

# The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism

[Government](#), [Capitalism](#)



The protestant ethic as a driving force of capitalism according to Max Weber and his book „ The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” Maximilian Carl Emil " Max" Weber was a German sociologist and a political economist. His work on sociology of religion is probably what he is best known for. He was trying to understand how religion - may have an effect on economic ethics despite the fact that the two terms are rarely related. His first work on the subject “ The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” is probably the piece which has defined his career as a sociologist.

During the later half of the 19th century the world was beginning to experience rapid and fundamental changes. The Second Industrial revolution was rapidly reducing the cost of living, improving global life standards. Scientific breakthroughs and ideas were leading to a fast evolution of economical development while people like Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley and George Mendel were redefining the very concept of man's place in the world. People were beginning to precipitate the world around them in a different way and it was rapidly transforming - a process which saw its conclusion after the First World War.

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During such a period when came out Weber's “ The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” in a world where the three biggest industrial powers (The British Empire; the United States of America; The Second German Reich) were protestant it is not hard to understand why he saw Protestantism as a factor for the prevalence of some countries over other. Throughout his book, Weber emphasizes that his account is incomplete. He

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is not arguing that Protestantism caused the capitalistic spirit, but rather that it was one contributing factor. He also acknowledges that capitalism itself had an impact on the development of the religious ideas.

The full story is much more complex than Weber's partial account, and Weber himself constantly reminds his readers about his own limitations. The book itself has an introduction and five chapters. The first three chapters make up what Weber calls "The Problem." The first chapter addresses "Religious Affiliation and Social Stratification," the second "The Spirit of Capitalism," and the third "Luther's Conception of the Calling and the Task of the Investigation." The fourth and fifth chapters make up "The Practical Ethics of the Ascetic Branches of Protestantism." The fourth chapter is about "The Religious Foundations of Worldly Asceticism," and the fifth chapter is about "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism." The book is not a study of the Protestant movement in the Christian religion. It is more an observation of how the ideas it preaches have influenced Capitalism. Protestantism began with The Protestant Reformation, also called the Protestant Revolt or simply The Reformation, which was the European Christian reform movement that established Protestantism as a constituent branch of contemporary Christianity.

It was led by Martin Luther, John Calvin and other Protestants. The self-described "reformers" (who "protested") objected to the doctrines, rituals and ecclesiastical structure of the Roman Catholic Church, and created new national Protestant churches. There were many smaller bodies as well. The most common dating begins in 1517 when Luther published "The Ninety-Five Theses", and concludes in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia that

ended years of European religious wars. Protestantism offers a concept of the worldly "calling," and gives worldly activity a religious character.

While important, this alone cannot explain the need to pursue profit. One branch of Protestantism, Calvinism (established by John Calvin from whom the name of the movement derives), does provide this explanation. Calvinists believe in predestination--that God has already determined who is saved and who is damned. As Calvinism developed, a deep psychological need for clues about whether one was actually saved arose, and Calvinists looked to their success in worldly activity for those clues. Thus, they came to value profit and material success as signs of God's favor.

Other religious groups, such as the Pietists, Methodists, and the Baptist sects had similar attitudes to a lesser degree. Weber argues that this new attitude broke down the traditional economic system, paving the way for modern capitalism. Having in mind all which has been said up to this point Max Weber deduced that the Protestant ethic was the driving force behind capitalism and the economical and social development in the countries which were the founders of the religious movement. Speaking from a strictly historical point of view the Reformation had its main influence in already developed cities and states.

Thus it could be possibly true to say that the Protestant movement was only a result from an already developing capitalist system. This, however, leads to the question of why, during the Protestant Reformation, the districts that were most economically developed were also most favorable to a revolution. It is true that freedom from economic traditions might make one more likely to also doubt religious traditions. However, the Reformation did not eliminate

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the influence of the Church, but rather substituted one influence for another that was more intervening in the lives of its followers. The reformation is not a suspension of Church dominance over life but rather a transition to a different kind of dominance. " This may be the case in protestant countries but this does not take into account that after the Reformation there can be seen a shift of power in Europe from Catholic states like Spain, Italy and France to Protestant states such as England, the Netherlands, Germany and Scotland. Weber begins his study with a question: What about Western civilization has made it the only civilization to develop certain cultural phenomena to which we like to attribute universal value and significance?

Only in the West does science that we consider valid exist. While empirical knowledge and observation exist elsewhere in science, history, art and architecture, they lack the " rational, systematic and specialized" methodology of the West. In particular, the development of bureaucracy and the trained official are unique to the West, as is the modern rational state. Weber makes a distinction in his work between capitalism and modern capitalism. For him capitalism has existed since ancient times and examples of capitalism can be found in Egypt, Babylon, India and China.

In this category he includes different opportunities which are of accidental and irrational character and are related with quick accumulation of wealth. Such random occurrences are activities like money-lending, state contracts and state financing, tax ransoms, colony exploitation and monopoly, profiting from wars, revolutions, political parties and etc. All of these forms differ from modern capitalism because of their speculative nature and the usage of random chances for profit. According to Weber the specific key

points of modern capitalism are: A strive for an uninterruptedly repetitive profit, •Achieving of profit through “ peaceful chances of exchange” and not through violence and aggression; •The emergence of the primarily “ bourgeoisie production capitalism” with its rational organization of the free spirit This new form is “ the rational capitalistic organization of (formally) free labor. ” This form reflects rational industrial organization, the separation of business from the household and rational bookkeeping. However, ultimately these things are only significant in their association with the capitalistic organization of labor. Exact calculation--the basis of everything else--is only possible on the basis of free labor. ” Weber says that we must try to understand what it was about the West that encouraged the technical utilization of scientific knowledge through things like bookkeeping. Similarly, we must ask where the rational law and administration of the West came from. Why didn't the political, artistic, scientific or economic development of other countries follow the same path of rationalization?

Weber makes a connection between the Protestant ethic which was accepted after the Reformation process in Europe and economic development using this definition of “ modern capitalism” Weber gives out a detailed analysis of statistical data which reflect the social stratification between Protestants and Catholics. The research was conducted using information gathered from countries of mixed religious composition - Germany, Austria and the Netherlands and he uses it to deduct that owners and business leaders, as well as the higher skilled laborers and personnel, are overwhelmingly Protestant.

Weber also says that though it might be thought that the greater participation of Protestants in capitalism is due to their greater inherited wealth, this does not explain all the phenomena. For example, Catholic and Protestant parents tend to give their children different types of education. While most Catholics prefer a humanitarian education, Protestants who according to Weber are preparing themselves for a bourgeoisie way of life prefer a more material education in order to master specific skills related with industrial manipulation. He explains this with the difference in early upbringing.

Catholics also have more of a tendency than Protestants to stay in handicrafts rather than to go into industry. This suggests that their environment has determined the choice of occupation. This seems all the more likely because one would normally expect Catholics to get involved in economic activity in places like Germany, because they are excluded from political influence. However, in reality Protestants have shown a much stronger tendency to develop economic rationalism than Catholics have. The task of Weber is to investigate the religions and see what might have caused this behavior.

What does the term "the spirit of capitalism" mean? This term can only be applied to something that is "a complex of elements associated in historical reality which we unite into a conceptual whole from the standpoint of their cultural significance." The final concept can only come out at the end of an investigation into its nature. There are many ways to define the spirit of capitalism. In order to best formulate it Weber put in regard what about the spirit interests him; this, however, is not the only possible point of view.

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To come up with a formulation, Weber presents a long excerpt from the writings of Benjamin Franklin. He says that Franklin illustrates the Protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism. The only work by Benjamin Franklin is "Autobiography", which consists of useful advices mainly oriented at the poor. According to Franklin time is money, credit is money, and that money can accumulate money. He encourages people to pay their debts on time, because this allows you to gain the confidence of others. He also encourages people to present themselves as industrious and trustworthy at all times.

Weber says that this "philosophy of avarice" sees increasing capital as an end in itself. He sees it as an ethic, and the individual is seen as having a duty to prosper. This is the spirit of modern capitalism. While capitalism existed in places like China and India, and in the Middle Ages, it did not have this spirit. All of Franklin's moral beliefs relate to promoting profit. They are virtues for this reason, and Franklin does not object to substitutes for these virtues that accomplish the same ends. However, this is not simply egocentrism.

The capitalist ethic does not embrace a hedonistic life-style. Earning more and more money is seen completely as an end in itself, and is not just the means for purchasing other goods. This seemingly irrational attitude towards money is a leading principle of capitalism, and it expresses a type of feeling closely associated with certain religious ideas. Earning money reflects virtue and proficiency in a calling. This idea of one's duty in a calling is the basis of the capitalist ethic. The individual should feel obliged to pursue success in his professional activity.



This does not mean that the idea only appeared under capitalistic conditions, or that this ethic must continue in order for capitalism to continue. Capitalism is a vast system that forces the individual to play by its rules, in an economic survival of the fittest. However, Weber argues that in order for a manner of life so conducive to capitalism to become dominant, it had to originate somewhere, as a way of life common to a large number of people. It is this origin that must be explained. He rejects the idea that this ethic originated as a reflection or superstructure of economic situations.

In Massachusetts, the spirit of capitalism was present before the capitalistic order took shape, as complaints of profit-seeking emerged as early as 1632. Furthermore, the capitalistic spirit took stronger hold in places like Massachusetts that were founded with religious motives than in the American South, which was settled for business motives. Furthermore, the spirit of capitalism actually had to fight its way to dominance against hostile forces. In ancient times and during the Middle Ages, Franklin's attitude would have been denounced as greed.

It is not the case that greed was less pronounced then, or in other places that lack the capitalist ethic. The biggest opponent of the capitalist ethic has always been traditionalism. Weber says that he will try to make a definition of "traditionalism" by looking at a few cases but he advises that it should not be accepted by people and that he only uses it in order to explain its influence on opposing capitalism. First, there is the laborer. One way in which the modern employer encourages work is through price-rates, for example paying an agricultural worker by the amount harvested.

In order to increase productivity, the employer raises the rate of pay. However, a frequent problem is that rather than working harder, the workers actually work less when paid more. They do this because they can reduce their workload and still make the same amount of money. " He did not ask: how much can I earn in a day if I do as much work as possible? But: how much must I work in order to earn the wage, 2 1/2 marks, which I earned before and which takes care of my traditional needs? " This reflects traditionalism, and shows that " by nature" man simply wants to live as he is used to living, and earn as much as is necessary in order for this.

This is the leading trait of pre-capitalistic labor, and we still encounter this among more backward peoples. Weber then addresses the opposite policy, of reducing wages to increase productivity. He says that this effectiveness of this has its limits, as wages can become insufficient for life. To be effective for capitalism, labor must be performed as an end in itself. This requires education and it is not something which comes naturally to people. Weber then considers the entrepreneur in terms of the meaning of traditionalism. He observes that capitalistic enterprises can still have a traditionalistic character.

The spirit of modern capitalism implies an attitude of rational and systematic pursuit of profit. Such an attitude finds its most suitable expression through capitalism, and has most effectively motivated capitalistic activities. However, the spirit of capitalism and capitalistic activities can occur separately. For example, we must consider the " putting-out system" when work is contracted by a central agent to subcontractors who completed the

work in their own facility, usually their own home. This represents a rational capitalistic organization, but with still traditional spirit.

It reflects a traditional way of life, a traditional relationship with labor, and traditional interactions with customers. At some point, this traditionalism was shattered, but not by changes in organization. Rather, some young man went into the country, carefully chose weavers whom he closely supervised, and made them into laborers. He also changed his relationship with his customers by making it more personal and eliminating the middleman, and he introduced the idea of low prices and large turnover. Those who could not compete went out of business.

A leisurely attitude towards life was replaced by an economic way of life. Most importantly, it was usually not new money that brought about this change, but the new spirit which was starting to manifest itself in some people. People who succeeded were typically temperate and reliable, and completely devoted to their business. Today, there is little connection between religious beliefs and such conduct, and if it exists it is usually negative. For these people, business is an end in itself. This is their motivation, despite the fact that this is irrational from the perspective of personal happiness.

In our modern individualistic world, this spirit of capitalism might be understandable simply as adaptation, because it is so well suited to capitalism. It no longer needs the force of religious conviction because it is so necessary. However, this is the case because modern capitalism has become so powerful. It may have needed religion in order to overthrow the old economic system. It is hardly necessary to prove that the idea of <https://assignbuster.com/the-protestant-ethic-and-the-spirit-of-capitalism/>

moneymaking as a calling was not believed for whole epochs, and that capitalism was at best tolerated.

It is nonsense to say that the ethic of capitalism simply reflected material conditions. Rather, it is necessary to understand the background of ideas that made people feel they had a calling to make money. Weber is very strict and analytical when he begins his analysis on the word "calling". Both the German word "Beruf" and the English word "calling" have a religious connotation of a task set by God. This type of word has existed for all Protestant peoples, but not for Catholics or in antiquity. Like the word itself, the idea of a calling is a product of the Reformation.

It is significant because it is the first religious term that gives any significance to earthly activities which have prior been neglected by all other religious doctrines and creeds. People are now perceived as having a duty to fulfill the obligations imposed upon them by their position in the world. Martin Luther developed this idea; each legitimate calling has the same worth to God. This "moral justification of worldly activity" was one of the most important contributions of the Reformation, and particularly of Luther's role in it.

However, it cannot be said that Luther actually had the spirit of capitalism in mind when he wrote his work "The Ninety-Five Theses". The way in which the idea of worldly labor in a calling would evolve depended on the evolution of different Protestant churches. The Bible itself suggested a traditionalistic interpretation, and Luther himself was a traditionalist. He came to believe in absolute obedience to God's will, and acceptance of the way things are.

Thus, Weber concludes that the simple idea of the calling in Lutheranism is at best of limited importance to his study.

This does not mean that Lutheranism had no practical significance for the development of the capitalistic spirit. Rather, it means that this development cannot be directly derived from Luther's attitude toward worldly activity. We should then look to a branch of Protestantism that has a much bigger contribution to the development of modern capitalism -Calvinism. Historically, the four major forms of ascetic Protestantism have been Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and the Baptist sects. None of these churches are completely independent of each other, or even from non-ascetic churches.

Even their strongest dogmatic differences were combined in various ways, and similar moral conduct can be found in all four. We see, then, that similar ethical requirements can correspond with very different dogmatic foundations. In examining these religions, Weber explains that he is interested in " the influence of 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. " People were concerned with abstract dogmas to a degree that can only be understood when we see how connected these dogmas were with practical religious interests.

The capitalistic spirit was not the goal of these religious reformers; their cultural impact was unforeseen and maybe undesired. Weber observes that Calvinism expected systematic self-control, and provided no opportunity for forgiveness of weakness. " The God of Calvinism demanded of his believers not single good works, but a life of good works combined into a

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unified system. " Calvinism's most distinctive dogma is the doctrine of predestination. Calvinists believe that God preordains which people are saved and which are damned. Calvinists came to this idea from logical necessity.

Men exist for the sake of God, and to apply earthly standards of justice to God is meaningless and insulting. To question one's fate is similar to an animal complaining it wasn't born a man. Humans do not have the power to change God's decrees, and we only know that part of humanity is saved, and part damned. Thus it became a psychological necessity to have some means of recognizing people in a state of grace, and two such means emerged. First, it was considered an absolute duty to consider oneself as one of the saved, and to see doubts as temptations of evil.

Secondly, worldly activity was encouraged as the best means of gaining that self-confidence. Calvinism rejected the mystical elements of Lutheranism, where humans were a vessel to be filled by God. Rather, Calvinists believed that they were only a way through which God worked. Faith had to be shown in objective results. They looked for any activity that increased the glory of God. Such conduct could be based directly in the Bible, or indirectly through the purposeful order of God's world. Good works were not a means to salvation, but they were a sign of having been chosen.

This was a rational and systematic approach to life. Since people had to prove their faith through worldly activity, Calvinism demanded a kind of worldly asceticism. It led to an attitude toward one's neighbor's sins that was not sympathetic, but rather full of hate, since he was God's enemy, bearing the signs of eternal damnation. This implied a " Christianization" of life that

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had dramatic practical implications for the way people lived their lives. Furthermore, religions with a similar doctrine of proof had a similar influence on practical life.

Predestination in its " magnificent consistency" was the foundation for the Puritans' methodical and rationalized ethics. The different branches of ascetic Protestantism had elements of Calvinist thought, even if they did not embrace Calvinism as a whole. Weber again emphasizes how fundamental the idea of proof is for his study. His theory can be understood in its purest form through the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Calvinism did have a unique consistency and an extraordinarily powerful psychological effect.

However, there is also a recurring framework for the connection between faith and conduct in the other three Protestant movements. Weber concludes his study with an attempt to describe the relationship between ascetic Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism. To understand how religious ideas translate into maxims for everyday conduct, one must look closely at the writings of priests. To demonstrate how religious ideas translate into maxims for everyday conduct Weber uses the writings of Richard Baxter as a model of ascetic Protestantism ethics.

In his work, it is striking to see his suspicion of wealth as a dangerous temptation which could lead to relaxation, idleness, and distraction from the pursuit of a righteous life. Possessions are only objectionable because of this risk of relaxation; only activity promotes God's glory. Thus, wasting time is the worst of sins, because it means that time is lost in promoting God's will in a calling. Baxter preaches hard and continual mental or bodily work. This is because labor is an acceptable ascetic technique in the Western tradition, <https://assignbuster.com/the-protestant-ethic-and-the-spirit-of-capitalism/>

and because labor came to be seen as an end in itself, ordained as such by God.

This does not change, even for those people who are wealthy, because everyone has a calling in which they should labor, and taking the opportunities for profit that God provides is part of that calling. Weber then attempts to clarify the ways in which the Puritan idea of the calling and asceticism influenced the development of the capitalistic way of life. First, asceticism opposes the spontaneous enjoyment of life and its opportunities - such enjoyment leads people away from work in a calling and religion.

Weber argues, " That powerful tendency toward uniformity of life, which today so immensely aids the capitalistic interest in the standardization of production, had its ideal foundations in the repudiation of all idolatry of the flesh. " Puritans felt a duty to hold and increase their possessions. It was ascetic Protestantism that gave this attitude its ethical foundation. Asceticism also condemned dishonesty and impulsive greed. The pursuit of wealth in itself was bad, but attaining it as the result of one's labor was a sign of God's blessing.

Thus, the Puritan outlook favored the development of rational bourgeois economic life, and " stood at the cradle of the modern economic man. " It is true that once attained, wealth alienated people from Protestantism. In fact, we can see that the full economic effects of these religious movements actually came after the peak of religious enthusiasm. " The religious roots died out slowly, giving way to utilitarian worldliness. " However, these religious roots left its more secular successor a conscience about acquiring money, as long as it was done legally.

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The religious asceticism also gave the businessmen industrious workers, and assured him that inequality was part of God's design. Thus, one of the major elements of the spirit of modern capitalism, rational conduct based on the idea of a calling, was "born" from the spirit of Christian asceticism. The same values exist in both, with the spirit of capitalism simply lacking the religious basis. Weber observes, "The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so." Asceticism helped build the "tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order." People born today have their lives determined by this mechanism.

Their care for external goods has become "an iron cage." Material goods have gained an unparalleled control over the individual. The spirit of religious asceticism "has escaped from the cage," but capitalism no longer needs its support. The "idea of duty in one's calling prowls about in our lives like the ghost of dead religious beliefs." People even stop trying to justify it at all. In conclusion, Weber mentions some of the areas that a more complete study would have to explore. First, one would have to explore the impact of ascetic rationalism on other areas of life, and its historical development would have to be more rigorously traced.

Furthermore, it would be necessary to investigate how Protestant asceticism was itself influenced by social conditions, including economic conditions. He says, "it is, of course, not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history." The work of Max Weber can't be understood properly without understanding the theories of Weber's biggest ideological opponent - Karl Heinrich Marx. Only through the analysis of their main differences in the two

ideologies can a stronger and broader understanding of capitalism be reached.

Although the father of Marx was actually Lutheran this did not give him a view of life as the one preached by Weber. Marx strongly believed in what he called "historical materialism" for him everything is material and that the only way for changes in society to take place is through the struggle between classes. The general concept is that every economic order grows to a state where it has reached maximum efficiency, while at the same time collapsing on itself due to developing internal contradictions or flaws and weaknesses which result in decay.

He believed that men are creators of their own history and they transform their natural habitat in order to fit their changing needs and desires: "Men begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence. . . . In producing their means of subsistence men indirectly produce their actual material life." Throughout history men transform nature so that it better serves their own purposes. According to Marx, all societies go through five stages of history and capitalism is simply a necessary stage between feudalism and the final step of communism.

The way in which men create their social organization is based on modes of production. Changes within these societies occur because as the mode of production changes, it no longer fits the present social organization. Therefore, a new class and hence a new form of society emerges. Weber's perspective was quite different. In fact "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" was written as a response to Marx in order to dispute the <https://assignbuster.com/the-protestant-ethic-and-the-spirit-of-capitalism/>

ideas which he puts forward. Weber has a different perspective on why and how capitalism came about.

Rather than just focusing on how capitalism came about, he focuses on finding an answer to the question of why capitalism happened where and when it did. When he looked for differences in the capitalist cultures and non-capitalist cultures at the time he found that capitalism occurred at the same time as the Protestant reformation. The obvious next question for Weber was why it was the Protestant culture that led to capitalism. He found the division of labor that came naturally through capitalism to be a good thing. It did not lead to the separating of society into two very different and conflicting classes.

Instead, it formed a number of different classes that were related to each man's life style and calling. Each man's God given calling was different from that of his fellow man because God intended it to be so. The division of labor led to the specialization of occupations and increased development of skills, which in turn caused an improvement in production. The division of labor therefore serves the common good. Marx had a completely opposite opinion of the division of labor. In his eyes, the division of labor is what leads to the formation of hostile and conflicting classes.

These classes are distinguished by their access, or lack thereof, to the means of production and consequently, their level of power. However, similar to Weber's view that your position within these classes is determined by an outside source, in Weber's case God, Marx believed that you were born into your social class and that you could not change your position. According to Marx though, this division of labor is what leads to the vicious cycle of

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capitalism. The division of labor allows for work to become very machine like. Which, in turn, alienates the worker from his work and product.

This alienation leads as well, to the estrangement of man from himself and from his fellow man because man's identity becomes his work. The division of labor and mechanization of labor also standardizes jobs as well as the workforce. Thus making workers easily replaceable like parts of a machine. This is not a problem when profits are high and the economy is growing. During times of good economic conditions wages will increase as well. In turn, the profit margin on labor will decrease leading to layoffs and increased unemployment. This will cause small businesses to collapse and wages to once again decrease.

However, at this point, consumption will have fallen because there is less disposable income. Companies will again hire more of these standardized workers who will work for lower wages because they are unemployed. This will again increase the capitalist profit and the cycle begins again. This alienation of the working class is not at all natural and therefore causes great problems. As said by Marx, men are naturally productive creatures. The fundamental nature of man is his consciousness and his ability to control that which surrounds him.

During the process of standardizing labor workers themselves become part of the end product and thus, " Labor produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity" The working class becomes increasingly disgruntled which leads to a struggle between the lower and upper classes which, because history is dialectical and not static, will lead to a revolution that will cause capitalism to fall. These specific conditions of

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capitalism are what caused the alienation and exploitation, and thus, they are the specific conditions which must be changed.

Accordingly, the working class will take over the means of production and bring into being the final stage of society, that being communism. Within communism false consciousness and alienation do not exist. Once the people recognize that we all depend on each other people will work more freely and voluntarily. It is ironic that maybe the reasons behind which communism was not able to thrive in Marx's homeland of Germany could be revealed if we use the thesis of Weber - In a country which has been a strict follower to protestant ethics and thus transformed it's peoples there is no way for an idea such as communism to thrive.

It is far to idle and is not so directly related with direct participation in the continuation of the world in a way which Protestantism would favor. A society in which all people are equal goes against everything which is considered principle in Protestantism - How can people distinguish themselves from other if they are all equal? Thus, even though the strength of the religion had long faded its ethics were strong enough to determine the outcome. It is important to note that neither of the leaders of the Spartacist uprising of 1919 (Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht) were Protestants.

As I once read in Paul Johnson's "Modern Times" the world can be changed by a scientific research. Not just the field in which it is specialized but also in society a whole and thus - the entire world. Max Weber can be put among those people who have not just written endless and worthless papers (like this one); he is among the people who have had an important and significant impact on life with their contributions. His ideas have been used in politics,  
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media, and economics; having an impact on the world as a whole. There will always be critics who stay pessimistic about the views expressed by Weber.

Some say that geographical location was the main reason for the success of the Protestant countries and some even object that countries which prosper such as China and Japan are not even Christian, but it is not the role of the work to deduct that Protestantism was the way to success but only to suggest that it had a guiding role. To use the fact that the Eastern Countries are not Christian as an argument, when they show so many of the qualities which for Weber were key for the success of the Protestants such as willingness to work and social unity is just absurd.

Max Weber was trying to understand why the capitalistic system was successful in some parts of the world and why it did not in others. His work is not perfect it is far from it. But Weber was one of the first people to suggest that economic processes and problems can have their roots in other fields of human knowledge. To view economics as an end in itself is a mistake which must be avoided and yet it is still the case in different areas around the world including Bulgaria.

Maybe Marx was right that capitalism was a machine complex and yet not perfect because humans are not perfect; it is a complicated process in which the smallest factor can produce worldwide effects. Weber attempts to give a rational explanation for why it was developed where history determined for it to do so. “ The master-economist must possess a rare combination of gifts. He must reach a high standard in several different directions and must combine talents not often found together. He must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher—in some degree.

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He must understand symbols and speak in words. He must contemplate the particular in terms of the general, and touch abstract and concrete in the same flight of thought. He must study the present in the light of the past for the purposes of the future. No part of man's nature or his institutions must lie entirely outside his regard. He must be purposeful and disinterested in a simultaneous mood; as aloof and incorruptible as an artist, yet sometimes as near the earth as a politician. " John Maynard Keynes