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# Marx and Weber's Polar Opposing Theoretical Concepts of Capitalism and Christianity: A Tribute to The Depth of Sociological Theory in the 21 Century

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**Abstract:** Marx and Weber two German Sociologists with opposite social theories centered around Capitalism and Religion in Western Civilization.

**Context:** This effort is the first in a series of articles designed to expose Sociology's depth in theoretical free social thought. The second article in this series will contrast "Conflict Theory" with "Functionalism".

**Marx** viewed modern capitalist society as an historical process of oppression and alienation. Indeed, labor is viewed as a commodity, Marx refers to this social conditions as Alienated or Estrange labor. Found in this social position humanity cannot experience a creative function; rather experiences oneself passively as the subject separated from the object. Therefore, the perversion of labor into a meaningless crippling productive force.

Furthermore, Marx argued the nature of humanity is to transform, and change nature to fit human needs or "Species-Being". Therefore, Humanity is the past, present and the future. As opposed to the species-nature of animal. Animal behavior is rooted in the internal repetition of activities, accepting what nature has to offer.

However, alienated labor perverts' human character as "species-being" into a means of existence, rather than a free, conscious creative activity. Moreover, humanity feels free only to act in a most animal function (rather than as a free creative activity decreasing humanities advantage over animals). Thus, productive life is species-life where humanity consciously transforms the outside world into ones' self-identity.

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Lastly, private property is the all-summarized expression of alienated labor for humanity is transformed into a commodity, to be owned and used by the Power-elite. Marx labels this "The Theory of Surplus Value". The equation located in "Surplus value" is as the value of "things" increase there is a direct decrease in the value of humanity. The end-product is always more valuable than the sum of its parts, which by logically includes the devaluation Humanity.

**Christianity:** Marx argued that embedded in the religious dogma of Christianity is the justification of slavery, negative self-contempt, submissiveness, life-long poverty, and the objectification of humanity, all for the benefit power-elite (Capitalist). Thus" RELIGION IS THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE", man (capitalist) create religion for their purposes of exploitation; thus religion "does not make man", man makes religion.

#### **Weber: Christianity and Capitalism:**

**By contrast, Max Weber's** work entitled the dogma in the "Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", argues that the Calvinist protestant religious dogma of hard work and the accumulation of wealth assisted in the good works of God. Hence, the more wealth one accumulates, the better works can be done, the pay-off for the "capitalist "is eternal life at the right hand of God, resulting in the foundation of American Capitalism.

Incorporated in Weber's theory of capitalism is the sociological concept known as the "Principle of Rationality" (POR).

A significant component found in the Principle of Rationality is "Disenchantment". Disenchantment is the impersonal and objective human behavior, Disenchantment accounts for the rise and fall of traditional institutions, structures, classes, and parties. Furthermore, Weber suggested that disenchantment is a major force of social change, changing human thought and emotions. Disenchantment is a general trend in Modern American Capitalist society which has

to a large extent progress to an intellectual, impersonal, calculating image based in rules and scientific laws. Hence, the "meaning of inner-worldly occurrences" through empirical and scientific thought. Thus, pushing back religion and the supernatural into the realm of the irrational, as a result reducing human relations to an objective and impersonal stance (Gerardi, 2012).

**Conclusion:** Marx viewed Christianity and Capitalism as created and controlled by the power-elite (Capitalist) dominating human behavior, indeed, the "OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE" "Man Makes religion" (Capitalist), not GOD.

Whereas Weber argued that the Calvinist salvation doctrine suggested that hard work and the accumulation of wealth assist in God's good works. The more wealth one accumulates the greater quantity of good works performed by GOD, leading to the capitalist eternal life at the right hand of God.

To sum-up, both theories although different in so many aspects, reflect the rationalization of Humanity. Marx viewed Modern Capitalist control of Labor as reducing Humanity to an object which stands above and beyond Humanity's individuality or nature.

Weber, as a significant component found in the Principle of Rationality is "Disenchantment". Disenchantment is the impersonal and objective human behavior, rationalizing human emotion.

The result found in Weber's work in the Calvinist salvation doctrine is the importance of individual human behavior in all social actions including human relationships.

On the other hand, Marx's theory removes the importance of individual human behavior from social action and places individual human behavior directly into the Social-realm of another, the "Power-Elite" (Capitalist).

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