

# Max weber sociology



Part 1: Using examples, distinguish between what Weber means by ' Value rational and ' Goal rational actions. Max Weber argued that in the study of social sciences ' meaningful actions of individuals or society could not be understood simply through observation, on the other hand natural sciences use observation has a core method for understanding. Weber explained that through understanding social actions we could understand societies more accurately especially western societies. He defined social action as ' behaviour to which subjective meaning is attached (L.

Ray 1999: 168). Social actions take account of others and are oriented in its environment. Action is social when directed to the behaviour of others meaningfully' (Weber 1913, 1978b: 4 cited in L. Ray 1999: 168), for example, when two cars driving opposite each other crash that is a behavioural event not involving shared meanings, but the attempts to avoid each other or insults which may follow are social actions because each driver is orienting their actions to that of the other. Weber identified four types of social actions which are found in contemporary society they are distinguished by their degree of rationality or represent an increasing trend towards rationalisation (L. Ray 1999).

The four types of social action that he identified are; 1 Traditional action, 2 Affective action, 3 Value rational action, 4, Goal-rational action. The first two social actions are non-rational and the latter two are rational actions, the distinction between them is that the first two are intrinsic and the latter two are calculated to an extent (L. Ray 1999: 169). Value rational (Wertrational) action is when one strives for a substantive goal oriented to an ultimate value e. g. salvation, religious, aesthetic, ethical.

By rational, that is, calculated means e. g. self-denial in pursuit of holiness (L. Ray 1999: 169). The ultimate value and pursuing of the goal is for its own sake and not because of the possibilities of success, ends are above calculation, for example, protestant asceticism encourages protestants to devote all their lives in the way of God this type of action is oriented in gaining salvation through self-denial and devoting ones life to the worship of God.

Goal-rational (zweckrational) action is when one weighs the ends, means and secondary consequences and alternative courses of the action so that the goal themselves have been rationally chosen taking consideration of ends means and action for specific outcome(L. Ray 1999: 169). This action is oriented to a mundane goal such as earning a living through techniques. There are two subtypes to this action first being instrumental action pursued in order to archive a reward such as profit and loss calculations (L.

Ray 1999: 169). The second being formal rational action in which the objective is procedural, where following the rules becomes ends in itself, for example, the democratic political system and judicial. Part 2: Identify and use relevant concepts from Weber to analysis reading B: Ivan Illich, Tools for conviviality, Calder and boyars, 1973: 34-38In this short essay I will be using concepts from Max Weber to analysis and explain the literature on tools of conviviality, from a Weberian perspective. The opening paragraph reminds us of our scientific achievements in the modern world and the capabilities modernity possesses to do absolutely anything with tools of modernity, with the aid of modern tools we can understand nature around us with a totally different dimension and with great insight then ever before. The author also

mentions that with our modern tools we can be propelled into hyper industrial age of electronic cybernetics or aid in developing wide range of convivial tools.

Modernity and tools is the keyword in this paragraph, to a Weberian modernity is the out come of rationalisation (A. Oattes 2004), the increasing trend of rationalisation and science has enabled man to measure, calculate, invent and craft instruments that would have never been achieved without rationalisation. To Max Weber rationalisation is core to modernity; rationalisation is a multi dimensional process which occurred of social change e. g. religious to secular, magical to scientific, personal to impersonal.

In this literature the author talks of the achievements of abandoning magic for science. Science has empowered man to create and invent technologies that can take people from one country to another in matter of hours rather than months it can also take man out of earth to the moon. The author talks about technology as a form of mechanical labour but also as a form of entertainment for the vast amount of people in the modern world, he refers to television and the internet which offer people a vast amount of choices to how they wish to be entertained. As specialist workers increase through the aid of technology bureaucracy will increase, Weber identified modern capitalism as distinct from other types of money economies. Modern capitalism was far more bureaucratic and rational methods of accounting and accounting procedures were applied in industrial undertaking (K. Morrison 1998: 340).

Procedures are capable of co-ordinating and mobilising physical resources such as land, machinery and tools that may be at the disposal of private operations for the purpose of production (K. Morrison 1998), hence as the author says in (Reading B) vast range of choices are available through increased productivity. Through the process of rationalisation and scientific developmental a lay person can diagnose and treat anyone, what the author says here is that science has developed treatment that do not require a specialist surgeon to carry out surgery but instead if a lay person was taught how to press the right buttons on the machine then surly he could treat anyone. An example of that is in modern medicine with the aid of machine doctor's diagnose patients and with the aid of machines they treat the illness, if a layman was to be taught on how to operate and understand the technology then surly he could carry out treatment. Another example of this is medicine, in the modern world surgery is looked upon as a last resort instead drugs are used to prevent and heal most major curable illness whilst in the pre-modern world herbal and magical rituals were seen upon as treatments.

The article goes on to say that because of specialisation and the need to be certified certain professions have a monopoly over everything that they carry out in their line of work. Mostly importantly he points out the fact that progress is growing dependence rather than self-care competence, the process of rationalisation and bureaucracy in modernity has placed procedures as Weber would argue, dependence is a characteristic of modern capitalist societies. The article then goes to say that in industrialised society we place an exaggeration on value and standard products, uniformity and

certified quality but in reality that doesn't necessarily mean we are getting best for our money, as Weber says in modernity everything is at a price (A. Oattes 2004). The author challenges the validity of rationalisation and science in where he says deprofessionalisation in medicine would increase quackery but he also says that quackery becomes less convincing as professionally calculated damages increases.

Another tool of convivial that this article mentions is transportation, since the advent of private cars and vast investment in highways people's mode of travel has changed dramatically it gives an example of a peasant who has to take the bus to the market to buy packaged industrialised commodities. Common man has lost his mobility the old system gave him, without gaining any new freedom, from this example Weber would confirm his point that the Iron cage which he talked about where expressive aspects of human life are increasingly constrained (A. Oattes 2004) and rationalisation of modern life manifest in organisational form in bureaucracy, brings into being the 'cage' within which men are increasingly confined (Weber's concluding observation in the Protestant Ethic cited in A. Giddens 1971: 184). The final point that the article rises is the ever need to develop better and better technology to provide efficient service at all cost, science has to be thoroughly exhausted in developing superior forms of technology to meet the ever growing modern capitalist industries.

Peasants are referred to as personal staff and accompany their barons now called managing directors or chief executives in their luxury helicopters Weber would understand this social change as highly organised and increasing bureaucratic organisations in modern capitalist societies (A.

Oattes 2004). Part 3: Why did Weber believe we increasingly lead “disenchanted” social lives in modern society? This short essay will be investigating why Max Weber believed we increasing lead disenchanted social lives and how he came to that conclusion. I will be looking into what caused disenchantment in our social lives in modernity and are we finding our means to re-enchantment in any other place and finally conclude if the statement made by Weber is justified in modern societies.

Max Weber borrowed the expression of ‘the disenchantment of the world’ from Schiller (Jenkins. R 2000: 11). Weber believed that the gradually disenchantment of the world had its foundations in modernity and according to Schroeder 1995 cited in Jenkins. R 2000: 12, his definitive concept of disenchantment defines modernity. Weber was not a cynic of modernity nor did he present ideas which ever reversible to modernity but he identified the dark side of modernity as the consequence of rationalisation and increased bureaucracy (Jenkins. R 2000).

In Weber’s investigation in disenchantment he found that modernity enabled everything to be understandable through rational means and everything could be explained with the use of scientific investigation. He also identified decline of magic and the rise of secularisation as another cause of disenchantment where increasingly the world becomes human-centred and the universe becomes more impersonal. The problem of disenchantment came about with modernity as Weber explains in the forms of rationalised routine demanded and produced by bureaucracy and policy governed regimes of authority (Jenkins. R 2000: 13). A major factor in disenchantment

of people came from governed regimes of authority such as the government, the law and policy-makers.

Disenchantment in modernity was like progress without attachment or personal meanings everything was systematic and routines in a regime in laymen's term one could say the idea of working in an office 9 to 5 day in day out with no meaning or attachment or a ultimate goal apart from increasing capital as an end itself, People are not called friends during work hours but colleagues everything is systematic and bureaucratic. The emergence of secularisation pushed aside ones religious belief to mere rituals done in private, faith in the unseen became the question of debate and rationalisation through calculated and scientific means became answer to every question. Modernity increased mans power to create and manipulate nature which originally was only attributed to God alone, which was why people were more enchanted and inclined to believe in an ultimate force or being. But since the advent of modernity and rationalisation the unexplained things that once people were enchanted by were in decrease and anti-traditionalist ideas were projected hence secularisation was chosen as ones faith of choice.

In modernity we see routine's of people that seem robotic in nature disenchanted mechanism as Weber says ' specialist without sprit' (A. Oattes 2004). Secular capitalism in modern western societies encouraged the need to accumulate wealth for its own sake and work for its own sake (A. Ottes 2004) it was far from the old idea of protestant capitalism which encouraged no excesses in wealth or work honouring god was far more greater the worldly gains.



Disenchantment in modernity is a trend that even to this day is debated and investigated, to what extent people have become spiritless. As we have established that disenchantment is a trait of modernity let's see what secular capitalism has to offer as alternative enchantment. Secular capitalism offers attachment in forms of collective interests or tribal identity, such as ethnicity; sexualities; intoxicants and ecstasies; the escapism of television, computer games and the internet and consumerist cultural hedonism (Jenkins. R 2000: 13).

In secular capitalism these attachments can act as enchantment or a vehicle to re-enchantment, re-enchantment has become a rationalised business in secular capitalist societies (Jenkins. R 2000: 13). Jenkins draws our attention to politics as a form of re-enchantment through its ritual, symbolism and theatre of nation he also mentions the show-business glitz of party conferences and conventions, and the staged drama of international summitry. Organised production of consumption of 'culture' of all its kinds, perhaps the most cynical 'disenchantment enchantment' (Ritzer 1999 cited in Jenkins. R 2000: 13). Every kind of entertainment industry is rationally organised to enchant us in the 21st century, but is it really enchanting us or demoralising us in modernity, through these re-enchantments we are encouraged to be materialist, consumption driven, escapist and ultimately lose grip of reality.

Bureaucratic re-enchantment is a common theme found in secular capitalist societies where people are enchanted via flags of their national state or music and food, nationalism has become a new concept of modernity through which people are enchanted (A. Ottes 2004). Religious events such

as Christmas have become less enchanting than ever before secular capitalist society use this event to drive consumerism at its forefront and immoralities are done in the state of intoxication with alcohol. Ostentation is practised in relation to who can decorate their house more luminously than their neighbour or who can afford the most expensive gift, in the latter case people get into debts to compete with each other. In conclusion, Weber believed we lead disenchanted social lives in modern society because of what modernity really stands for as moral and spiritual guidance.

Weber believed that modernity was irreversible and brings material gain and increases power but it does not necessarily serve human needs (Bilton et al 1996: 601). The economic and political power dramatically expands trapping us more cruelly than ever in an inhuman society. As Weber says in his conclusion in protestant ethic and spirit of capitalism, we become specialist without spirit, sensationalist without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a civilisation never before achieved (Weber 1930: 182 cited in Bilton et al 1996: 601).