

Max Weber's "Die Protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus"

It is the aim of my thesis to try to survey Max Weber's "Die protestantische Ethik und der 'Geist' des Kapitalismus" from a new point of view.

While his theory in this work has widely been criticized, it raised many problems for discussions from the standpoint of economics. I would like to take up this controversial thesis not from the standpoint of economics but from that of sociology. That is to say, I am going to explain that Weber's theory consists in the same analysis as one called "Latent Function" by R. K. Merton. Weber's analysis has led to one of the fundamental elements of the spirit not only of modern capitalism, but of all modern culture: rational conduct on the basis of the idea of 'calling'. According to him, it was born from the spirit of Christian asceticism, that is, from labor in a calling in *majorem gloriam Dei*, as a means to *certitudo salutis*. This, in other words, means that "Subjective disposition" motivating the Protestant movement resulted in a quite different "Objective consequence." As a matter of fact, however, his analysis is equivalent to that of Merton's "Latent Function." The logical procedure to interpret the seemingly paradoxical causation—religious motivation of Protestantism and its unexpected effect, or the rise of Capitalism, has been worked out by Weber through his so-called method of "psychologisch ›rerständlicher‹ Zusammenhang".

This thesis is thus an attempt to prove the above-mentioned points.

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