

The work concept according to Weber

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The latest studies on economical ethics of worldwide religions tend to show us once again the connection between religions and economies, more important the connection between religions and social strata. The desire and passion to approach the idea of mankind living with both the material and the spiritual, induces us once again the thought that mankind needs a new social and religious spirit. Weber, being a researcher of moral and explains the ratio to which religion and work stand to each other. We are inspired by a new course, “the opportunity to possess” what we want, and this is a fact that needs not to remain ambiguous. No way can you come out of dismantling the idea that religious inspiring brings you a new range, a new profession that essentially makes you what you really are, a professional. Next, we try to catch up with the new emerging situation that basically is a bit more complicated, the “intuition”. Though we look for the perfect in what we see, all this comes out as unclear in religion. Maybe the obstruction that the religion wants to give to it, is even stronger than that. The “intuition” started by a human being comes out as an intuition to be reached through the intelligence, while the intuition in religion, brings up through new routes a much more complicated situation than this. It brings a situation in which you lose your control, as you have only one choice.

Weber poses this idea since the beginning: “The Protestants own larger capitals than Catholics.” What surely comes out clearly and what really matters to be clarified is that the economy, not the religion, is in the foundations of progress. It seems evident to the author that the Catholics were behind the Protestants because the latter ones already knew that the religion had to be liberated from such capitalist ambitions.

Key words: work, religion, social moral, social strata, ethics

Free Initiative in the labor market

Weber in one of his extracts argues the new moral of Protestants' work as follows: "The catholic is quiet and equipped with the tiniest instinct of profit, while the Protestant is quite another thing. He knows very well what is going to happen if he isn't interested in the the profit"¹. The explanation regarding the profit is related to the importance that people give to their work; work for them means profit. The profit is what will provide us a better and safe life. The meaning given to the work by a Protestant is that of free initiative, which is decision-making and importance given as a good opportunity to gain.

Actually the expression "wanting to eat well" is given to show that through work, someone wants to guarantee a better life (Weber, Max 2004 Tirana). He gets satisfaction from his achievements. Enjoying life happens at the time when someone really understands to have got satisfaction from the job done. Just like Epicurus who related life to satisfaction, the same thing is done by Protestantism which according to Weber is expressed as satisfaction and free initiative. According to Luther, a painter after expressing his art in raising a church gets satisfaction for having contributed in "establishing" the church. It is the satisfaction that he gets from his job which urges him to become someone important in this life. The satisfaction coming out of his pen is what makes his life have a sense. It doesn't matter whether the church is big or small; it is his work. We don't need to verify what kind of man the painter was, but his work is his happiness.

The comparison between Catholics and Protestants often consists in raising this question "Are we talking about a materialistic world?" Nothing better than this comparison shows the satisfaction they take from their work². Of course, we have to prove that work as a materialistic gaining tool is ambiguous, reminding that the materialism of the Protestants was not strongly constituted. The society in that time was divided in social strata, thus material gain was not

¹ Weber, Max, *"The Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism"*, Tirana, 2004, Plejad, Page 67

²Page 67 It must be highlighted that work as a material profit is not very clear as a standalone concept.

common to all. Let's just recall that Calvin, Luther or especially Erasmus considered work as a tool for being liberated from religion. No way are we talking about modern capitalism, but just about the new steps of everybody's liberation from a doctrine which had ruled greatest part of life.

"The business in religion"

This type of explanation fails where there is a natural gift for doing business; this saying suits people who intensively look for ways of doing business even in the religion³. Calvinism clarifies that this type of business was done by a group of people who seemed to be serving God but their real interest was serving a narrow group of people and interests. Let's recall that also Luther's concern was so great as presented in "Apology doctrines"; there are ideas that seem to be of a religious scope but essentially are quite the opposite, mere business.

Serving to religion has been a new way of becoming rich. What indoubtly is brought by Luther and Calvin not only in the vest of theologians, but also as filosofers is this: there is a new way to gain through religion. To be correct in interpreting this new stream of moral we must remind that life is shown as a development manner where inspiration is a quality of non-clear thought in itself; a thought which cannot be identified as transcendental but a thought that Erasmus gives us as "Seleni Alicibiadis", the spirit of Socrat inveterate at the end of his life accompanied by an illuminate mind like his⁴.

Luther's and Calvin's old Protestantism has little to with what nowadays is refered to as development. It was directly hostile to the causes of modern life which today even the most radical believer does not want to miss. So, if we want to find an internal connection between the old protestant spirit and the modern capitalist culture, we must try not to look for materialistic satisfaction but to seek the pure characterisctics of this spirit. It is quite clear the ratio in which previous social reformation thought stands to that of nowadays, where an integration of work and religion is necessary.

³ Page 67 Let's remind that the name "business" is chosen by Weber as this concept has not come from reformers.

⁴ Erasmus "*Insanity praise* " Tirana page 55 Here it is discussed about a materialistic world not in full shape and surely we have to approach these examples which seem to be meaningless but are essentially necessary.

The progress of public goodness by the use of work

The work developed here, even related to a better life, is considered as something important and useful. Late but not least, Weber's approach to the importance of happiness is a concept which urges a progress of public goodness. According to the French author Philipp van Parijs who has approached the public goodness as a progress; this means that he considers common goodness to necessarily have public access. Related to the case of job inequality, it is a concept which doesn't preserve a full equality⁵. We clarify that the author brings up a reformation approach regarding the fact that usually work is offered in equal conditions; work is shown as a new quality for the society rebringing once again the opportunity to become who we really are.

The idea of goodness and usability is in the interest of all to become who we really are. Work is an internal part for each of us, and as such it doesn't explain anything else but a complete progress of oneself. We bring it up once again fully argued and comprehensible that indeed work is a subject of goodness.

The position that each of us must clarify is how Lutherism and Calvinism argue with pros and cons the desire for a good life not so supreme and untouchable but a more terrestrial goodness and even touchable. The goodness now is not only what comes from the Bible, but according to them, it also is brought by the progress of our work. We are developed not only through our religion, but also through our work as a result of productive development.

Here it is seen that social being was very dry, it was not a society with full features; now it is a society which tends to undress from dark religious concepts. Reformation supported the idea that religion is quite different from the one we know. Mankind through his work comes to know even God⁶. The freedom to choose even the work is what urged mankind to be what he is today, a citizen providing that his own product doesn't remain faint.

The work panel moves towards the thought that it doesn't enclose to the idea of being a service work but also a gaining work⁷. Thinking that work is also profit is clearer where satisfaction is taken from our work, a satisfaction dedicated not only to the others but also to

⁵ Van.Parijs.Phillipe "Quanta disegualianza possiamo accettare" Page 17

⁶ Page17 the same book

⁷ Page 19 Van Parijs explains that the religious services time has gone. Nowadays mankind is searching a much greater satisfaction from his work.

ourselves. The service is not considered under the aspect of satisfying the others, it is also considered in satisfying ourselves and those near to us for the grace of the work done by us. Then, it is quite another thing what we want to explain regarding the profit; never should we forget that profit is not only materialistic but also spiritual.

The spiritual concept of capitalism

To further explain it as a concept, capitalism is used very late after the reformation but the thought of developing a work-profit relation is mentioned also during the early reformation. Lutherism and Calvinism as streams don't forget to mention relation and readiness for work, which influenced Weber himself to follow the same stream. Capitalism has divided in two locomotives the economical history, "covering our needs" and "profiting occasionally", which is continuous even for the direction of an economic enterprise. The range of personal needs or the need to gain profit, are independent from the limits of the needs or the opportunities to accomplish profit from time to time, on which everyone is decisive for the type and course of his activity⁸.

Enunciation: economy will become an activity which will bring social progress. This is principal in what individuals seek firstly as a need and secondly as a maximal profit coming out from this economy. Sombart when exploiting capitalism has divided it in two major locomotives through which the economic history has moved up: "the cover of needs" and "the profit" occasionally where everyone becomes decisive for the type and direction of his activity. The personal needs range while the aim for profit depends on societies' opportunities⁹. It is clear that necessity comes as a feature of a society that still hasn't developed enough. It must be clarified that the capitalist spirit comes later and the reformation is dealt with what it considered to be as traditional.

Capitalism means initiating an activity from a private economy, the beginning of free initiative starting from ourselves. The "capitalist" form and spirit from where it is lead are

⁸Max Weber "The Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism" Tirana 2004 Page 72

⁹ Page 72

generally in an adequate ratio, but not depending legally from each-other; when we use it as the starting point for a profit, we use it as a legal tool for gaining based on a specific profession.

Though dealing with a capitalist spirit that knows to choose its profession, the need to legitimate this capitalist spirit is visible. But regarding the economy to which capitalists refer to as traditional, we will encounter that it was led by an entrepreneur spirit. It seems as easy peasy, but it is not the mere truth, mainly because the spirit of the capital is shown as the spirit of a gentleman where it is not the individual to lead; actually leading is the spirit of a person where everybody wants to find their own satisfaction.

Natures of this kind filled with capitalist spirit are considered indifferent nowadays, even though they are not hostile to the church. The thought of paradise is tempting their decisive nature. The religion looks to them as a tool to leave the terrestrial work. If we get to ask them why they are never satisfied from their wealth according to a pure terrestrial approach, their fall seems so meaningless. If they get to know any answer, they relate it to caring about the relatives¹⁰.

All this paragraph is taken from the treatment done to Protestants' capitalist spirit. Weber thinks that it is a new shape inherited from the previous reformation. Modern capitalism derives from late capitalism; it is a concern that in the foundation of its existence there is the interest for one's benefit. Selfishness represented by mankind is a characteristic shown in a quantity or another. Let's concentrate a bit on selfishness versus religious fear because according to Lutherism or even Calvinism, it must be highlighted that both streams often used to see religion as selfish obedience to fears. Thus, there are two aspects to be considered: first, we are creatures of God, second, due to this we must be divine; because it would be an offense to the holiness of God if what we offer to God is not holy¹¹. According to this, it comes that our entire life must be a proof of holiness and that we won't be free of this sacrilege if we slip to impurity of thought and spirit, considered this as a moral value.

Thus, sacrilege is desecrate of the holy and the Bible. In this passage, Pal uses his words in great style. To start with, he says that we have offered our body as a sacrifice for God; this

¹⁰ Max Weber "The Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism" Tirana Page 78

¹¹ Page 78 Weber, Max

means that we don't have powers, but we are totally under the power of God. This means that we must quit and deny ourselves. The abovementioned forecast regarding individuality shows once again the position where the human being must discover his thoughts which might not help him to know himself. This reminds of Socrates and his perseverance in knowing himself. "Man, get to know yourself" is the discussion presented by me; in some ways it is in the same stream with Socrates' thought arguing that mankind must reveal what he really is and what are his life intentions. Being a human is a fortune that not all the other beings make use of. The merit of this is partly of the reformators that have transformed us in searchers for discovering the social identity.

Conclusions:

Max Weber's development of sociology occupies one of the most important positions in worldwide sociology especially in European sociology. What deserves to be mentioned is that the innovation brought by his sociology is the development of the individual liberated from the religion and systems. Weber's religious sociology is one of the most important sociologies, he uncovers the individual from being dependent on the religious system and liberates him from being influenced by religion in general; the modern times individual according to him is one that can act freely and can develop in his freedom without being influenced by social strata and religious developments.

The German sociologist Max Weber in his deed "The Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism" argues that integration of religious belief and disciplined activity produces the ethics that stimulates capitalism; due to this cooperation, he brought up modern capitalism, which is different from that of Marx, who considers religion outside of the economical development.

Reforms and counter-reforms brought a variety of situations:

a) Three important branches like Catholicism, Protestantism and Lutherism were crystallized. Each of these tried to strengthen their own religion.

b) The developments aimed using of the civil state for establishing new relationships between the nation and the nationals, a relationship which flew in face of absolute ruling.

c) The development of education was urged, bibles were translated into other languages, whose countries constricted the believers to read and write, in some way, their own communication with God.

d) The faith related to the vital and daily economical activity had to be liberated from religion.

All of the above would bring once again the opportunity to gain the knowledge desired by people. We must estimate the position for an Erasmus humanism, to see the man as a being full of faith in himself and God. Here humanism was a stream getting attention. The man is a man and as such must be respected.

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