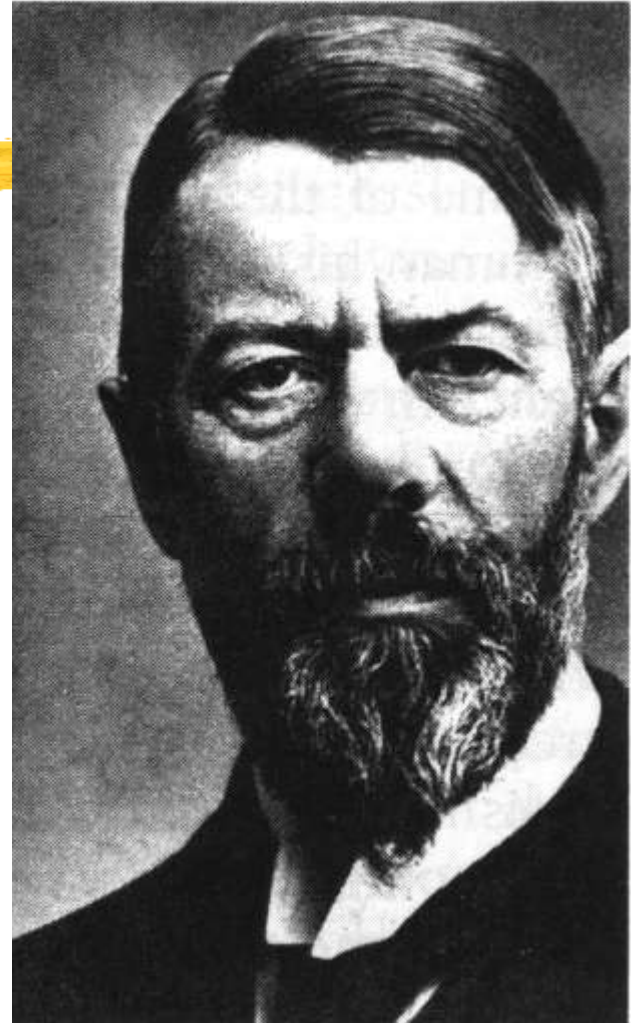


MAX WEBER

(1864-1920)

by Dr. Frank Elwell



NOTE:



This presentation is based on the theories of Max Weber as presented in his *books* listed in the bibliography. A complete summary of Weber's theories (as well as the theories of other macro-theorists) can be found in *Macrosociology: The Study of Sociocultural Systems*, by Frank W. Elwell. If you would like to receive a .pdf file of the chapter on Weber please write me at felwell@rsu.edu and put Weber.pdf in the subject line.

SOCIAL ACTION



MAX WEBER CONCEIVED OF SOCIOLOGY AS A
COMPREHENSIVE SCIENCE OF SOCIAL ACTION.
HE SAID THERE ARE FOUR TYPES:

⌘ ZWECKRATIONAL

⌘ WERTRATIONAL

⌘ AFFECTIVE

⌘ TRADITIONAL

ZWECKRATIONAL



GOAL ORIENTED RATIONAL BEHAVIOR. ACTION IN WHICH BOTH THE GOAL AND THE MEANS ARE RATIONALLY CHOSEN. YOU HAVE A GOAL, YOU TAKE RATIONAL STEPS TO ACHIEVE IT. ANOTHER NAME FOR THIS IS "TECHNOCRATIC THINKING."

WERTRATIONAL



VALUE-ORIENTED RATIONALITY IS
CHARACTERIZED BY STRIVING FOR A GOAL,
WHICH IN ITSELF MAY NOT BE RATIONAL, BUT
WHICH IS NONETHELESS PURSUED THROUGH
RATIONAL MEANS.

AFFECTIVE



ACTION THAT IS ANCHORED IN THE EMOTIONAL STATE OF THE ACTOR RATHER THAN IN THE RATIONAL WEIGHING OF MEANS AND ENDS.

TRADITIONAL



ACTION GUIDED BY CUSTOMARY HABITS OF
THOUGHT, BY RELIANCE ON THE "ETERNAL
YESTERDAY."

SOCIAL ACTION



WEBER WAS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH MODERN WESTERN SOCIETY, IN WHICH, AS HE SAW IT, BEHAVIOR HAD COME TO BE DOMINATED INCREASINGLY BY GOAL-ORIENTED RATIONALITY.

SOCIAL ACTION



IN MODERN SOCIETY THE EFFICIENT APPLICATION OF MEANS TO ENDS HAS BECOME PREDOMINANT AND HAS REPLACED OTHER SPRINGS OF SOCIAL ACTION.

SOCIAL ACTION



WEBER PROPOSED THAT THE BASIC DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF MODERN WESTERN MAN WERE BEST VIEWED IN TERMS OF CHARACTERISTIC SHIFTS IN HUMAN ACTION.

THE IDEAL TYPE



AN IDEAL TYPE IS AN ANALYTICAL CONSTRUCT THAT SERVES THE SOCIAL INVESTIGATOR AS A MEASURING ROD TO ASCERTAIN THE SIMILARITIES AS WELL AS DEVIATIONS IN CONCRETE CASES.

THE IDEAL TYPE



THE IDEAL TYPE INVOLVES AN ACCENTUATION OF THE "LOGICALLY CONSISTENT" INSTITUTION. IT IS A LOGICALLY PRECISE AND COHERENT WHOLE, THAT CAN NEVER BE FOUND AS SUCH IN REALITY.

IDEAL CAPITALISM



- ⌘ PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF ALL POTENTIALLY PROFITABLE ACTIVITIES
- ⌘ INDIVIDUAL ACTORS SEEKING TO MAXIMIZE THEIR PROFIT
- ⌘ COMPETITION BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND FIRMS
- ⌘ GOVERNMENT KEEPS ITS HANDS OUT OF THE MARKETPLACE, OR LAISSEZ FAIRE

BUREAUCRACY



BUREAUCRATIC COORDINATION OF HUMAN
ACTIONS IS THE DISTINCTIVE MARK OF
MODERN SOCIAL STRUCTURE.

IDEAL BUREAUCRACY



⌘ HIERARCHY

⌘ IMPERSONALITY

⌘ WRITTEN RULES OF CONDUCT

⌘ ACHIEVEMENT

⌘ SPECIALIZED DIVISION OF LABOR

⌘ EFFICIENCY

TYPES OF AUTHORITY:



⌘ RATIONAL-LEGAL

⌘ TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

⌘ CHARISMATIC

CAUSALITY



WEBER FIRMLY BELIEVED IN SOCIOLOGICAL CAUSALITY, BUT HE EXPRESSED CAUSALITY IN TERMS OF PROBABILITY.

CAUSALITY



"WE ASSOCIATE THE HIGHEST MEASURE OF AN EMPIRICAL 'FEELING OF FREEDOM' WITH THOSE ACTIONS WHICH WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF PERFORMING RATIONALLY."

CAUSALITY



PREDICTION BECOMES POSSIBLE ONLY WITHIN
A SYSTEM OF CONCEPTUALIZATIONS THAT
EXCLUDES CONCERN FOR MANY CONCRETE
FACTS.

CAUSALITY



WEBER ARGUED THAT MARX HAD PRESENTED AN OVERLY SIMPLIFIED SCHEME THAT COULD NOT ADEQUATLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE COMPLEX WEB OF CAUSATION LINKING SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND IDEAS.

IDEALISM-MATERIALISM



THERE IS NO PRE-ESTABLISHED LINKAGE BETWEEN THE CONTENT OF AN IDEA AND THE MATERIAL INTERESTS OF THOSE WHO BECOME ITS CHAMPION, BUT AN "ELECTIVE AFFINITY" MAY ARISE BETWEEN THE TWO.

IDEALISM-MATERIALISM



WEBER ATTEMPTED TO SHOW THAT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN IDEAS AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES WERE MULTIPLE AND VARIED, AND THAT CAUSAL CONNECTION WENT IN BOTH DIRECTIONS. HE GAVE GREATER WEIGHT TO THE INFLUENCE AND INTERACTION OF IDEAS AND VALUES ON SOCIO-CULTURAL EVOLUTION.

PROTESTANT ETHIC



THE PROBLEMS POSED BY MODERN SOCIETY WERE FOREMOST IN WEBER'S MIND, AND IN THIS CONNECTION HE CONCEIVED THE SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL TO RATIONAL ACTION. HE MAINTAINED THAT THE RATIONALIZATION OF ACTION CAN ONLY BE REALIZED WHEN TRADITIONAL WAYS OF LIFE ARE ABANDONED.

PROTESTANT ETHIC



THE PROTESTANT ETHIC BROKE THE HOLD OF TRADITION WHILE IT ENCOURAGED MEN TO APPLY THEMSELVES RATIONALLY TO THEIR WORK. WHILE WEBER MAINTAINED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL MATERIAL CAUSES TO THE RISE OF CAPITALISM, IDEAS AND IDEOLOGIES PLAYED A ROLE.

BUREAUCRACY: DYSFUNCTIONS



WEBER WAS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT THAT BUREAUCRATIZATION HAD ON HUMAN CULTURE. HE NOTED SEVERAL DYSFUNCTIONS:

- ☒ OLIGARCHY
- ☒ RATIONALITY
- ☒ DEHUMANIZATION
- ☒ IRRATIONALITY FACTOR

OLIGARCHY



BY ITS VERY NATURE BUREAUCRACY GENERATES AN ENORMOUS DEGREE OF UNREGULATED AND OFTEN UNPERCEIVED SOCIAL POWER. BUREAUCRACY TENDS TO RESULT IN OLIGRACHY, OR RULE BY THE FEW—BY OFFICIALS AT THE TOP OF THE ORGANIZATION.

OLIGARCHY



THE IRON LAW OF OLIGARCHY: "WHO SAYS ORGANIZATION, SAYS OLIGARCHY."
ACCORDING TO THE "IRON LAW," DEMOCRACY AND LARGE SCALE ORGANIZATION ARE INCOMPATIBLE. THIS IS DUE TO THE VERY NATURE OF BUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATION WHICH IS HIERARCHICALLY ORGANIZED WITH TREMENDOUS POWER INVESTED IN THE TOP OFFICES.

OLIGARCHY



THESE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE REINFORCED BY THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION. LEADERS HAVE ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER INFORMATION AND FACILITIES THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE RANK-AND-FILE. THESE LEADERS TEND TO PROMOTE JUNIOR OFFICIALS WHO SHARE THEIR OPINIONS.

OLIGARCHY



THE RANK AND FILE ALSO PROMOTE OLIGARCHY. THEY TEND TO LOOK TO LEADERS FOR POLICY DIRECTIVES, AND ARE GENERALLY PREPARED TO ALLOW THE LEADERS TO EXERCISE THEIR JUDGEMENT ON MOST MATTERS.

OLIGARCHY



WEBER POINTED OUT THAT THE TREND
TOWARD GREATER LIBERTY IN MODERN
SOCIETIES REQUIRES BUREAUCRATIZATION
OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

OLIGARCHY



MODERN DEMOCRACY, THROUGH THE VOTE,
HAS A CERTAIN INFLUENCE OVER THE ELITES
WHO WILL RULE THEM, BUT THERE CANNOT
BE FULL PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY.

OLIGARCHY



THOSE ON TOP OF BUREAUCRATIC HIERARCHIES CAN COMMAND VAST RESOURCES IN PURSUIT OF THEIR INTERESTS. THIS GIVES THE ELITE AT THE TOP OF THESE HIERARCHIES VAST POWER.

OLIGARCHY



"THE MOST PERVASIVE FEATURE THAT DISTINGUISHES CONTEMPORARY LIFE IS THAT IT IS DOMINATED BY LARGE, COMPLEX, AND FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS..."

OLIGARCHY



"OUR ABILITY TO ORGANIZE THOUSANDS AND EVEN MILLIONS OF MEN IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH LARGE-SCALE TASKS--BE THEY ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, OR MILITARY--IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST STRENGTHS..."

OLIGARCHY



"THE POSSIBILITY THAT FREE MEN BECOME
MERE COGS IN THE BUREAUCRATIC MACHINES
WE SET UP FOR THIS PURPOSE IS ONE OF THE
GREATEST THREATS TO OUR LIBERTY"

RATIONALIZATION



RATIONALIZATION REFERS TO THE INCREASING DOMINANCE OF ZWECKRATIONAL IN MODERN LIFE. THERE ARE THREE CHARACTERISTICS:

- ⌘ EFFICIENCY
- ⌘ CALCULABILITY
- ⌘ DEMYSTIFICATION

EFFICIENCY



REFERS TO THE DRIVE FOR EFFICIENCY BY ALL FORMAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS. THIS SEARCH FOR THE MOST EFFICIENT MEANS OF ATTAINING A GOAL HAS BECOME A MAJOR FORCE IN BOTH CAPITALIST AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION.

CALCULABILITY



REFERS TO THE NEED FOR PREDICTABILITY AND ORDER IN SOCIAL LIFE. DATA SEEMINGLY TAKES ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN, THE REIFICATION OF NUMBERS AND STATISTICS BECOMES ALMOST AS IMPORTANT AS REALITY ITSELF.

DEMYSTIFICATION



DEMYSTIFICATION MEANS THE ELIMINATION OF SPIRITUAL MEANING AND MORAL SIGNIFICANCE FROM SOCIAL LIFE AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY SYSTEMATIC, LOGICAL, AND REASONABLE ELEMENTS.

DEMYSTIFICATION



THE MODERN WORLD HAS BEEN DESERTED BY THE GODS. MAN HAS CHASED THEM AWAY AND HAS MADE CALCULABLE AND PREDICTABLE WHAT IN AN EARLIER AGE HAD BEEN GOVERNED BY HIS GRACE.

RATIONALIZATION



BUREAUCRACIES ARE BUILT ON THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFICIENCY AND CALCULABILITY. THEY PROGRESSIVELY REPLACE TRADITIONAL SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH RATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DESIGNED TO PERFORM LIKE MACHINES.

RATIONALIZATION



TO BECOME INDUSTRIALIZED IS TO BECOME RATIONALIZED, A PROCESS AFFECTING EVERY AREA OF SOCIETY, THE MOST PUBLIC AND THE MOST PRIVATE, THE STATE AND THE ECONOMY AS WELL AS THE REALTIONS OF MARIAGE, FAMILY, AND PERSONAL FRIENDSHIPS.

RATIONALIZATION

THE RESULT IS A SOCIETY THAT IS CONSTANTLY QUESTIONING TRADITIONAL WAYS, ABSOLUTE VALUES, AND CONSTANTLY DEVISING MORE RATIONAL WAYS TO ACHIEVE DESIRED ENDS.



DEHUMANIZATION



AS BUREAUCRACIES SATISFY, DELIGHT, AND SATIATE US WITH THEIR OUTPUT OF GOODS AND SERVICES, THEY ALSO SHAPE OUR MENTALITY, THEY DEFINE OUR VERY HUMANITY.

DEHUMANIZATION



"THE CALCULABILITY OF DECISION-MAKING...IS
MORE FULLY REALIZED THE MORE THE
BUREAUCRACY 'DEPERSONALIZES' ITSELF..."

DEHUMANIZATION



"THE MORE COMPLETELY IT SUCCEEDS IN ACHIEVING THE EXCLUSION OF LOVE, HATRED, AND EVERY PURELY PERSONAL-- ESPECIALLY IRRATIONAL AND INCALCULABLE-- FEELING FROM THE EXECUTION OF OFFICIAL TASKS...

DEHUMANIZATION



"IN THE PLACE OF THE OLD-TYPE RULER WHO IS MOVED BY SYMPATHY, FAVOR, GRACE, AND GRATITUDE, MODERN CULTURE REQUIRES FOR ITS SUSTAINING EXTERNAL APPARATUS THE EMOTIONALLY DETACHED, AND HENCE RIGOROUSLY PROFESSIONAL EXPERT."

DEHUMANIZATION



ULTIMATELY, RATIONALIZATION MUST LEAD TO DEHUMANIZATION—THE ELIMINATION OF CONCERN FOR HUMAN VALUES.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



BUREAUCRACY IS NOT RATIONAL IN THE SENSE OF THE MORAL ACCEPTABILITY OF ITS GOALS OR THE MEANS USED TO ACHIEVE THEM.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



INDIVIDUAL OFFICIALS HAVE SPECIALIZED AND LIMITED RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY AND SO ARE UNLIKELY TO RAISE BASIC QUESTIONS REGARDING MORAL IMPLICATIONS.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



THE PROBLEM IS FURTHER COMPOUNDED BY THE CORRESPONDING WEAKENING OF MANY TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND RELIGION—WHICH SERVED TO BIND PRE-INDUSTRIAL MAN TO THE INTERESTS OF THE GROUP.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



FINALLY, RATIONALIZATION CAUSES THE WEAKENING OF TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS MORAL AUTHORITY--THE VALUES OF EFFICIENCY PREDOMINATE.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



WEBER'S VIEWS ABOUT THE INESCAPABLE RATIONALIZATION AND BUREAUCRATIZATION OF THE WORLD HAVE OBVIOUS SIMILARITIES TO MARX'S NOTION OF ALIENATION.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



WEBER BELIEVED THAT THE ALIENATION DOCUMENTED BY MARX HAD LITTLE TO DO WITH CAPITALISM, BUT WAS A CONSEQUENCE OF INDUSTRIALISM AND BUREAUCRACY.

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR




WEBER ARGUED THAT IN ALL RELEVANT SPHERES OF MODERN SOCIETY MEN COULD NO LONGER ENGAGE IN SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT ACTION UNLESS THEY JOINED A LARGE-SCALE ORGANIZATION...

IRRATIONALITY FACTOR



...THEY WOULD BE ADMITTED INTO THIS ORGANIZATION ONLY UPON THE CONDITION THAT THEY SACRIFICED THEIR PERSONAL DESIRES TO THE IMPERSONAL GOALS AND PROCEDURES THAT GOVERNED THE WHOLE.

SOCIOCULTURAL EVOLUTION




BECAUSE BUREAUCRACY IS A FORM OF ORGANIZATION SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHERS, FURTHER BUREAUCRATIZATION AND RATIONALIZATION IS AN INESCAPABLE FATE.

SOCIOCULTURAL EVOLUTION



"IT IS APPARENT THAT TODAY WE ARE PROCEEDING TOWARDS AN EVOLUTION WHICH RESEMBLES (THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF EGYPT) IN EVERY DETAIL, EXCEPT THAT IT IS BUILT ON OTHER FOUNDATIONS, ON TECHNICALLY MORE PERFECT, MORE RATIONALIZED, AND THEREFORE MUCH MORE MECHANIZED FOUNDATIONS."

SOCIOCULTURAL EVOLUTION



"THE PROBLEM WHICH BESETS US NOW IS NOT:
HOW CAN THIS EVOLUTION BE CHANGED?--
FOR THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT: WHAT WILL
COME OF IT?"

REPUTED LAST WORDS OF MAX WEBER:



"THE TRUTH IS THE TRUTH."

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