

Max Weber
(1864 - 1920)

Weber is famous for his study of:

- I. social stratification
- II. understanding of bureaucracy
- III. the factors contributing to modern industrial society
- IV. the effects of religion on the development of capitalism

I. Weber believed basic human needs were satisfied through groups or "strata."

How might stratification (or strata) influence someone's thinking?

- How a person sees the world
- How a person acts
- How people live
- A person's view of reality

Weber believed these "strata" or groups are found in three realms:

political (power),
economic (class), &
cultural (status)

Weber studied
politics and power

Weber defined politics as
"the conflict over who shall
control the state"

Weber started several
political parties

Weber asked the question:
Why do people carry out the
orders of a political leader?

Leaders were categorized by Weber as either:

- Traditional (e.g., king)
- Charismatic, or
- Rational-legal authority (holding a bureaucratic position that brings with it specific powers)

Weber developed two methodologies for studying social phenomena that have become famous:

"verstehen"
and the "ideal type"

Verstehen refers to obtaining an empathetic understanding of what people's subjective meanings are (spending a day "in the shoes" of someone)

What would be an example where Verstehen might be used when doing research?

The "ideal type" refers to taking a social concept and describing it in its ideal (or unblemished) form.

For example, in the case of an ideal "roommate":

What would be the characteristics of the ideal type?

II. Weber used his idea of the "ideal type" to examine bureaucracy.

What are some characteristics that might help describe the "ideal" bureaucracy?

For example, when hiring someone?

Who would get promotions and raises?

Where does a person's "authority" come from?

Which customers would get served first?

Weber's ideal bureaucracy:

-authority is in the "position" not the individual

-clear rules and regulations

-hiring and promotion are based on merit

-salaries are paid for managers to carry out bureaucratic work (instead of pay by barter)

Sociologists today, studying the "ideal type" bureaucracy, note the existence of an "informal" bureaucracy or organization within the formal organization.

What might be some characteristics of an informal organization?

persons consulted who are not in "official" authoritative positions

Weber showed that the personalistic procedures for carrying out the work are giving way to bureaucratic procedures.

III. A third goal of Weber's was to explain why society was able to change from a feudal to a modern industrial society.

Any ideas on why society was able to make this shift/change? Why didn't it happen sooner?

At least five contributing factors were identified as helping to develop the modern industrial society:

1. large, stable markets (due in part to better transportation)
2. available labor (workers free from slavery or debt to landlords)
3. modern finances (monetary system, literacy)
4. religion
5. invention of industrial machinery to gain efficiency (replaced scattered handicraft work)

IV. Regarding religion, Weber believed modern industry was facilitated by the evolution from a "communal" or tribal God to a "universalistic" God.

The change broadened the size of the community included in the accepted "solidarity".

A second change was that God came to be viewed as separate from the physical world.

This allowed people to look for rational explanations for phenomena in the physical world rather than supernatural.

Scientific investigation became accepted.

A final contribution of Weber was his belief that religion allowed for the emergence of capitalism.

This work was presented in his book: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Weber's main thesis was that it was the protestant ethic that contributed to the emergence of Capitalism.

In particular, it was the Protestant belief in predestination.

That is, the belief that one's destination to heaven or hell was decided at birth.

Due to this belief, people looked for signs of their destination.

Being physically "well-off" was viewed as a positive sign.

Consequently, people worked hard to gain wealth and this included a keystone to (the spirit of) capitalism: investing.

How might this compare to another religion such as Buddhism or Hinduism?

It is argued that the development of capitalism in countries such as India and China was stunted due to their religion.

The End

5 minutes: Guess the Leadership styles:
Guess which style: authoritarian, democratic, laissez faire or charismatic

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bv16yctXaFM>

How great leaders inspire action:
why, how, what.
Show first 10 minutes (stop when starts to discuss innovation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qp0HIF3SfI4>

mms://video.ua.ac.be/Henderickx_Erik/conformiteit.wmv