" is thus the unrestrained master of a body of highly qualified military officers and officials whom he selects freely and personally without regard to tradition or to any other impediments. Such "rule of the personal genius," however, stands in conflict with the formally "democratic" principle of a generally elected officialdom.

C. Tenure and the inverse relationship between judicial independence and social prestige. Normally, the position of the official is held for life, at least in public bureaucracies, and this is increasingly the case for all similar structures. As a factual rule, *tenure for life* is presupposed even where notice can be given or periodic reappointment occurs. In a private enterprise, the fact of such tenure normally differentiates the official from the worker. Such legal or actual lifetenure, however, is not viewed as a proprietary right of the official to the possession of office as was the case in many structures of authority of the past. Wherever legal guarantees against discretionary dismissal or transfer are developed, as in Germany for all judicial and increasingly also for administrative officials, they merely serve the purpose of guaranteeing a strictly impersonal discharge of specific office duties. . . .

D. Rank as the basis of regular salary. The official as a rule receives a *monetary* compensation in the form of a *salary,* normally fixed, and the old age security provided by a pension. The salary is not measured like a wage in terms of work done, but according to "status," that is, according to the kind of function (the "rank") and, possibly, according to the length of service. The relatively great security of the official's income, as well as the rewards of social esteem, make the office a sought-after position, especially in countries which no longer provide opportunities for colonial profits. In such countries, this situation permits relatively low salaries for officials.

E. Fixed career lines and status rigidity. The official is set for a "career" within the hierarchical order of the public service. He expects to move from the lower, less important and less well paid, to the higher positions. The average official naturally desires a mechanical fixing of the conditions of promotion: if not of the offices, at least of the salary levels. He wants these conditions fixed in terms of "seniority," or possibly according to grades achieved in a system of examinations. Here and there, such grades actually form a *character indelebilis* of the official and have lifelong effects on his career. To this is joined the desire to reinforce the right to office and to increase status group closure and economic security. All of this makes for a tendency to consider the offices as "prebends" of those qualified by educational certificates. The necessity of weighing general personal and intellectual qualifications without concern for the often subaltern character of such patents of specialized education, has brought it about that the highest political offices, especially the "ministerial" positions, are as a rule filled without reference to such certificates. . . .

The Technical Superiority of Bureaucratic Organization Over Administration by Notables

The decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely *technical* superiority over any other form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic apparatus compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form. As compared with all collegiate, honorific, and avocational forms of administration, trained bureaucracy is superior on all these points. And as far as complicated tasks are concerned, paid bureaucratic work is not only more precise but, in the last analysis, it is often cheaper than even formally unremunerated honorific service. . . .

Today, it is primarily the capitalist market economy which demands that the official business of public administration be discharged precisely, unambiguously, continuously, and with as much speed as possible. Normally, the very large modern capitalist enterprises are themselves unequalled models of strict bureaucratic organization. Business management throughout rests on increasing precision, steadiness, and, above all, speed of operations. This, in turn, is determined by the peculiar nature of the modern means of communication, including, among other things, the news service of the press. The extraordinary increase in the speed by which public announcements, as well as economic and political facts, are transmitted exerts a steady and sharp pressure in the direction of speeding up the tempo of administrative reaction towards various situations. The optimum of such reaction time is normally attained only by a strictly bureaucratic organization. (The fact that the bureaucratic apparatus also can, and indeed does, create certain definite impediments for the discharge of business in a manner best adapted to the individuality of each case does not belong in the present context.)

Bureaucratization offers above all the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specializing administrative functions according to purely objective considerations. Individual performances are allocated to functionaries who have specialized training and who by constant practice increase their expertise. "Objective" discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to *calculable rules* and "without regard for persons."

"Without regard for persons," however, is also the watchword of the market and, in general, of all pursuits of naked economic interests. Consistent bureaucratic domination means the leveling of "status honor." Hence, if the principle of the free market is not at the same time restricted, it means the universal domination of the "class situation." That this consequence of bureaucratic domination has not set in everywhere proportional to the extent of bureaucratization is due to the differences between possible principles by which polities may supply their requirements. However, the second element mentioned, calculable rules, is the most important one for modern bureaucracy. The peculiarity of modern culture, and specifically of its technical and economic basis, demands this very "calculability" of results. When fully developed, bureaucracy also stands, in a specific sense, under the principle of *sine ira ac studio.* Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is "dehumanized," the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is appraised as its special virtue by capitalism.

The more complicated and specialized modern culture becomes, the more its external supporting apparatus demands the personally detached and strictly objective *expert,* in lieu of the lord of older social structures who was moved by personal sympathy and favor, by grace and gratitude. Bureaucracy offers the attitudes demanded by the external apparatus of modern culture in the most favorable combination. In particular, only bureaucracy has established the foundation for the administration of a rational law conceptually systematized on the basis of "statutes," such as the later Roman Empire first created with a high degree of technical perfection. During the Middle Ages, the reception of this [Roman] law coincided with the bureaucratization of legal administration: The advance of the rationally trained expert displaced the old trial procedure which was bound to tradition or to irrational presuppositions. . . .

The Leveling of Social Differences

In spite of its indubitable technical superiority, bureaucracy has everywhere been a relatively late development. A number of obstacles have contributed to this, and only under certain social and political conditions have they definitely receded into the background.

A. Administrative Democratization

Bureaucratic organization has usually come into power on the basis of a leveling of economic and social differences. This leveling has been at least relative, and has concerned the significance of social and economic differences for the assumption of administrative functions.

Bureaucracy inevitably accompanies modern *mass democracy,* in contrast to the democratic self-government of small homogeneous units. This results from its characteristic principle: the abstract regularity of the exercise of authority, which is a result of the demand for "equality before the law" in the personal and functional sense—hence, of the horror of "privilege," and the principled rejection of doing business "from case to case." Such regularity also follows from the social preconditions of its origin. Any non-bureaucratic administration of a large social structure rests in some way upon the fact that existing social, material, or honorific preferences and ranks are connected with administrative functions and duties. This usually means that an economic or a social exploitation of position, which every sort of administrative activity provides to its

bearers, is the compensation for the assumption of administrative functions.

Bureaucratization and democratization within the administration of the state therefore signify an increase of the cash expenditures of the public treasury, in spite of the fact that bureaucratic administration is usually more "economical" in character than other forms. Until recent times—at least from the point of view of the treasury—the cheapest way of satisfying the need for administration was to leave almost the entire local administration and lower judicature to the landlords of Eastern Prussia. The same is true of the administration by justices of the peace in England. Mass democracy which makes a clean sweep of the feudal, patrimonial, and—at least in intent—the plutocratic privileges in administration unavoidably has to put paid professional labor in place of the historically inherited "avocational" administration by notables.

B. Mass Parties and the Bureaucratic Consequences of Democratization

This applies not only to the state. For it is no accident that in their own organizations the democratic mass parties have completely broken with traditional rule by notables based upon personal relationships and personal esteem. Such personal structures still persist among many old conservative as well as old liberal parties, but democratic mass parties are bureaucratically organized under the leadership of party officials, professional party and trade union secretaries, etc. In Germany, for instance, this has happened in the Social Democratic party and in the agrarian mass-movement; in England earliest in the caucus democracy of Gladstone and Chamberlain which spread from Birmingham in the 1870's. In the United States, both parties since Jackson's administration have developed bureaucratically. In France, however, attempts to organize disciplined political parties on the basis of an election system that would compel bureaucratic organization have repeatedly failed. The resistance of local circles of notables against the otherwise unavoidable bureaucratization of the parties, which would encompass the entire country and break their influence, could not be overcome. Every advance of simple election techniques based on numbers alone as, for instance, the system of proportional representation, means a strict and inter-local bureaucratic organization of the parties and therewith an increasing domination of party bureaucracy and discipline, as well as the elimination of the local circles of notables—at least this holds for large states.

The progress of bureaucratization within the state administration itself is a phenomenon paralleling the development of democracy, as is quite obvious in France, North America, and now in England. Of course, one must always remember that the term "democratization" can be misleading. The *demos,* itself, in the sense of a shapeless mass, never "governs" larger associations, but rather is governed. What changes is only the way in which the executive leaders are selected and the measure of influence which the *demos,* or better, which social circles from its midst are able to exert upon the content and the direction of administrative activities by means of "public opinion." "Democratization," in the sense here intended, does not necessarily mean an increasingly active share of the subjects in government. This may be a result of democratization, but it is not necessarily the case.

We must expressly recall at this point that the political concept of democracy, deduced from the "equal rights" of the governed, includes these further postulates: (1) prevention of the development of a closed status group of officials in the interest of a universal accessibility of office, and (2) minimization of the authority of officialdom in the interest of expanding the sphere of influence of "public opinion" as far as practicable. Hence, wherever possible, political democracy strives to shorten the term of office through election and recall, and to be relieved from a limitation to candidates with special expert qualifications. Thereby democracy inevitably comes into conflict with the bureaucratic tendencies which have been produced by its very fight against the notables. The loose term "democratization" cannot be used here, in so far as it is understood to mean the minimization of the civil servants' power in favor of the greatest possible "direct" rule of the *demos,* which in practice means the respective party leaders of the *demos.* The decisive aspect here—indeed it is rather exclusively so—is *the leveling of the governed* in face of the governing and bureaucratically articulated group, which in its turn may occupy a quite autocratic position, both in fact and in form. . . .

The Objective and Subjective Bases of Bureaucratic Perpetuity

Once fully established, bureaucracy is among those social structures which are the hardest to destroy. Bureaucracy is *the* means of transforming social action into rationally organized action. Therefore, as an instrument of rationally organizing authority relations, bureaucracy was and is a power instrument of the first order for one who controls the bureaucratic apparatus. Under otherwise equal conditions, rationally organized and directed action (*Gesellschaftshandeln*) is superior to every kind of collective behavior (*Massenhandeln*) and also social action (*Gemeinschaftshandeln*) opposing it. Where administration has been completely bureaucratized, the resulting system of domination is practically indestructible.

The individual bureaucrat cannot squirm out of the apparatus into which he has been harnessed. In contrast to the "notable" performing administrative tasks as a honorific duty or as a subsidiary occupation (avocation), the professional bureaucrat is chained to his activity in his entire economic and ideological existence. In the great majority of cases he is only a small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism which prescribes to him an essentially fixed route of march. The official is entrusted with specialized tasks, and normally the mechanism cannot be put into motion or arrested by him, but only from the very top. The individual bureaucrat is, above all, forged to the common interest of all the functionaries in the perpetuation of the apparatus and the persistence of its rationally organized domination.

The ruled, for their part, cannot dispense with or replace the bureaucratic apparatus once it exists, for it rests upon expert training, a functional specialization of work, and an attitude set on habitual virtuosity in the mastery of single yet methodically integrated functions. If the apparatus stops working, or if its work is interrupted by force, chaos results, which it is difficult to master by improvised replacements from among the governed. This holds for public administration as well as for private economic management. Increasingly the material fate of the masses depends upon the continuous and correct functioning of the ever more bureaucratic organizations of private capitalism, and the idea of eliminating them becomes more and more utopian.

Increasingly, all order in public and private organizations is dependent on the system of files and the discipline of officialdom, that means, its habit of painstaking obedience within its wonted sphere of action. The latter is the more decisive element, however important in practice the files are. The naive idea of Bakuninism of destroying the basis of "acquired rights" together with "domination" by destroying the public documents overlooks that the settled orientation of *man* for observing the accustomed rules and regulations will survive independently of the documents. Every reorganization of defeated or scattered army units, as well as every restoration of an administrative order destroyed by revolts, panics, or other catastrophes, is effected by an appeal to this conditioned orientation, bred both in the officials and in the subjects, of obedient adjustment to such [social and political] orders. If the appeal is successful it brings, as it were, the disturbed mechanism to "snap into gear" again.

The objective indispensability of the once-existing apparatus, in connection with its peculiarly "impersonal" character, means that the mechanism—in contrast to the feudal order based upon personal loyalty—is easily made to work for anybody who knows how to gain control over it. A rationally ordered officialdom .continues to function smoothly after the enemy has occupied the territory; he merely needs to change the top officials. It continues to operate because it is to the vital interest of everyone concerned, including above all the enemy. After Bismarck had, during the long course of his years in power, brought his ministerial colleagues into unconditional bureaucratic dependence by eliminating all independent statesmen, he saw to his surprise that upon his resignation they continued to administer their offices unconcernedly and undismayedly, as if it had not been the ingenious lord and very creator of these tools who had left, but merely some individual figure in the bureaucratic machine which had been exchanged for some other figure. In spite of all the changes of masters in France since the time of the First Empire, the power apparatus remained essentially the same.

Such an apparatus makes "revolution," in the sense of the forceful creation of entirely new formations of authority, more and more impossible—technically, because of its control over the modern means of communication (telegraph etc.), and also because of its increasingly rationalized inner structure. The place of "revolutions" is under this process taken by *coups d'état,* as again France demonstrates in the classical manner since all successful transformations there have been of this nature. . . .

Discussion Questions

1. How can the rise of "new age" movements, extreme sports, religious fundamentalisms, and spiritual healers be explained in light of Weber's discussion of rationalization and the "disenchantment of the world"?

2. What are some of the essential differences between Weber's view of religion and Durkheim's? Which view better explains the role of religion in contemporary life?

3. In developing his ideal type of bureaucracy, Weber highlights the rational aspects of this organizational form. In what ways might bureaucracies exhibit "irrational" or inefficient features? How have bureaucracies "dehumanized" social life, transforming modernity into an iron cage?

4. Given Weber's three types of legitimate domination, the political system in the United States is best characterized as based on legal authority. What elements of the other types of authority can, nevertheless, still be found? How might political controversies result from the "illegitimate mixing" of different types of authority? Provide examples.

5. Following Weber's arguments in *The Protestant Ethic* and *Spirit of Capitalism*, what role did the "calling" and outward signs of grace play in the development of capitalism? When capitalism was firmly established, what effect did it have on the religiously based ideas?

6. In what way(s) is Weber's analysis of class, status, and party different from Marx's understanding of class and social stratification? What are the implications of the difference(s) for designating the proletariat a revolutionary force for social change and for understanding the exercise of power in the United States?

Part II

Classical Sociological Theory

Expanding the Foundation