A N D R E A S   P E T T E N K O F E R

Weber's Theory of Radical Movements: A Reappraisal*

Abstract

The ongoing wave of radical religious protest confirms the need for an alternative to the rationalist approach that has come to dominate social movement research. At this moment, it seems promising to take another look at Weber's sociology of religion: it offers a theory which (1) proposes an unfamiliar account of the relation between personal identity and political activism, (2) builds on this to explain the functioning of a specific type of social movements organization, and (3) thereby identifies mechanisms causing a dynamic of protest that cannot be reduced to a ''rational'' adaptation to an opportunity structure. These concepts can also elucidate the working of movements that are not explicitly religious in character.

T H E   O N G O I N G   W A V E of radical religious protest confirms the need for an alternative to the rationalist approach that has come to dominate social movement research.[1] At this moment, it seems promising to take another look at Weber's sociology of religion: instead of postulating one single universal rationality of action reacting to varying ''opportunity structures'', Weber's hermeneutic sociology assumes the possibility of fundamentally heterogeneous logics of action and forms of coordination. And in spite of all the prominence Weber's writings on ''charismatic leaders'' have gained, his sociology of religion still offers unused possibilities for a theory of radical protest: it proposes an unfamiliar account of the relation between personal identity and political activism; it identifies mechanisms causing a dynamic of protest that cannot be reduced to a ''rational'' adaptation to an opportunity structure; and it opens a new perspective on the organizational form of radical movements. Thus, while helping to explain the new religious protest, it might also elucidate the working of movements that are not

---

* I would like to thank Alfons Bora, Hans Joas and Hans Kippenberg for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[1] For a debate on the uses and limits of the ''opportunity structure'' concept that is central to mainstream social movement research,

see GOODWIN AND JASPER (2004). The present paper is part of an attempt to develop an account of radical protest which is not focussed on the notion of opportunity structure (PETTENKOFER 2009).

Andreas PETTENKOFER, Fernuniversität Hagen [andreas.pettenkofer@gmx.net].

explicitly religious in character. However, to use these possibilities, it is necessary to get rid of some misunderstandings concerning Weber's concept of ''charisma''-based legitimacy; first of all, the notion that what it offers in terms of general theoretical propositions only refers to structures that are highly unstable, to constellations where a ''mass'' admires a ''leader'', and to the implementation of a conventionally understood 'bureaucratic' order (as 'routinization of charisma'). In the following sections, I begin by briefly addressing these misunderstandings which make it difficult to see how interesting and fruitful Weber's concept still is (1); then, I reconstruct Weber's explanation for the emergence and the immediate effects of the ''charisma''-related logic of action (2), as well as his explanation of the way this logic creates stable structures of coordination (3). Finally, I discuss the scope and limitations of Weber's argument (4).

Charisma and political protest: some misunderstandings

The first misunderstanding that has shaped the concept's reception concerns its scope of application. That the possibilities Weber's sociology of religion offers for analyzing political protest have been used only partially is also due to the very success of Weber's own theses on ''charismatic leaders''.[2] This application of Weber's concept has gained prominence because it seemed to allow a sociological approach to the national-socialist movement; since Parsons has taken up this idea, the Nazis are often considered as the paradigmatic case of a ''charismatic movement''.[3] This, in turn, has created the notion that Weber's concept is valuable mainly for studying personalized power in strongly hierarchical contexts; it has also suggested a close link between Weber's analysis and a traditional notion of ''the mass'' (an impression that is reinforced by the Parsonian analyses' reliance on a problematic understanding of the national-socialist mode of wielding power).[4]

[2] WEBER [1920] 1968, pp. 241-245. On the concepts of ''charismatic leadership'' and ''plebiscitarian leadership democracy'', see MOMMSEN (1974).

[3] His articles, written in the 1930s and early 1940s, on the rise of the national-socialist movement are collected in PARSONS (1993), with an introduction by Uta Gerhardt. For further attempts to use Weber's concept for analyzing national-socialism, see e.g. GERTH (1940), LEPSIUS (1986) and WEHLER (2004).

Weber himself obviously did not have only movements of the radical right in view – the example he gives of a contemporary ''charismatic leader'' is Kurt Eisner, a member of the Social Democratic Party's pacifist wing (WEBER [1920] 1968, 242).

[4] On the residuals of ''mass psychology'' that can indeed be found in Weber's writings, see BAEHR (1990); for an overview on the discourse of mass psychology, see van GINNEKEN (1992).

In addition, it has supported the notion that any case apt to be analyzed with Weber's concept must be a pathological case, and that in order to analyze non-pathological cases, other concepts have to be used. In this pathologizing version, Weber's concept is only in a very limited sense an alternative to rationalist approaches; for this version, the cases supposed to be suitable for a rationalist description remain theoretically privileged and continue to serve as the counterfactual point of reference of every explanation.

This understanding of the concept's domain of application entails an incomplete understanding of Weber's explanatory strategy. While the notion of legitimacy obviously points to the goal of explaining social *order*, this line of reception envisages charisma-based *structures* only in connection with the ''routinization of charisma'', including the special case of the ''plebiscitarian leadership democracy'', that is, only in cases that do not represent *pure* instances of ''charisma''-based legitimacy.[5] This selective use of Weber's concept has motivated different strategies to compensate for its perceived lack of explanatory power: on the one hand, the assumption that charismatic legitimacy, as such, is linked to a sheer *lack* of structure has been used to combine Weber's concept (following Parsons' example[6]) with a theory of anomie, which among other things is supposed to explain under what conditions a public emerges that is susceptible to ''charismatic'' figures; on the other hand, there is a search for traits that, in a given environment, predispose individuals to be elevated into the position of ''charismatic leader''. (This line of research might seem to be supported by Weber's own late political writings which can be read as showing Weber hoping for the rise of politicians who are, quite simply, actually charismatic.) This Parsonian-Weberian framework has produced very interesting results;[7] however, to make fuller use of the possibilities of Weber's approach, it is helpful not to restrict oneself to reworking the anomie-theoretical notion of charisma, but to reconstruct Weber's original concept.

To do this, one has to go back to parts of Weber's work that are usually not discussed in this context. His theses on ''charismatic leaders'' and on the ''plebiscitarian leadership democracy'', which are

---

[5] The ''plebiscitarian leadership democracy'' should not be regarded as the paradigmatic case since it is a mixed type: because of the steep hierarchical differentiation and the enormous spatial extension typical of this form of political order, coordination cannot be guaranteed by ''charismatic'' authority alone; hence, it is also dependent on ''bureaucratic'' elements.

[6] PARSONS 1993.

[7] For a recent example see ANDREAS 2007.

the starting points for most examinations of ''charisma''-based order, are ulterior applications of an earlier, more general concept. They constitute only one aspect of a broader analysis concerning the social consequences of a potential for social hierarchization and boundary-making that is intrinsic to every religious pattern of meaning. Within Weber's work, the concept of ''charisma'' does not at first serve to describe constellations of ''mass'' and ''leader'' but to explain the emergence of structure within informal groups that are consciously anti-hierarchical. Weber uses the word for the first time in his *Protestant Ethic*, as a name for what these believers are centrally concerned about; here (at least in the German original), the word appears only twice,[8] it is not yet part of a systematic terminology. The argument then is developed by Weber in the sociology of religion he writes in 1913 but does not publish until 1920, as part of *Economy and Society*.[9] As a theoretical category within a published text, ''charisma'' first appears in the introduction to *Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen*,[10] published in 1915 and translated as ''The Social Psychology of the World Religions''.[11] To reconstruct Weber's general concept of ''charismatic'' movements, one should start with these early writings. When reading these texts, one sees that Weber does not try to show how action is guided by ''charismatic'' dispositions. (If this had been his goal, it would seem reasonable to conclude that he does not deliver the theory he apparently promised – a theory which rather belongs in the domain of psychology or theology anyway – and that ''charisma'' consequently remains a residual category, the result being a genius theory of history which basically reproduces the believers' point of view.) Instead, he develops a (''constructivist'') argument about the social consequences of cultural patterns which elevate specific dispositions to the status of ''charisma'', and serve, for those who share this belief, as schemes guiding not only their observations of others, but also their observations of themselves. In this sense, Weber's discussion of ''charisma'' is part of his general project of studying the social effects of different types of norms; it concerns a type of norm using criteria that never refer only to the single act, but always to the person as a whole. In the following section, I begin by reconstructing the relevant argument from the *Protestant Ethic*.

---

[8] WEBER 2002, pp. 93, 119.
[9] On this intermediate stage of Weber's sociology of religion, see KIPPENBERG 2003.

[10] See KROLL 2001, p. 47.
[11] WEBER [1915] 1946.

256

"World-rejection" and the stabilization of radical activism

There is a tradition of reading the *Protestant Ethic* as an extended argument about the unintended consequences of purposive action.[12] While not invalid, this reading is certainly partial; Weber also describes a general mechanism which can explain how ways of acting that under the given "structural" circumstances appear to be quite improbable can nevertheless be stabilized. Through this argument, the *Protestant Ethic* becomes the starting point for a theory of a social change driven by radical movements.

As is well known, Weber wants to explain why members of Reformed Protestantism developed a sustained economic activity even though their social environment conferred neither material nor reputational advantages to those who acted in this way.[13] His answer concentrates on proving that they viewed this activity as a form of "innerworldly asceticism", that is, as an activity which is valuable for its own sake, independent of its consequences. A crucial additional motive, Weber claims, is based on the conviction that the ability to sustain this conduct of life is a sign allowing certainty of salvation (which emphatically does not mean that Reformed Protestants believe salvation to be attainable *in exchange* for actions conforming to religious norms); moreover, some sects consider economic success a kind of secondary indicator showing the person in question to have actually led an ascetic life. Thus, according to Weber, the stabilization of a way of acting which, at first, could seem to be the product of a long-term instrumental orientation has, in fact, quite different causes; this early capitalist evolution is based, in what might seem a paradoxical way, on a religious rejection of "the world" as a whole. Initially, this is an argument about the consequences of a way of acting that is indifferent to its consequences (and thus to "opportunity structures"): only because, in the end, the agents do not care whether their actions change their environment can the relevant patterns of action be sustained in a socially consequential way. By creating greater

---

[12] For a recent restatement of this view, see SCHLUCHTER (2005, pp. 78-79).

[13] WEBER [1905] 2002a, pp. 24-28. Obviously, Weber's historical thesis has been heavily criticised. (On this debate, see LEHMANN and ROTH 1993.) However, Weber's argument consists of two independent parts: a proposed explanation showing how practices which at first glance seem to be guided by an instrumental logic can be sustained by a "religious" logic valuing them for their own sake; and the claim that, in the case of early-modern economic discipline, this occurred on such a massive scale as to be essential for the take-off of modern capitalism. The first part of the argument, which interests us here, is not affected by the criticism levelled against the second part.

257

independence from changing opportunities (and from short-term calculations concerning these opportunities), this indifference to consequences contributes to the emergence of an autonomous social entity. In the following sections, I begin by discussing how Weber explains the emergence and stabilization of this kind of action-orientation.

The first part of his explanation aims to show under what conditions actions which in principle are apt to change their environment will become valued in a way that does not depend on their consequences. Weber claims that in its pure form, this ''value-rational'' orientation can only exist if the ''world'' is rejected as a whole: the more encompassing this rejection, the less can rules for evaluating actions refer to their ''worldly'' consequences. On the contrary, a ''world-rejecting'' attitude implies condemning instrumental activities since they, by their concern for consequences, let the agent become involved with a world he should reject.[14] Therefore, believers ask instead for an actions' intrinsic value (the possibility to justify it in a ''value-rational'' way), and for the reasons which have actually guided the action (the agent's *Gesinnung*): the more important it becomes to avoid ''any sort of involvement in the everyday routine world'',[15] the more important it also becomes that every action is not only performed in accordance with the norm (if, perhaps, with a ''worldly'' motive), but out of an unmediated inward commitment to the norm. Now, one of the central insights of Weber's sociology of religion is that ''world-rejection'' can be practised in quite different ways: not only through ''world-flight'' (e.g. withdrawing into a monastery or some other organization of ''alternative'' life), but also through a world-rejecting way of turning towards the world, which Weber calls ''innerworldy asceticism''.[16] In this way, a religious attitude not at all directed at changing the world may nevertheless motivate a way of acting that induces social change. This is also a claim about a problem of *observation*: though in a sense being performed for their own sake, actions motivated by ''innerworldly asceticism'' may, if they are suitable to change the agents' environment, at first glance seem to confirm the preconception that every action can be attributed to an instrumental motive. To avoid such premature conclusions, and hence to explain why these actions happen at all, a consciously hermeneutic approach is

---

[14] While a prominent contemporary interpretation attributes the social consequences of Protestantism to its having reinstated, within Christianity, a positive attitude towards ''the world'', Weber does not share this interpretation, and this is crucial for the explanation he suggests (see BREUER 2006).

[15] WEBER [1920] 1968, p. 245.

[16] See BREUER 2001, pp. 230-231.

necessary; an approach that begins by attributing an instrumental action-orientation to all agents is bound to miss the mechanism at work here.[17]

The second part of Weber's explanation concerns the question why these norms are actually obeyed. His answer does not point to the *confidence*-inducing effect religious patterns can have (which is emphasized by Durkheim), but to their *discomforting* effect. Whoever feels committed to the type of religious norm discussed above is confronted with a new kind of uncertainty: on the one hand, the exceptionally high ethical standards deriving from world-rejection quickly lead believers to question whether they *really* have internalized the relevant values. On the other hand, the specific criteria that have to be used in this context to determine the moral quality of actions create a discomforting effect of their own: since it is only actions performed with the right *Gesinnung* that are counted as "good works", what finally matters is an "inner" state that cannot be directly observed. This uncertainty motivates a search for signs indicating the reality of this state, which prompts a new attentiveness concerning *emotions* which are considered to be signals of "charisma",[18] and – more importantly for Weber's explanation – a search for *actions with evidential value*, that is, actions the possibility of which is held to be contingent on a specific disposition of the actor, and which thus seem to give an "authentic" expression of the actor's inner state. This "idea of being put to the test (*Bewährungsgedanke*)"[19] is the central element of the mechanism: it functions as a "schema of the link between faith and morality (*Schema der Verknüpfung von Glaube und Sittlichkeit*)";[20] because of it, these religious convictions have the consequence that evidentiary acts are performed again and again. (Against the claim that this mechanism sustains a "value-rational" way of acting, one might object that the case Weber wants to explain here is one of continuous striving for *success*. However, this success – at least this is what Weber argues – is not valued *as such* but for the evidential value attributed to it. Hence, the success-orientation is not essential to the mechanism; it arises because in *this* case, a specific position within the cultural pattern sustaining the mechanism is filled in a particular way.) Though focussing on feelings of self-doubt, this is not a psychological

---

[17] A similar argument is proposed by BOURDIEU (1990); still, assuming such a problem of observation does not require adopting the concept of *habitus* Bourdieu uses in this context.

[18] WEBER [1920] 1968, p. 535.
[19] WEBER [1905] 2002a, p. 86. Kalberg translates this as "the idea of testifying through action to belief" (WEBER [1920] 2002b, p. 78).
[20] WEBER [1905] 2002a, p. 86.

explanation; it is only because of a specific cultural framework that members need not doubt but can be certain what to feel uncertain about.

The elements essential to the mechanism cannot appear only in conjunction with the highly idiosyncratic ''Protestant Ethic''. Contrary to an interpretation that can sometimes be found in the literature, the critical problem of self-reassurance is not tied to the idea of pre-destination; Weber has already pointed this out in the *Protestant Ethic*.[21] As he emphasizes in a later development of his argument, believing that the relevant inward qualities can be acquired by training has largely the same practical consequences as believing in predestination. In both cases, it is essential that ''the specific action be really symptomatic of the total character'';[22] what members concentrate on is always ''a uniform quality of personality, of which conduct is the expression''.[23] Even those who share the voluntaristic belief that one's self can be systematically changed to the good may at the same time doubt whether they *really* have the will to effect this change, or whether the change *really* happened. Even if introspection is consi-dered a valid source of information about one's own inward state, believers have to ask themselves whether their self-assessment is not a product of self-deception.[24] For these reasons, the same mechanism can guide an activism that understands itself as secular. The ''in-nerworldy asceticism'' described in the *Protestant Ethic* occurs outside of the political realm,[25] but Weber himself has already pointed out

[21] Weber's list of the variants of Reformed Protestantism constituting the subject matter of his book (WEBER [1905] 2002a, pp. 6-7) shows that his explanation for pre-capitalist economic discipline cannot rest on features peculiar to Calvinism. Rather, his strategy for capturing the relevant properties of this religious ''ethos'' lies in a comparison looking for attributes that are common to all of these movements but that cannot be found in Catholicism and Lutheranism: ''Dogmatic differences, even the most important, like those regarding the doctrines of predestina-tion and justification, intermingled and com-bined in various ways [...]. In particular, the examples of moral conduct which are impor-tant for our purposes can be found equally among the followers of the most varied denominations, whether they emerged from one of the four sources listed above'' – i.e. Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, the diffe-rent ''Baptizing sects'' – ''or from a combina-tion of several of them. We shall see that

similar ethical maxims could be linked with different dogmatic principles.'' (WEBER [1905] 2002a, p. 68). In the second edition, published in 1920, Weber emphasizes even more clearly that the ''idea of testifying to belief through one's actions'' – the mecha-nism's cultural basis – is independent of dogmatic differences such as exist with re-spect to the question of predestination (WEBER [1920] 2002b, p. 77).

[22] WEBER [1920] 1968, p. 534.

[23] WEBER [1920] 1968, p. 533.

[24] On these points see ZARET (1993, pp. 250-252, 264-266), with further source material.

[25] LEHMANN (1988, pp. 540-541) points out that several sources important to Weber's argu-ment were written after their authors withdrew from radical (religious) politics, and that their extolling of everyday life results from this political defeat. Still, there is no reason to suppose that this is a necessary condition for the mechanism that Weber describes.

that *political* convictions can form a self-sufficient basis for this mechanism. His example derives from the contemporary anarchist movement:

> One may [...] demonstrate ever so concretely to the convinced syndicalist that his action is socially "useless" i.e., it is not likely to be successful in the modification of the external class position of the proletariat, and that he even weakens this greatly by generating "reactionary" attitudes, but still – for him – if he is really faithful to his convictions – this proves nothing. [...] The central concern of the really consistent syndicalist must be to preserve in himself certain attitudes which seem to him to be absolutely valuable and sacred, as well as to induce them in others, whenever possible. The ultimate aim of his actions [...] is to give him the subjective certainty that his attitudes are "genuine," i.e., have the power of "proving" (*bewähren*) themselves in action [...]. Aside from that – if he is consistent – his kingdom, like that of every "absolute value" ethics (*Gesinnungsethik*), is not of this world. (Weber 1949, pp. 23-24)

Here, too, the problem of self-reassurance can sustain activism, even without any added expectation of political benefits. This is important since in radical political movements, even of "secular" orientation, such a need for self-reassurance should regularly arise: the more encompassing a group's rejection of the existing order, the more each member has to doubt not only other members' commitment, but his own as well. Moreover, applying Weber's concept to this case shows how this cultural pattern creates yet other motives for which rationalist theories of political protest cannot account: (1) the pattern enables members to consider their activism also as a technology of the self,[26] making the goal of stabilizing the requested attitude into another motive for activism. (2) Under these cultural premises, acts of protest can also be seen as a means of influencing the public – not only in the way presupposed by the theory of strategic interaction, that is, by reinforcing the credibility of promises or threats, but also in the way provided for by the cultural model of "martyrdom" ("giving witness"), according to which an action that proves the firmness of the agent's conviction can also prove their rightness, by demonstrating a sacred force working through the agent. If a public shares this general model, it becomes possible to change this public's convictions through "exemplary action".[27]

To sum up: a way of acting that in principle can change its environment may, in spite of low chances of success and generally

---

[26] FOUCAULT 1988.
[27] Agents' inward states, or their visible presentation, can also play an important role in attempts at political influence that can be described with a theory of strategic inter- action (see SCHELLING 1960; GOFFMAN 1970); still, the two models differ widely as to the ways in which the public is supposed to react to these perceived inward states.

unfavourable conditions, be stabilized if it becomes connected to a problem of self-assurance, that is, if members have to prove not only to others but to themselves that they are actually – inwardly, ''authentically'' – committed to a certain set of norms, and if these actions are considered proof of this commitment, their performance being thus elevated into a proof of the agent's identity.[28] (As his attentiveness for the problem of proof shows, Weber gains analytical leverage by not simply presupposing certain norms to have a structuring effect but considering these norms, as lawyers typically do, through the problem of their *application*).[29] Under these conditions, actions that are often performed to reach certain goals can also be performed for ''expressive'' reasons alone. One important cause for this is the collective drawing of a boundary against ''the world'' as a whole – the emergence of a collective identity based on world rejection –, provided that it is also linked to a rejection of ''world-flight''. This is why, contrary to common notions about the effectiveness of ''moderate'' activism, an action-orientation originating from world-rejection may be much more likely to effect social change than an orientation which, though rejecting the world as it is, hopes to improve it and, because of this goal-orientation and the ''realism'' it goes with, is invariably led to some kind of accommodation.[30]

How much importance Weber attributes to this mechanism can be seen in his comparison of Protestantism and Confucianism.[31] There, he describes Confucianism as the ''rational ethic which reduced tension with the world to an absolute minimum'' (Weber 1951, p. 227). The practical consequence, according to Weber: ''Not reaching beyond this world, the individual necessarily lacked an autonomous counterweight in confronting this world'' (Weber 1951, p. 235).

---

[28] For a case study showing the importance protestant programmes of self-change can have in social movements, see YOUNG (2001).

[29] According to TURNER and FACTOR (1994), Weber's whole approach to sociology is shaped by his legal training.

[30] The basic idea that a ''world-rejecting'' attitude can have paradoxical consequences goes back to Nietzsche's essay on ,ascetic ideals': ''The ascetic priest embodies the desire for another existence, somewhere else

(*ist der fleischgewordene Wunsch nach einem Anders-sein, Anderswo-sein*), is even the highest form of this desire [...]. But the very power of this desire is the chain which binds him to this life; this very power transforms him into an instrument, obliged to create more favourable conditions for human life as it exists here [...].'' (NIETZSCHE [1887] 1996, p. 99).

[31] WEBER [1915] 1951, pp. 226-249. On the importance of this chapter for understanding Weber's way of thinking, see HENNIS (2000).

The ''Protestant Ethic'' appears as a polar opposite:

> In strong contrast to the naïve stand of Confucianism toward things of this world, Puritan ethics construed them as a tremendous and grandiose tension toward the ''world''. (Weber 1951, p. 227)

It is this attitude that sets a process of radical modernization into motion – for which it is essential that the participants' distance towards their social environment is not just the ''rational'' distance presupposed by the economic theory of action, but a radical world-rejection

> From the relation between the supra-mundane God and the creaturally wicked, ethically irrational world there resulted [...] the absolute unholiness of tradition. (Weber 1951, p. 240)

Weber takes up this comparison in a polemic against an evolutionist sociology whose representatives provide ''their salute of approval for existing 'trends' (*sich als Beifallssalve der jeweiligen 'Entwicklungstendenz' konstituieren*)'' and ''transform the adaptation to these 'trends' [...] into a principle ostensibly based on the authority of a 'science''' (Weber 1949, p. 23). Weber's answer is:

> Those specific qualities of our culture which, despite our differences in viewpoint, we all esteem more or less positively, are not the product of the only consistent ethic of ''adaptation to the possible'', namely, the bureaucratic morality of Confucianism. (Weber 1949, p. 24)

This view of Confucianism is quite unfair,[32] but it shows that, in spite of all his polemical remarks on the ''ethics of conviction'', he regards the religious attitude described in the *Protestant Ethic* as the foundation of a general mechanism of social change that cannot be found only in pathological cases.

This does not mean that Weber's theory is simply voluntaristic. As Runciman[33] has shown, the explanatory strategy of the *Protestant Ethic* is strongly dependent on assumptions about structural selection: while different cultural patterns can produce different reactions to the same ''structure'', it is only under specific structural conditions that these patterns favour their ''carriers''.[34] More specifically, only under generally unfavourable conditions have those practices that are guided by world-rejection a comparatively higher chance of ''surviving''.

---

[32] See SCHLUCHTER 1983.
[33] RUNCIMAN 2004, pp. 446-447.
[34] This is why WEBER ([1905] 2002a, p. 121) assumes that, once a capitalist order has been institutionalized, the ''Protestant Ethic'' no longer makes any difference.

In this kind of environment, the benefits of this type of action-orientation are typically higher than its costs; under different conditions, practices resting on different foundations (moderation, the weighing of consequences, etc.) may have higher chances of success.[35]

There have been some attempts to prove that Weber's explanation can be integrated into a conventional rationalist framework. (1) Elster[36] has tried to show that the practices analyzed in the *Protestant Ethic* can be traced back to benefits-oriented, if misguided, attempts to gain salvation. His argument draws on psychological experiments by Quattrone and Tversky[37] which concern among other things the reasons for voting. These experiments make a specific cognitive error visible: the ''conflation of diagnostic and causal efficacy'', a type of magical thinking that attributes to actions which are at best suitable to *verify* a certain inner state the ability to *produce* it. The corresponding argument concerning Weber goes as follows: those agents whose behaviour seems to fit into Weber's theory are in fact suffering from the same cognitive error; the Puritans' actions which seemingly only serve the purpose of self-assessment are in fact meant to guarantee the agent's salvation. Thus, this objection does not attempt to reconstruct Weber's empirical results with novel theoretical means; rather, it presupposes Weber's results to be empirically wrong. (As discussed above, Weber assumes that sect members do not attribute any causal effect concerning salvation to the *Bewährung*.) The idea that there are cases of apparently ''value-rational'' action which may be explainable by this cognitive error is interesting; however, it seems exaggerated to infer from the experiments carried out by Quattrone and Tversky that this holds for all such cases. At any rate, it is not really more plausible or more parsimonious to assume that the Puritan believers, being exceedingly well acquainted with these dogmatic questions, should suffer in large numbers from what they would consider an obvious self-delusion. (In fact, this objection seems to say more about the limits of rational choice theory than about Weber's argument. The uncertainty of self that can motivate these evidentiary acts may be difficult to grasp for a theory constrained to hold on to the Cartesian

---

[35] What seems to be important here is that Weber's argument, though implying claims about structural selection, cannot be reduced to the notion of ''choice within constraints'' (i.e. the programme of showing that different types of behaviour can be traced back to a single instrumental rationality reacting to varying opportunity structures). If Weber's arguments remain interesting, it is also because of their distance towards this common style of explanation.

[36] ELSTER 2000, pp. 33-34.

[37] QUATTRONE and TVERSKY 1986.

assumption of unproblematic self-transparency.) (2) Another attempt to integrate Weber's observations into the framework of utilitarianism tries to trace these ways of acting to a hedonic calculus. Indeed, Weber himself sometimes tries to redescribe religious behaviour in this way.[38] Concerning, among other things, the Puritan quest for certainty of salvation, he writes:

> [T]hese other-worldly sacred values were by no means only values of the *beyond*. This was not the case even where it was understood to be so by the participants. Psychologically considered, man in quest of salvation has been primarily preoccupied by attitudes of the here and now [. . .] – these states undoubtedly have been sought, first of all, for the sake of such emotional value as they directly offer the devout. In this respect, they have in fact been absolutely equal to the religious and alcoholic intoxication of the Dyonisian or the soma cult [. . .]; the ancient and religiously consecrated use of hashish, opium, and nicotine; and, in general, to all sorts of magical intoxication. They have been considered specifically consecrated and divine because of their psychic extraordinariness and because of the intrinsic value of the respective states conditioned by them. (Weber 1946, pp. 277-278)

Here, Weber assumes a cost-benefit calculus which has the agent's mood as its object. According to this interpretation, these actions – not only the religiously framed drug consumption, but also the Puritan quest for certainty of salvation – are performed only if, and only as long as, they succeed in brightening the individual member's mood. This interpretation thus assumes that the participants are motivated by the attractiveness of some situationally experienced mood alone, and that all other reasons they may give for their actions are just ex-post-rationalizations. This redescription might be plausible for the case of religiously framed drug consumption. (Even there, one would have to ask whether religious beliefs – with their attribution rules determining how the drug experience is to be understood – do not constitute a precondition for the situation to be experienced in the way that gives it its peculiar attractiveness.) As to the quest for certainty of salvation, such a redescription is not plausible. It is only through specific beliefs that certainty of salvation can become a problem at all, and that after suitable proof, a calmer emotional state can be reached. Hence, to reduce these actions to instrumentally rational efforts at mood management, one would have to assume that sect members have consciously decided to hold these beliefs for the sake of the mood-brightening effect they can indirectly produce; such an explanation would presuppose an incoherent notion of *deciding to believe*.[39] Thus,

---

[38] On these ambiguities, see TYRELL (1992).   [39] WILLIAMS 1973; ELSTER 1983.

even if Weber himself has sometimes tried to integrate these phenomena in a rationalist framework, rational choice theorists should not use his argument as it is inconsistent. The fact that these attempts at a rationalist redescription remain unsuccessful supports the claim that ''charisma''-based legitimacy is indeed an autonomous logic of action.[40] Still, it remains to be asked if this concept can only help to understand the agents' reasons for action, or if it can also help explain the emergence of (stable) structures of coordination.

The "sect" as an organizational form of protest

According to a common understanding, Weber's concept of ''charisma''-based legitimacy refers to an object that, socially, is more or less unstructured. After the reconstruction proposed above, one might still argue that a cultural pattern concentrating exclusively on ''inner'' states must be quite unfit to sustain stable social structures; this, in turn, might be seen to imply that this pattern cannot explain forms of activism going beyond the short-term and the strictly local. Such an explanation, this widely accepted reading claims, is provided by Weber only when he addresses the ''*routinization* of charisma'', that is, the process during which ''charisma''-based legitimacy is at least partially replaced by a *different* principle of ordering: by those mechanisms of coordination that for a long time have formed the main subject of mainstream sociology of organizations.[41] (The resource mobilization approach in social movement research[42] belongs to the same tradition as Weber's statement on how ''charismatic'' groups' need for resources tends to induce an internal transformation of these groups.)

Indeed, in the *Protestant Ethic*, Weber explicitly abstains from discussing the role organizations play.[43] Nevertheless, the cultural pattern he analyzes cannot support only ''community''-like structures;

---

[40] There have also been attempts to integrate Weber's concept of value-rational action into an enlarged rational choice theory (e.g. ESSER 2004). For reasons of space, I cannot discuss this here.

[41] For alternative points of view within social movement research, going beyond the preconceptions of this traditional sociology of organisations, see CLEMENS (1996) and POLLETTA (2002). Weber's concept, showing how a particular cultural constitution of personal identity can be connected with the stability of ''radical'' organizations, might help to go further into this direction.

[42] ZALD and McCARTHY 1987.

[43] WEBER [1905] 2002a, p. 103.

266

by inducing, among believers, a specific practice of observing oneself and others, it can also set into motion a mechanism of social stabilization.[44] In this way, it can become the basis of a self-sufficient, if precarious, organizational type (the "sect"), thereby recursively stabilizing itself.[45] In fact, the concept of "charisma" belongs essentially to the sociology of organizations; as a theoretical category, it is introduced by Weber in order to explain how anti-hierarchical, strongly individualist beliefs can nevertheless give rise to stable patterns of coordination.[46] The conviction that the relevant inward properties are unequally distributed encourages not only the drawing of external boundaries, but also the development of an internal hierarchy: because of the idea that "men are differently qualified in a religious way", all "intensive religiosity has a tendency toward a sort of status stratification (*ständischer Gliederung*), in accordance with differences in the charismatic qualifications".[47] Thus, the attribution of different "qualifications" provides a basis for acceptable authority.[48] At this point, Weber's argument can be extended. Any such rejection of the "world", by making an individual's possible ties to the world appear as dangerous, promotes a self-image which sustains the idea of being in need of discipline. If those considered to be more highly qualified in terms of "charisma" present themselves as willing and able to support this discipline, those sharing these religious convictions have an additional reason to accept the hierarchical order. In this sense, this cultural pattern does not simply function as an ideology that makes members *overlook* coercion; rather, it lends plausibility to a self-concept that makes coercion seem *acceptable* and motivates

[44] For an account detailing how notions about persons "being gifted" can institute an alternative form of coordination, thereby generating specific problems of proof, see also BOLTANSKI and THÉVENOT (1991) on the *cité inspirée*. More generally, their sociological approach demonstrates the importance of evidentiary acts for social coordination.

[45] The concept of "sect" sometimes appears in recent social movement research, but usually without being connected to a theoretical argument. Obviously, a problem with this concept is that in everyday language – at least, wherever the "church" is the dominant form of organized religion – it is exclusively used as a term of derision (while Weber, even if he cannot always resist the temptation to assume an ironic tone, uses it as a neutral term for an organizational type); still, a good alternative is not available.

[46] Already for the canonist Rudolph Sohm, whose discussion of "charisma" serves as a starting point for Weber, this is the reason to introduce the concept: Sohm wants to describe a mode of cooperation, typical of early Christianity, which abstains from legally formalizing its relation of authority but, because of this, remains highly unstable, thus causing a process of intensive legalization and of building formal organizations (see KROLL 2001).

[47] WEBER [1915] 1946, p. 287.

[48] SHILS (1982) has already argued that an important way for notions about "charisma" to produce social order is by generating ever more subtle gradations of status; he, too, however starts with the "charismatic leader" and understands the more egalitarian types of "charisma"-based legitimacy as secondary phenomena resulting from the "dispersion" of a charisma originally concentrated in a single individual.

members to submit freely to it. For this reason, even the perception that organizational elites act in a manipulative way need not stop members from subjugation, since they can attribute a moral purpose to the manipulator.[49] This promotes organization-building by supporting the elite's position in yet another way, giving them ''pastoral power''.[50] Thus, even for socially egalitarian types of religion, institutionalization in the guise of organization-building need not be *extraneous* to the religious pattern (e.g. a product of predatory elites overpowering the religious community, an adaptation to environmental pressure), but can come ''from within''.

The organizational structure thus generated by the cultural pattern contributes in several ways to sustaining this pattern and hence, to sustaining radical activism. First, the institutionalization of these beliefs within a group strengthens their effect, (1) by promoting the members' mutually confirming each other's convictions, which – because of the specific convictions being confirmed – also has a strongly discomforting effect, inducing in every member a socially assisted self-doubt; (2) by creating in each member the wish to be recognized, according to the local criteria defining ''charisma'', by every other member. Moreover, the cultural pattern's social effect is reinforced when it is linked to a social structure based on the distinction between members and non-members: When ''charisma'' becomes a membership condition, the relevant criteria become the basis for those efforts at control that are typical of organizations in general. Because of the problem of proof arising whenever what seems to matter is not just practical conformity but some difficult-to-observe inward state, this also intensifies the search for unambiguous signs of this inward state.[51] This, in turn, supports members' self-doubts and encourages them in their efforts to prove, to others and to themselves, that they actually fulfil the organization's criteria. (It is true that many ''charismatically'' integrated groups do not have *all* the characteristics of a formal organization; in particular, though distinguishing members and non-members, they do not do this in an unambiguous, formalized way. However, this slight lack of clarity does not weaken the mechanism but reinforces it, by raising

---

[49] In his novel about a would-be ''suicide'' activist, UPDIKE (2006, p. 237) writes: ''The boy knows he is being manipulated, yet accedes to the manipulation, since it draws from him a sacred potential.''

[50] Hence, there are points of overlap with Foucault's discussion of ''subjectivations'' which integrate their targets into a power

structure; for an attempt to link these two lines of argument, see HAHN (1982).

[51] On such efforts at control, see the case studies on Leninist organizations by RIEGEL (1987), using concepts from Weber, and Studer (STUDER and UNFRIED 1999; STUDER 2003), using concepts from Foucault.

268

the share of members who have to ask themselves whether they really belong, as well as the amount of time during which they have to ask themselves this question.) This effect is all the stronger as within *organizations*, such criteria typically are not only used to decide whether the minimal conditions of membership have been met, but also to rank members in the organization's internal competition. The competition generated by this cultural pattern in turn sustains the beliefs that sustain this competition.[52] Moreover, the continuous mutual calling into question promoted by such an order of competition raises members' self-doubts, their penchant for self-examination and thus, their efforts to perform evidentiary acts.

Such self-doubts may be actively encouraged by organizational elites, who have a power-related interest in supporting each member's bad conscience. Thus, if a stable self-thematization can be observed which generates a readiness to submit to organizational discipline, this may partially be due to strategies of the organization's elite. More important, though, is the fact that in this type of organization several mechanisms which, in other organizations, have the effect of limiting internal competition, do not work: (1) competition is not hedged by formal hierarchy. Since within such groups hierarchical positions are not formally assigned, every member must be continually able to *prove* his ("true") status. However, due to the problems of proof generated by the specific criteria of "charisma"-based justification, this can never be done in an unambiguous, conclusive way. Thus, any member can start at anytime to renegotiate his status. (2) Competition is not moderated by zones of indifference. Since this cultural pattern makes it possible to dramatize even the smallest differences, it calls for an unlimited continuation of competition; the internal rivalry can thus come close to a competition for a pure positional good, where whatever one member gains in status, some other member must lose. An example for this is given by Kanter:[53] in one of the communes she studied, each member's placement in the church choir is meant to reflect her moral status in relation to that of every other member, which results in the seating order being changed on a regular basis. (3) Competition is unlikely to be alleviated by individual decisions to withdraw from it, as it concerns not only a reputation that members can legitimately understand as being superficial, or some role they can consider as being extraneous to a 'core' of their personality, but the person as a whole; a good example for this, and generally for "charismatic"

---

[52] See KANTER (1972, pp. 108-110) on 'spiritual differentiation' as a commitment device in religious organizations.

[53] KANTER 1972, p. 109.

justification under secular premises, is the slogan, used by the self-help organization Synanon, that ''Character is the only status''.[54] Thus, members of such groups will rarely be content with mere membership (i.e. the knowledge that they fulfil the minimal conditions of belonging). For all these reasons, what can be expected in formally egalitarian groups having a consensus on what counts as a 'gift of grace' is not so much stable harmony but stable competition; and it is this stable competition, not just the consensus of the believers, that gives these organizations their stability.[55] Here, too, the mechanism does not presuppose the specific cultural framework of Reformed Protestantism. *Any* cultural pattern concentrating on an unequal distribution of ''inward'' qualifications can put into motion a dynamic of internal hierarchization, and hence can also be used to question a given hierarchical order.

Finally, the 'sect' thus appears, in Weber's description, as being in several aspects functionally equivalent to the ''bureaucratic'' type of organization. Both types restrain the adoption of decision rules originating from the organization's environment; both stabilize an improbable form of rule application that is ''formalistic'' rather than ''utilitarian'', and thus independent from the vagaries of short-term cost-benefit-calculations; for these reasons, both can effect changes in their environments, which they regard with considerable coldness. In its ''bureaucratic'' version, however, this is tied to preconditions which demand higher resources – education programmes for training future members, material and ''career'' incentives, a media-based system of control – and are often difficult to reconcile with ''radical'' programmes. The ''sect'', as a type of organization, derives its specific social importance from not being dependent on these preconditions.

Conclusion

Looking once again at Weber's argument has shown that the ''charismatic leader'' does not constitute the paradigm case of ''charisma''-based legitimacy; rather, the intensification of this kind of personal authority into a highly asymmetric relation between ''leader''

---

[54] Quoted in KANTER 1972, p. 110.

[55] Thus, Weber's sociology of religion makes it possible to describe ''sects'' without assuming, as it is often done, an enormous amount of harmony, a complete lack of criticism, etc. (For a recent document showing how inappropriate this traditional understanding of ''community'' is for grasping this kind of phenomenon, see the accounts by former members of ''new left'' underground organizations in HOLDERBERG 2007.)

and ''followers'' is a special case. This also means that the concept of ''charisma'' should not be taken to refer only, as it does in everyday political debate, to the kind of impression a certain type of politician is able to make;[56] it is one of Weber's seminal insights that even the ability to lead a joyless life of bookkeeping may be elevated to the status of ''charisma''. If Weber systematically avoids giving a list of attributes that may be considered as signs of ''charisma'', this is not a *weakness* of his theory. For the concept to be sociologically useful, it is essential to see that the position of those supposed inward qualities which are considered to be highly valuable as well as unequally distributed can be filled in very different ways – though with the same social consequences (a strong commitment to norms, mediated through a pressure to prove oneself; the emergence of an autonomous structure of coordination, sustained by this pressure; a decoupling of activism from ''opportunity structure''). For this reason, the concept is useful for analyzing protest movements with quite different thematic orientations.

Finally, some limitations. What Weber offers is not a general theory of radical movements but a partial theory about a specific set of mechanisms. He captures only *one* side of ''religious'' phenomena. This becomes clear if one compares Weber's approach with that of Durkheim. While Durkheim concentrates on mechanisms deriving from the coreligionists' perception of something *shared*, Weber accentuates the potential for social *differentiation* inherent in every ''religious'' pattern of meaning; correspondingly, in his writings on religion, he does not emphasize the role of an immediate attraction that members may feel, but that of normative demands that members must meet, and that they may meet well or less well.[57] This difference between the two approaches is also visible in how they treat the emotional dimension of religion. Weber, unlike Durkheim, does not concentrate on the euphoric but on the depressive aspect; he underlines the '''melancholy' and 'moroseness' of the Puritans''.[58] When talking about ''positive'' religious experience he adopts, as could be seen above,

[56] For critical remarks on this reduction, see also SCHLUCHTER (1988).

[57] On the distinction between asking what is held to be immediately attractive and asking which norms have social consequences, see JOAS (2000).

[58] WEBER [1905] 2002a, p. 177, n. 227. This difference is not only caused by the particular subject matter of the case study from which Weber develops his concept, but also by previous theoretical differences. Weber certainly mentions that Pietism and Methodism offer a religious understanding of positive emotions by treating them as important signs of the state of grace (WEBER [1905] 2002a, pp. 92-96); still, this does not seem to mean much to him. He also more or less ignores an euphoric emotional state which is closely tied to the doctrine of predestination: the happy consciousness, resulting from the certainty of being among the elected, that whatever one wants to do can only be right (as parodied in Hogg's *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* [HOGG 2002]).

271

the reductionist description given by the utilitarian tradition, while, however, adding a negative evaluation; it seems that the only religious phenomena Weber could write about in a non-derogatory way are those dominated by the *ought*.[59]

This is related to a deeper-seated theoretical problem; and because of this problem, a return to Weber as a theorist of social movements would not warrant some kind of return to Weber as a general theorist. Since Weber programmatically insists on an individualism that is not so much methodological but ontological, he cannot adequately grasp the formative effects of social structures on individual agents (effects which, according to Durkheim's analysis, show themselves also in the immediately attractive aspects of religious experiences). In my re-construction of Weber's arguments, I have tacitly made use of an assumption that is preeminent for the sociological tradition going back to Mead but was not available to Weber in any explicit way: the assumption that the way an individual relates to him- or herself is socially constituted and that no person has a privileged, let alone immediate access to him- or herself. Especially for explaining the internal dynamics of ''sect''-type organization, this assumption is indispensible; to reconstruct Weber's explanation in a useful way, it is thus essential not to adopt the individualism that is so prominent in the self-description of Weber's sociology. Also, the explanation offered in the *Protestant Ethic* deviates from the individualist position not only by asking whether the believers' action create, independent from their intention, a self-reproducing (capitalist) order; asking this question would still be consistent with a moderately individualist ontology. Rather, in Weber's description, these individual agents appear them-selves as being socially constituted. Certainly, Weber arrives at his explanation by being attentive to the way the agents relate to themselves *as individuals*, and to the role this *self*-relation plays for the ''applica-tion'' and the further evolution of a cultural pattern. It is only the believers' self-relation that creates the crucial problem of proof, by transforming a theological view on the unpredictability of salvation into a dramatic personal problem of uncertainty. However, as the *Protes-tantic Ethic* shows on every page, the specific character of this self-relation is culturally constituted; only because of their peculiar religious convictions do members feel so much thrown back on themselves, and so much forced into self-examination. Consequently, this explanatory accent on individuals' self-relations does not support an argument for

---

[59] On Weber's devaluation of happiness, see THOMÄ (2000).

assuming a primary individuality preceding all cultural patterns.[60] Hence, his explanation of ''charisma''-based order seems to show that the individualist element in Weber's sociology is not really consistent with the programme – deriving from the idea of an ''interpretive'' sociology – of looking for heterogeneous logics of actions, as well as for heterogeneous forms of coordination building on these logics of action. Insofar as this is true, there is no real ''metatheoretical'' coherence in Weber's writings, and no coherent theoretical whole to which one could refer in any meaningful way; thus, it is rather by abstaining from attempts to discover a self-sufficient paradigm of Weberism that one can profit from Weber's sociological insights.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANDREAS Joel, 2007. ''The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization. A Case Study of Rebellion during the Chinese Cultural Revolution'', *American Sociological Review*, 72, pp. 434-458.

BAEHR Peter, 1990. ''The Masses in Weber's Political Sociology'', *Economy and Society*, 19, pp. 242-265.

BOLTANSKI Luc and Laurent THÉVENOT, 1991. *De la justification* (Paris, Gallimard).

BOURDIEU Pierre, 1990. ''The Scholastic Point of View'', *Cultural Anthropology*, 5, pp. 380-391.

BREUER Stefan, 2001. ''Weltablehnung'', *in* Hans G. KIPPENBERG and Martin RIESEBRODT, eds, *Max Webers ''Religionssystematik''* (Tübingen, Mohr, pp. 227-240).

—, 2006. ''Die Geburt der Moderne aus dem Geist der Weltablehnung'', *in* Stefan BREUER, *Max Webers tragische Soziologie* (Tübingen, Mohr, pp. 33-59).

CLEMENS Elisabeth S., 1996. ''Organizational Form as Frame. Collective Identity and Political Strategy in the American Labor Movement, 1880-1920'', *in* Doug MCADAM, John D. MCCARTHY and Mayer N. ZALD, eds, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, pp. 205-226).

DURKHEIM Emile, [1912] 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, (New York, Free Press [trans. Karen E. Fields]).

ELSTER Jon, 1983. ''States that are essentially by-products'', *in* Jon ELSTER, *Sour Grapes. Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, pp. 43-108).

—, 2000. ''Rationality, Economy, and Society'', *in* Stephen P. TURNER, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Weber* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, pp. 21-41).

ESSER Hartmut, 2004. ''Wertrationalität'', *in* Andreas DIEKMANN and Thomas VOSS, eds, *Rational-Choice-Theorie in den Sozialwissenschaften* (München, Oldenbourg, pp. 97-112).

FOUCAULT Michel, 1988. ''Technologies of the Self'', *in* Martin LUTHER H., eds, *Technologies of the Self. A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (London, Tavistock, pp. 16-49).

GERTH Hans H., 1940. ''The Nazi Party. Its Leadership and Composition'', *American Journal of Sociology*, 45, pp. 517-541.

van GINNEKEN Jaap, 1992. *Crowds, Psychology, and Politics, 1871-1899* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP).

GOFFMAN Erving, 1970. *Strategic Interaction* (Oxford, Blackwell).

GOODWIN Jeff and James M. JASPER, eds, 2004. *Rethinking Social Movements* (Lanham u.a., Rowman & Littlefield).

[60] Another way of putting this is that the *Protestant Ethic* does not only contain the argument about unintended consequences that rational choice reconstructions focus on, but also an argument about the social constitution of personal identities; while this second argument remains implicit, it is needed for explaining the actions that have these unintended consequences. Thus, Weber's book is not at all the object lesson on the uses of individualism that it is sometimes made out to be.

Hahn Alois, 1982. "Zur Soziologie der Beichte und anderer Formen institutionalisierter Bekenntnisse", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 34, pp. 407-434.

Hennis Wilhelm 2000. *Max Weber's Central Question* (Newbury, Threshold Press [trans. Keith Tribe]).

Hogg James, [1824] 2002. *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh UP).

Holderberg Angelika, ed., 2007. *Nach dem bewaffneten Kampf. Ehemalige Mitglieder der RAF und der Bewegung 2. Juni sprechen mit Therapeuten über ihre Vergangenheit* (Gießen, Psychosozial).

Joas Hans, 2000. *The Genesis of Values* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press [trans. Gregory Moore]).

Kanter Rosabeth M., 1972. *Commitment and Community. Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP).

Kippenberg Hans G., 2003. "Religiöse Gemeinschaften. Wo die Arbeit am Sinn-Problem der Welt und der Bedarf sozialen Handelns an Gemeinschaftlichkeit zusammentreffen", *in* Gert Albert, Agathe Bienfait, Steffen Sigmund and Claus Wendt, eds, *Das Weber-Paradigma. Studien zur Weiterentwicklung von Max Webers Forschungsprogramm* (Tübingen, Mohr, pp. 211-233).

Kroll Thomas, 2001. "Max Webers Idealtypus der charismatischen Herrschaft und die zeitgenössische Charisma-Debatte", *in* Edith Hanke and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, eds, *Max Webers Herrschaftssoziologie* (Tübingen, Mohr, pp. 47-72).

Lehmann Hartmut, 1988. "Asketischer Protestantismus und ökonomischer Rationalismus, Die Weberthese nach zwei Generationen", *in* Wolfgang Schluchter, ed., *Max Webers Sicht des okzidentalen Christentums* (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, pp. 529-553).

Lehmann Hartmut and Günther Roth, eds, 1993. *Weber's "Protestant Ethic", Origins, Evidence, Contexts* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP).

Lepsius M. Rainer, 1986. "Charismatic Leadership, Max Weber's Model and its Applicability to the Rule of Hitler", *in* Carl F. Grauman and Serge Moscovici, eds, *Changing Conceptions of Leadership* (New York, Springer, pp. 53-66).

Mommsen Wolfgang J., 1974. "The Theory of the 'Three Types of Legitimate Domination' and the Concept of Plebiscitarian Democracy", *in* Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *The Age of Bureaucracy, Perspectives on the Political Sociology of Max Weber* (Oxford, Blackwell, pp. 71-94).

Nietzsche Friedrich, [1887] 1996. *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Oxford, Oxford UP [trans. Douglas Smith]).

Parsons Talcott, 1993. *On National Socialism. Edited and with an Introduction by Uta Gerhardt* (New York, Aldine de Gruyter).

Pettenkofer Andreas, 2009. *Radikaler Protest. Zur soziologischen Theorie politischer Bewegungen* (Frankfurt a.M., Campus [in print]).

Polletta Francesca, 2002. *Freedom is an Endless Meeting, Democracy in American Social Movements* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).

Quattrone George and Amos Tversky, 1986. "Self-deception and the Voter's Illusion", *in* Jon Elster, ed., *The Multiple Self* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, pp. 35-58).

Riegel Klaus-Georg, 1987. "Öffentliche Schuldbekenntnisse im Marxismus-Leninismus, Die Moskauer Schauprozesse (1936-1938)", *in* Alois Hahn and Volker Kapp, eds, *Selbstthematisierung und Selbstzeugnis, Bekenntnis und Geständnis* (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, pp. 136-148).

Runciman Walter G., 2004. "(Neo)-evolutionäre Wahlverwandtschaften", *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, 14, pp. 439-449.

Schelling Thomas C., 1960. *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard UP).

Schluchter Wolfgang, ed., 1983. *Max Webers Studie über Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp).

—, 1988. "Umbildung des Charismas. Überlegungen zur Herrschaftssoziologie", *in* Schluchter W., *Religion und Lebensführung, vol. 2, Studien zu Max Webers Religions- und Herrschaftssoziologie* (Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, pp. 535-554).

—, 2005. "'Wie Ideen in der Geschichte wirken'. Exemplarisches in der Studie über den asketischen Protestantismus", *in* Wolfgang Schluchter, *Handlung, Ordnung und Kultur* (Tübingen, Mohr, pp. 62-85).

Shils Edward A., 1982. "Deference", *in* Edward A. Shils, *The Constitution of Society* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 143-175).

Studer Brigitte, 2003. "L'être perfectible, la formation du cadre stalinien par le 'travail sur soi'", *Genèses*, 51, pp. 92-113.

Studer Brigitte and Berthold Unfried, 1999. "'Das Private ist öffentlich', Mittel und

Formen stalinistischer Identitätsbildung'', *Historische Anthropologie*, 7, pp. 83-108.

THOMÄ Dieter, 2000. ''Glück und Person. Eine Konstellation bei Nietzsche und Max Weber'', *Jahrbuch für Nietzscheforschung*, 9, pp. 257-280.

TURNER Stephen P. and Regis A. FACTOR, 1994. *Max Weber, The Lawyer as Social Thinker* (London, Routledge).

TYRELL Hartmann, 1992. '''*Das Religiöse' bei Weber*'', *Saeculum*, 43, pp. 172-230.

UPDIKE John, 2006. *Terrorist* (New York, Knopf).

WEBER Max, [1915] 1946. ''The Social Psychology of the World Religions'', *in From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology* (New York, Oxford UP, pp. 267-301 [trans. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills]).

—, [1917] 1949. ''The Meaning of 'Ethical Neutrality' in Sociology and Economics'', *in Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (New York, Free Press, pp. 1-49 [trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch]).

—, [1915] 1951. *The Religion of China. Confucianism and Taoism* (New York, Free Press [trans. Hans H. Gerth]).

—, [1920] 1968. *Economy and Society* (New York, Bedminster [trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich]).

—, [1905] 2002a. ''The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism'', *in* Max WEBER, *The Protestant Ethic and the ''Spirit'' of Capitalism and Other Writings* (London, Penguin, pp. 1-202 [trans. Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells]).

—, [1920] 2002b. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Third Edition (Oxford, Blackwell [trans. Stephen Kalberg]).

WEHLER Hans-Ulrich, 2004. *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, vol. 4 (1914-1949) (München, Beck).

WILLIAMS Bernard, 1973. ''Deciding to Believe'', *in* Bernard WILLIAMS, *Problems of the Self* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, pp. 136-151).

YOUNG Michael P., 2001. ''A Revolution of the Soul, Transformative Experiences and Immediate Abolition'', *in* Jeff GOODWIN, James M. JASPER, Francesca POLLETTA, eds, *Passionate Politics, Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 99-114).

ZALD Mayer N. and John D. MCCARTHY, 1987. *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick, Transaction).

ZARET David, 1993. ''The Use and Abuse of Textual Data'', *in* Hartmut LEHMANN and Guenther ROTH, eds, *Weber's Protestant Ethic. Origins, Evidence, Contexts* (Cambridge, Cambridge UP, pp. 245-272).

Résumé

L'apparition d'une contestation radicale à base religieuse prouve le besoin d'une alternative aux théories rationalistes des mouvements sociaux. Le retour à la sociologie des religions de Weber s'impose. Au delà du type charismatique il ouvre sur une compréhension des affirmations identitaires et de l'activisme politique qui explique l'apparition d'un type spécifique d'organisation contestataire. Il s'agit de comprendre une dynamique de protestation irréductible à l'adaptation aux structures de circonstances. Extrapoler aux mouvements séculiers est possible.

Zusammenfassung

Das neue Phänomen eines radikalen religiösen Protests bestätigt die Annahme, dass wir eine Alternative zu den gängigen rationalistischen Theorien sozialer Bewegungen brauchen. Hier ist es nützlich, noch einmal zu Webers Religionssoziologie zurückzukehren: Sie enthält eine – nicht auf Thesen über ''charismatische Führer'' begrenzte – Theorie, die (1) ein anderes Verständnis des Verhältnisses von personaler Identität und politischem Aktivismus entwickelt, (2) davon ausgehend den Aufbau eines spezifischen Typs von Bewegungsorganisationen erklärt und (3) so zeigt, wie eine Eigendynamik des Protests entstehen kann, die sich nicht auf eine Anpassung an Gelegenheitsstrukturen reduzieren lässt. Damit hilft sie auch, Protestbewegungen zu erklären, die sich als säkular begreifen.