

Otto B. Wiersma (mei 2013)
Religieus-ethisch reductionisme bij Max Weber?

In zijn opstel 'De Protestantse Ethiek en de Geest van het Kapitalisme' (1905) is Max Weber op zoek naar de oorzaken van de opkomst van het 'rationele kapitalisme' van de moderne ondernemingen en de daarmee samenhangende kapitaalsaccumulatie.

Het rationele kapitalisme wordt erdoor gekenmerkt dat veel geld verdienen beschouwd wordt als het streefdoel van een goede en dus verantwoorde levenswijze (17), waarvoor een rationele aanwending van kapitaal in een permanente onderneming en de rationele organisatie van techniek (22) en arbeid wordt toegepast (18). Dat brengt een andere manier van zakendoen met zich mee: selectie van de beste werknemers, controle van de productie en producten en verkoopmethoden volgens het principe 'lagere prijzen, meer zaken' (20). Op basis van rigoreuze berekeningen wordt de materiële behoeftenbevrediging rationeel georganiseerd (22).

Dit rationele kapitalisme vraagt om een specifieke werk-instelling, namelijk een visie op werk als levensroeping en een hoge waardering van en vasthouden aan de resultaten van je beroepswerk. MW meent hiervoor een beslissende rol gevonden te hebben in het puriteins Protestantisme.

MW stelt dat beroepsarbeid voor de puriteinse Protestanten een probaat middel, om niet te zeggen het enige middel was, om zich van hun staat van genade te vergewissen (57). Deze religieus-ethische overtuiging zou de hefboom zijn geweest voor het ontwikkelen van waarden als hard werken en soberheid en geleid hebben tot kapitaalsaccumulatie middels herinvesteringen, het streven naar rijkdom met als doel: rijk te zijn als bewijs van wedergeboorte en authentiek geloof (55).

MW voert er echter geen substantieel bewijs voor aan dat de puriteinse Protestanten er destijds van overtuigd waren dat (hun) rijkdom een bewijs van wedergeboorte en authentiek geloof was.

Vermoedelijk omdat dit bewijs ook niet is te leveren, want de puriteinse Protestanten lieten zich veeleer leiden door een aantal kerngedachten die hiermee nogal op gespannen voet staan, onder meer door rijkdom juist te relativieren.

Je zou deze kerngedachten kort kunnen samenvatten met:

God kiest mensen uit om gered te worden [1e orde] [sola gratia]
Christus is gezonden om deze redding te realiseren [2e orde] [solo Christo]
door het geloof ontvangen de uitverkorenen de zekerheid van hun redding [3e orde] [sola fide]
de staat van genade en het geloof daarin leiden tot liefde en goede daden [4e orde]
en goede daden (zoals bv in beroepsarbeid) kunnen soms leiden tot mooie resultaten [5e orde]

Deze 5e orde resultaten zoals bv rijkdom kunnen op zichzelf geen stevig bewijs van redding vormen omdat ook goddelozen erg rijk kunnen zijn en omdat de gelovige die rijk is niet gegarandeerd rijk blijft: rijkdom als zodanig is allerminst vast en zeker. Daarbij is de epistemologische kerngedachte van het puriteins Protestantisme bepalend: sola scriptura – alleen de bijbel (itt het RK clerikale leergezag) is de bron van betrouwbare kennis. En die bijbel biedt nu net heel wat relativeringen van rijkdom.

In dit verband is het wel geestig dat deze relativeringen ook te vinden zijn in de context van een bijbelcitaat dat een cruciale rol speelt in het betoog van MW. De associatie van beroepsarbeid met (religieus-ethisch geladen) 'roeping' (vocatio) ontleent MW aan Luthers vertaling van een fragment uit Jezus Sirach, een deuterocanoniek geschrift gedateerd rond 180 BCE.

Het betreft JS 11:20-22 (ontleend aan <http://lutherbibel.net/>)

20 Bleibe in Gottes wort / vnd vbe dich drinnen / vnd beharre in deinem Beruff / Vnd las dich nicht jren / wie die Gottlosen nach Gut trachten.

21 Vertrauwe du Gott / vnd bleibe in deinem Beruff /

22 Denn es ist dem HERRN gar leicht / einen Armen Reich zu machen.

Dat in dit fragment bepaald niet gesuggereerd wordt dat 'rijkdom' als zodanig er een bewijs van is gered (uitverkoren) te zijn, blijkt uit de wijdere context ervan. Lees maar eens JS 10:19 – 14:19 op de site van de NBV: <http://www.biblija.net/biblija.cgi?m=Sir&id18=1&pos=0&set=10&lang=nl> en noteer daaruit de gedachten over rijkdom en armoede. Voor wie dat iets te veel moeite is, staan [hier](#) een paar van die gedachten.

Uit deze completere passage van JS is te concluderen: rijkdom biedt geen zekerheid (gered te zijn / zalig te worden) en is in zichzelf ook een tamelijk 'onzeker goed', maar als je het bezit, mag je er ook volop van genieten (wat dus iets anders is dan 'hedonistisch verkwisten').

MW legt te veel nadruk op het religieus-ethische aspect van de opkomst van het rationele kapitalisme ('onvoorstelbaar grote invloed van de religieuze bewustzijnsinhouden' 59) en schrijft de puriteinse Protestanten daarbij een door henzelf niet gedeelde religieus-ethische overtuiging toe.

De door hen gedeelde praxis (hard werken, sober leven, ondernemerschap, kapitaalsaccumulatie) moet dus andere bronnen hebben, waar MW zelf overigens ook op wijst door te spreken van 'sociaal-culturele condities' en het open houden van de mogelijkheid van zowel 'materialistische' als 'spiritualistische' causale interpretaties (59).

Als de door MW aangevoerde doorslaggevende verklaring van de opkomst van het rationele kapitalisme niet bevredigend is, in welke richting moeten de verschillende verklaringlijnen dan gezocht worden? Aanzetten hiertoe zijn te vinden bij de vele critici van de these van MW (voor samenvattingen zie verderop in deze tekst).

Een aantal van die aanzetten zijn terug te vinden in het volgende overzichtje van een serie contextuele condities vanaf de opkomst van het Protestantisme (zo rond 1500), specifiek kapitalistische waarden als hard werken, soberheid, eerlijkheid en vertrouwen, hun effecten op gedrag (spaarzaamheid, innovativiteit, consumptie en fertiliteit) en de economische effecten daarvan zoals opkomst van grote ondernemingen geleid volgens de principes van het rationele kapitalisme: [opkomst van het rationele kapitalisme](#).

De pijlen in dit overzichtje suggereren een causale richting, maar er is alle reden om je bij de verschillende combinaties van elementen grondig of te vragen wat nu precies wat 'veroorzaakt'.

Weber, M., The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, 1905

NL tekst, selectie Rob:

De Protestantse Ethiek en de Geest van het Kapitalisme
I Godsdienst en sociale stratificatie

Bijna alle rijke steden in de meest welvarende steden van Duitsland werden
Protestants vanaf de 16e eeuw. Waarom? [omdat ze geen zin meer hadden om
zo veel af te dragen aan de RK kerk?]

emancipatiedrang, echter ook tirannie van het puritanisme

14 Protestanten: meer technisch[-wetenschappelijk] onderwijs

Katholieken: meer onderwijs in de humanoria

minderheden: ambities in economische activiteit? tegenargument: Protestanten

overall meer economische ambities, of ze nu een meer- of minderheid zijn

katholieken: onthechting; protestanten: secularisering [?] van alle domeinen

calvinisme, quakers, mennonieten: diepe vroomheid + zin voor zaken >

> ontluiken van werklust en vooruitgangsgedachte

II De Geest van het Kapitalisme

16 vanuit benaderende omschrijvingen naar een conceptueel geheel

cf Benjamin Franklin (1748): tijd is geld; krediet is geld; geld brengt geld voort

17 modern kapitalisme: veel geld verdienen als ethische norm, winst als doel op zich
sociale ethiek: beroepsplicht

18 historisch materialisme: economische situatie > ideeën

Weber: ideeën > ontwikkeling v/h moderne kapitalisme

De kapitalistische geest is een ethisch geïnspireerde keuze voor de rationele
aanwending van kapitaal in een permanente onderneming en de rationele organisatie
van arbeid.

19 Traditionalisme: arbeiders die niet meer hoeven te verdienen dan ze nodig
hebben om te leven; ondernemers die ook met mate werken om genoeg te verdienen
voor een behoorlijk leven en een appeltje voor de dorst

20 > andere manier van zaken doen, controle producten, verkoopmethoden, lagere
prijzen = meer zaken > rationaliseringsproces > soberheid, herinvestering van fortuin
kern: hard werken en soberheid: ideaaltype van de kapitalistische ondernemer
leven om te werken ipv werken om te leven

21 concept van rijkdom als doel op zich

22 In het 14e/15e eeuwse Florence (het meest kapitalistische centrum van die tijd)
was de modern kapitalistische mentaliteit (najagen van winst en rijkdom als
doel op zich) niet te rechtvaardigen.

welk ideeëngoed maakte het najagen van winst tot een roeping waartoe het
individu zich moreel verplicht voelde?

economisch succes berustend op rigoreuze berekening ipv op beschermde privileges,
politiek opportunisme of irrationele speculaties.

rationalisering niet alomvattend - bv achteroplopend in het recht in Engeland

23 wat is de bron van het idee van 'werk als beroep en roeping'?

[associatief betoog nav Luther's 'Beruf', Duitse bijbelvertaling... Jezus Sirach 11,
zie echter de context van deze passages...]

IV De religieuze fundamenten van het sekuliere [sc in en op de wereld gericht] ascetisme

Calvinisme: predestinatie > logica van het fatalisme (gekozen of niet), echter psychologica van
het activisme > zekerheid van uitverkiezing (certitudo salutis) door (materiële resultaten of de
kwaliteit van ?) het werk 'in majorem Dei gloriam' (dus niet de gemeenschap of de naasten als
einddoel): 'fides efficax' > rationalisering v/h leven: alles gericht op dat ene doel: de eer van God.

[alternatief: geloof/vertrouwen in redding is (in principe) voldoende zekerheid;
relativering van rijkdom (ook een ongelovige kan rijk en een arme kan gered zijn)]

[Katholicisme: zekerheid geboden door de kerkelijke sacramenten en eigen 'goede werken']

[Lutheranisme: zekerheid geboden door unio mystica, mystieke eenwording met God, vergeving
van zonden meer accent dan de praktische heiliging van het leven]

Piëtisme: praxis pietatis in conventikels ook wel uitgewerkt in de gedachte dat God de
uitverkorenen zegent met het succes van hun arbeid.

Methodisme: sterkere sentimenten in de emotionele bekeringsact > heiligmaking (het zelf
aanvoelen van de genade en volmaaktheid) > rationeel streven naar volmaaktheid.

Baptistische secten, Mennonieten, Quakers: innerlijk getuigenis van de H.Geest > permanente
verkondiging > zuivere gemeenschap > onberispelijk gedrag > bewijs van 'wedergeboorte';
afwending van politieke beroepen en publieke ambten > meer economische beroepen.

V Ascetisme en de Geest van het Kapitalisme

49 Richard Baxter - puriteinse moraaltheologie, cf Spenser en Barclay of Voetius

Baxter mn omdat hij de periode representeert die onmiddellijk voorafging aan
de transformatie ervan tot utilitarisme [geseculariseerde variant]

50 veroordeling van rust in/genot van rijkdom

actief bezig zijn tot Gods glorie - vs inactieve contemplatie

51 hard werken als doel van het leven (vs Thomas van Aquinas: arbeid alleen
nodig voor overleven)

Baxter: rijk en arm moet zich wijden aan zijn beroep
arbeidsverdeling:

Thomas: individuele plaats in het leven is contingent
 Luther: eigen situatie aanvaarden en je houden aan de bepaalde grenzen
 Baxter: werk tot Gods eer, roeping (calling) (cf Adam Smith: bedrevenheid opvoeren, specialisatie, hogere productiviteit)
 52 Baxter's puriteinse element: werk als ascetische oefening een bewijs van de staat van genade, systematisch en methodisch leven voor de 'ascese in de wereld'.
 > meerdere beroepen en ook veranderen van beroep is mogelijk, als nuttiger = meer opbrengst voor de gemeenschap en voor de beroepsbeoefenaar welvaart als bekroning van de vervulling van de beroepsplicht
 NB het gaat hier niet om theologische concepten maar om de praktische gevolgen van de religieuze oriëntatie van de beroepsethiek.
 53 anti-autoritaire ascetische puritanisten vs plezierzoekers
 Puriteinen: sport alleen als ontspanning voor een goede fysieke conditie, niet om zich met anderen te meten (vs eerzucht en wedden)
 Puriteins misprijzen van artistieke bezigheid (bv theatre as idle talks, onnuttig en derhalve irrationeel)
 Puriteinse uniformering van kledingstijlen (vs opsmuk) - ideaal voor gestandaardiseerde productie (vs verheerlijking van de mens)
 54 mens als beheerder van geld en goed - niets verkwisten, vs spontaan genot van rijkdom > afremmen consumptie (mn van luxegoederen)
 Barclay: rationeel verwerven van bezit vs irrationeel gebruik van bezit
 55 [alsnog?] onaanvaardbaar: streven naar rijkdom met als enig doel 'rijk zijn' wel ambivalent: rijkdom niet doel op zich, maar wel teken van goddelijke zegening; hefboom-effect van de combinatie van hard werken en ascetische soberheid voor de opkomst van de Geest van het [moderne] Kapitalisme.
 Accumulatie van kapitaal > productieve herinvestering > accumulatie van kapitaal > ...
 Bevordering van de tendens naar een burgerlijke, economisch rationele levenswijze.
 Puritanisme stond zo aan de wieg van de moderne zakenman.
 56 ME monastiek ascetisme > puriteins ascetisme > seculier ascetisme > seculier utilitarisme (ontdaan van religieuze inspiratie)
 57 beroepsplicht > bevordering arbeidsproductiviteit
 ondernemer: winst maken als 'roeping'
 arbeider: werk als 'roeping'
 noot: Men ziet dat de belangen van God en die van de werkgevers hier op een merkwaardige wijze hand in hand gaan.
 religieuze ascese > beroepsidee > rationele ingesteldheid > geest v/h moderne kapitalisme
 58 Goethe: specialisme (met een fundamenteel ascetische, burgerlijke levensstijl) betekent afscheid van de tijd waarin het menselijk bestaan universalistisch georiënteerd kon zijn.
 De puritein WILDE een beroepsmens zijn, wij MOETEN beroepsmensen zijn
 [in de moderne economische orde met haar mechanische productie die haar eigen voorwaarden oplegt]
 De materiële goederen hebben de macht over de mensen verworven ('stalen kooi') en de geest van het religieuze ascetisme is uit de kooi geweken - de beroepsplicht staat niet meer in verband met de hoogste spirituele waarden;
 winstbejag, ontdaan van elke religieuze en ethische betekenis
 steeds meer verdienen als 'sportieve prestatie'
 59 Vervolgonderzoek: hoe is het Protestants ascetisme beïnvloed door de economische condities - dit om te voorkomen dat eenzijdig [historisch] materialisme vervangen wordt door een al even eenzijdige spiritualistische causale interpretatie van cultuur en geschiedenis. Beide zijn mogelijk, en de historische waarheid is er geenszins mee gediend als één van de twee zou pretenderen conclusief te zijn.
 [werd dit onderzoek verricht in het volgende hoofdstuk?]
 [waar treffen we in de geschiedenis meer deze combinatie van hard werken en soberheid aan? daar ook cumulatieve kapitaaleffecten? zo niet, waarom niet?]

paar citaten uit de context van Jezus Sirach 11:20-22

Weber: 'vocatio', 'Beruf' als roeping met een beroep op Jezus Sirach 11:20-22

Dat is een wel erg smalle basis voor 'leven om te werken' gericht op kapitaals-accumulatie als bron van de zekerheid gered te zijn.

Dit lijkt een 'misreading' op grond van selectief shoppen in de JS brontekst.

Lees JS 10:19 – 14:19 voor een heel wat genuanceerder beeld van rijkdom en armoede.

Een paar verzen uit deze hoofdstukken:

10: 23 Het is niet rechtvaardig een arm maar wijs mens te verachten

26 Voel jezelf niet te wijs om te werken,

pronk niet met jezelf wanneer het je slecht gaat.

27 Beter dat je werkt en van alles voorzien bent dan dat je pronkt met jezelf en niets te eten hebt.

30 Een arme wordt geëerd om zijn bekwaamheid, een rijke om zijn rijkdom.

31 Wie als arme wordt geëerd, wordt het als rijke nog meer.

Wie als rijke wordt geminacht, wordt het als arme nog meer.

11: 11 Er zijn er die werken, zwoegen, rennen, maar des te meer schieten ze tekort.

12 Anderen zijn traag en hebben hulp nodig, ze hebben een gebrek aan kracht en een overvloed aan armoede.

Maar de Heer beziet hen welwillend, hij verheft hen uit hun nederig bestaan

13 en richt hun hoofd weer op, tot verbazing van velen.

14 Het goede en het kwade, leven en dood, armoede en rijkdom komen van de Heer.

15 Wijsheid, inzicht en kennis van de wet komen van de Heer, van hem komen liefde en goede daden.

17 De gaven van de Heer zijn het blijvend bezit van vrome mensen, zijn gunst brengt hun altijd veel goeds.

18 Een mens wordt rijk door angstvallig te sparen, maar kijk eens wat zijn loon is. Hij zegt:

19 'Nu kan ik een rustig leven leiden en van mijn bezit genieten,' maar hij weet niet voor hoe lang.

Wanneer hij sterft moet hij alles nalaten aan anderen.

20 Houd je aan je verplichtingen, wees daarin bestendig, en blijf werken tot je oud bent.

21 Bewonder de daden van een zondaar niet, geloof in de Heer en volhard in je werk.

Het kost de Heer geen enkele moeite om plotseling, in korte tijd, een arme rijk te maken.

22 De zegen van de Heer is het loon van een vroom mens, na korte tijd heeft hij al veel succes.

23 Zeg niet: 'Heb ik aan iets gebrek, kan het mij nog voorspoediger gaan?'

24 Zeg niet: 'Ik ben van niemand afhankelijk, hoe zou mij nu tegenspoed kunnen treffen?'

25 In goede tijden weet men niets meer van de slechte, in de slechte niets meer van de goede.

26 Het kost de Heer geen enkele moeite om een mens wanneer hij sterft naar zijn daden te vergelden.

13: 2 Til geen gewicht dat te zwaar voor je is, ga niet om met iemand die sterker en rijker is dan jij.

Waarom zou een aarden pot met een ketel omgaan?

De pot krijgt een duw en breekt.

3 Een rijke handelt onrechtvaardig, en maakt nog ophef ook, een arme wordt onrecht gedaan, en hij moet zich ook nog verontschuldigen.

4 Als je een rijke tot nut bent profiteert hij van je, als je tekortschiet laat hij je links liggen.

24 Rijkdom waaraan geen zonde kleeft is goed, goddelozen beweren dat armoede slecht is.

14: 3 Een vrek geniet niet van zijn rijkdom, waartoe dient het bezit van een gierigaard?

4 Wie alles oppot en zichzelf tekortdoet spaart voor anderen, zij zullen van zijn bezit genieten.

10 Een hebzuchtig mens begeert voedsel, maar zijn eigen tafel is karig gedekt.

11 Mijn kind, als je iets bezit, doe jezelf dan te goed en breng de Heer op een waardige manier offers.

14 Laat de goede dagen je niet ontsnappen, het genot waarop je recht hebt niet aan je voorbijgaan.

15 De vrucht van je gezwoeg laat je toch niet aan een ander na, wat je hebt verworven laat je toch niet door het lot verdelen?

16 Geef, neem en geniet, want in het dodenrijk zijn geen genoegens.

conclusie: rijkdom biedt geen zekerheid (gered te zijn / zalig te worden) en is in zichzelf ook een tamelijk 'onzeker goed', maar als je het bezit, mag je er ook volop van genieten

ad Weber IV

Weber's these van 'hard werken en soberheid gericht op kapitaals-accumulatie als bron van de zekerheid gered te zijn' en zijn selectieve beroep op JS 11 doet geen recht aan de kernwaarden van het protestantisme: sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia, solo Christo, soli Deo gloria, in contradistinction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of the day:

sola scriptura (vs RC Magisterium: teaching authority as embodied in the episcopacy)

sola fide ("Justification by faith only, that [second order] yields good works" vs RC "Faith and good works yield justification")

sola gratia (salvation comes by divine grace or "unmerited favor", unearned gift only, not as something merited by the sinner vs RC good works & clerical sacraments)

solo Christo (Christ is the only mediator between God and man, vs RC priest and church as mediating entities)

soli Deo gloria (all glory is to be due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through His will and action vs RC canonized saints, popes, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy)

conclusie: volgens het Protestantisme biedt niet het resultaat van werk (zoals bv kapitaalsaccumulatie) de zekerheid (gered te zijn / zalig te worden), maar alleen het geloof in God's genade door Christus

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Protestant_Ethic_and_the_Spirit_of_Capitalism

In the book, Weber wrote that capitalism in northern Europe evolved when the Protestant (particularly Calvinist) ethic influenced large numbers of people to engage in work in the secular world, developing their own enterprises and engaging in trade and the accumulation of wealth for investment. In other words, the Protestant work ethic was an important force behind the unplanned and uncoordinated mass action that influenced the development of capitalism. This idea is also known as the "Protestant Ethic thesis."

He defines spirit of capitalism as the ideas and esprit that favour the rational pursuit of economic gain: "We shall nevertheless provisionally use the expression 'spirit of capitalism' for that attitude which, in the pursuit of a calling [berufsmäßig], strives systematically for profit for its own sake in the manner exemplified by Benjamin Franklin."

Weber points out that such a spirit is not limited to Western culture if one considers it as the attitude of individuals, but that such individuals - heroic entrepreneurs, as he calls them - could not by themselves establish a new economic order (capitalism).

He further noted that the spirit of capitalism could be divorced from religion, and that those passionate capitalists of his era were either passionate against the Church or at least indifferent to it.

After defining the "spirit of capitalism," Weber argues that there are many reasons to find its origins in the religious ideas of the Reformation. Many others like William Petty, Montesquieu, Henry Thomas Buckle, John Keats have noted the affinity between Protestantism and the development of commercialism.

Weber traced the origins of the Protestant ethic to the Reformation, though he acknowledged some respect for secular everyday labor as early as the Middle Ages.

Protestant self-confidence took the place of Catholic priestly assurance of God's grace. Worldly success became one measure of that self-confidence.

Weber saw the fulfillment of the Protestant ethic not in Lutheranism, which was too concerned with the reception of divine spirit in the soul, but in Calvinistic forms of Christianity. The trend was carried further still in Pietism.[4]:90 The Baptists diluted the concept of the calling relative to Calvinists, but other aspects made its congregants fertile soil for the development of capitalism - namely, a lack of paralyzing ascetism, the refusal to accept state office and thereby develop unpolitically, and the doctrine of control by conscience which caused rigorous honesty.

The new religions (in particular, Calvinism and other more austere Protestant sects) effectively forbade wastefully using hard earned money and identified the purchase of luxuries as a sin. Donations to an individual's church or congregation were limited due to the rejection by certain Protestant sects of icons.

Finally, donation of money to the poor or to charity was generally frowned on as it was seen as furthering beggary.

Weber lamented that the loss of religious underpinning to capitalism's spirit has led to a kind of involuntary servitude to mechanized industry.

Weber saw other factors in play, as well. They included the rationalism in scientific pursuit, growing connections between observation and mathematics, development of scholarship and jurisprudence, rational systematisation of government administration (development of bureaucracy) and advances in entrepreneurship.

In essence Weber's "Spirit of Capitalism" is effectively and more broadly a Spirit of Rationalization.

Weber's criticisms of Karl Marx and his theories. While Marx's historical materialism held that all human institutions - including religion - were based on economic foundations, The Protestant Ethic turns this theory on its head.

The economist and historian Henryk Grossman criticises Weber's analysis on two fronts. Firstly with reference to Marx's extensive work which showed that the stringent legal measures taken against poverty and vagabondage was a reaction to the massive population shifts caused by the enclosure of the commons in England. And, secondly, in Grossman's own work showing how this

"bloody legislation" against those who had been put off their land was effected across Europe and especially in France. For Grossman this legislation, the outlawing of idleness and the poorhouses they instituted physically forced people from serfdom into wage-labor. For him, this general fact was not related to protestantism and so capitalism came largely by force and not by any vocational training regarding an inner-worldliness of protestantism. Thus Grossman solves the central crux of Weber's analysis: his puzzlement over how enough people were recruited into early capitalist manufacturing. Grossman shows how people were in fact forced to obey capitalist principles not on any religious grounds but rather from legalistic grounds of force made by those who held power and wanted more production for their own benefit but also, often in their own view, for their nation's benefit.

In a paper published on 10 November 2009, Harvard economist Davide Cantoni tested Weber's Protestant hypothesis using population and economic growth in second-millennium Germany as the data set, with negative results.

Dudley and Blum write:

"Evidence of falling wages in Catholic cities and rising wages in Protestant cities between 1500 and 1750, during the spread of literacy in the vernacular, is inconsistent with most theoretical models of economic growth. In *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber suggested an alternative explanation based on culture. Here, a theoretical model confirms that a small change in the subjective cost of cooperating with strangers can generate a profound transformation in trading networks.

H.M. Robertson, in his book *Aspects of Economic Individualism*, argued against the historical and religious claims of Weber. Robertson points out that capitalism began to flourish not in Britain, but in 14th century Italy, a decidedly different epoch. Since this is true, then the rise of capitalism cannot be attributed to Adam Smith, the Protestant Revolution, etc. In fact, Robertson goes further, and states that what happened in Britain was rather a retrogression from what was achieved in Italy centuries earlier.

Liberal economic theory was developed by French and Italian Catholics, who were influenced by the Scholastics. The British economic thought was rather a step backwards since it espoused the Labor Theory of Value, which had already been proved incorrect by the School of Salamanca.

It has recently been suggested that Protestantism has indeed influenced positively the capitalist development of respective social systems not so much through the "Protestant ethics" but rather through the promotion of literacy. (Becker and Wossmann)

<http://dspace.uta.edu/bitstream/handle/10106/309/umi-uta-1247.pdf;jsessionid=B963E510D531BDAF2A0F09D3D8CEF64D?sequence=1>

Crowell, E., *Weber's "Protestant Ethic" and His Critics*, 2006

Weber's claim is that rational capitalism is the source of the industrial revolution and the growth of capitalism as the preeminent universal economic system. Weber claimed that this rational capitalism came into being by a work ethic rooted in Calvinism. Weber's rational capitalism is capitalism that values growth and efficient production. It is different from previous versions of capitalism in that it is based on a concept of continual growth.

Weber's question was not concerning the creation of capitalism because there is evidence that it had existed before, but rather the growth of capitalism in Europe.

Protestantism was the main religion in Europe during the rise of the

industrial revolution, and more industrialists were Protestant than Catholic. Weber saw the work ethic of the ascetic Protestant as the key.

Prior to ascetic Protestantism the mentality of the working class was to make enough to live on, or enough to provide for basic needs. The change occurs when the mentality changed to making more than one needed for basic needs, thus making income above the subsistence level.

Before addressing some of the key concepts and terminology that Weber used it is important to address the method that he used to draw his examples. This method is referred to by Weber as the 'ideal type'.

The ideal typical concept will help to develop our skill in imputation in research: it is no 'hypothesis' but it offers guidance to the construction of the 'hypothesis'. It is not a description of reality but it aims to give unambiguous means of expression of such a description.

In Marx's view of capitalism, capitalism is not about work, it is about the exploitation of the worker. Weber is redefining capitalism.

W not a conceptual 'definition' but only by a provisional illustration of what is here meant by the 'spirit' of capitalism.

W used some of Benjamin Franklin's maxims for illustrating the 'spirit' of capitalism:
time is money [not working half a day is losing more than half a day's wage]
credit is money [money as tool and means to an end: making more money, e.g. by interest]
money can beget money [money as a method to create wealth]
reputation as greatest asset [honesty, prudence]

The development of the 'capitalist spirit' can most easily be understood as part of the total development of rationalism and must be derived from the latter's fundamental attitude to the ultimate problems of life. (Weber 1905:27)

'Beruf' associated with English 'calling'.

English Puritan by the name of Richard Baxter, as his primary example of Ascetic Protestantism work vs idle talk, luxurious living, and even more sleep than is required for health Work is the end and the purpose of life commanded by God. (cf Thomas Aquinas: "Work is only necessary 'natural ratione' for the preservation of the life of the individual and the community").

His critics took issue with practically every point of his argument believing it to be complete fabrication, and some even claimed historical fantasy.

Facts: rise in incomes from 1870 [?] to 1905

The three early German critics of Weber were Fischer (historian?), Rachfahl (historian), and Sombart (political economist and an economic historian, writing a book 'Jews and the Rise of Modern Capitalism').

An ideal type is a conceptual tool with which to approach reality; and in this sense is a 'conceptual construct'. When confronted with an empirical situation, it is often helpful to introduce a series of ideal types. In doing so, Weber argues, it is more important to capture what is essential about a phenomenon than to often reproduce the often confusing empirical situation. (Chalcraft)

By creating an 'ideal type' the process of creating an argument is greatly simplified. It is this

simplification that caused the greatest deal of controversy for Weber. However, it is a very useful tool in the digestion of large amounts of empirical information.

criticisms regarding:

- ideal type and its cultural assumptions [eg 'Beruf' as common word, not 'calling' - the last seen as 'idealist interpretation of history', selective witnesses (Franklin, Baxter)]

- overemphasized the role of Calvinism + wrong interpretation of it [eg asceticism separate practice]

- ambiguous and unscientific nature of his study [no creedal statements or formal treaties, but only pastoral writings; 'inner worldly asceticism' as misnomer; lack of sources and historical data; groups that were Protestant and Calvinist but did not follow the pattern of the Puritans that he claims lead to modern capitalism, e.g. Hutterite colony - community of goods; Holdeman Mennonites - shun the accumulation of any earthly possessions that are not needed]

- historical inaccuracy:

Sombart

believed that the discovery of and desire for wealth had begun much earlier than the Reformation. It was during the Middle Ages that people had come to cherish the value of money, and secularization and urbanization had strongly supported this notion. By the end of the Middle Ages, he argued, the desire to earn and possess money, especially gold, had turned into a mass phenomenon. Sombart believed that the rise of capitalism was prior to the Reformation in the influence of the Jews. 4 reasons: (1) Their dispersion over a wide area, (2) Their treatment as strangers, (3) their semicitizenship (4) their wealth.

[W: but they did not create the growth of rational capitalism]

Tawney

believed that Weber attributes capitalism to a false source, that in fact the origins of capitalism are rooted in Medieval Europe prior to the Reformation (in Venice and Florence, or in southern Germany and Flanders).

Historically it is one-sided to suggest that one aspect of society such as religion can have the effect Weber claims of Calvinism.

Weber ignores or at least touches too lightly on, intellectual movements, which were favorable to the growth of business enterprise and to individualist attitude toward economic relations (e.g. Machiavelli).

Weber oversimplified the nature of Calvinism (too many variations within the doctrine of various Calvinist sects)

Weber's responses to his critics

in the Protestant Ethic Weber stated that he was only spelling out one of many factors, conducting an ideal-type analysis, in the sense that he had isolated one 'pure' condition for capitalism, that was in reality mixed with other conditions in the complexities of history.

Weber was not producing the reason for capitalism, but a reason for capitalism.

Capitalism Weber says, has existed at many times and in many places. It existed among the ancients of Babylon, in India and in China, and in the slave trade of the Roman Empire. There were merchants with powerful guilds in the European Middle Ages. But none of these is representative of what he called 'rational capitalism'. (Collins 1986:53)

Rational capitalism as Weber saw it was a brand of capitalism that existed not for profit alone, but for the very sake of production, a form that was concerned with growth as much as the immediate profits.

Difference Catholic 'asceticism' and Calvinistic 'asceticism' - confusion.

[Frugality/parsimony is not (yet) 'asceticism', although 'asceticism' implies frugality/parsimony]

Facts about prominence in business: Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist/Quaker/Baptists?

According to Weber the Calvinist/Quaker/Baptists.

Sombart (saw Marx as most brilliant sociologist - religion as control of the masses by the Capitalist).

'rational capitalism' [modern capitalism]
capitalist 'take off', seeking to perpetuate itself, industrial revolution into vast business enterprises, creating factories and wealth, money as 'tool', ...
(different from market economy, use of money and search for business profits (this to be found in Ancient World and the Orient))

Sombart: Franklin's views based on the thoughts of the Renaissance writer Leon Batista Alberti on housekeeping.

Weber afgezet tegen:
Synode van Dordrecht 1618-1619 > canon of Dordt
divine predestination vs free choice (Arminianism)
Fear of sin and of not learning of one's election in fact shows the reason for the 'Protestant Ethic'.
Not just work for the sake of work; it is work because it pleases God.

Weber's 'General Theory of History'
Weber saw Protestantism as only one element of the rise of capitalism.
[but] one of the most important factors ...

Weber:
Business leaders and owners of capital, as well as the skilled higher strata of the labor force, and especially the higher technical or commercial-trained staff of modern enterprises tend to be predominately Protestant. (Weber 1905: 3) [fact?]

Collins:
Hence the original conditions necessary for the emergence of capitalism were not necessary for its continuation. The original ethic could fade, once the calculability of massive economics transactions had become a matter of routine. (Collins 1986:96)

<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/frey.protestant.ethic>

Frey, D., The Protestant Ethic Thesis, 2010

money making as a calling
Calvinism, Weber argued, changed the spirit of capitalism, transforming it into a rational and unashamed pursuit of profit for its own sake.

Calvinism accomplished this transformation, not so much by its direct teachings, but (according to Weber) by the interaction of its core theology with human psychology.

Uncertainty about salvation, according to Weber, had the psychological effect of producing a single-minded search for certainty.

If one glorified God and conformed to what was known of God's requirements for this life then that might provide some evidence of election. Thus upright living, which could not earn salvation, returned as evidence of salvation.

This singleness of purpose left no room for diversion and created what Weber called an ascetic character.

This "providential interpretation of profit-making justified the activities of the business man," and led to "the highest ethical appreciation of the sober, middle-class, self-made man" (163).

A sense of calling and an ascetic ethic applied to laborers as well as to entrepreneurs and businessmen. Nascent capitalism required reliable, honest, and punctual labor (23-24), which in traditional societies had not existed (59-62). That free labor would voluntarily submit to the systematic discipline of work under capitalism required an internalized value system unlike any seen before (63). Calvinism provided this value system (178-79).

In short, the Protestant ethic ordered life according to its own logic, but also according to the needs of modern capitalism as understood by Weber.

Weber's book showed little sympathy for either Calvinism, which he thought encouraged a "spiritual aristocracy of the predestined saints" (121), or capitalism, which he thought irrational for valuing profit for its own sake. Finally, although Weber's thesis could be viewed as a rejoinder to Karl Marx (1818-1883), Weber claimed it was not his goal to replace Marx's one-sided materialism with "an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation..." of capitalism (183).

Much reason to discredit a cause-and-effect relationship. Sometimes capitalism preceded Calvinism (Netherlands), and sometimes lagged by too long a period to suggest causality (Switzerland). Sometimes Catholic countries (Belgium) developed about the same time as the Protestant countries. Even in America, capitalist New England was cancelled out by the South, which Samuelsson claims also shared a Puritan outlook.

Frey (1998) has argued that orthodox Puritanism exhibited an inherent tension between approval of economic activity and emphasis upon the moral boundaries that define acceptable economic activity. A calling was never meant for the service of self alone but for the service of God and the common good. That is, Puritan thinkers always viewed economic activity against the backdrop of social and moral obligation. (..) If nothing else, business would be enhanced and made more efficient by an environment of honesty and trust.

Evidence of Links between Values and Capitalism

Jonassen argued that capitalism emerged in nineteenth-century Norway only after an indigenous, Calvinist-like movement challenged the Lutheranism and Catholicism that had dominated the country.

Engerman's (2000) review of economic historians shows that they have given little explicit attention to Weber in recent years. However, they show an interest in the impact of cultural values broadly understood on economic growth.

Granato, Inglehart and Leblang (1996, 610) incorporated cultural values in cross-country growth models on the grounds that Weber's thesis fits the historical evidence in Europe and America. They did not focus on Protestant values, but accepted "Weber's more general concept, that certain cultural factors influence economic growth..." Specifically they incorporated a measure of "achievement motivation" in their regressions and concluded that such motivation "is highly relevant to economic growth rates" (625). Conversely, they found that "post-materialist" (i.e., environmentalist) values are correlated with slower economic growth. Barro's (1997, 27) modified Solow growth models also find that a "rule of law index" is associated with more rapid economic growth. This index is a proxy for such things as "effectiveness of law enforcement, sanctity of contracts and ... the security of property rights."

Conclusion

Historical evidence from the Reformation era (sixteenth century) does not provide much support for a strong (causal) interpretation of the Protestant ethic. However, the emergence of a vigorous capitalism in Puritan England and its American colonies (and the case of Norway) at least keeps the case open. More recent quantitative evidence supports the hypothesis that cultural values count in economic development.

Rather, such presumably secular values as the need to achieve, intolerance for corruption, respect for property rights, are all correlated with economic growth. However, in its own time Puritanism produced a social and economic ethic known for precisely these sorts of values.

Gannon, S., *The Popularity of Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: An Analysis of Historical Trends of Scholarship*, 2002

The Protestant Ethic thesis used scientific principles, focused on the psychology of the individual, and utilised a new methodology of 'ideal types' that was original and useful to the field.

Weber's methodology held him back from discovering the true nature of the phenomena that he wanted to investigate. His methodology created a theory that reduced logical struggles and grand dialectics to mere psychological origins, and discarded the modern (in terms of the search for natural laws) for the classical (the use of 'ideal types', which Antoni identified with the archetype-models of Plato) (Antoni, 1959).

Margaret Wilson Vine shed some light on why this interest existed. She argued that Weber was an exemplar of the international movement towards a psycho-sociological perspective that was denoted in Italy's Pareto and the United States' W.I. Thomas.

There was also a perception that his work applied a multi-causal explanation model (in the words of Daniel W. Rossides (1978), a model of 'pluralistic sociocultural positivism'

1980s There was some discussion during this period of the different types of rationality in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. For example, in Roger Brubaker's (1984) *The Limits of Rationality*, he discussed several different types (deliberate, systematic, calculatable, impersonal, exact, purely qualitative, rule-grounded, predictable, methodological, sober, scrupulous, logical, intelligible, consistent, anti-emotional, and conscious self-scrutiny [p.2]).

In Alan Swingewood's *A Short History of Sociological Thought* (originally published in 1984), he focused on how rationality caused the separation of the private domain from the public domain. He argued that this aspect of rationality was significant in Weber's essay.

However, during this period, scholars construed rationality to mean something different. Where it once represented a path of development that civilisations progressed upon, it came to mean a value label, which functioned to place value on Western civilisation, and devalue others.

The variety of methodologies that were attributed to Weber were empiricism, statistical analysis, micro-sociology, social psychology, the 'ideal type', verstehen, the need to link empirical data with theory, the role of agency, experimentation, the separating of values and subjectivities, objectivity, the multi-causal model of research, and, in general, positivism. Some of these methodologies are inconsistent with each other.

'Vulgar Marxism' presented a vision of society that was incompatible with the norms of the Western society. On one hand, economic determinism states that societies are determined by their economic mode of production. But in the West, there is a norm of 'individualism' that states that the individual is a creative element in history (Seidman, 1994). There is thus a conflict between this norm and this economic determinism. Weber's emphasis on the individual came as a salve to this irritation of 'vulgar Marxism'. It was this ability of Weber to soothe the conflict that made it so popular, even now.

I do not mean to imply that Weber's work was without merit. However, its often-uncritical acceptance and varied application by academics speak less to its inherent arguments, and volumes to its value to legitimate the often-changing programmes of scholars.

Baert, P., *Contextualizing Max Weber*
International Sociology 2007; 22; 119

There are a number of reasons why sociology has cultivated such a special relationship with its founders. First and foremost, sociologists have never achieved a clear consensus regarding the basic methodological principles and theoretical assumptions of their discipline.

Disagreement on fundamental approaches and principal conclusions keeps people wedded to the history of their discipline.

Although sociologists do not embrace the notion of scientific progress that can be found among natural scientists, they do assume that theory formation proceeds in a cumulative fashion, whereby intellectual achievements of the past are fundamental to and incorporated in present endeavours.

Karl Marx, Max Weber and Durkheim are the usual choices. Other candidates include, for instance, Georg Simmel (e.g. Levine, 1997) and Alexis de Tocqueville (e.g. Boudon, 2005).

the contextualist tradition in the history of political thought (e.g. Skinner, 1969; Tully, 1989), focusing as it does on the institutional and intellectual contexts in which sociological thought has been produced.

Weber's central methodological positions are clearly present in *The Protestant Ethic*. These include his rejection of a Marxist view of history, his use of ideal types, his commitment to methodological individualism, the role of *Verstehen* and the relationship between purposive action and unintended consequences.

Philip Gorski presents a more critical assessment of the Weber thesis. Gorski agrees with Weber that the Protestant Reformation played a significant role in the economic transformations that took place. However, he prefers to focus not on the intrinsic nature of Protestant beliefs, but on the differences in economic resources, incentives and institutions between North Atlantic (Netherlands and Britain) and continental Europe.

Weber did not criticize Ploetz's racial theories on moral grounds but showed the empirical and conceptual lacunae in his argument. Here, we see Weber's methodological orientation at work, insisting as he does that value-patterns and ideological orientations should not interfere with the research process as such.

<http://www.maxweberstudies.org/>

http://www.march.es/ceacs/publicaciones/working/archivos/1995_73.pdf

Hamilton, R.F.,
MAX WEBER'S THE PROTESTANT ETHIC
A COMMENTARY ON THE THESIS AND ON ITS
RECEPTION IN THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY
1995

Weber's argument in *The Protestant Ethic* may be treated as involving twelve steps, each of which requires independent analysis, investigation, and assessment.

The twelve claims and assessments follow:

1. Martin Luther expounded a new and distinctive religious doctrine: the concept of "the calling," secular occupations were invested with God-given purpose. Calling taken too economic and individualistic by MW.

2. Transmission of the new doctrine to followers: The calling.
Not in MW's version, but in ML's version as work for the collective good.

3. Calvin and his followers expound the doctrine of predestination.
At all points the theological specialists had to grapple with an insoluble contradiction. The reconciliation of the eternal decree on the one hand, and free will, repentance, and God's grace on the other, brought diverse, and ever-changing solutions.

4. Transmission of the doctrine to followers: Predestination.
The use of Richard Baxter as the exemplary representative was inappropriate. Weber's use of the Westminster Confession was seriously misleading. The predestination doctrine was being replaced by covenant theology even before the Civil War.

5. Among Calvinists, the predestination doctrine produced extreme salvation anxieties which were experienced in profound "inner isolation."
Not adequately supported by Weber; rejected in subsequent research. Kaspar von Greyerz's review of the limited evidence available for seventeenth century England showed predestination playing a "relatively minor role."

6. Calvinists were told that "intense worldly activity" may be taken as a sign of salvation.
Not supported by Weber; he presented no documentary evidence on this point. A recent review of relevant Dutch materials found no support for the claim thus providing grounds for rejection. Unlike the question of salvation anxieties, it should be noted, this is a testable claim: if valid, one should be able to cite the documentary evidence.

7. To gain that assurance, Calvinists engaged in remarkably disciplined economic activity.
Not supported: For this, one would have to establish, for example, that Puritans worked significantly harder than equivalent Anglicans. Such "outcome" differences are central to the validation of the entire Weber thesis. No evidence is presented to support this claim.

8. Calvinists accumulated considerable amounts of capital which, following religious strictures, were reinvested.
Not supported: The argument assumes capital accumulation and reinvestment (as opposed to other uses, such as hoarding, tithing, philanthropy). No evidence is presented on these questions.

9. The ethic and the later spirit cause substantial economic growth in Protestant nations, specifically in those influenced by Calvinism and its derivatives.
Not supported. The most frequently presented correlations are, to say the least, somewhat crude. That the Netherlands and England showed outstanding economic performance does not establish "Protestantism" as the cause. A more

detailed examination shows an unexpected relationship in the Netherlands (Catholicism in the higher ranks of Amsterdam; Calvinism in the lower classes or off on the Friesian fringes). The linkage of Puritanism (or Dissent) and economic takeoff in England is not demonstrated.

10. Sometime later, the original attitudes were transformed; the religious ethic disappeared and was replaced by the secular capitalist spirit.

Not supported. The support for this claim is extremely weak: one must assume that a few fragments taken from Benjamin Franklin's extensive writings do in fact represent "the spirit of capitalism" as defined by Weber. One must assume, furthermore, that the "spirit" is derived from Calvinist antecedents.

11. The argument of extension or of diffusion: the "spirit of capitalism" spreads out from the early centers and, later, has sweeping, general effects.

On the generalization of the spirit, on the Iron Cage, this too is unsupported.

No evidence is presented to demonstrate the universal presence of the compelling work ethic. No evidence is presented to demonstrate the diffusion of that ethic in prior decades or centuries to those previously untouched by ascetic Protestantism.

12. Late in the 19th century, one finds substantial differences in the economic and occupational standing of Protestants and Catholics, this resulting from "the permanent intrinsic character of their religious beliefs" (40).

The claim of significant Protestant-Catholic differences of achievement in the late nineteenth century was not adequately supported. The support "found" in the Baden school attendance figures involved a copying error and a causal argument that proved to be spurious.

Weber relies heavily on the results which particular beliefs 'might have had' on practice. This device entails the use of what has been called 'the conjectural preterite'; i.e., what a writer might

'logically' have gone on to say if he had extended his remarks or, as applied to behavior, what a person might have

done if he had acted out the 'logical' conclusion of his beliefs. It is a species of argument from ignorance which is

extremely difficult to answer except by drawing attention to its inherent subjectivity or by asking why the historian should have found it necessary to have recourse to such methods" (Viner, p. 156).

The Protestant Ethic thesis appears to be a social misconception, that is, a widespread agreement about facts or interpretation which is mistaken. In a footnote, Weber refers to his argument as a "sketch," a term which seems entirely appropriate. But in the text, in many confident statements, Weber moves far beyond that indication of the tentative or of the hypothetical and treats the thesis as a well-documented conclusion.

A scholarly analysis would recognize, cite, and deal with important criticisms. The complexities of the Dutch case, for example, should be indicated, especially the problematic relationship there of "religious affiliation and social stratification." The complexities of the English case ought to be noted and its outright rejection in Rubinstein's research should be reported.⁶ But this, by and large, has not been the case. The criticisms, as will be seen immediately, have been neglected.

The Weber thesis is generally neglected also in works of economic history. Many leading sources on the "history of industrialization" make no reference at all to "the Weber thesis." Phyllis Deane's comprehensive study of Britain's industrial

revolution has no index reference to Max Weber, to Protestantism, or to religion. Her chapters, incidentally, review and document the importance of a wide range of other factors, ones neglected in most of the sociological literature.

The most positive reception of the Weber thesis, by a considerable margin, is found in sociology.

There is, clearly, a serious disparity in the treatments of the Weber thesis. It is highly commended in sociology but is given little attention in the two fields most likely to have expert knowledge of the subject, Reformation history and economic history.

The Protestant Ethic is only a part of his world-historical project, one that reviewed the religions of China, of India, and of ancient Judaism.

absence of systematic evidence linking religion and economic development

Marshall's summary conclusion, that the only reasonable verdict is "not proven," seems entirely appropriate. The implication for Weber's defenders is easy: provide the necessary proof. In the process, the serious researcher should also consider (and, if possible, test) alternative hypotheses to account for the "rise of the West."

Alternative Hypotheses

Carlo Cipolla, the noted economic historian, argued the importance of two technological innovations. England and the Netherlands developed better ships, ones that were larger and more seaworthy. They also developed superior cannons. The combination of the two gave those nations a distinctive advantage. The large ship became a movable gun platform, one allowing the concentration of unusual firepower on targets that could be approached by sea. Nations facing the Atlantic adopted the innovations (with varying success and effectiveness). The two innovations made possible the "outreach program" known as the Age of Discovery. At the same time, however, Cipolla indicated, the new age began with a decisive defeat for "the West." The expansion of the Ottoman Turks disrupted the age-old trade routes to Asia thus, in part at least, stimulating the search for the Atlantic alternatives.

The Age of Discovery and the Turkish advances occurred simultaneously with the Reformation. Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor (and king of Spain), dealt with the conquest of the New World, with the Turks, and with Martin Luther.

Major continental powers, even if defensive in orientation, will ordinarily have more costly military requirements than nations on the periphery or those located behind natural barriers.

England (and later the United Kingdom), because of its insular setting, had distinctly lower military costs. Some tens or hundreds of thousands of men, moreover, were "freed" for productive economic activities.

Given England's island location, surplus population could be "exported" to underdeveloped colonies where they could perform productive economic activities (versus idleness at home).

Thus far, the discussion of the economic implications of military and geographic circumstances has treated only the "static" peacetime condition. But costs escalate dramatically in wartime.

After paying heavy wartime costs, Spain lost

the Netherlands, its flourishing commercial center. The Dutch were also Europe's leading shipbuilders, a decisive fact for the outcome of the struggle. Because of the continued need for ships, Spanish silver continued to flow to Amsterdam even after independence.

geographic division was a result of the conflict, not a precipitating cause. The rivers that held up Field Marshall Montgomery's advance for months in 1944 had the same impact centuries earlier. The rivers, it was argued, "enabled the rebellion to entrench itself in the North provinces while Spain recovered those situated on the wrong side of the strategic barrier." Later, two large migrations occurred; Catholics moved south and Protestants moved north.

The settlement of the War of Liberation gave the Dutch control over the Rhine allowing access into the interior. The settlement blocked the mouth of the Scheldt, Antwerp's river, that city now being part of the Spanish Netherlands. That political fact "set the stage for" the subsequent advance of "Protestant" Amsterdam.

Another key consideration, one rarely given adequate attention, involves public finance. Spain had the highest tax rates in Europe. A series of mistaken policies destroyed a flourishing woolen industry and ended some success in foodstuffs. France could not, or rather, did not successfully organize its finances. The sale of offices was inefficient, costly, and socially corrosive. The system of tax farming had similar consequences. By contrast, the Netherlands and England had low-cost and efficient tax arrangements. The greater pluralism in the Netherlands and in England, especially after 1688-1689, meant more effective input from people with a knowledge of business and commerce. The creation of the Bank of England made government borrowing easier and less costly than was the case in France or Spain. The lower interest rates that resulted also aided English commerce.

Religions all have some kind of institutional apparatus which, depending on the size, could represent a significant or a modest charge for the supporting economy. Jacob Viner quoted Christopher Hill on this question: Protestantism was a cheaper religion than Catholicism. But Weber, he added, avoiding an obvious economic fact, "makes no reference to this theme in his explanation of...the relative economic backwardness of Catholic countries."

The [Catholic] clergy constituted a significant part of the population, in many cities, such as Worms, comprising at least 10 percent of the population." With the Reformation and a dramatic shift of clergy into economically productive occupations, one would expect significant changes in economic growth, that quite independent of callings and predestination.

The confiscation and sale of church properties generated immense amounts of capital which, presumably, was put to more "productive" use than was previously the case. If so, that too would have had some positive economic impact.

Diligence in work, Weber's single-minded emphasis, is only one of many possible economic impacts of "religion." Daniel's discussion of Wenzeslaus Linck's activity in Nuremberg, as indicated, supports Weber on a key theme, on the importance of the calling albeit in conjunction with a notion of social responsibility. One relevant consideration in

this connection is "last wills and testaments and the execution of legacies."
Linck argued for economic and social reasons, it was "absolutely necessary" that goods be left to one's natural heirs "so that they would not be future burdens on society."
plea for "social justice and civic responsibility" What weight, if any, should be assigned the calling and what weight given the change in inheritance patterns?

Industrial Revolution. Many focus on the period from 1750 to 1850.
Most accounts focus on the cotton industry.
The phenomenal growth of Manchester came in the 1830s and 1840s.
This poses some problem for the Weber thesis. Almost two centuries intervened between the Puritan triumph in seventeenth-century England and this economic takeoff.

Economic historians:

Early in the modern era England moved to eliminate internal trade barriers. Geography also played a role, the island location and navigable rivers made possible a coastal trade which also meant a larger economic base. In addition, in the eighteenth century, an extended infrastructure was built to link up that territory, this with the construction of canals and highways. The industrial revolution, moreover, was preceded by a series of innovations collectively termed the agricultural revolution. That produced a healthier, longer-lived population which, other things equal, would ordinarily mean a more productive population. The demographic revolution, which began in the middle of the eighteenth century, produced a demand for food, clothing, and housing which, because of the prior innovations, could be met with reasonable success.

A series of five innovations in the cotton industry, the flying shuttle, the carding machine, the spinning-jenny, the water-frame, and the cotton gin, made possible the breakthrough that most people see as central to "the" industrial revolution. A parallel series of innovations led to the use of steam engines and coal as power sources and to the creation of the machine tool industry.

The explanations provided by economic historians focus on technology, on the sources of the innovations, and on social organization, the ability to adopt and use the inventions.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch has advanced still another hypothesis, this in an important chapter entitled "Coffee and the Protestant Ethic." Prior to the seventeenth century, he reports, alcoholic beverages were standard fare for most European populations. English families began the day with a breakfast of beer soup. That was followed, in the course of the day, by the drinking of beer or ale which, on the whole, was healthier than water. The subsequent widespread use of coffee transformed a generally beggared population, making it into a sober, alert, and active force. This change, understandably, brought about a dramatic improvement in work habits.

Weber vs Marx?

controversy within the German universities, specifically between classical economics (rational self-interested calculating individuals) and the historical school (unique values associated with different training and traditions).

more value judgments, and specifically denominational ideology, are

present in The Protestant Ethic than Weber himself realized or present interpreters are aware

Weber's argument, unexpectedly, is centered on the work of the Bern theologian, Matthias Schneckenburger, who emphasized the differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism. He portrayed the former as generating passivity, the latter as generating activism. Schneckenburger also argued predestination as somehow the driving force.

Another much-cited author in Weber's monograph is Albrecht Ritschl, the "most influential German-speaking Protestant theologian of the late nineteenth century." Ritschl played down the denominational differences, arguing that Protestantism generally was "the religion of progress" and that Catholicism was both backward and inferior.

It was the Kulturkampf, Bismarck's struggle against Catholicism, that provided the context for the controversy, not the Sozialistenkampf. Ritschl was arguing that Protestantism was a better religion than Catholicism.

Guenther Roth introduces his discussion of this issue with an unexpected observation: "The hatred [Weber] felt for his Lutheran heritage and the German authoritarian realities was so great that he modeled his notion of ethical personality and innerworldly asceticism to a considerable extent after an idealized image of English history, especially of Puritanism." In 1906, in a letter discussing The Protestant Ethic, Weber wrote: "The fact that our nation never went through the school of hard asceticism, in no form whatsoever, is the source of everything that I hate about it (and about myself)." The "radical idealism" of the Protestant sects, those of England and America, had produced the modern "freedom of conscience and the most basic rights of man," values he ardently defended. But that crucial formative experience was missing in Germany.

Marianne Weber:

Weber expressed great admiration for Karl Marx's brilliant constructions; Weber suspected all political metaphysics up to that time as a kind of mimicry by which the privileged classes protected themselves against a rearrangement of the spheres of power. In this respect he shared Karl Marx's conception of the state and its ideology.

Fischhoff writes that Weber "was an admirer of the Marxian hypothesis, only objecting that it should not be made absolute and universal, a summary philosophy,"

<http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/protestantism.htm>

William H. Swatos, Jr., PROTESTANT ETHIC THESIS,

1. not theology, but the working out of theology in practical action, is Weber's concern.
2. Weber's careful distinction of the character of 'modern rational' capitalism
3. the PE has been transvalued into a secular work ethic quite apart from, and perhaps even antithetical to, any religious considerations.

In El Protestantismo, Balmes, who died in 1848, makes precisely the case that Weber does, that Protestantism is the principal engine of modern rational capitalism and all it entails, not least its peculiar work discipline.

The PE thesis ultimately rests on making a convincing comparative case that one 'type' of life orientation differs sufficiently from another type of life orientation that an 'either this or that' argument may be drawn.

<http://www.cjsonline.ca/reviews/protestant.html>

review of:

Jere Cohen, *Protestantism and Capitalism: The Mechanisms of Influence*, 2002

While some of the source material lends a measure of support to the hypotheses, he finds that the balance of the evidence tends to disprove Weber's propositions in every case.

the central thesis may be tautological

"The idea of modern capitalism is poorly conceptualized because it is ambiguous. The rational firm, rational organization of labor, calculable law, and so on may be characteristics of it, but may simply be preconditions of it; Weber .. stated the relationship both ways." Cohen goes on to pose the question "Could the spirit of capitalism have caused modern capitalism if it had been part of modern capitalism?"

Cohen draws out the helpful distinction between behavioral and cultural mechanisms of influence, the former operating on the individual level under the direct influence of Puritan tenets and the latter coming into force once capitalism had become the dominant culture and secularization had taken root.

<http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/rr12-771.pdf>

Dorius, S.F., *The Spirit of Capitalism, Economic Development and National Wealth*, 2012

By removing the religious dimension, Weber's thesis becomes a broadly generalizable 'mobility model' with potential appeal far beyond the narrow confines of Christian European history. Within a macrocomparative framework, we explore the relationship between capitalist values, capitalist behaviors, and economic development.

Results suggest that capitalist values are an essential motivating factor in the global diffusion of industrialization and the accumulation of national wealth. Failure to account for the indirect effect of values on capitalist outcomes and to control for socio-economic advantage is likely to obscure the causal effect of values on industrial capitalism.

The core of Weber's thesis, summarized in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, is the power of ideas: the rise of ascetic Protestantism provided a set of values and beliefs about work, saving, investment, and the acquisition of wealth that were essential to the rise of modern capitalism.

Beyond anecdote, quantitative evidence for the Protestant Ethic thesis has been surprisingly hard to come by: So difficult in fact, that Iannaccone (1992: 1474) concluded that 'the most noteworthy feature of the Protestant Ethic thesis is its absence of empirical support.'

We argue that with certain modifications, a revised version of his thesis is relevant today.

the focus should be on the values that facilitate the expansion of contemporary capitalism, such as hard work, thrift, and savings.

Using a macro-comparative framework, we explore the relationship between capitalist values, capitalist behaviors, and cross-national variation in measures of industrial capitalism.

we can examine changes in capitalist values within countries around the world and the economic behaviors associated with capitalism, regardless of the religious composition of a country.

Hypothesis 1: An over-time increase in capitalist values is associated with higher savings rates and lower consumption rates within countries.

modernization mobility model

'Modern societies' are characterized by high income and education, high rates of urbanization, low fertility and mortality, broad protections for individual freedoms and liberties, and extensive technological infrastructure (e.g. roads, ports, and power grids).

the modernization mobility model and Weber's own thesis place ideational factors (attitudes, values, and beliefs) as causally prior to the kinds of behaviors and economic outcomes we are interested in here. Both models also place economic development as the endpoint in a causal chain linking values, behaviors, and economic outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: An over-time increase in capitalist values is associated with a decrease in fertility and an increase in educational attainment within countries.

Hypothesis 3: An over-time increase in capitalist values is associated with an increase in innovation within countries.

Hypothesis 4: After controlling for socioeconomic advantage, capitalist values will have an indirect, positive effect on industrialization and national wealth through mediating behaviors.

data

World Values Survey (WVS)

World Bank's World Development Indicators

World Intellectual Property Organization: patents

5 waves of data collection from 1981 - 2008

We constructed a measure of capitalist values using a subset of items from the WVS.

The rotated list of qualities included: good manners, politeness and neatness, independence, hard

work, honesty, feeling of responsibility, patience, imagination, tolerance and respect for other people, leadership, self-control, thrift saving money and things, determination and perseverance, religious faith, unselfishness, obedience, and loyalty;

capitalist values: combi of hard work and thrift saving money and things

Our primary dependent variable is industrialization, measured by CO2 emissions and GDP.

Mediating variables:

We measured savings and consumption behaviors using gross national savings rate per capita and household consumption as a share of GDP.

Further: patent applications > innovation, educational attainment, fertility rate.

countries where people are most likely to prioritize the kinds of values Weber identified as embodying the spirit of capitalism - hard work, thrift, savings - are in Eastern Europe and Asia

picture

global_distribution_of_capitalist_values.jpg

Figure 2 also indicates that prevalence of capitalist values is lowest in Catholic and Protestant majority countries, including the Western Hemisphere and much of Europe, and highest in Buddhist and Hindu majority countries. Similarly, Figure 2 indicates that the wealthiest societies have, on average, the lowest capitalist value prevalence rates, while poor and middle income countries have, on average, much higher prevalence rates. Indeed, Protestant majority countries have the lowest average rates of capitalist values, followed by Catholic and Muslim majority nations (see Figure 3). Eastern religions, Eastern Orthodox and 'other' religious majority nations have, on average, the highest prevalence rates, where, for example, fully 79 percent of people in the Orthodox Christian country-group identify hard work as an essential quality in children. The value of thrift and savings, at 55 percent, is greatest in Buddhist majority countries, and lowest in Protestant majority countries (28 percent).

Grouping countries according to World Bank income classifications further illuminates unevenness in the global distribution of capitalist values. High income countries have, on average, lower prevalence rates of capitalist values than less affluent nations, while countries in the lowest income class have the highest prevalence rates. In fact, over seventy percent of respondents in poor countries espouse hard work, compared to just over 40 percent in the high-income country-group.

on average, the richer or more industrialized a nation, the lower the prevalence of capitalist values in that society.

Based on Figures 2-4, it may be tempting to conclude that Weber's thesis regarding a link between religion, capitalist values and industrial capitalism is incorrect.

[nevertheless...]

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the model results in Table 2 [Fixed effects regressions of capitalist values on capitalist outcomes] is that change in capitalist mass values is associated with change in the response variables in the expected direction and at acceptable significance levels for all seven outcome variables.

The effect of values on savings and consumption rates increased markedly in magnitude and statistical significance when we used a five-year lagged measure of capitalist values. Using the ten-year lagged measure of values increased the size and magnitude of the saving and consumption rate slopes even more.

If rich countries once valued hard work, thrift and savings but economic success led to a shift in values (value change hypothesis), then a model in which we control for socioeconomic advantage should confirm a conditional correlation between capitalist values and behaviors conducive to industrialization.

picture
indirect_effect_of_capitalist_values_on_industrialization.jpg

We have argued that empirical tests of Weber's thesis regarding individual and national mobility should be reoriented from the past to the present and should give attention to secular values that embody the spirit of capitalism instead of Protestant values per se. We hypothesized that quantitative support for Weber's thesis was most likely to be found in value orientations, rather than in religion, at least at the national level. Our analysis largely confirmed key assertions of Weber's thesis. We found that, net of socioeconomic advantage, societies that place high value on hard work, thrift, and savings are more innovative, more educated, have higher savings rates, have lower consumption rates and fertility rates, and are more industrialized.

The findings from this research also shed light on the value-change hypothesis of modernization theory in which economic development leads to change in value priorities (Inglehart and Baker 2000). Recall that capitalist values were negatively correlated with industrialization and national income (Figure 3) and yet in Table 2 we demonstrated an

unconditional positive association and in Table 3, we showed a conditional positive association between values and these same outcomes.

Weber claimed that 'the spirit of religious asceticism' has escape from the cage. Once firmly grounded, the spirit of capitalism was expected to decouple from its religious origins and become a self-perpetuating economic model, rather than a set of religious beliefs particular to a single region and religious group. Our research suggests Weber was indeed correct on this point.