

The ethics of religious affiliation and social stratification

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Essay The relationship between the ethics of religious affiliation and social stratification is very well exposed by the influence of the ethics of Protestantism on the spirit of capitalism. It is essential to realize that the influence of various religious ideas and ethical principles on the development of an economic spirit has been widely accepted by the scholars in the field. Studies by important sociologists, economists, and politicians of the world today confirm that there is an essential connection between the spirit of modern economic life, which is supported by the theories of capitalism, and the rational ethics of ascetic Protestantism. In one of the most important work on the topic, Max Weber establishes that the spirit of capitalism in northern Europe was greatly influenced by the Protestant (predominantly Calvinist) ethic. Thus, Weber indicates that the work ethic of Protestantism immensely contributed to the growth of capitalism in the Western world, transforming the unplanned and uncoordinated mass into actions driven by the spirit of capitalism. " But not all the Protestant denominations seem to have had an equally strong influence in this direction. That of Calvinism, even in Germany, was among the strongest, it seems, and the reformed faith more than the others seems to have promoted the development of the spirit of capitalism, in the Wupperthal as well as elsewhere." (Weber, 43)

Therefore, in a profound analysis of the relationship between religious affiliation and social stratification, it becomes lucid that the ethics of Protestantism has played an essential role in the development of the spirit of capitalism. A reflective exploration of the connection between religion and the spirit of capitalism in modern Europe brings out the essential difference among the work ethics of different sects of Christianity such as Catholicism

and Protestantism. In fact, sociological studies have often taken interest in the contrast between the ethics of different sects of Christianity, and there exists considerable difference in the work ethics of the Protestant regions of Northern Europe and the Catholic regions of the Southern Europe.

Significantly, the relationship between the Ascetic Protestantism and the spirit of rationalized Capitalism has been topic of serious discussion in the contemporary sociological studies. It has been widely accepted that the ethics of Protestantism transferred Christian Asceticism from monasteries to common life, and thereby encouraged general public to take part in the work of the material world to accumulate wealth for investment. Significantly, the dogma of calling is essential to the ethics of Protestantism, according to which every individual has a special calling by God to undertake self-disciplined work to achieve the eternal grace of God. As Ole Riis maintains, “succeeding in one’s calling may lead to wealth as a sign of God’s grace and as means for the benefit of the common weal. The notion about God’s providence was stated with the most forceful psychological effect through the dogma of predestination, emphasized by the Calvinists.” (Riis, 24)

Therefore, the ethics of Protestantism played a significant role in the development of the spirit of capitalism which may be understood as a way of accumulating capital by peaceful trade as an ethical duty. In conclusion, the connection between religion and the spirit of capitalism is specifically revealed by the influence of the ethics of Protestantism on the notion of accumulating capital by peaceful trade as an ethical duty. Works Cited Riis, Ole. “Religion and the Spirit of Capitalism in Modern Europe.” Religion in secularizing society: the Europeans' religion at the end of the 20th century.

Loek Halman and Ole Riis. BRILL. 2003. P 24. Weber, Max. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Courier Dover Publications. 2003. P 43.