

Classical Sociological Theory
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The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism

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The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism



Welcome back to the class, we are starting our discussion on one of the most important and popular works of Max Weber, which can be called as his magnum opus, titled “The Protestant Ethic and he Spirit of Capitalism”, an extremely important, controversial, popular as well as influential work.

This work actually follows the discussions that we had in the previous classes, where we discussed Weberian argument about the emergence of modern capitalism. I hope you remember the class, where we discussed about the factors that Weber argued as a kind of a pre-requirements for the emergence of modern sense of capitalism in Europe.

We ended that discussion with the very important point that Weber put forward, that along with all the structural factors that required like the emergence of a free market and a free labor force and a number of other factors, a very important point that Weber puts forward is the emergence of a particular kind of spirit, attitude, personal orientation and orientation of a collective nature.

Weber discusses a kind of a particular capitalist spirit, which he argues, was something very, very peculiar to Europe, European society and it was very peculiar to a particular time period.

And that really opened up a set of a series of fascinating discussions and, and debates about the role of religious ideas, the role of cultural ideas in the emergence of capitalism. So we are going to discuss that work, *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of capitalism*.

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- The *Protestant Ethic* was originally published as a two-part article in 1905, and then republished in a revised edition in 1920.
- This book touches on a number of themes central to Weber's work as a whole: the transition from traditional to modern society, the origins of modern capitalism, the unique qualities of western rationalism, the role of ideas in history, the influence of religious ethics on economic conduct, the characteristics and fate of the modern individual, and the prospects for individual freedom in the modern rationalized world.
- Weber's aim was to show the relationship between higher socio-economic success of Protestant believers in Europe in comparison with others



So, *The Protestant Ethic* was originally published as a two-part article in our 1905, and then republished us a revised edition in 1920. This book touches on a number of themes centered to Weber's work as a whole. And that is why many observers have identified this book as the magnum opus, or the most significant work of Weber.

The transition from traditional to modern society, the origins of modern capitalism, the unique qualities of western rationalism, the role of ideas in history, the influence of religious ethic on ethics on economic conduct, the characteristics and fate of the modern individual, and the prospects of individual freedom in the modern rationalist world.

And, each of these themes are so profound and quite important and very significant in its own right, whether it is about the argument on the transition from traditional society to modern society, or the unique qualities of western rationalism, and the role of ideas in history, and this follows much larger debates in history.

If you look into the debates between idealists and materialists, between Hegel and Marx, all these debates revolve around this whole idea of trying to understand what are the roles of ideas

in history, and the influence of religious ethics on economic conduct and whole. So, each of these themes is so profound for an academic engagement.

So Weber's aim was to show the relationship between higher socio economic successes of Protestant believers in Europe in comparison with others. So, for Weber, there was an important empirical question as well, an empirical reality as well, where he could argue convincingly that the socio economic mobility or socio economic status of Protestants are much higher than that of Jews or Catholics or other people.

And so he wanted to build on this particular empirical reality and then theorize it trying to establish a connection between the rise of modern capitalism in Europe and the emergence of a kind of a particular or a peculiar spirit that Weber argues was part of the Protestantism, so that is what we are going to discuss.

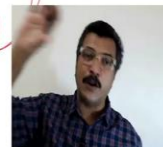
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- The central argument of the *Protestant Ethic*, sometimes referred to as the "Weber thesis," is that the spirit of capitalism, as well as the type of person embodying this spirit, can be traced back to certain religious influences originating from the Reformation. He thus posits a congruence or affinity between two worldviews : Protestantism on the one hand and the culture of modern capitalism on the other.



- Weber's ultimate purpose is to demonstrate that the modern vocational culture, with its affirmation of the ideal of diligent labor in a specialized calling, is "in some way *religiously based*."

- The influence of religion on economy/secular life



The central argument of the Protestant ethic that sometimes is referred to as the Weber thesis, or Weberian thesis, is that the spirit of capitalism, as well as the type of person embodying the spirit can be traced back to certain religious influences originated from the Reformation. He thus posits a congruence or affinity between two worldviews; Protestantism on the one hand and the culture of modern capitalism on the other.

So this is his basic argument, or hypothesis that he wants to prove. He wants to convince that there is a kind of a congruence, a kind of connection between the Protestantism on the one hand

and the culture of modern capitalism on the other. The spirit of capitalism, as well as the type of person embodying the spirit, can be traced back to certain religious influence originated from the Reformation.

I am inviting your attention to the previous class, where he talks about the necessity for having a peculiar spirit, a peculiar orientation, for the people to engage in modern capitalism, and this particular spirit, which we will elaborate down the line is closely connected with the rise of Protestant movement within Christianity.

I hope you are familiar with this story about this reformation movement, which really challenged the influence of Roman Catholic Church and completely altered the way in which Christianity was understood, propagated, and challenged the role of the clergy. It is an important development that happened in Europe during the particular time.

Weber's ultimate purpose is to demonstrate that the modern vocational culture with its affirmation on the ideal of diligent labor in a specialized calling is in some way a religiously based. So, his ultimate argument is to demonstrate that the modern vocational culture with its affirmation on the ideal of diligent labor in a specialized calling is in some way a religiously biased.

So, he argues that the kind of a particular attitude particular preoccupation that we have towards certain vocational opportunities, which we consider it as a kind of a calling, as a heightened form of interest and dedication and work. He is pointing at the ways in which religious ideals influences economy and secular life. And this is yet another important theme that we discuss here.

This point assumes even more significance, because, we have already discussed this theme, in a completely different argument. I hope you remember when we discussed the Marxian thesis on the base and superstructure. Marx was very categorical that the influence happens in a particular direction, it happens from the economy to that of the superstructure, from the base to that of the superstructure, and he placed religion, values, ethic, and culture, everything in the superstructure.

For Marxian analysis, why that certain religion takes place in certain shape has to be analyzed on the basis of the economic structure of society, whereas Weber is arguing the opposite. Weber is arguing that how the influence of religious values can change the nature of economic activity. So

he is talking about a reverse kind of influence from the capitalism, from the culture to that of the economy.

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What is the spirit of capitalism?



- 1. Work is valued as an end in itself. Weber was fascinated by the fact that a person's "duty in a calling [or occupation] is what is most characteristic of the social ethic of capitalistic culture, and is in a sense the fundamental basis of it."
- 2. Trade and profit are taken not only as evidence of occupational success but also as indicators of personal virtue. In Weber's words, "the earning of money within the modern economic order is, so long as it is done legally, [seen as] the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling."
- 3. A methodically organized life governed by reason is valued not only as a means to a long-term goal—economic success—but also as an inherently proper and even righteous state of being.



What is the spirit of capitalism that Weber is talking about? We have discussed about modern capitalism, we are familiar with that. Now, we want to know what does he mean by this term spirit, a kind of peculiar individual or collective orientation, certain kind of an attitude, certain kind of a worldview, certain kinds of predisposition, that Weber argues was something so instrumental in the emergence of capitalism.

So, the first point is that work is valued as an end in itself. Weber was fascinated by the fact that a person's duty in a calling or occupation is what is most characteristic of the social ethic of capitalist culture. And it is in a sense, that the fundamental basis of it. So, work is valued as an extremely important vocation, it is seen as a calling, it is seen as a person's duty, maybe you can even say that a person is destined to do that, a person is supposed to devote his entire life for that particular work, a person is supposed to have utmost dedication and commitment to that kind of a particular work.

The work is not seen as a mere way of getting some salary or some other benefit, but a person is supposedly completely dedicated to that particular work. Weber was fascinated by the fact that usually this term a calling we associated with couple of professions like, medicine, a doctor's work is considered as a calling or a teacher's or a priest's.

These are the people who are traditionally or generally identified as people who take up certain jobs, certain professions with so much of dedication, so much of commitment, because they see a lot of value in that. So it is not necessarily the salary that somebody gets when he becomes a priest or a doctor or a teacher that somebody is attracted towards that it, on the other hand, the person finds that job is something so important, something so divine in certain words.

So the second point is that trade and profits are taken not only as evidence of occupational success, but also as indicators of personal virtue. In Weber's words, the earnings of money within the modern economic order as long as it is done legally, seen as the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling.

So this has a very interesting, this Protestantism or this spirit of capitalism has a very interesting take on the concept of wealth and profit and in a marked distinction from Catholicism, which really, exalted or which really glorified poverty. Protestantism, Weber argues as a completely different take on profit.

And we know that Catholicism really celebrates or it romanticizes poor people, because it argues that the poor people are chosen by the God, poor are the people who are closer to God. And there is a very important thing in the Bible that it is very difficult for a person to enter into the heaven than a camel passing through the eye of a needle.

Weber or a host of other scholars have argued that within Catholicism, amassing more wealth and profit is seen as not something favorable nor good, rather, in Protestantism, Weber argues that trade and profit are taken not only as evidence of occupational success, but also as indicators of personal virtues.

The earning of money within modern economic order, so as long as it is done legally is seen as the result and expression of virtues and proficiency in a calling. So, you as a trader or as a businessman, and if you are amassing more and more money and profit through legitimate means, then it is widely seen as a virtue of your commitment to that particular vocation.

So, a hardworking businessman is somebody who must be respected and he is expected to make more money, more profit, provided he does it through all kinds of, legal and legitimate avenues. So this is another very important feature that Weber calls as the spirit of capitalism.

A methodically organized life governed by reason is valued not only as a means to a long term goal, economic success, but also as an inherently proper and even righteous state of being. A more organized life, not a chaotic or a completely reckless life, a methodically organized life governed by reason, a more systematic, organized life is valued not only as a means to a long term economic success. Of course, it is an important one, but also an inherently proper and even righteous state of being. So a person who is well-disciplined in his life, who uses rationality, who is not kind of swayed by magic or blind beliefs and other thing is also seen as an extremely important and successful person.

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- 4. Embodied in the righteous pursuit of economic success is a belief that immediate happiness and pleasure should be forgone in favor of future satisfaction. Strict control on worldly pleasures and emphasis on an ethical living.
- These values—the goodness of work, success as personal rectitude, the use of reason to guide one's life, and delayed gratification, though widely prevalent in Europe, was historically unique and was of recent origin.
- Difference between the modern rational capitalism and other forms of capitalism.



Fourth point, embodied in the rightest pursuit of economic success is a belief that immediate happiness and pressure should be foregone in favor of future satisfaction. Strict control on worldly pleasures and emphasize on an ethical living. This is another very important point. So Weber argues that the spirit of capitalism, especially from the Protestant ethics, on the one hand, it encourage people to create more and more wealth, more and more profit, but on the other hand, it lay down strict protocols on the people about how to spend that.

You are supposed to create more wealth, but you are not supposed to indulge in a lot of luxury and other things. You are not supposed to spend the money that you create in a reckless manner rather you are supposed to postpone it, keep it away for a future and you are supposed to have strict control on the worldly pleasures.

The very fact that you are creating more money, does not provide you the entitlement to spend it at the way you want. So, here there is a major ethical constraint imposed on a person's life and here I hope you understand is an extremely important point. It actually tells you that the very fact that you are able to create all this money does not give you the freedom to spend the money, what the way you want.

You are not supposed to indulge in luxuries, you cannot be a spendthrift, you cannot be spend money on all kinds of worldly vices or luxuries, may not be even vices you cannot spend money on worldly luxury, you are supposed to have a very austere life, you must be very careful when

you spend money for your personal needs. You, so there is a major disciplining orientation is brought in along with these all arguments.

And these values, the goodness of work, success as personal rectitude, the use of reason to guides one life and delayed gratification, through though widely prevalent in Europe was historically unique and was of recent origin. So this is Weber's argument, why each of these are things were widely, practice, widely available in Europe during Weber's time, Weber argues that it was historically unique and was of the recent origin.

And then he so he creates this ideal type of this spirit of capitalism by attributing all these features, and then undertakes a historical analysis, trying to see how and why it emerged in Europe. And so the difference between the modern rational capitalism and other forms of capitalism, which we discussed in the previous class. Please refer to the previous class we had an elaborate discussion about how the previous forms of capitalism existed, for example, through expansionism, through slave trade, pillages and plunders and they are different from the modern capitalism.

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- The significance of rise of the spirit of capitalism along with other structural reasons.
- Weber believed that Puritanism and the other Protestant sects destroyed the cultural values of traditional society
- Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564) and protestant reformation
- Weber was interested in ascertaining "those psychological sanctions which, originating in religious belief and the practice of religion, gave a direction to practical conduct and held the individual to it."



So the significance of the rise of the spirit of capitalism, along with other structural reasons, that we discussed in the previous class, Weber believe that the Puritanism and other Protestant sects destroyed the cultural values of traditional society and gave way to modern capitalism.

Weber was of the very strong opinion that the Reformation moment that happened, that originated in Germany, but then swept across the Europe was of profound significance, started by Martin Luther and then, propounded by host of other people, really challenged the authority of the church.

They were extremely critical of the church and argued that the church has really degenerated, it has deteriorated, it has lost all its moral values, and it is indulging in all kind of vices. They called for a direct engagement with the God or direct engagement with the God Almighty, without the mediation of the clergy. That is an extremely important one.

That is very closely connected with your rationalist or your rational engagement with the Bible, your rational engagement with the whole question for religion, you do not really require the priest as intermediaries, you do not need to route your prayers through the priest, you can directly reach the God, you can directly read the Bible and then understand that, which was not encouraged or permitted within Christianity within Catholicism.

This emergence of reformism, whether it is Calvinism or others or Puritans is very significant. So, Weber was interested in ascertaining those psychological sanctions, which originating in the religious belief and the practices of religion gave a direction to practical conduct and held the individual to that.

Weber's idea was to delineate, and to separate a set of religious ideals, that had an ethical orientation, and that directly or indirectly reoriented individual attitudes and individual proclivities in a particular direction. And that is a very fascinating exercise, you try to understand how certain religious ideas certain religious principles, act on your individual psyche, act on your individual mind and then orient your actions in a particular way. And that was his overall exercise.

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Four consequences of Protestant belief system



- First, because the Calvinist doctrine of predestination led people to believe that God, for incomprehensible reasons, had divided the human population into two groups, the saved and the damned, a key problem for all individuals was to determine the group to which they belonged.
- Second, because people could not know with certainty whether they were saved, they inevitably felt a great inner loneliness and isolation.



Weber comes up with four important consequences of Protestant belief system. The first one is because the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which is an extremely important one. Predestination led people to believe that God for some incomprehensible reasons, had divided the human population into two groups, the saved and the damned, a key problem for all individuals was to determine the group to which they belong.

So, one of the important sects within reformism, the Calvinists had a very particular worldview or theological understanding about the God and the relationship between God and human beings. So, in marked difference from Catholicism, where you think that you are blessed and you undergo this ritual of initiation then because of you know human fault you can get lapsed in your actions and you can commit sins.

And then once you commit sin, then you have this priest, you can go and confess in front of the priest and the priest can forgive you and can take away all the sins on you and then you will be declared as pure, as all the sins can be washed away. And finally, once you die, because you do a lot of prayers and you go to church and you do this confession and you receive this Holy Sacrament during every mass, you die as a very divine person and then your position or your entry into the heaven is ensured.

This is the kind of a concept within Catholicism, but whereas in Protestantism, especially in Calvinism, it has a very fascinating kind of an argument. So, Calvin argued that God has divided

all the people even before their birth into two groups; the one who is saved, the one who is damned. So, the people who are saved are assured, and they are the one who will be selected, and will have their entry or their permanent life in the heaven till the end of the world or permanently.

On the other hand, the people who are not selected are the people who are damned and they will be sent to the hell. And this obvious distinction without analyzing a person's life in this earth is a very different proposition compared to that of Catholicism or even compared to that of religion like Hinduism. Because here, the God is not evaluating somebody on the basis of his or her conduct on the earth, it is already decided, that is why it is called us predestination, your destination is already decided.

The moment you are born, it is already decided that you will be sent to heaven or hell. And this is a very tricky situation. The key problem for all individuals was to determine the group to which they belonged, because people could not know whether they are saved or damned that inevitably caused great inner loneliness and isolation.

And you can easily understand the kind of tension, the kind of anxiety that this particular uncertainty causes in the mind of a strong believer. For a true believer, this particular argument about predestination is a major point of concern. It is a major point of anxiety and Weber argues that that led to a lot of a great inner loneliness and isolation.

Because it puts you into so much of insecurity feeling, because even if you want to do certain thing, you are told that whatever you do in this world, God is not going to help because it is already decided, and there is absolutely no way for you to know which group that you belong to.

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- Third, although a change in one's relative state of grace was seen as impossible, people inevitably began to look for signs that they were among the elect. In general, Calvinists believed that two clues could be used as evidence: (a) faith, for all had an absolute duty to consider themselves chosen and to combat all doubts as temptations of the devil, and (b) intense worldly activity, for in this way, the self-confidence necessary to alleviate religious doubts could be generated.
- Fourth, all believers were expected to lead methodical and ascetic lives unencumbered by irrational emotions, superstitions, or desires of the flesh.
- As Weber put it, the good Calvinist was expected to "methodically supervise his own state of grace in his own conduct, and thus to penetrate it with asceticism," with the result that each person engaged in "a rational planning of the whole of one's life in accordance with God's will."



So, the third point, Weber argues that although a change in one's relative status of grace was seen as impossible, people inevitably began to look for signs that they were among the elect. So, one is that you have no way of understanding whether you are the saved one or the damned one or the selected one or the rejected one, but Weber argues that, in the height of this insecurity, people started looking for signs to get an assurance, to get a solace whether they belong to the group of the elected one.

In general Calvinists believed that two clues should be used as evidence, one is faith for all is an absolute duty to consider themselves chosen and to combat all doubts as temptations of the devil and involve in intense worldly activity, for this self-confidence is necessarily to alleviate religious doubts could be generated.

So, the first one is to have a complete faith that you belong to the selected one, you think that you are the saved one and any negative thought or any doubt is seen as the work of the devil. In a situation of uncertainty you have to think that you are selected and you live accordingly. I hope you follow the argument.

If you think that you are the selected one, then you cannot behave the way you want because you are part of the selected few. And the rest of the people around you could be the damned one, they are not going into the heaven, but you are one among the chosen few. And if you are a chosen one, then you should behave accordingly in a way to justify God's decision. For that, the self-confidence is necessary to alleviate religious doubts.

So you work very hard, thinking that you are one among the selected one, so that all unnecessary doubts can be eliminated. Fourth, all believers were expected to lead methodical and ascetic life unencumbered by irrational emotions, superstitions or desires of the flesh.

So all believers are expected to lead an ethical and methodical ascetic life. Here we have already discussed this point that whether you are an extremely rich person or not does not matter, but your personal life must be that of a very minimalist life and ascetic life. You are not supposed to indulge in luxuries, nor have unnecessary desires in this worldly luxuries and worldly pleasures, desires of the flesh or superstitions or emotions or irrational emotions, this is another very important point.

Catholicism was very closely connected with a lot of magical powers, lot of superstitions, beliefs in the powers of Saints, Mother Mary, believes in the powers of lot of chosen people. So, Protestantism completely, rejects all these claims and then want people to be scientifically oriented, want people's life to be completely free from the influence of magic superstitions, irrational emotions, or desires of the flesh.

As Weber puts it, the good Calvinist was expected to methodically supervise his own state of grace in his own conduct and this to penetrate it with asceticism, with the result that each person is engaged in a rational planning of one's own life in accordance with God's will. So, this is a connection that Weber is making, that you think that you are a chosen one, because you cannot go by the argument of priest whether you are chosen or you are a damned one.

So, you consider yourself as the chosen one. And once you are considered as the chosen one, you have the obligation to lead the life in a befitting manner; you should not have put down the God because God has selected you. You should lead such a life worthy of chosen person, and then you are supposed to lead a rational planning of the whole life of one's life in accordance with the God's will.

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- Worldly asceticism was not restricted to monks and other "religious virtuosi" (to use Weber's phrase) but required of all as they conducted their everyday lives in their mundane occupations or callings.



- Martin Luther's idea of 'calling' "in the sense of a life task, a definite field in which to work." The calling brings "the mundane affairs of everyday life within an all-embracing religious influence."

- Calvinism creates an unprecedented inner loneliness, where each person cannot rely on a priest to intervene regarding sin and salvation.



Worldly asceticism was not restricted to monks and other religious virtuosi. So this worldly asceticism is not an asceticism that is completely cut off from the worldly life, it is not that you become a monk and then you leave all the worldly affairs and then you go and then do meditation in some remote places or you live in a monastery, it is not the case.

So Calvinism understands asceticism as something which is very closely connected with this world. It does not demand that you be cut off from the ordinary life, it does not prohibit you from getting married, and it does not prohibit you from having children or having a normal family life. It does not prohibit you from many worldly affairs unlike Catholicism, in which that the priests are supposed to lead a very celibate life and supposed to have woes of poverty, woes of obedience and so on. Whereas Calvinism or a whole host of other Protestant denominations do not believe in that.

So, worldly asceticism was not restricted to monks and other religious virtuosi, to use Weber's phrase, but required that all should conduct their everyday lives according to their callings. So this ascetic life is a life with principles, a life with a lot of dedication and discipline that can be done in your ordinary life where you have to devote your hundred percent commitment to your own calling.

Martin Luther's idea of calling is understood as the sense of a life task, a definite field in which to work. The calling brings the mundane affairs of everyday life within an all embracing

religious influence. Along with this Calvinist idea of predestination, Martin Luther's argument about this calling is extremely important point in Weberian argument.

So, you consider your work as your calling and you are completely dedicated to that, which is the Calvinist idea. We have come across quite a lot of figures, important models like that, some of the very popular doctors, very extremely popular teachers, very important health workers or social workers, like Mother Teresa who is committed to their work and calling.

It was not seen as a profession, or just job, or mere duty. You do not see it as a burden that is imposed on you. Rather, you think that your entire life is dedicated for that, you are born to do that kind of work. So, Martin Luther's idea of calling in the sense of a life task, a definite field in which to work, the calling brings the mundane affairs of everyday life, within an all embracing religious influence.

Calvinism creates an unprecedented inner loneliness, where each person cannot rely on a priest to intervene regarding sin and salvation. We discussed this point earlier. You cannot simply go to a priest and then do a confession where he will lift you from all your sins and declare you as pure. This is impossible within Protestantism, especially within Calvinism where you do not have this idea of confession and then your sins being washed away, such concepts simply do not exist.

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Two responses by the Calvinists



- First, the individual should never question whether or not he is one of the elect, for doubts show that one is not among the saved. All temptations come from the devil, and individuals have to attain supreme self-confidence that they are saved.
- Second, intense worldly activity is necessary to maintain this self-confidence. The world exists for the glorification of God and this must be manifested in people's everyday acts. Weber states, "the performance of 'good works' became regarded as a 'sign' of election – not in any way a method of attaining salvation, but rather of eliminating doubts of salvation."



So Calvinist had two responses. First, the individual should never question whether or not he is the one of the elect, or show doubts that one is not among the saved. We discussed that earlier. So you think that should think that you are saved and never allow the doubts to emerge in your mind because these doubts is a sign of lack of faith, or weak form of faith.

If you are completely convinced that you are the select one, then you will not even have an iota of doubt, all temptations from the devil and individuals have to attain supreme self-confidence that they are saved. So all the temptations come from devil whether you are select one, or you should do this or should do that, they all come from devil and you must have the inner moral strength to reject all these temptations.

Second, intense worldly activity is necessary to maintain this self-confidence; the world exists for the glorification of God. And this must be manifested in people's everyday act. So the world exists for the glorification of God. So looking at your action, people must understand that your action is an example or it is a glorification of God. They must be able to see the glorification of God in your action.

It is a very daunting task. It is a huge challenge to make people think that through your action, through your work you are actually doing is the glorification God. Weber states, the performance of good work becomes regarded as a sign of election, not in any way a method of attaining

salvation, but rather eliminating doubts of salvation. So you must approach your work as a way of exalting the glorification of God.

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- Weber states that the most important result of this ascetic Protestantism was "a systematic rational ordering of the moral life as a whole."
- Calvinism helps to create psychological conditions conducive to the rise of capitalism. The calling is a command from God for "the individual to work for the divine glory."
- The accumulation of wealth came to be seen as willed by God. They enacted a prohibition only against the enjoyment of wealth. The accumulation of wealth is not a problem; only if wealth is consumed in an immoral manner is affluence questionable.



So Weber states that the most important result of this ascetic Protestantism was a systematic, rational ordering of the moral life as a whole. So Weber says that these were the intellectual influences, these were the spiritual influences of Calvinism, or that of different sects of Protestantism, which is an enormous pressure on the individual to think that they are the select, and if they are the select, then that must get reflected in the work.

So everybody is forced, everybody is pressurized, to work more sincerely, put in more hard work and put in and to consider their job as their vocation or as their calling. Calvinism helps to create psychological conditions conducive to the rise of capitalism. The calling is a command from the God for the individual to work for the divine glory.

So these two things, this psychological condition of predestination and this calling Weber argues are extremely important to the rise of capitalism. The accumulation of wealth came to be seen as willed by God. So as I mentioned earlier, creating more wealth or creating more profit is not in, is not a sin in itself. It is seen as willed by God.

If you consider your occupation, your job with so much of passion, the God will reward you and the God will give you more money, the God will shower his blessings on you by making you wealthier, but then this wealth puts enormous moral responsibility on you to use this wealth

responsibly. They enacted a prohibition only against enjoyment of wealth; the accumulation of wealth is not a problem; only if wealth is consumed in an immoral manner is affluence questionable.

So you create more wealth and with that wealth you create further wealth, you employ more people, you expand your, your business, empire that is all seen as a glorification, as a manifestation of the glory of God. But the moment you try to indulge in your personal luxury, your personal indulgence, when you begin to immerse yourself in say, for drugs or alcohol or sex, then that is seen as your down turn.

So that is seen as, as something that is absolutely unacceptable in the eyes of a true Protestant believer. And this worldview, as I mentioned is considerably different from that of a Catholic world, where Catholicism has been telling the poor people that if you are poor, then think that you are more closer to the God because once you die, the God will take you directly to the heaven.

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- The Protestant ethic legitimated profit making, but it also provided ideological support to capitalism by justifying inequality, poverty, and low wages.
- Weber argues that the "civic strata," such as merchants and businessmen, found this religious worldview appealing. The existence of these groups is based on economic calculation and the mastery of economic conditions.
- It was the rising stratum of the lower industrial middle class, with their ideal of the self-made man, who embodied the capitalist spirit.



The Protestant ethic legitimated profit making, but also provided ideological support to capitalism by justifying inequality, poverty and low wages. Here, you are directly concerned only with the cost of creating profit, expanding your empire, business empire, but it is also justified inequality because it does not address inequality, it does not address poverty, in a way

Catholicism addresses, but we have discussed when we discuss Karl Marx, what is the problem in a Catholic understanding of poverty.

Karl Marx argued that Christianity or Catholicism in particular, did not enquire why that there are poor people or it did not enquire about the reasons of poverty, it did not enquire into the structural reasons that either generate or perpetuate poverty, it only tried to salvage the poor, it only try to rescue the poor through the works of charity.

But it did not ask larger questions about the root cause or did not ask larger questions about the system that creates poorer people. Because the moment you ask that question, Marx argued you that you are asking some of the centrally important questions, then you get into the realm of material conditions, realm of ownership of means of production and you get into a complete different realm of explanation and low wages.

Weber argues that the civic strata such as merchants and businessmen found this religious worldview appealing. The existence of these groups is based on economic calculation and the mastery of economic conditions. So he argues this that a particular, maybe the middle class or the civic strata such as the merchants and businessmen found this religious worldview appealing. The existence of these groups is based on economic calculation and the mastery of economic conditions.

It was the rising stratum of this, of the lower industrial middle class with the self, with their ideal of the self-made man who embodied the capitalist spirit. So Weber now connects this spirit of capitalism with the rise of a particular class of people, the merchants and the businessmen, who belong to the lower middle class or the lower industrial middle class who imbibed this particular spirit and then began on an expansion spirit of capitalist production, which really gave so much of impetuous, speed and energy through that of the capitalist expansion.

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- By demonstrating the influence of ascetic Protestantism on the formation of the vocational culture of modern capitalism, he challenges what he takes to be the economic determinism of Marx's historical materialism.



- Weber insists that the course of history is determined not only by economic forces but by ideal or cultural forces as well—by life-shaping belief systems.



Now let us see the larger implication of this argument. By demonstrating the influence of ascetic Protestantism on the formation and the vocational culture of modern capitalism, Weber challenges what he takes to be the economic determinism of Marx's historical materialism. So this is the story of Protestant ethics, so Weber takes a particular spirit of capitalism as an idea and then he traces back its origin in the emergence of Calvinism or emergence of Reformism.

And then he says that this Reformist movement is the one which actually gave rise to this particular spirit along with a number of structural reasons as we saw which include the availability of free market, availability of free labor, the science and technology specialized knowledge, established rules and regulations, along with all these structural reasons, this particular spirit gave an impetus for the emergence of capitalism as a dominant economic system.

And this particular argument as we already mentioned is directly opposite to a Marxian argument about the economic determinism, where the economic strata influences or it determines the values. So Weber's work is in a way widely identified and discussed and debated by scholars as a very important critic of Marxian argument about the role of economy and role of religious values.

So that is why this, this particular book Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism by Weber is seen as an extremely important critic of Marxian explanation on economic determinism because

Weber through his wonderful analysis is able to put forward a thesis and use historical material, an empirical analysis to argue that there was a definitive ideological influence for the emergence of capitalism as a distinct economic system.

So Weber insists that the course of history is determined not only by economic forces but by ideal or cultural forces as well by life shaping belief systems. So this is the most important argument Weber brings fourth the significance of belief system, Weber brings fourth the significance of cultural ideas, the importance of values, important of ethical dispositions as extremely important life shaping forces.

So he is not ready to relegate them unlike Karl Marx who see these things as epiphenomena. Marx understood these belief systems as a consequence or a corollary of an economic system, Weber is not ready to do that, Weber is not ready to accept that argument rather Weber argues that in the history of human life, these values and belief systems and cultural values are as important as the material conditions.

So in that sense, Weber's thesis is widely seen as an efficient correction, as an efficient antidote to a very hard line Marxian argument that tend to discount the importance of values and beliefs and realms of ideas and cultures and other things. So let us wind up the class, today we had a discussion about this his magnum opus *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* and we will continue with Weber's discussion in the coming classes as well. So see you, thank you.