Max Weber's Ethics for the Modern World

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Abstract and Keywords

Max Weber was an extremely important ethical thinker, as is suggested by the title of his most famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Confronted by the perceived breakdown of universally accepted, religiously based ethical codes, he proposed a two-tier scheme of ethics: impersonal, professional, technically, and legally appropriate behavior in the public sphere of employment, alongside wide tolerance of "subjectivist" self-assertion in regard to (for example) religion and sexuality in the private sphere. This was a radically original scheme whose relevance to twenty-first-century circumstances is self-evident, though not to the many moral philosophers who appear to think that today's ethical theory should still resemble the prescriptions of Kant or even Aristotle. The second part of the essay outlines a series of possible contemporary applications of Weberian ethics, as well as "neo-Weberian" modifications which the lapse of time since Weber's death suggests.

Keywords: ethics, value, Protestant ethic, impersonal, amoral, subjective

What Weber Said

AMONG many instances of incomprehension in the reception of Max Weber's thought, the reception of his ethical ideas is one of the bleakest. One might think it obvious that a man whose most famous work was entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–1905) had something important to say about ethics, especially when we find that "ethic" and "spirit" were essentially equivalents. For example, Weber described his argument as designed to show how "A constitutive component of the capitalist spirit ... was born out of the spirit of *Christian asceticism*."[1] Elsewhere, he referred to the capitalist "ethic" that had descended from a Protestant "ethic," before adding in the extra label of Puritan and capitalist "ethos" in 1919.[2] Now, whatever the significance of these terminological variations might be, this fussing makes it plain that ethics were indeed at the forefront of his mind, and the *Protestant Ethic* is by far his most important statement in this area. As he stated in 1919–1920, his subject was "the universal history of the ethics of Oc-

cidental Christianity;" more specifically, "the interconnections between the modern economic ethos and the rational ethic of ascetic Protestantism."[3] Yet Weber's twentieth-century readers found his thinking on ethics alien and incomprehensible. It was unflinchingly realistic and radically original, so they marginalized it. Today, however, we can see that he identified patterns of behavior of fundamental importance within the social phenomena of his day which are to a large extent ours as well.

The best-informed contemporary in regard to Weber, modern ideas about religion, and the ethical theory of the philosophers was Ernst Troeltsch. For him Weber was ultimately a mystery: he embodied "a union of scepticism, heroism and moral severity at root alien to me."[4] It was a commendably honest response by a Christian and idealist thinker (p. 314) to Weber's seemingly incomprehensible combination of passionate ethical conviction in his personal life, belief in irreconcilable value-pluralism and conflict in society, and a call for "value-freedom" in intellectual inquiry (*Wissenschaft*)—but it left the field wide open to misrepresentation. This set in with a vengeance after 1945 when, understandably, it became axiomatic that the only good German was one who espoused conventional ethical values: that is, values which were eternal, universally applicable, and harmonious. So Weber's ethical thought was located within mainstream Kantian and post-Kantian tradition, as if he were a philosophical idealist, who "holds firmly ... to the possibility of specifying universal, comprehensive ethical commands."[5] Indeed, his entire sociology has been characterized as "Kantianizing," and this remains an observable theme in commentary to this day.[6] Now, this was no doubt an understandable response to the ethical problems raised by Nazism, the Berlin Wall, or Baader-Meinhof; and it was certainly no worse than Leo Strauss' alternative: that Weberian "value-freedom" "necessarily leads to nihilism."[7] But still the Kantian label was a drastic denial of the ideas of a man who announced himself as one of "the spokesmen for value-collision,"[8] and its textual foundation was equally eccentric. Insofar as it discussed Weber's ethics at all, a strongly secular generation studiously ignored the *Protestant Ethic* and focused instead on two outlying and largely unconnected areas: his methodological writings—that is, the academic ethics implied by his radical demand for analytical "value-freedom," a subject distinct from social ethics—and the discussion of ethics in the famous lecture "Politics as a Vocation" (1919).[9] Here, Weber's appraisal of politicians motivated by ethics of conviction and responsibility seemed to present something substantial and accessible, on the assumption that responsible behavior was a self-evident good. Yet such an assumption overlooked his dictum in the same lecture that politics was the most morally empty or "diabolical"[10] of all ethical contexts, so it could hardly supply a model for society as a whole. It also overlooked the fact that the origin of Weber's argument lay with the "ethic of conviction," which was a religious category, because the root of all his ethical thought lies in ideas about religion.

What then were these ideas? For Weber it was an evident historical fact that religion (and not idealist philosophy) had been the great generator of ethics in all eras and societies previous to his own. The precursor to modern ethics lay in "salvation" or "ethical" religions. These were "ethically rationalized religions," based on an "ethical postulate: that the world was a divinely ordered cosmos, hence that it had some form of ethically meaningful direction."[11] Religious salvation (whether in an afterlife, reincarnation, or annihila-

tion) and the creation of ethical meaning in a rational earthly cosmos were seamlessly fused, and these benefits were available to all believers. Under the auspices of religion such ethics could present themselves, and were received, as universal and eternal. However, in seventeenth-century Europe and New England ("the Occident") there was a unique departure from this model. Within the Christian tradition of this area there arose a radically new, deviant religious form: ascetic Protestantism with its own "Protestant ethic." Ascetic Protestantism was still a religion; but unlike Catholicism and Lutheranism it was "no longer ... an actual 'salvation religion,' " so it gave rise to an entirely new ethic which created the "modern *Kultur*" or value-scheme on which (p. 315) twentieth-century Western society and its social relations were based.[12] This radical modernizing departure was of course Weber's principal concern, so this was the aspect of his thinking that he outlined first, in the *Protestant Ethic*. The historical and comparative context to occidental modernity would then follow later in his writings on the sociology of religion and the "world religions" after 1910.

The crucial novelty of modern Western ethics was that the principal social determinants of ethical conduct had ceased to be personal; they had become impersonal and, in that sense, amoral. The rise of modern capitalism was the outstanding example of this[13]:

> The characteristic feature of modern historical development is the lapse of *personal relationships of rule* as the basis for the organization of labor ... Modern development increasingly replaces these with the *impersonal* rule of the propertied *class*, purely business connections instead of personal ones, and tributary obligations to an unknown power which cannot be seen or grasped [shareholders] instead of personal subordination. It thereby eliminates the possibility of comprehending the relationship of ruler and ruled in ethical and religious terms.

Conversely, the Lutheran Church "always adopted a position of extreme mistrust in relation to what we customarily call the money economy.... Why has it done so? For this reason: because it recognised instinctively that the money economy necessarily eliminated direct relationships of rule from one individual to another, and set in their place relations of a purely 'business,' that is, impersonal kind."[14] At the end of the nineteenth century the Lutheran and Catholic Churches continued to suppose that traditional personal ethics, understood in terms of the relationship between one individual and another and founded on the biblical principles of "love thy neighbor" (*Nächstenliebe*)[15] and Christian "brotherhood" (*Brüderlichkeit*), were sufficient for the needs of a modern, mass society—as if being good or loving was sufficient to explain and cope with such phenomena as the conflict of class interests, the pitiless discipline of market forces, or the disintegrative effects of specialization based on the division of labor. To Weber this was nonsense, and this lies at the heart of his (and our) diminished conception of the position occupied by religion in Western society.

By contrast, in Calvinists and Protestant sectarians he found doctrines and practices that inaugurated a new ethical world based on a radical denial of "personal" and previously "unconstrained" (*unbefangene*) humanity.[16] The Calvinist postulate of a transcendental,

impersonal, inscrutable, and ethically meaningless *deus absconditus*, or hidden god, had generated an ethic that promoted the rise of a "transcendental" and "meaningless" capitalism and had begun the process of training which enabled men and women to cope with its demands. Calvinists turned the doctrine of "love thy neighbor" on its head. " 'Love of one's neighbour' is expressed ... in the *first* instance by fulfilment of the ... tasks prescribed by one's *job* or *calling*; at the same time it takes on a characteristically objective and *impersonal* character, that of service to the *rational* formation of the social *cosmos* that surrounds us." One "loved" one's fellow men not by reaching out to them but by ignoring them, by accepting a "happy limitation" of one's perspectives and devoting (p. 316) oneself to one's job, which was also a religious calling.[17] This rather than personal relationships was the real religious calling, and those who observed this ethic were the "steel-hard" individuals whose institutionalized residue or "*congealed spirit*" created the twentieth-century "steel-hard housing" that placed enforcement of the new ethic on the "mechanical foundation" supplied by the demands of servicing capitalism—it was no longer a matter of personal initiative.[18] Sectarianism performed a similar function in an associational context. A sect was not (as one might think) a "community" (*Gemeinschaft*) based on emotional warmth between its members but an impersonal "society" (*Gesellschaft*). The crucial rite of admission to the sects was based on a detached, meritocratic assessment of a person's individual ethical "*qualities*," and the sectarian life was one of continual self-assertion of those qualities before one's peers. So its ethical legacy was not communitarianism; rather, it was "one of the most important historical foundations of modern 'individualism.' " In these ways ascetic Protestantism dismissed the traditional Christian ethic based on love, personal warmth, and "cosiness" (*Gemütlichkeit*) and created instead the impersonal and exclusively self-reliant "ethic" which modern capitalism and other organizations required in a public context.[19]

It will be clear that Weber's use of the term "Protestant ethic" was doubtful since the ascetic Protestant ethic was no longer an ethic in the traditional, personal sense, even if in the first instance it retained a "religious root" like the "actual" salvation religions—the psychological stimulus contained in the threat of damnation. The departure from ethical tradition was more obvious in the case of the capitalist economy and its market, which on any conventional understanding was "neither ethical, nor anti-ethical, but simply non-ethical."[20] Yet capitalism, like Protestantism, *was* "ethical" in the elementary sense that it regulated conduct; and this was why Weber resorted to a miscellany of substitute terms in this context, "spirit," "ethic," and "ethos," as well as the ethically detached terminology of "norms."[21] Capitalism worked in two principal ways. First, the capitalist "housing" exercised an external disciplinary function on conduct that could not be ignored:

> It forcibly imposes its norms of economic conduct on the individual, insofar as he is caught up in the relationships of the "market." The manufacturer who persistently contravenes these norms will just as infallibly meet with economic elimination, as the worker who cannot or will not adapt to them, will be thrown unemployed onto the street.[22]

Second, and more comprehensively, the individual was governed by an internalized "ethical" commitment to the *Beruf* (calling, job, profession) as an "absolute *end in itself*": that is, the conduct of one's social life was limited toward performing a narrowly specialized function within the division of labor, where a person was "ultimately concerned only with himself, thinking only of his own salvation."[23]

The modern ethic was not simply a capitalist ethic but (as Weber had noted) a "rational ethic," just as his conception of modernity was a continual oscillation between distinct yet overlapping ideas of capitalism and rationality.[24] In the transition to modernity, (p. 317) "The ethical practice of everyday man was stripped of its lack of plan and system and shaped into a consistent *method* for the entire conduct of life." A rational life was a remorselessly systematized life, where all one's life—"the entire conduct of life" or *Lebensführung*—was organized to one end, the "absolute *end in itself*." Hence, Weber emphasizes in a capitalist context Benjamin Franklin's maxim "*time* is *money*," where not a moment was to be wasted or to go unconsidered.[25] For the same reason Weber also considers "lifestyle," "that powerful tendency towards making lifestyle uniform which today stands side by side with the capitalist interest in 'standardization' of production," and traces behavior down to quite minor symptoms such as dress and short haircuts. Another great engine of Western rationalization was the law. Here again seventeenth-century Puritans anticipated modernity in that they did not necessarily observe the law because it was right—"the agent can never have a conscience"—but practiced "formal legality": they observed the letter of the law because it was a necessary requirement in a rationalized society. In the same way capitalists practiced the traditional virtue of "honesty" not only or even because it was a virtue but because it was "the best policy." For example, when you "*appear* as both a careful and an *honest man* ... it increases your *credit*."[26]

In this way Weber made an extremely important and original statement about modern ethics or codes of conduct. In a social or public sphere, such as the workplace, the factors governing conduct do not compel because of their moral force. Instead, one is presented with a rationalized, homogenized, and "impersonal" environment, where one yields to the command of what is understood to be functionally, legally, and technically correct, hence rational. Ethically "correct" conduct is not defined substantively as right or wrong or in terms of outcomes (such as the biblical Ten Commandments) but primarily in terms of procedure: what is formally legal or rational—hence what Weber calls "the *formalism* of the Puritan ethic."[27] The attributes of correct behavior are not enthusiasm, human warmth, or sympathy but being "cool," "reserved," "hard," and "sober," with conduct as a whole governed by personal "control" or "self-control."[28] This is the human face of "ascetic" and "rational" conduct which in a capitalist context serves the "categorical imperative" of systemic, humanly meaningless acquisition.[29] (Such an impersonal and unintended "imperative" is surely a sufficient comment on Weber's alleged Kantianism.) Any display of a personal, emotional, or moralizing kind is out of place; and this modern "ethical" code is very much the one by which we live today in most public spaces.

However, the impersonal "ethic" only applies in public or social contexts. Weber did not suppose that men and women ceased to have values—this is the one point where he coincides with Kantianism—and there is a second tier of ethical behavior manifested primarily in the private and personal spheres. One component comes from the vestiges of religious behavior, where what was once public has retreated into the private sphere: the "prophetic pneuma" which had swept through "great communities" now "beats only within the smallest community circles, passing from one person to another in pianissimo."[30] Flight into mysticism (in principle, a wholly isolated state) and even erotically charged passion were further alternatives of this kind, and Weber also saw an analogy to the collapse of a public religion in the change from public and monumental art to one (p. 318) that was more intimate and domestic.[31] All were part of a more general development of personal behavior which, far from being a product of historical decline, was very much in the ascendant; and it too is mentioned, however fleetingly, in the *Protestant Ethic*. When Weber asks who might live in the "steel housing" of rationalism and capitalism in the future, his final answer is that the future state might be one of " 'Chinese' (or 'mechanised') petrifaction, garnished by a ... frantic self-importance."[32] Reference to "self-importance" here is not just vague rant but quite precise. What Weber means is that the complement to an impoverished rationalism ("petrifaction") is an ostentatious, "self-important" display of personal identity *outside* the workplace or other rationalized public spaces. Elsewhere he went so far as to describe his age as one of "subjectivist *Kultur*" or values, where the younger generation in particular had "an inevitable and strongly developed predisposition in favour of its own self-importance."[33] We must presume that Weber himself did not take himself so seriously, but when he was asked by a student, "Max Weber, what is your supreme and leading value?" he answered, "I have no supreme and leading value" and itemized a miscellany instead.[34]

So alongside impersonal uniformity in public and professional life, there was a marked assertion and proliferation of personal values. Weber's most sustained treatment of this development appears in his better-known, yet insufficiently appreciated, remarks from 1917–1919, when he describes the modern condition as one of "polytheism": "The old plurality of gods, devoid of magic and so in the form of impersonal powers, climb out of their graves, strive for power over our lives, and begin again their eternal struggle with one another."[35] At first sight this might suggest that modern religious and ethical life had somehow reverted to that of ancient Greece and Rome. But this is not Weber's meaning, as the characteristic reference to modern "impersonal powers" makes plain. The essence of his thinking is that once the control exercised by the socially agreed scheme of traditional Christian ethics has lapsed (this lapse is our one and only point of common ground with the ancient world), diversity of values and conflict between them proliferate. In the modern situation there is not only irreducible political conflict between nations, for example, French and Germans, or between different religious views; there is also conflict between the value priorities one allocates to different "life orders" (or spheres) since all of these are now driven by their own inner laws. Given the different values of art, religion, sexual pleasure, the economy, and politics, which does one prefer? Is beauty "better" than moral goodness? There can be no authoritative answer to such questions, only an individ-

ual one. Religion itself is just a single component of the modern "polytheism"—a stark contrast to the "ethic of brotherhood" of the salvation religions, which brought all of these differing areas of life under a single, controlling standard.[36]

Perception of the breakdown of traditional values was already widespread in the Germany of Weber's day, far more so than in any other European country. In a famous phrase Ernst Troeltsch referred to "the anarchy of values,"[37] and discussion of the subject was carried on with great energy throughout Weber's adult life. A seminal figure here was Friedrich Nietzsche, whose concern with this subject is announced very clearly in such books as *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *The Genealogy of Morality* (1887). (p. 319) Weber's references to "self-importance" are a jaundiced reference to Nietzsche's elitism of "higher beings" and still more to the "Nietzsche cult" that set in after c. 1890 with its emphasis on personal identity and what was in fact an assertion of social elitism.[38] But while Weber was surely a beneficiary of Nietzsche's destructive criticism of established values (though there were many other forces pointing to the same conclusion), he was no "Nietzschean" in any positive sense. He had an abhorrence of any elitism in regard to values or "the goods of *Kultur*"—universal access to such goods is the foundation of all his ideas about "bourgeois democracy"[39]—as of the personal exhibitionism that accompanied it. Though he received the collapse of unified religio-ethical codes of value as a fundamental fact, he was dismissive of what followed in its wake: a situation where the choice of fundamental values, a choice that was once that between God and the devil and which should still define "the meaning of one's being and doing," had become a banal "everyday" continuum, where meaningful choice was now evaded and replaced by a flight into visceral and anti-intellectual "experience" (*Erlebnis*).[40] However, unlike Nietzsche, Troeltsch, and indeed all other ethical thinkers of his day, Weber was the only significant thinker who took it for granted that the breakdown of traditional, universally prescribed personal ethics was radical and irreversible. The purpose of reflection on ethics and *Kultur* was not to restore or reform authoritative values (as with Troeltsch, Nietzsche, and Heinrich Rickert) but to understand the new situation and its implications.[41] Outside Germany, Emile Durkheim anticipated Weber at one important point when he insisted that the social fact of the division of labor was also a moral fact; but still his understanding of "the general formula of morality" was wholly conventional so that the social ethic of the "collective conscience" was simply an extension of the Kantian ethics of the individual and in no way a challenge to them.[42]

After 1905 the original ethical conception of the *Protestant Ethic* was unchanged. Weber's theoretical focus shifted away from conjoint promotion of capitalism and rationalism toward a clear-cut emphasis on rationalism in 1907–1908[43]—hence the increased prominence of bureaucracy in his thinking, such that bureaucracy rather than capitalism appears as the principal modern form of *Herrschaft* (rule) in *Economy and Society*. However, whereas he viewed Western capitalism as a distinctly modern phenomenon whose ethical significance required explanation, bureaucracy was age-old (albeit subject to a process of rationalizing purification over time); and since it was based on a principle of command, it carried no ethical significance. It is true that its latest, most purely rational character and its reliance on obedience to the impersonal agency of law meant that it

now abutted modern capitalism very nearly and created a similar "ethical" environment de facto; yet there was little novelty in the idea that bureaucratic command was "not in the name of a personal authority, but in the name of an impersonal norm."[44] Accordingly, it never occurred to him to speak of, or write about, the ethics of bureaucracy as distinct from those of formal legality.

Furthermore, the theoretical shift toward bureaucracy did not mean that capitalism ceased to be important. Because of its specifically modern character and ethical significance, it remained "the most fateful power of our modern life."[45] The principal "late" presence of capitalism in Weber's work comes in his analysis of contemporary German (p. 320) politics in 1917–1918, where he supposed that a healthy polity should rest on three distinct foundations: rational bureaucracy; political parties and a parliament which would foster charismatic political leadership; and an independent capitalist economy and *Kultur*, which was largely rational but not purely so (unlike bureaucracy). Confronted by the threat of bureaucracy, capitalism was one of the few chances "to rescue *any* remnant in *any* sense of 'individualistic' freedom of movement," and so it was precious.[46] Hence, much of what was said about capitalism in the *Protestant Ethic* was recycled in *Suffrage and Democracy in Germany* (1917), where Weber praises the appeal to "the ethic of professional duty and honour" and the capitalist embodiment of the principle that "honesty is the best policy." And, in contrast to a ubiquitous, politically supported capitalism which was both unstable and unethical, "it is precisely the *rational*-capitalist *business ethic* of this second [modern, Western] type of 'capitalism' which stands the highest—on the whole far higher than the average economic ethic of any period that really existed in history."[47]

This positive view of the "ethical" qualities of capitalism casts fresh light on the *Protestant Ethic* and shows the error of reading too much tragedy into its famous conclusion. There was much about modern ethics that Weber did not *like*, not least because from his youth he had hated the narrowing of horizons implied by specialization: "I have never had any respect for the concept of a 'profession' [*Beruf*], since I believed that in fact I was broadly suited to a fairly large number of positions."[48] But while there is a lament in the *Protestant Ethic* and Weber undoubtedly yearned for "mankind's Faustian universality," he then dismisses his emotional outburst for what it is: a collapse into private "value judgements." Yet today's readers prefer tragedy.[49] Hence, a tenacious insistence that when Weber wrote about the "steel housing" (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*) of capitalism and rational specialization, his underlying idea was not that of a "housing" (an image which implies constraint rather than coercion as well as the supply of the means of life) but that of the "iron cage" bestowed upon him in translation by Talcott Parsons.[50] However, Weber knew exactly what he was writing, and he would have had no time for Gothic romanticism of this kind. By his "hard" realism and distaste for personal advertisement he *identified* with much of the impersonal *Kultur* he outlined, where questions of personal preference or "happiness" were irrelevant.[51] For him impersonal capitalism and rationalism were the outcomes of a historically irreversible process, and whatever limitations they might place on a maximal conception of human freedom, it was now simply not possible to function in a technical, specialized, rationalized, mass society on any other basis than that of imper-

sonal constraint and regulation. Weber's views, like those he attributed to Puritans in the seventeenth century, were "*without illusion* and *pessimistically* tinged"; but they were not simply pessimistic.[52]

The one tangible supplement to the *Protestant Ethic* is the discussion of ethics in "Politics as a Vocation." However, we should not be misled by the canonical status of this lecture today. It may look like a valuable synoptic statement, being the one and only theoretical text where Weber put "politics" in the title; but such reticence can be read in more than one way.[53] The discussion of the need for a political "ethic of responsibility" is indeed new, but paradoxically in the case of a thinker whose thinking is so remorselessly (p. 321) continuous in its evolution, this novelty is questionable. There is an obvious contrast here with "Science as a Vocation," which appeared in the same lecture series and which has clear roots going back to the "Objectivity" essay in 1904. Why then had he never discussed political ethics or even "politics" before?

In fact, the idea for "Politics as a Vocation" was not Weber's. The lecture was given in response to an outside request (from the Freistudentischer Bund),[54] and its argument was by no means well worked out. The root of the lecture lies not in the "ethic of responsibility" but its alternative, the religious "ethic of conviction"; and this is its point of contact with his established ideas. For Weber any authentic ethic, for example, the Protestant and Catholic ethics, was an "ethic of 'conviction' "[55]; so the ethical question that underlies the lecture (which is about much else besides) is whether there could be an authentic political ethic at all. His lifelong belief was that there could not because of the stark contrast between politics as a realm of debased, contingent, and local ethics where physical force was the final court of appeal and any universal ethical claims, whether they be those of the ethical and salvation religions or the impersonal and international ethic of Western capitalism.[56] Furthermore, the time for any extraordinary incursion of religious ethics into politics, such as the seventeenth-century introduction of ethical natural law and human rights by Puritan agency, was long since past.[57] Weber's principal concern in 1917–1919 —as is well known—was not to promote ethical politicians but charismatic ones, capable of exercising decisive leadership in a sphere where rule-bound, ethical, and legal prescriptions were a positive hindrance. Possession of personal charisma was "the highest form" of the political vocation.[58] Given such premises he takes an extremely skeptical view of "conviction" politicians. Action on the basis of ethical conviction is seen as an illegitimate importation of non-political ideas, and nine out of ten of such persons are "windbags."[59] But then, giving way to his own moralism and the possible needs of the new Weimar Republic,[60] he accepts that there may be room for the tenth case: he imagines the politician who tempers inflexible and unworkable "conviction" by a "responsible" awareness of the worldly consequences of his actions. But logically such a person remains a contradiction in terms, and he is really "a prophet," whose gifts are purely personal and who can strike no permanent root. In other words, he is a "genuine," charismatic "leader."[61]

Given the evanescent nature of any ethical component in this argument, we can hardly be surprised to find Weber reverting subsequently to his normal or default position: that politics was a diabolical arena, that alliance with the devil in power politics was entirely permissible, and that the only sin in politics was not a matter of ethics but "stupidity."[62] Not only is "Politics as a Vocation" an extremely fragile construction, but it offers only a fragment of Weber's ethical thought, just as the arena of political conflict is only a small and unusual subset of social behavior as a whole. It says nothing about the rational and impersonal context which is the principal basis of modern ethics in the "everyday" public, social, and non-political sphere: that is, the realms of capitalism, bureaucracy, law, and the professions, in comparison to which the sphere of "politics," strictly defined, is actually very limited: that is, the realm of irrational power struggle and international relations above all.[63] The family resemblance between Weber's (p. 322) understanding of "politics" as adversarial and unethical and Carl Schmitt's famous statement of "The Concept of the Political" is frequently noted, but this overlooks the stark contrast between the space and prominence the two men allot to "politics." Where Schmitt wanted to establish "the *total* state" that would render all of society political, Weber wished to squeeze "state" and "politics" into a corner, so far as possible under the overall aegis of "society"—as Schmitt recognized.[64] Weber's true originality lay in the admission that there was an ethical divide between politics and the rest of the public sphere, and in this he anticipated the perceptions of the affluent, stable, and disillusioned democracies that emerged in the West after 1945.

What Weber Might Say to Us Today

Weber's rationally homogenized yet ethically fragmented modernity is generically the same as ours. That there has been a collapse of traditional, universal, and religiously founded ethics has long been obvious; and we do not need him to remind us. What is radically new about his thought is his identification of two distinct ethical tiers. On the one hand, there is the "impersonal," sober, self-controlled code of conduct which dominates so much of public life in the economy, law, bureaucracy, and the professions generally. Here there is little moral sense or discourse, and the primary "values" are the observance of what is procedurally correct, formally legal, and logically and technically rational. On the other hand, there is the "subjectivist *Kultur*" of the private individual which, in the sharpest contrast, is about the assertion of individual values in all their variety. But though it is a contrast, it can only exist as a complement or balancing antithesis to the first. It too can only be understood as a socially determined phenomenon, operating in relation and reaction to the constraints imposed by the public sphere. But if Weber's social construction of ethics has something substantial to say, it raises a question whether much of today's moral philosophy is not rendered otiose by its relentlessly traditional and individual premises. Here society exists only as an offstage presence, a source of external "consequences" which serve as a possible measure of the rightness of the actions of the sovereign individual (though this is not to deny its testimony to the entrenchment of asocial individualism in Anglophone culture).[65] Even those who take the modern economy as their starting point make a category error when they seek to set "*moral* limits" to mar-

kets.[66] In a word, the premises of much of today's ethical theory have remained unaltered since the days of Troeltsch and the neo-Kantians (or even Aristotle and Aquinas).[67] Can this be right?

The contemporary relevance of what Weber says about the public sphere will be clear. When we talk of "professional conduct" or "behaving in a professional manner," it is an unconscious imitation of Weber's focus on the *Beruf*; and our meaning is essentially the same as his: an implicit appeal to an incontrovertible norm of great power, yet one that is colorless and limited to a specific context. Less colorless is the apotheosis of what is "cool" in popular culture, another unconscious conjunction with Weber. Not to be (p. 323) "cool" is "to lose it," to lose the emotional "self-control" in public spaces that Weber prized so highly; and it is notable that it should be a code of great importance in youth culture. This thereby serves as an "ethical" training for a more middle-aged public sphere, with which at first sight it has nothing to do. The most obvious test of the border between private and public ethics lies for us, as for Weber, in the sharp boundary drawn between kinship and family groups and the "impersonal" sphere. This boundary remains far less developed in many societies outside the West,[68] and its weakness renders the whole fabric of public life precarious and corrupt in our eyes. Still the boundary is also transgressed in the West. Organized crime and "gangs" ultimately founded on personal connection are an extreme example[69]; the suggestion by corporate law firms that female employees might like to display "loyalty" by marrying male partners within the firm is a smaller one yet equally flagrant. The boundary is not absolute: consider the family business. But though this may have inscrutable private consequences (how does business life affect family life?), in public it is only an extension of individual agency, whose position in an impersonal marketplace is conventional.

The operation of "formal legality," where the only incontestable action is that which follows the letter of the law, is widely acknowledged, not merely in "professional life" and tax avoidance but also, for example, in sport. What is the definition of foul play? Does sports equipment conform to the weight limit or chemical compound prescribed? Is the blood composition of an athlete within prescribed limits? The minute regulation of such questions, based jointly on law and impersonal technology, determines the decision; and ideas about right and wrong are ever more closely tied to the letter of the law. Meanwhile the infinity of laws and rules constantly changes in all spheres, which further enhances the priority of technically informed behavior and the relegation of any "moral" sense. On the other hand, the ethical status of law is contested, and one salient objection to Weber's position would be that there is an ethical component to human rights law.[70] Now, Weber's regard for "the rights of man" was extremely high, so high that in practice his formalism is hardly different from others' ethical commitment[71]; but still the force of a Weberian and formalist analysis of twentieth-century human rights is considerable. It only applies to "the Occident" where the rule of law is established, but still most of the articles of the European Convention on Human Rights (1948) can be analyzed in Weberian terms: that is, as the establishment either of formal rights—for example, "formal freedom" rather than physical servitude,[72] which does not exclude a myriad of social, economic, and cul-

tural oppressions—or of private rights—such as freedom of conscience—or procedural rights—like the right to a fair trial.

As regards "capitalism," it may be said that with the concept of the *Beruf* Weber had identified the distinctive ethics of the professional and corporation man whose worldview was primarily determined by the requirements of the professional career long before this idea was taken up by sociology and journalism after 1945.[73] It also marked out a more socially comprehensive phenomenon: the idea that possession of a job was an essential source of "ethical" legitimacy or self-esteem. Weber was one of the first to understand from personal experience that absence of a job specification—"unemployment" (a new term from the 1880s) or a gap on the CV—could be internalized (p. 324) as an ethical failing in modern Western society.[74] More broadly still, while Weber was no apologist for the "steel housing" of capitalism, the explanation he offers of why it is "ethically" acceptable—it is founded on formal, technical, and rational strengths which are "unarguable," separate from politics, yet make no moral claim—is of the utmost relevance to the hold capitalism exercises both on western European societies which long nurtured a deeply critical attitude toward it as well as on the more sympathetic cultural terrain of Britain and America.

On the debit side Weber failed to theorize the relationship between diabolical and ephemeral politics and a quite differently formed public sphere. In particular, he was so keen to keep apart state bureaucracy and industry in his own day that he refused to create a sociology of the "two types" of capitalism that he himself identified: an unethical and unregulated "political," "robber," and "adventure" capitalism and an industrial capitalism which was largely rational and possessed of a specifically "economic ethic."[75] Yet today the interface between capitalism and its political supports is a central issue, though it has been set aside a priori by neoliberalism.[76] An ever more bureaucratized economy has rendered even the illusion of the "free" market (which had, of course, to be based on law) illusory, and its regulation cannot be regarded simply as formally rational and politically neutral. So neo-Weberian analysis of the extent to which capitalism is rational, "ethical," and apolitical and of the extent to which it has departed from a Weberian model rooted in an idealized conception of laissez-faire Britain c. 1846—"the affinity of inner-worldly asceticism with the minimization of state intervention ('Manchesterism')"—is now a pressing need.[77]

Another kind of exception to a conception of public behavior as rational and ethical lies in organized sport and mass entertainment, where it is legitimate and expected that audiences give vent to emotion in a social context. Weber, like most continental intellectuals of his generation, had no interest in sport; and he identified the sports of early seventeenth-century England as pre-rational symptoms of "the *spontaneous enjoyment* of existence" doomed to be obliterated by the Puritans. The one place he witnessed modern, mass spectator sport was in America where, in accordance with this conception, he took it to be an expression of the youthfulness (i.e., primitiveness) of American *Kultur* as it belatedly followed the path of "Europeanization": the passions it evoked were those of the classical Greek *agon* or "amphitheater." Of course, such views are quite unsustainable today, especially when we consider that the other pioneer of organized sport was England—

very much one of "the old capitalist countries" of Europe and the epicenter of Puritan "reserve" and "self-mastery."[78] Nonetheless, neo-Weberian analysis of mass spectator sport is eminently feasible. It would rest on the facts, first, that sport is a site of entertainment and consumption, distinct from the world of employment (the *Beruf*), which dominates the *Protestant Ethic*; but, even so, any such public entertainment (as distinct from the domestic, television audience) is organized, rationalized, and commercialized. The release (*Abreaktion*) of emotion by the audience must be confined within a regulated time period and physical location, it must conform to law (violence is strictly proscribed), and it must be paid for.[79] Something similar could be said of (p. 325) music—by far the most developed entertainment industry known to Weber. Here again he had no interest in its passive consumption, but still his interest in demonstrating the rational components at work in the mass performance of classical music is a pointer, at a time when live performance was also a principal form of its consumption.[80]

In general, we live in a Weberian world, where the incursion of unregulated private emotion into the public sphere is profoundly unsettling. The outstanding current example is the radical breach in the boundaries between private and public communication created by social media. Through technology, the public and social forms of durable record and impersonal interchange have become attached to an enormous range of utterance, of which the large majority is conceived and expressed as private conversation with its attendant emotion, exposed sensitivity, and want of restraint. The format of private–public citizens' gossip then permeates, or is taken into, the mainstream of public discourse, whether by existing media, politicians, or cybercriminals; and combustion, outrage, and abuse are the result—hence the widely noted degradation of public debate in twenty-first-century America above all, the original home of social media. (This is not to overlook the political forces in play here, where there is no novelty.)[81] It is an unusual instance of mass technology with an "anti-Weberian" tendency—it releases and does not "standardize" personality—and the level of threat is accordingly high. Unless we consent to the degradation of an impersonally "ethical" public sphere, then Weberian analysis would suggest that some regulation must take place and a sufficient boundary between the public and private spheres be restored. However, as Weber observed, we cannot make predictions here; we can only estimate "chances" and make probabilistic estimates of "objective possibility."[82]

The other face of Weberian ethics is that of the proliferation of subjective values in areas that were once seen as fundamental, and hence of public concern and regulation, but which are now allowed to be private and plural. (Note, however, their status as values, as well as the defense or establishment of their privacy, still entails a large volume of public discussion today.) This relates above all to questions of religion, marriage, sexuality, and gender or "identity politics," questions which, though broached in Weber's lifetime and familiar to him through a wide range of personal acquaintance ranging from Else Jaffé to Georg Lukács, only became a central feature of western European and American society from the 1960s on. In some areas, such as race and gender, Weber was much more interested in public uniformity and legal equality than private diversity, though even here some recognition of diversity is present.[83] The one point at which his agenda has clearly

dated is the prominence he gives to aesthetic values as an area where prescriptive norms were breaking down.[84] This was an area of obvious interest given art's importance to the culture of the educated bourgeoisie and because of the incursion of aesthetic modernism which was bringing about the final destruction of any belief in classical artistic norms, but neither consideration applies today.

Weber's principal achievement was to situate this development as a whole, but he also produced an exceptionally powerful analysis of religion in particular. He never tried to offer "a definition of what religion 'is,' "[85] being all too aware of its historical transformations (p. 326) and variations. His core unit was not religion but values, just as his one and only "transcendental presupposition" was that "we *are persons of Kultur*": humans are holders of values who render selected parts of empirical reality meaningful by attaching value to them, and this is *Kultur*.[86] He did not claim (as is sometimes supposed) that religion would be eliminated by modernizing rationalization, and he was not a theorist of "secularization" in this sense. What he claimed was that due to the modern reconfiguration of values, religion had lost its claim to provide a single, universal code of ethics, accepted by all members of society. This is surely correct and is essential to understanding the diminished social and institutional position occupied by religion today, regardless of the retained position occupied by many churches "in public" for portions of the public,[87] or the personal significance of religious thinking to individuals across a wide plurality of viewpoints. Churches and individuals adopting a "religious" perspective (a perspective outwardly continuous with past forms yet subject to the reconfiguration of values) are simply one set of contributors to the debate about personal values alongside a larger number who ignore the religious label. In this debate all are equal in principle and all except terrorists must accept that there is a plurality of views outside their own.

One possible objection to Weber's presentation of "subjectivist *Kultur*" is that he was too much of a strenuous moralist to be wholly modern. The fact that religious codes of value had broken down or that values themselves were historically mutable and could be a matter of personal choice did not mean (in his eyes) that they had ceased to serve the elementary function they had always served: of working out "the meaning of [one's] doing and being." Accusations of "relativism" were utterly misplaced for someone who, though a moral pluralist, was also a passionate moral absolutist.[88] As we saw, he could be dismissive of the banality and hedonism of the lifestyle radicals of his own days, and experiments in living regarding sexuality were unlikely to appeal to someone whose modernism here consisted in upholding (and practicing) birth control, as a means of protecting women's health and making a breach in "patriarchalism."[89] (As noted, public equality rather than private diversity was his principal concern here.) But though our culture (and perhaps any mass culture) is more relaxed than Weber might have liked, it would be a mistake to underestimate either his tolerance of diversity or the seriousness of today's views on religion, sexuality, and gender. The ethically strenuous wrestlings of existentialism that Weber foreshadowed[90] have long since passed away, and we acknowledge our moral relativism almost unthinkingly; but this does not mean that values have gone away —postmodernism has proven quite as ephemeral as moral strenuousness—and if Weber

were alive today, it must be supposed that in principle he would have been a staunch supporter of "identity politics."

There was, however, a more significant difficulty which Weber understood very well: that the ethical bequest of the Protestant past was split. He insisted with all possible force that the modern capitalist "ethic"

> is so completely stripped of any eudaemonist, let alone hedonist thoughts, it is conceived so *purely* as an end *in itself*, that in relation to the "happiness" or "utility" (p. 327) of the single *individual* (at any rate), it appears as something wholly transcendental and simply irrational.[91]

But there were obvious problems with such an assertion. Concentration on the ethic of "the single *individual*" obscured the fact that the aggregate reward of modern capitalism was an unsurpassed provision of industrial goods for "the *mass*" of ordinary people.[92] Technically rational capitalism was comparable to bureaucracy in its superior provision of services, and here is a fundamental respect in which capitalism is a housing, not a cage or prison. Because it was a distraction from his ethical argument, Weber did not mention this in the *Protestant Ethic*, preferring instead to make the alternative point that systemic pursuit of profit was not the same as "satisfaction of [people's] material needs"—but he was not so mean-spirited as to deny the value of mass material comforts. Elsewhere he was happy to second a mixed "democratic" ideal: seeking "to make possible the increasing participation of [the working masses] in the material *and* intellectual goods of our *Kultur*," always provided it was participation and did not derive from paternalist welfare provision.[93]

Materialism posed an obvious problem at the individual level. The central feature of the capitalist "ethic" may have been impersonal, ascetic-rational discipline; but its "highest good" was "the *acquisition of money* and ever more money." However much Weber insisted that "innerworldly Protestant asceticism ... brings its whole weight to bear against the unconstrained *enjoyment* of possessions," that "it is a straitjacket on *consumption*, and especially luxury consumption," its capitalist offspring was continually multiplying possessions, consumption, and exposure to hedonism. Conscious recognition of a mass "affluent society" may have been unknown in Weber's Germany, but he knew full well that "asceticism" as the creator of unprecedented material wealth was a force "which always wills the good and always produces evil" in the form of "property and its temptations." So once the ascetic ethic ceased be the product of personal assertion and came to rest on a "mechanical foundation," it was subject to a "dissolution into pure utilitarianism," "the striving for worldly goods, conceived as an *end in itself*" which was practically a denial of the original.[94] This commonsense recognition of the prevalence of modern materialism by no means subverts Weber's principal argument (though it tells us once more that a "Kantian" Weber is nonsense). Neither the disciplined and impersonal ethic of professional life nor the subjective assertion of private values is canceled thereby. On the contrary, hedonism or materialism is just one more private value or "end in itself," and Weber deserves credit for recognizing a central modern reality that he found personally distasteful. But

his message is more mixed than might appear at first sight, and the *Protestant Ethic* is about more than just the Protestant and capitalist ethics.

The conclusion is simple: Weber worked out a brilliantly original analysis of modern ethics which has been shamefully ignored. His world is not perfectly congruent with ours, but it is close to it; and he supplies an extremely powerful model with which to analyze this world. Accordingly, his work opens a wide field for reflection and inquiry.

Notes:

(1.) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (hereafter *PESC*), trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner's, 1930), 180; "Die protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus," in *Asketischer Protestantismus und Kapitalismus. Schriften und Reden 1904–1911, Max Weber- Gesamtausgabe* (hereafter *MWG*) I/9, ed. W. Schluchter with U. Bube (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2014), 420; this is the text originally published in 1904–1905 in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. The correlation between published and linguistically accurate English translations of Weber's work is, with honorable exceptions, often only moderate. Thus, translations are my own as I have prioritized linguistic accuracy in translation.

(2.) *PESC*, 51–52, 53–54, 165–166, 180; *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus/Die protestantischen Sekten und der Geist des Kapitalismus. Schriften 1904–1920, MWG* I/18, ed. W. Schluchter with U. Bube (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2016), 155–157, 159–161, 444–449, 485–486 (the revised 1920 text).

(3.) *PESC*, 27, 186–187n1; *MWG* I/18, 117, 123–125n1.

(4.) Ernst Troeltsch, "Max Weber," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, June 20, 1920, in *MWG*, ed. J. Winckelmann and R. König (Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985), 46.

(5.) Dieter Henrich, *Die Einheit der Wissenschaftslehre Max Webers* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1952), 117. See also Wolfgang Schluchter, *Die Entwicklung des okzidentalen Rationalismus* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1979), VIII–IX; Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 1:154–156.

(6.) Wolfgang Schluchter, *Grundlegungen der Soziologie* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), pt. 1, c.3, cf. idem, *Religion und Lebensführung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 1:80–88.

(7.) Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 42.

(8.) Max Weber, "The Meaning of 'Value-Freedom' in the Sociological and Economic Sciences" (hereafter "Value-Freedom"), in *Collected Methodological Writings* (hereafter *CMW*), trans. H. H. Bruun and ed. H. H. Bruun and S. Whimster (1917; New York: Routledge, 2012), 315; *Verstehende Soziologie und Werturteilsfreiheit. Schriften und Reden*

1908–1917, MWG I/12, ed. J. Weiβ with S. Frommer (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2018), 470.

(9.) See my "Beyond Methodology: Max Weber's Conception of *Wissenschaft*," *Sociologia Internationalis* 52 (2014): 157–218; also Wolfgang Schluchter, *Wertfreiheit und Verantwortungsethik* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1971); Hans Henrik Bruun, *Science, Values and Politics* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Munksgaard, 1972); Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf 1917/1919—Politik als Beruf 1919, MWG* I/17, ed. W. Schluchter and W. J. Mommsen with B. Morgenbrod (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1992), which pairs "Politics" and "Science as a Vocation"; Martin Endreß, "Ethik (Gesinnungs- und Verantwortungsethik)," in *Max Weber Handbuch*, ed. Hans-Peter Müller and Steffen Sigmund (Stuttgart, Germany: Metzler, 2014), 52–54. For a rare discussion of the "Protestant Ethic" in ethical terms, see Klaus Lichtblau, "The Protestant Ethic versus the 'New Ethic,' " in *Weber's Protestant Ethic*, ed. Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 179–193; cf. Lichtblau, "Die Kulturwerte des asketischen Protestantismus und die 'Neue Ethik,' " in *Kulturkrise und Soziologie um die Jahrhundertwende* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Suhrkamp, 1996), 315–345. However, the Protestant ethic remains "Christian" and "conventional," standing in contradiction to any concessions Weber made to ethical modernism elsewhere (in the erotic sphere). So "tragedy" is the keynote of a broken-backed ethical scheme (185, 191–192).

(10.) Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *Political Writings* (hereafter *PolW*), ed. P. Lassman and R. Speirs (1919; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 362, 365, 366; *MWG* I/17, 241, 247, 249.

(11.) Weber, "Zwischenbetrachtung," in *The Essential Weber: A Reader* (hereafter *Essential*), ed. S. Whimster (1915/1920; London: Routledge, 2004), 221, 238 (under the title "Intermediate Reflection on the Economic Ethics of the World Religions"); *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen. Konfuzianismus und Taoismus. Schriften 1915–1920, MWG* I/19, ed. H. Schmidt-Glintzer with P. Kolonko (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1989), 486, 512 resp.

(12.) Weber, "Zwischenbetrachtung," *Essential*, 223; *MWG* I/19, 490; *PESC*, 180; *MWG* I/18, 484–485.

(13.) Weber, "Review of Friedrich Naumann, *Was heißt Christlich-Sozial?*," in *Landarbeiterfrage, Nationalstaat und Volkswirtschaftspolitik. Schriften und Reden 1892–1899, MWG* I/4, ed. W. J. Mommsen with R. Aldenhoff (1894; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993), 356–357. Compare the sociology of *Herrschaft* in *Economy and Society* (hereafter *E&S*), ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich (c.1911–1914; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 1186; *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Nachlaß. Herrschaft, MWG* I/22–4, ed. E. Hanke with Th. Kroll (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2005), 635.

(14.) Weber, "Die deutsche Landarbeiter" (1894), in *MWG* I/4, 328; cf. 356–357.

(15.) Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, etc.

(16.) A frequent usage not indexed in *MWG* I/9 and *MWG* I/18. It is supplemented by "natural" (in inverted commas), but almost never by 'natural' since Weber has no belief in an original natural state, only the vacant state of absence of *Kultur*.

(17.) Weber, "Sociology of Religion" (c.1913), in *E&S*, 548; *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Nachlaß. Religiöse Gemeinschaften, MWG* I/22-2, ed. H. G. Kippenberg with P. Schilm (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2001), 328.

(18.) References to *PESC*, 53, 108–109, 181, 221n12; *MWG* I/18, 159, 275n98, 291–293, 487. *Parliament and Government in a Restructured Germany* (1917–1918), in *PolW*, 158; *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg. Schriften und Reden 1914–1918, MWG* I/15, ed. W. J. Mommsen with G. Hübinger (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1984), 464.

(19.) Weber, " 'Churches' and 'Sects' in North America" (1906), *MWG* I/9, 455, 454n1; "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (hereafter *FMW*), ed. H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (1907/1919–1920; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), 320–322; *PESC*, 127; *MWG* I/18, 344.

(20.) *PESC*, 176–177; *MWG* I/18, 479–481; *E&S*, 1186; *MWG* I/22-4, 635.

(21.) *MWG* I/9, Index q.v.

(22.) *PESC*, 54–55; *MWG* I/18, 161–162.

(23.) *PESC*, 62, 107; *MWG* I/18, 180, 287.

(24.) See my *Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic: Twin Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) (hereafter Ghosh, *Twin Histories*), esp. 133–142.

(25.) *PESC*, 48, 117; *MWG* I/18, 151, 322.

(26.) References in *PESC*, 50, 151, 165, 169; *MWG* I/18, 153, 407, 443, 458–459.

(27.) Exodus 20:3–17; Deuteronomy 4:13, 5:7–21; *PESC*, 258n189; *MWG* I/18, 407n275.

(28.) All are frequent usages, but only "*Kontrolle*" and "*Selbstkontrolle*" are indexed in *MWG* I/9.

(29.) *PESC*, 276n79; *MWG* I/18, 462n358.

(30.) Weber, "Science as a Vocation" (1917/1919), *CMW*, 352; *MWG* I/17, 110.

(31.) Weber, "Sociology of Religion" (c.1913), *E&S*, 601; *MWG* I/22, 402; "Suffrage and Democracy in Germany" (1917), *PolW*, 108–109; *MWG* I/15, 375–376; "Sociology of Music" (1912) or *Zur Musiksoziologie, Nachlaß, MWG* I/14, ed. C. Braun and L. Finscher (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2004), 275–280.

(32.) *PESC*, 182; *MWG* I/9, 422; *MWG* I/18, 488.

(33.) Respectively, Weber, "Der Begriff der Produktivität. Diskussionsbeiträge auf der Generalversammlung des Vereins für Sozialpolitik am 28. September 1909 in Wien]," in *MWG* I/12, 212; "Value-Freedom," *CMW*, 307; *MWG* I/12, 453.

(34.) Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 279.

(35.) Weber, "Science as a Vocation," *MWG* I/17, 101; cf. "Value-Freedom," *CMW*, 348 cf. 314; *MWG* I/12, 469–470.

(36.) This clash is mapped out in Weber's "Zwischenbetrachtung," *Essential*, 215–244; *MWG* I/19, 479–522. However, this famous essay is limited by the fact that it takes the ethic of the salvation religions as its starting point and not that of the modern West. This is regrettable, but it is also a testimony to Weber's belief that views stated in the "Protestant Ethic" need not be repeated.

(37.) Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 105.

(38.) Cf. Ferdinand Tönnies, *Der Nietzsche-Kultus* (Leipzig, Germany: Reisland, 1897).

(39.) This ideal is repeatedly stated in 1892–1894 when real social reform appeared to be a possibility and only rarely thereafter, but it had not gone away: see Marianne Weber, diary entry December 4, 1911, in *Max Weber: A Biography*, trans. H. Zohn (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1988), 462; *Max Weber. Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1926), 470.

(40.) Weber, "Value-Freedom," *CMW*, 314–315, 348; *MWG* I/12, 469–470; "Science as a Vocation," *MWG* I/17, 101, respectively. On Weber and personal exhibitionism, Weber and "meaning," Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 4–5, 277–293.

(41.) See my "Beyond Methodology," § I; "Max Weber and the *Literati*," Ghosh, *Max Weber in Context* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2016), chap. 5.

(42.) Emil Durkheim, *De la division du travail social* (1893; Paris: PUF, 1930), 9; *The Division of Labour in Society* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1984), 10.

(43.) Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 162–174.

(44.) Weber, "Introduction" (1915/1919), *Economic Ethics of the World Religions*, in *FMW*, 294–295; *MWG* I/19, 119.

(45.) Weber, "Vorbemerkung" ("Prefatory Remarks to the Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion"), *PESC*, 17; *Essential*, 103; *MWG* I/18, 105.

(46.) Weber, "Parliament and Government," *PolW*, 159; *MWG* I/15, 465–466; cf. Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 331–332.

(47.) Weber, "Parliament and Government," *PolW*, 90; *MWG* I/15, 356–357; cf. Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 329–335.

(48.) Weber's letter to Marianne Schnitger, Spring 1893: Marianne Weber, *Biography*, 185; *Lebensbild*, 197; *Briefe 1887–1894, MWG* II/2, ed. R. Aldenhoff-Hübinger with Th. Gerhards and S. Oßwald-Bargende (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2017), 360.

(49.) *PESC*, 180, 182; *MWG* I/18, 485, 488; for Weber as tragic thinker, see Gerhard Wagner, *Geltung und normativer Zwang* (Freiburg and Munich: Karl Alber, 1987), 163, 168; Hinnerk Bruhns, "Science et politique au quotidien chez Max Weber," *Max Webers historische Sozialökonomie* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2014), 210; Lichtblau, *Kulturkrise und Soziologie*.

(50.) *PESC*, 181; *MWG* I/18, 487; cf. Lawrence A. Scaff on "Parsons' fortunate imaginative mistake": *Weber and the Weberians* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 151. What Weber really feared was the invasion of industry by state bureaucracy, thereby choking off capitalist dynamism: "the housing of that future serfdom in which perhaps men will one day be compelled to an impotent submission," in "Parliament and Government," *PolW*, 158; *MWG* I/15, 464.

(51.) Weber, "Erhebungen über Auslese und Anpassung ... der Arbeiterschaft der geschlossenen Großindustrie," *Zur Psychophysik der industriellen Arbeit. Schriften und Reden 1908–1912, MWG* I/11, ed. W. Schluchter with S. Frommer (1908; Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1995), 81; "Science as a Vocation," in *Essential*, 277; *MWG* I/17, 92; cf. Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 4.

(52.) *PESC*, 105; *MWG* I/18, 281.

(53.) Weber, "The National State and Economic Policy/Politics" (1895) is explicitly not "explanatory and analytical *Wissenschaft*": *PolW*, 15; *MWG* I/4, 559.

(54.) Hence its opening, "The lecture which I have to give at your request ...": *PolW*, 309; *MWG* I/17, 157. Cf. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "Editorischer Bericht," *MWG* I/17, 120, 129.

(55.) *PESC*, 116; the Protestant ethic is frequently referred to as a *Gesinnung* or ethical conviction: *MWG* I/9, 915.

(56.) Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 218–221.

(57.) See Weber to Adolf Harnack, February 5, 1906, in *Briefe 1906–1908, MWG* II/5, ed. M. R. Lepsius and W. J. Mommsen with B. Rudhard and M. Schön (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1990), 32–33.

(58.) Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *PolW*, 312; *MWG* I/17, 161.

(59.) Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *PolW*, 367; *MWG* I/17, 250.

(60.) Compare *Suffrage and Democracy in Germany*: "Of course, politics is no ethical concern. But all the same there is a certain minimum sense of shame and obligation of decen-

cy which if transgressed cannot go unpunished, even in politics": *PolW*, 83; *MWG* I/15, 350.

(61.) Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *PolW*, 365, 367; *MWG* I/17, 246, 250.

(62.) Weber, "*Sachliche* ... Bemerkungen am 19.1.[1920]," *Zur Neuordnung Deutschlands. Schriften und Reden 1918–1920, MWG* I/16, ed. W. J. Mommsen with W. Schwentker (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1988), 273.

(63.) Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," *PolW*, 311; *MWG* I/17, 159.

(64.) Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker, 2009), 23; cf. 20n2 on Weber.

(65.) Compare Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), and *On What Matters*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–2017).

(66.) Cf. Michael Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (New York: Farrar, 2012).

(67.) Consider the loyalties of Alasdair Macintyre, author of *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981).

(68.) Compare Weber, "The City," *E&S*, 1222–1231; *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Nachlaß. Die Stadt, MWG* I/22–5, ed. W. Nippel (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 1999), 107–112; Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil. The Foundations of Chinese Society* (1948; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

(69.) The compendious literature on the Mafia is the best-known case.

(70.) See Winfried Brugger, *Menschenrechtsethos und Verantwortungspolitik: Max Webers Beitrag zur Analyse und Begründung der Menschenrechte* (Freiburg, Germany: Karl Alber, 1980); Jürgen Habermas, *Faktizität und Geltung: Beiträge zur Diskurstheorie des Rechts und des demokratischen Rechtsstaates* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Suhrkamp, 1992); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia. Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

(71.) *PESC*, 245n118; *MWG* I/18, 358–359n204.

(72.) Compare *PESC*, 21–24; *MWG* I/18, 110–114 on "(formally) *free labour*."

(73.) For example, see William Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956).

(74.) Cf. Marianne to Helene Weber, December 10, 1902, *Biography*, 261; *Lebensbild*, 274.

(75.) Weber, "Suffrage and Democracy," *PolW*, 89–90; *MWG* I/15, 356–357; *E&S*, 164–166; *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Soziologie, MWG* I/23, ed. K. Borchardt, E. Hanke, and W. Schluchter (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2013), 379–382; *PESC*, 17–22; *MWG* I/18, 105–111. Cf. Ghosh, *Twin Histories*, 337–338.

(76.) More reflective thinkers of this persuasion accept that long-established, *laissez-faire* political institutions provide the foundation for "free" economic activity, but still this tells us nothing about the workings of political economy today: Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail* (New York: Crown, 2012).

(77.) Weber, "Sociology of Religion," *E&S*, 593; *MWG* I/22-2, 390; cf. "Antikritisches" (1910), *MWG* I/9, 589n14, and "Antikritisches Schlußwort" (1910), *MWG* I/9, 672n2, on Cobden and the Anti-Corn Law League; *The Protestant Ethic Debate: Max Weber's Replies to His Critics, 1907–1910*, ed. D. J. Chalcraft and A. Harrington (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 78n14, 121n2.

(78.) For references see *PESC*, 119, 166–167, 235n81, 268n47; *MWG* I/18, 325–327n167, 438n326, 449; also Max to Helene Weber, October 27/November 2, 1904, *Briefe 1903–1905, MWG* II/4, ed. G. Hübinger and M. R. Lepsius with T. Gerhards and S. Oßwald-Bargende (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2015), 366–367.

(79.) Compare Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (1978; New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), and *Sports Spectators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), for a somewhat different employment of Weberian analysis in this area. Guttmann's belief in the importance of statistics and rational calculation to modern sport was well founded, but his emphasis on "records" distracted attention from a central point: that victory in sport now comes to a large degree through an accumulation of statistically measured achievement (leagues, championship series, world rankings, judges' panels) and not necessarily from the superior prowess of one individual over others.

(80.) Weber, *Zur Musiksoziologie, MWG* I/14, 253–280.

(81.) Cf. Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy*, 11–15.

(82.) Weber, "Critical Studies in the Logic of Sciences of *Kultur*" (1906), in *CMW*, 139–150, 169–184; *Zur Logik und Methodik der Sozialwissenschaften. Schriften 1900–1907, MWG* I/7, ed. G. Wagner with C. Härpfer et al. (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr [Siebeck], 2018), 288–412, 451–484.

(83.) See my *Max Weber in Context*, 119–31, on Weber, Georg Jellinek, and Judaism.

(84.) For example, Weber, "Zwischenbetrachtung," *Essential*, 230–232; *MWG* I/19, 499–502.

(85.) Weber, "Sociology of Religion," *E&S*, 399; *MWG* I/22-2, 121.

(86.) Weber, "The 'Objectivity' of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy," *CMW*, 119, cf. 116; *MWG* I/7, 188–189, cf. 181–182.

(87.) José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), presents what is in practice a largely Weberian analysis. He may have a somewhat exaggerated thesis of the "*deprivatization* of religion" today, as if it had once been excluded from the public sphere altogether and then returned to it; but still he accepts that "the liberal principle of the privatization of religion is ... unimpeachable" (57).

(88.) Weber, "Value-Freedom," *CMW*, 315; *MWG* I/12, 470.

(89.) *PESC*, 263n22; *MWG* I/18, 423–425n301.

(90.) See my *Max Weber in Context*, chap. 8.

(91.) *PESC*, 53; *MWG* I/18, 159.

(92.) See *E&S*, 165; *MWG* I/23, 381.

(93.) *PESC*, 53; *MWG* I/18, 159; "Objectivity," *CMW*, 107; *MWG* I/7, 159 (my emphasis).

(94.) References are to *PESC*, 53, 89, 170–172, 183; *MWG* I/18, 159, 253–254, 460–467, 489; Cf. J. K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

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