

MAX WEBER (1864-1920): THEORY AND CONCEPTS

Teo Lee Ken, Shima Vezvaei
Alzahra University
Sociological Theories 1

May 4, 2019

Works

- The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1930), translated Talcott Parsons
- From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (1946), translated and edited H.H. Gerth, C. Wright Mills
- The Methodology of the Social Sciences (1949), translated and edited Edward A. Shils, Henry A. Finch
- The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism (1951), translated and edited H.H. Gerth
- The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism (1958), translated and edited H.H. Gerth, Don Martindale
- Economy and Society (1978), edited Guenther Roth, Claus Wittich
- Political Writings (1994), edited Peter Lassman, Ronald Speirs

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Ideas, and concepts
3. Method, and application

1. Introduction

- Sociology,
 - the understanding and social analysis of society;
 - the interpretation of society; and
 - the theorizing of society
 - social, economic and political change
 - the problems of modern social life

2. Ideas, themes, concepts

i. Sociological method

- To explain, and interpret
- Empirical, cause and effect, reality
- ‘Sociology...seeks interpretively to understand **social action** and thereby causally to explain it in its progression and in its effects. “Action”...(is defined as) **human behavior** (whether outer or inner and including failure to act) in so far as the agent or agents associate it with a **subjective meaning**. “Social” action...is...related in its intended meaning, and oriented in its progression, **to the behavior of others.**’

-Max Weber, *Economy and Society*-

- ii. The development and implications of rationality
 - Formal rationality (law, logic) vs. substantive rationality (norms, values)
 - Formal rationality, bureaucratization, bureaucracy
 - Rationality, and the modern state and modern rational legal authority
 - Rationality and bureaucracy, and its impact on individual freedom, equality, cultural vitality

- “(It is as if we were) human beings who need ‘order’ and nothing but order, who become nervous and cowardly when that order is weakened for a moment...That the world should know nothing but such men of order – that is the development in which we are involved...and the central question is not how we are to reinforce...it, but what we have to set against (it)...to preserve a remainder of humanity...from this total domination of bureaucratic ideals.”

-Max Weber Gesamtausgabe I-

iii. The sociological analysis of religion

- The comparative study of world religions
- The meaningless real world, the need for the world to have meaning and order
- The need and promise of long life, health, wealth
- The need to justify and accept suffering
- The use and practice of religion, depend on the social class
- The nature, form and content of religion determined by social conditions and social structures

iv. History and sociology of authority

- Rational and legal authority
- Traditional authority
- Charismatic authority

v. Others,

- The sociological analysis, and meaning, of cities
- The sociological study of capitalism
- The sociological categories of ideal types
- Essays on politics, knowledge, and education

3. Method, application

- The problems and issues of modern Iranian social life, and society
- The sociological study of of Iranian social, political, economic, cultural change
- Sociology and religion in Iran
- The sociological analysis of global change
- The process of environmental and climate change
- Theories of Iranian society
- Asian sociology, Syed Hussein Alatas; Iranian sociology, Gholam Abbas Tavassoli