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Spirit of capitalism: Weber, Grossman and Marx

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ABSTRACT

The topic of the paper is the origin of the capitalist mode of production as seen by two giants of the social sciences: Max Weber and Karl Marx. In other words, first Weber's famous theory of the capitalist spirit is examined in-depth, not restricting oneself to the overview of the critical literature, but adding a couple of novel counter-arguments put forward by the present author himself. Weber's treatment is then compared with an equally famous Marxian theory of primitive capitalist accumulation. Better to bridge the two approaches in question, Grossman's essay has been used to that end. It is also pointed out that from the perspective of modern historical studies, Marx was largely right, and his theory is compelling to this day.

Keywords: capitalism, Protestantism, Calvinism, primitive accumulation, history, social class

INTRODUCTION

MAX WEBER (1864-1920) was of course one of the leading thinkers of recent epoch whose ideas still powerfully resonate across the social sciences and humanities. As it happens, he is considered one of the three founding fathers of modern sociology, the other two being Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx... The name of the latter theorist is relevant in that context especially because Weber has been, and rightly so, regarded as the principal bourgeois alternative to Marx's historical materialism. This question is too important and too often misrecognised to be left out without any further commentary that is sketched out below. The

main subject of the essay is, however, Weber's famous theory of the origin of capitalism that will be compared with the Marxian theory of primitive accumulation. The extent to which the Weberian thesis has gained currency among the scholarly community may be illustrated by just one example of Emmanuel Wallerstein who draws heavily on Weber's framework in his own world system theory.

But first let us call the reader's attention to the third theorist mentioned in the head: Henryk Grossman [Grossmann] (1881-1950) was born in Cracow. He was a member of Polish Social Democratic Party (PPSD), but a critical one, struggling against the opportunism and narrow-minded nationalism or chauvinism pertaining to the party. He contributed to a split of Jewish workers from the PPSD in 1905 to form the separate Jewish Social Democrat Party of Galicia, wherein he occupied leadership positions for the next 3 years. With the defeat of the 1905 revolution and the subsequent decline in the working class movement, he left active politics and worked as a statistician and economist. After the war, he joined the Communist Workers Party of Poland in 1920. He was imprisoned for this activities several times, finally ending up as a political exile in Frankfurt at the end of 1925. There he came to be associated with the Frankfurt Institute and wrote, inter alia, his major work on capitalist breakdown. He was forced into exile again in 1933, first to Britain and then the USA. He returned to Germany in 1949, joining the Socialist Unity Party, as Professor of Political Economy at the University of Leipzig, where he died the following year.

To turn to the issue of comparison of the two great rivals mentioned above, oftentimes it is Weber's notion of "subjective meaning" as being crucial for his so-called interpretive approach that is regarded as lying at the root of the uniqueness of his methodological position, and thereby of the paramount differences between the latter and Marx's historical materialism.

The aforementioned notion figures prominently in his definition of sociological science. According to Weber, "sociology (in the sense in which this highly ambiguous word is used here) is a science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects" (Weber 1947, 88).

Thus, Weber's essential starting point is an acceptance of the subjective point of view, of *verstehende Soziologie*, i.e. a system of sociological categories couched in terms of the subjective point of view, that is of the meaning of persons, things, ideas, normative patterns, and motives from the point of view of the persons whose action is being studied (Weber 1947, 89). The fact that *prima facie* the above-cited statements may appear to be clear should not obscure the circumstance that the key idea is not devoid of ambiguity. The term in question seems, to be sure, suggestive of specific interpretation. The matter, as we shall see, is not that simple. Note, namely, Weber's statement to the effect that: "in all the sciences of human action, account must be taken of processes and phenomena which are devoid of subjective meaning, in the role of stimuli, results, favouring or hindering circumstances" (Weber 1947).

So far, so good. Weber adds, however, that:

To be devoid of meaning is not identical with being lifeless or non-human; every artefact, such as for example a machine, can be understood only in terms of the meaning which its production and use have had or will have for human action; a meaning which may derive from a relation to exceedingly various purposes. Without reference to this meaning such an object remains wholly unintelligible. That which is intelligible or understandable about it is thus its relation to human action. (Weber 1947)

The above pronouncement contains an idea according to which subjective meaning could be understood as reference to human action, or comprehending various material and

ideal objects from the viewpoint of an actor or agent. This “activist” or “actionist” as opposed to psychologistic interpretation is highlighted by the following contention referring to such objects as functioning:

... in such roles as ends, means, obstacles, and by-products. It is not, however, permissible to express this by saying, as is sometimes done, that economic action is a “psychic” phenomenon. The production of goods, prices, or even the “subjective valuation” of goods, if they are empirical processes, are far from being merely psychic phenomena. But underlying this misleading phrase is a correct insight. It is a fact that these phenomena have a peculiar type of subjective meaning. This alone defines the unity of the corresponding processes, and this alone makes them accessible to subjective interpretation. (Weber 1947)

From the perspective of socio-economic structuralism, as the present author's theoretical framework is termed, there can be no quarrel, therefore, with the following rendering of Weber's approach: “Weber rejects psychological reductionism in the course of emphasising that motives should be viewed as discrete psycho-historical, or psycho-cultural, entities” (Campbell 2006).

Our anti-subjectivistic interpretation of Weber is confirmed, too, by Peukert who draws attention to the fact that:

The concept of understanding is not developed in a subjectivist or hermeneutical tradition. [...] Weber did not adhere to his official interpretative principles and analytical framework. His studies on agrarian social relations, on antiquity, and the development of the concept of Agrarverfassung demonstrate that his substantive studies and his methodological claims (methodological individualism, value neutrality, etc.) diverge. He was also a structuralist; for example, his studies implicitly hold that an internal logic rules at different times in history, existing independently of individual consciousness. (Peukert 2004)

The latter conclusion has been confirmed by Mary Fulbrook in her *British Journal of Sociology* article, “Comparing One Aspect of Max Weber's Explicit Conception of 'interpretive sociology' with His Actual Practices in his Substantive Investigations”. The author was able to:

show that Weber's overt emphasis on the importance of meanings and motives in causal explanation of social action does not correspond adequately with the true mode of explanation involved in his comparative-historical studies of the world religions. Rather, the ultimate level of causal explanation in Weber's substantive writings is that of the social-structural conditions under which certain forms of meaning and motivation can achieve historical efficacy. (Fulbrook 1978)

Well, the formulation of a social-structural point of view is not worlds apart from the theoretical position of Karl Marx. This can be seen all the more clearly if Weber's research practice rather than his methodological declarations are taken into consideration; all his major works on Confucianism, and several other great religions are a case in point. Those works are as close to Marx's historical materialism as one can get. To be sure, one can go with that comparison only that far; as will be seen below, in some weberian works the aforementioned theoretical-methodological perspective is certainly missing. But the truth is that Marx does not always abide by the historical-materialist viewpoint either: there are scores of Marx's pronouncements that have anything in common with what constituted his conceptual toolkit in his mature stage of intellectual development.

ECONOMY AND POLITICS (THE STATE) IN WEBER'S THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Every reader of Max Weber's seminal treatise titled "Economy and Society" is aware how much space has been devoted there to the question of the determination of demarcation lines of the economic structure. From this point of view, the following definition is of cardinal importance: "‘Economic Action,’ (*Wirtschaften*) is a peaceful use of the actor's control over resources, which is primarily economically oriented" (Weber 1947).

What is worth stressing here as both sound and crucial from the viewpoint of the above-mentioned purpose is Weber's reference to the term "peaceful." Its relevance to the purpose under consideration is shown, among others, by the following outline of interrelations between the heading substructures of the present subchapter, distinguished by Weber:

from "economic action" as such, the term "economically oriented action," which will be applied to two types: (a) every action which, though primarily oriented to other ends, takes account, in the pursuit of them, of economic considerations; that is, of the consciously recognised necessity for economic prudence. Or (b) that which, though primarily oriented to economic ends, makes use of physical force as a means. It thus includes all primarily non-economic action and all non-peaceful action which is influenced by economic considerations. (Weber 1978)

Weber goes on to say that "type of action, including the use of violence, may be economically oriented. This is true of war-like action in such cases as marauding." He praises "Franz Oppenheimer, in particular, for the fact that he has rightly distinguished economic means from political means." It is essential to distinguish the latter from economic action. The use of force is unquestionably very strongly opposed to the spirit of economic acquisition in the usual sense. Hence the term:

"economic action" will not be applied to the direct appropriation of goods by force and the direct coercion of the other party by threats of force. [...] Furthermore, the formally peaceful provision for the means and the success of a projected exercise of force, as in the case of armaments and economic organization for war, is just as much economic action, as any other. (Weber 1978)

Weber makes use of the concept when he points out that "Every course of rational political action is economically oriented with respect to provision for the necessary means, and it is always possible for political action to serve the interest of economic ends" (Weber 1947). Similarly, while Weber points out that "though it is not necessarily true of every economic system, certainly the modern economic order under modern conditions could not continue if its control of resources were not upheld by the legal compulsion of the state; that is, if its formally 'legal' rights were not upheld by the threat of force." However, one cannot agree more with Weber when he states that the above-mentioned circumstance does not blur or eliminate what he regards as an essential distinction between the economy and the non-economic structures in question:

But the fact that an economic system is thus dependent on protection by force, does not mean that it is itself an example of the use of force. It is entirely untenable to maintain that economic action, however defined, is only a means by contrast, for instance, with the state, as an end in itself. This becomes evident from the fact that it has been possible to define the state itself only in terms of the means which it attempts to monopolize, the use of force. (Weber 1947)

On these grounds Weber clarifies some other important conceptual distinctions. In particular, writes he, the term “economy” will be distinguished from that of “technology.” The term “technology” applied to an action refers to the totality of means employed as opposed to the meaning or end to which the action is, in the last analysis, oriented. [...]

“Rational” technique is a choice of means which is consciously and systematically oriented to the experience and reflection of the actor, which consists, at the highest level of rationality, in scientific knowledge. (Weber 1978)

The following statement corroborates our earlier insight concerning Weber’s structural or holistic approach, which in the following case neatly combines with his dialectical style of thinking (and, needless to say, this marks another feature shared with the classics of Marxism, albeit, to be sure, one need not be a historical or dialectical materialist to be a dialectician, as shown by the case of Simmel and many other instances):

What is concretely to be treated as a “technology” is thus variable. The ultimate significance of a concrete act may, seen in the context of the total system of action, be of a “technical” order; that is, it may be significant only as a means in this broader context. Then concretely the meaning of the particular act lies in its technical result; and, conversely, the means which are applied in order to accomplish this are its “techniques.” In this sense there are techniques of every conceivable type of action. [...] All these are capable of the widest variation in degree of rationality. The presence of a “technical question” always means that there is some doubt over the choice of the most efficient means to an end. Among others, the standard of efficiency for a technique may be the famous principle of “least action,” the achievement of the optimum result with the least expenditure of resources. (Weber 1978)

Weber’s account contains several rather simple truths, but also some ambiguity—as the following passage shows—concerned with the similarity of the terms “economising”, “economical” and “economic”, which permits, nay, encourages slips from one of these meanings to either of the remaining two:

As long as only questions of technology in the present sense are involved, the only considerations relevant are those bearing on the achievement of this particular end, the pursuit of which is accepted as desirable without question. Given this end, it is a matter of the choice of the most “economical” means, account being taken of the quality, the certainty, and the permanence of the result. Means, that is, are compared only in terms of the immediate differences of expenditure involved in alternative ways of achieving the end. As long as it is purely a technical question, other wants are ignored.

Thus, in a question of whether to make a technically necessary part of a machine out of iron or platinum, a decision on technical grounds alone would, so long as the requisite quantities of both metals for this particular purpose were available, consider only which of the two would in this case bring about the best result and would minimize the other comparable expenditures of resources, such as labour. But once consideration is extended to take account of the relative scarcity of iron and platinum in relation to their potential uses, as every technologist is accustomed to do even in the chemical laboratory, the action is no longer in the present sense purely technical, but also economic. (Weber 1947)

Despite Weber’s best intentions, the manner he frames his distinction contributes to the obliteration of the economy’s boundaries rather than their clear delineation. The latter task would be helped by an adoption of, for example, Polanyi’s substantive approach discussed earlier. From this viewpoint some actions of laboratory scientists may indeed be included in the economy inasmuch as they manufacture concrete material goods, say, medicines, or

engage in the type of work later defined as pre-material. This, however, is not a criterion Weber would use.

From an economic point of view, “technical” questions always involve the consideration of “costs.” This is a question of crucial importance for economic purposes and in this context always takes the form of asking what would be the effect on the satisfaction of other wants if this particular means were not used for satisfaction of one given want. [...].

The question of what, in comparative terms, is the cost of the use of the various possible technical means for a single technical end depends in the last analysis on their potential usefulness as means to other ends. This is particularly true of labour.¹ A technical problem in the present sense is, for instance, that of what equipment is necessary in order to move loads of a particular kind, or in order to raise mineral products from a given depth in a mine; further, among the alternatives it is a question of knowing which is the most efficient, that is, among other things, which achieves a given degree of success with the least expenditure of effort. It is, on the other hand, an economic problem how, on the assumption of an exchange economy, this equipment can be paid for in money through the sale of goods; or, on the assumption of a planned economy, how the necessary labour and other means of production can be provided without damage to the satisfaction of other wants held to be more urgent. In both cases, it is a problem of the comparison of ends. Economic action is primarily oriented to the problem of choosing the end to which a thing shall be applied, of choosing the appropriate means.

For purposes of the theoretical definition of technical rationality it is wholly indifferent whether the product of a technical process is in any sense useful. In practice this is not the case, however, since economic elements are also involved in concrete cases. (Weber 1947)

Thus, Weber himself acknowledges that the distinction concerned is not as clear-cut as he would have us to believe.

In the present terminology there could well be a rational technique even of achieving ends which no one desires. It would, for instance, be possible, as a kind of technical amusement, to apply all the most modern methods to the production of atmospheric air, and no one could take the slightest exception to the purely technical rationality of the action. Economically, on the other hand, the procedure would under normal circumstances be clearly irrational because there was no demand for the product. (Weber 1947)

It may seem paradoxical that Weber, considering his impressive historical erudition, uses here categories peculiar to only one type of historically existing modes of economic activity, the commodity-money economy, which is best exemplified by its most developed variant in the form of the capitalist mode of production.² To generalise Weberian considerations, one would have to use the notion of use value instead of his category of demand which implies that a given good has exchange value. But again, by no means all economies, as Weber is perfectly aware, were organised on exchange principles. Thus, it follows that we must return to the topic of defining the economy if such a definition is to be satisfactory from the standpoint of socio-economic structuralism.

¹ Recognising this special importance of labour, Weber moves closer to his arch-rival's position.

² However close is the relationship of the two, it is not one of identity, which is being overlooked by the following comment to Blaug's observation that: “The history of economic thought ... is nothing but the history of our efforts to understand the workings of an economy based on market transactions” (1985, 6).

Accordingly conventional economics can be seen as the theoretical construction of capitalism” Li Xing & Jacques Hersh 2003).

The problem of rationality

The above deliberations involve one of Weber's central notions, which must be discussed at some length, not only for its own sake, but also for more general implications in terms of Weberian approach. A German scholar has carried on a thorough analysis of this question. His conclusions, relevant to the above arguments, are as follows:

That abstract theory starts with the modern occidental type of man and his economy. It tries to understand the elementary phenomena of the "economically fully educated" man (1990, 29). Notice that Weber does not say here that abstract theory is only a heuristic advice. He underlines the idea of a single logic of economic action. This logic is, in his view, most fully expressed in occidental societies. What Weber describes seems to be a real and not an ideal type of description. Weber is not historical in the present context, insofar as he does not posit different types of systematic economic action in different economic systems ... In the most-often-quoted passage of his deliberations on economics, he enumerates the well-known idealizations pertinent to the notorious notion of homo economicus: all noneconomic motives are excluded; full knowledge of the situation, maximization (the use of the best means available), and full use of all energies ...

This is an utterly unrealistic image, analogous to a mathematical ideal figure (1990, 30). For Weber, the neoclassical model of man is at the centre of theoretical analysis. His remark on the unrealistic nature makes no difference, as the truth of the matter is that no neoclassical economist of any stature doubts that we are dealing in such cases with an idealization. Meanwhile, Weber himself argues in this very connection that the action of the idealized economic man concerned captures and at the same time gives expression to the transhistorical logic of systematic or rational economic behaviour and that, moreover, the occident approximates this model quite well.

"The notion of rationality [...] presupposes a world without surprise, corresponding to Schumpeter's closed circuit and not to discontinuous change, novelty, surprise, and uncertainty" (Peukert 2004).³ As a matter of fact, Weber often talks of complete calculability, which is indeed an extreme position.

In terms of the capitalist class structure and an analysis of its economy, , it is telling that the German sociologist distinguishes capitalists, managers, and organizers, but he does not take account of the role and function of the entrepreneur, as opposed to, for instance, Schumpeter.

It is apparent that Weber endeavours to apply the concept of rationality in every aspect of his analysis. As a result, "Sometimes the reader begins to doubt if we know more as a result of the introduction of the notion of rationality compared with more traditional descriptions. For example, Weber talks about the limitations of the free recruitment of the labour force as limitations on the formal rationalization of economic activity and continues with limitations on technical rationality in this sphere" (1968d: 128). (Peukert 2004)

The formal and substantive rationality of economic action

While considerations of rationality in general are certainly of crucial importance, at least equally relevant for the purposes of sociology of economy is the distinction alluded to in

³ These notions are characteristic concepts of the Austrian school that is the subject of one of the subsequent chapters.

the claim cited above. As we shall see, the author of the present book has in this matter a rather different view than the above-mentioned German scholar:

Weber's distinction has been much acclaimed, but in our view it is not so spectacular and also ambiguous. It is not spectacular because no market theorist questions the neutrality or indifference of the market with regard to distribution or that market allocations may lead to unacceptable results⁴ (working poor, etc.).

On the other hand, if Weber accepts the Austrian narrative of the market economy, formal rationality is to a great extent identical to substantive rationality.

This is because the economy serves the final consumer and competition wipes out profits, so that the ethical substantive standard of the market economy since Adam Smith (i.e., the procurement of cheap goods) is realized. (Peukert 2004)

This Weber's concept can, however, be looked at from a different angle. Although the right-wing convictions that Weber held are well-known, in practice he would not shy away from recognising a number of fundamental contradictions of a market economy or capitalism, for that matter. Thus, he pointed out that:

It is necessary to formulate the concept of economic action in such a way as to include the modern market economy; so it is not possible to take consumers' wants, and their 'satisfaction,' as a point of departure. The concept must take account, on the one hand, of the fact that utilities are actually sought after—including among them orientation to pecuniary acquisition for its own sake. But, on the other hand, it must also include the fact, which is true even of the most primitive self-sufficient economy, that attempts, however primitive and traditionally limited, are made to assure the satisfaction of such desires by some kind of activity. (Weber 1947)

The purpose of what is in fact a criticism of the capitalist system is served, among others, by the aforementioned dichotomy. Weber points in fact to one of the fundamental contradictions pertaining to the modern economy, what he calls the tension between the “formal” and “substantive” (materiel) rationality of the economy. At the same time, Weber's distinction, not accidentally parallel to that of Karl Polanyi's, mitigates somewhat not only our, as we have seen, charge of insufficient historical sensitivity of his approach. By the term formal rationality he means the extent to which it is possible to carry through accurate rational calculation of the quantities involved in economic orientation, and hence to act upon the results of such calculation. By substantive rationality, on the other hand, he means the extent to which it is possible to secure what, according to a given system of values, is an adequate provision of a population with goods and services, and in the process remain in accord with the ethical requirements of the system of norms. The tension arises from the fact that a high level of formal rationality can be attained only under certain specific substantive conditions, which are always in some important ways in conflict with the interests and moral sentiments implied in a high level of substantive rationality.

The prices which are an essential basis of rational accounting are, as he says, not so much “claims to unspecified utilities” without relation to the conflict relations of human beings, as they are “estimates of the chances of success” in a situation of the conflict of

⁴ This claim is unfounded as, *inter alia*, an example of Hayek shows (cf. Tittenbrun 2011.) All this seems rather odd given that Peukert, as his paper amply demonstrates, has an extensive knowledge of Austrian economics.

interest with other competitors.⁵ The outcome of such a competitive conflict can never be guaranteed to be strictly in accord with the standards of substantive rationality. (Weber 1947)

From a comparative point of view, note how many common points there are between Weber and Marx- structural and dialectical approach, a key aspect of the latter being the category of contradiction or conflict, for that matter. On the other hand, ideological and class positions of the two thinkers are far apart; Weber reckons that because of its enormous simplification of the goals and standards of success of economic activity, the highest degree of formal rationality takes the form of capital accounting. The thing Weber emphasizes immediately is the dependence of this in turn on the highest possible degree of market freedom, that is of the absence of impingement on the market of economically irrational interests or influences, or of economically rational ones which, like monopolies, by restricting market freedom interfere with the access of others to the conditions of high calculability. In addition, capital accounting implies, Weber notes, a high level and stability of discipline in the functioning of the enterprise, and stable relations of appropriation of all the important elements in the situation, materials, premises, equipment, labour, legal rights, and privileges, etc.

On the other hand, though, the differences concerned are not as wide as is often thought. Finally, third, it is not, according to Weber's apt comment, "need" or "desire" as such which influences the production and marketing of goods, but "effective demand." There is in the first place no guarantee that any given distribution of purchasing power is in accord with the standards of substantive rationality. This is true not only between individuals but also between impersonally organised interests. For instance, so far as higher education and research are dependent on private support through gifts and endowment there would seem to be no reason to suppose that the relative funds available to institutions for this purpose at all accurately reflect the valuation of the goals in the society at large.⁶ Too many fortuitous circumstances influence their income. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that the processes of a competitive market economy themselves influence the distribution of income in ways contrary to any given set of substantive standards, notably through the cumulative tendency to increasing inequality⁷ which operates unless control of it is more stringent than there seems to be any realistic possibility of attainment. If this is not a realistic view of the capitalist economy, then what is? The author of "Wirtschaft und Gessellschaft" presents here a truly socio-economic point of view, which is also prominent, as suggested, in most, but not all other contexts.

The tension operates reciprocally. The process of extension of formal rationality, and of the conditions underlying it, creates situations and stimulates types of action which in various ways come into conflict with whatever substantive norms there are in the society and the

⁵ And yet, for all his merits, Weber, it has been observed, "reduces that relationship to a conscious, considered interaction between competitors investing in the same object ('all parties potentially interested in the exchange'). [...] The point is [...] to subordinate this 'interactionist' description of strategies to a structural analysis of the conditions that delimit the space of possible strategies—while, at the same time, not forgetting that competition among a small number of agents in strategic interaction for access (for some of them) to exchange with a particular category of clients is also, and above all, an encounter between producers occupying different positions within the structure of the specific capital" (Bourdieu 2005).

⁶ This criticism of capitalism, in turn, may be compared to that of Galbraith, implied in his distinction between private opulence and public squalor.

⁷ This assertion alone suffices to show that Weber, contrary to Peukert and other critics, does go beyond conventional economics.

sentiments and symbols associated with them. As a result of this conflict there are at various points tendencies to “interference with the operation of the free market economy. Under relatively stable conditions these forces may be held in a state of relative balance, even though it is precarious, but under other conditions it is quite possible for the interfering tendencies to enter upon a cumulative development such as to lead to a far-reaching process of change, undermining many of the essential conditions of the market economy” (Weber 1947).

To reiterate this crucial point, the above statement shows how far Weber would go in his realistic socio-economic assessment of capitalism. The intellectual honesty of the author is remarkable, all the more so as this statement contradicts his other, rather sceptical assessments of the capacity of collective action of the working class as an agent of change:

“Profit-making” (*Erwerben*)⁸ is activity which is oriented to opportunities for seeking new powers of control over goods on a single occasion, repeatedly, or continuously.[...] There is a form of monetary accounting which is peculiar to rational economic profit-making; namely, “capital accounting.” Capital accounting is the valuation and verification of opportunities for profit and of the success of profit-making activity.

“Capital” is the sum of money in terms of which the means of profit-making which are available to the enterprise are valued. (Weber 1947)

This technical definition of capital is disappointing, as, after all, we are dealing here with one of the most eminent social scientists of all time. From the sociological, or, more precisely, socio-economic viewpoint, capital is not simply a sum of things or money, for that matter. It is, rather, a social relation between the labour power and his/her employer, as an owner of the means of production, services etc.

This does not mean that Weber, as a general rule, does gloss over important socio-economic distinctions.

As distinguished from the calculation appropriate to a budgetary unit, the capital accounting and calculation of the market entrepreneur are oriented not to marginal utility, but to profitability. To be sure, the probabilities of profit are in the last analysis dependent on the income of consumption units and, through this, on the marginal utility of the available income of the final consumers of consumer goods.

As it is usually put, it depends on their “purchasing power” for the relevant commodities. But from a technical point of view, the accounting calculations of a profit-making enterprise and of a consumption unit differ as fundamentally as do the ends of want satisfaction and of profit-making which they serve. For purposes of economic theory, it is the marginal consumer who determines the direction of production. In actual fact, given the actual distribution of power this is only true in a limited sense for the modern situation. To a large degree, even if the consumer is in a position to buy, his wants are “awakened” and “directed” by the entrepreneur.⁹

In a market economy [...] the double entry form of bookkeeping which is the most highly developed from a technical point of view. [...] in the system of accounting, there is introduced the fiction of exchange transactions between the different parts of a single

⁸ The editors note that “In common usage the term *Erwerben* would perhaps best be translated as 'acquisition.' This has not, however, been used as Weber is here using the term in a technical sense as the antithesis of *Haushalten*” (Weber 1947).

⁹ It can be seen that Weber rather mercilessly treats one of the favourite capitalistic myths of “consumer sovereignty.”

enterprise¹⁰; [...] in order to develop a technique of estimating the bearing of each particular measure on the profitability of the enterprise. [...] In an economy which makes use of capital accounting and which is thus characterized by the appropriation of the means of production by individual units, that is by property,¹¹ profitability depends on the prices which the "consumers," according to the marginal utility of money in relation to their income, can and will pay. It is only possible to produce profitably for those consumers who, in these terms, have sufficient income. A need may fail to be satisfied, not only when an individual's own demand for other goods takes precedence, but also when the greater purchasing power of others, in relation to any kind of demand, withdraws the relevant good from the market. Thus the fact that competition on the market is an essential condition of the existence of rational money accounting further implies that the outcome of the economic process is decisively influenced by the ability of persons who are plentifully supplied with money to outbid the others, and of those more favourably situated for production to underbid their rivals on the selling side. The latter are particularly those well supplied with goods essential to production or with money. (Weber 1947)

This implicit reference to class deserves to be stressed, again in contrast to orthodox economics in which this notion is conspicuous by its absence. Meanwhile, as we have seen, Weber takes account of differentiation in property and class terms not only among consumers but also producers, i.e. capitalists.

Capitalism and its genesis

While it could be argued that for the social scientist, the most valuable collection of Weverian texts is that known under the title "Economy and Society", the fact of the matter is that the most popular and most widely known his work is surely "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism". The essay is famous for the theory of the origin of capitalism it encompasses. It is to the consideration of that theory that we now turn.

The most fundamental features of capitalism as an economic order were for Weber the deferral of consumption and rational accounting. What Weber argues is that ascetic Protestantism (or in any event some other form of innerworldly asceticism) was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of Capitalism as a socio-economic formation. According to this view, capitalism was thus the unintended consequence of religious ethics.

To throw some light on the famous Weberian thesis, let us draw attention to the contrast between attitudes toward wealth in the medieval & modern worlds. In the former case, wealth was looked down on morally. What wealth generated was for consumption only. However, capitalism is based on the supremacy of wealth over the individual, the valuing of production without consumption, or production for the sake of accumulation of profits. The thing is that this change did not occur, as Weber pointed out, because of any shift in the economic structure. Weber's point of departure was the general premise that ethics influence action.

More specifically, Christian ethics revolve around the central axis of salvation.

It was crucially important how one was supposed to attain that noble end. Namely, she would best to withdraw from the world (one worked in the predominant variety preferred as a Accordingly, the preferred way of life was either to become a hhermit, as described, inter alia,

¹⁰ In modern parlance, this would be referred to as transfer prices.

¹¹ It should read: private property, as property of the means of production, or, more generally, means of economic activity is present, albeit in a variety of forms, under all economic formations of society.

in the great classical Russian literature, or follow Hamlet's advice extended to Ophelia. To be sure, it was believed that friars should work, but this was just for discipline, not profit. To put it another way, penance was a way to salvation, not work in the world. Ordinary folks could reach salvation through good works, charity, and, last but not least, the financial support of the church. It was precisely the corruption of this last act that produced the Reformation. In Lutheranism, by contrast, the highest value is not withdrawal from the world; instead: work is one's "calling." One has a duty to serve God whatever one's station. However, it laid stress on innerworldly life, while not an otherworldly one, but still it did not include any ascetic drive which would rationally structuralise one's life. Calvinism takes as its starting point the premise that work is one's calling, and while one cannot influence one's own salvation in any direct manner, one can know if one is saved by carrying out God's commands. Thus, under this kind of religious ethics, one rationalises one's life and conduct by way of success, showing one's salvation takes hard work; wealth is acceptable, but, mind you, only if you don't enjoy it! So, under this sort of ascetic doctrine, the basic role or function of wealth is that it provides a useful temptation, which will be resisted only by the saved.

Weber, just as his great theoretical rival, recognised that capitalism requires capital accumulation, specifically, reinvestment of profit for the sake of the enterprise, not for the capitalist. Thus, it is Weber's contention that inner-worldly asceticism has an "elective affinity" for capitalism. In other words, according to Weber, **Bląd! Nie zdefiniowano zakładki.** there obtains a close parallel between the ethics of Calvinism and the ethics of the capitalist who was, of course, the leading and driving force of the capitalist mode of economic activity. When one notices the historical priority of the former, and the former's absence in other civilisations, which supposedly had all the other prerequisites, the causal importance of Protestantism for the development of capitalism follows.

Weber's thesis may also be couched in the following terms:

Weber emphasised that money making as a calling had been "contrary to the ethical feelings of whole epochs ..." (Weber 1930:73; further Weber references by page number alone). Lacking moral support in pre-Protestant societies, business had been strictly limited to "the traditional manner of life, the traditional rate of profit, the traditional amount of work ..." (67). Yet, this pattern "was suddenly destroyed, and often entirely without any essential change in the form of organization ..." Calvinism, Weber argued, changed the spirit of capitalism, transforming it into a rational and unashamed pursuit of profit for its own sake. (Frey 2001)

According to Weber, a key feature of Calvinism, uncertainty about salvation:

had the psychological effect of producing a single-minded search for certainty. Although one could never affect God's decision to extend or withhold election, one might still attempt to ascertain his or her status. [...] If one[...] conformed to what was known of God's requirements for this life, then that might provide some evidence of election. Thus upright living, which could not earn salvation, returned as evidence of salvation.

The upshot was that the Calvinist's living was "thoroughly rationalized in this world and dominated by the aim to add to the glory of God in earth ..." (118). [...] This singleness of purpose left no room for diversion and created what Weber called an ascetic character. "Only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the definite manifestations of His will" (157). Only in a calling (Beruf) does this focus find full expression. "A man without a calling thus lacks the systematic, methodical character which is ... demanded by worldly

asceticism" (161). A calling represented God's will for that person's practical role and conduct in the economy and society.

Such an emphasis on a calling was but a small step from a full-fledged capitalistic spirit. In practice, according to Weber that small step was taken, for "the most important criterion (of a calling) is ... profitableness. For if God ... shows one of His elect a chance of profit, he must do it with a purpose..." (162). This "providential interpretation of profit-making justified the activities of the business man," and led to "the highest ethical appreciation of the sober, middle-class, self-made man" (163). There will be an occasion below to return to the notion of middle class, but even at this point a critical comment is in order—the concept, used, true, by both authors of the classical class theories, i.e. Weber and Marx, in point of fact is no class concept at all; it pertains to social stratification (cf. Tittenbrun 2016a).

It is important to note that a sense of calling and an ascetic ethic applied to labourers as well as to entrepreneurs and businessmen (businesspersons). Nascent capitalism required reliable, honest, and punctual labour (23–24), which in traditional societies had not existed (59–62). Note in passing what is in fact an incredibly important issue: Weber's conflation of the concepts of labour and labour power; to put it differently, a distinction between the capacity to work or a potential work on the one hand and the actual work on the other must be observed lest there be no misunderstanding in one's view of both economic and social structures.

That free labor would voluntarily submit to the systematic discipline of work under At any rate, according to Weber, capitalism required an internalized value system unlike any socio-economic system seen before (63). Calvinism provided this value system (178–79).

Thus, the Protestant ethic ordered life according to its own logic, but also according to the needs of modern capitalism as understood by Weber. (Frey 2001)

The famous Weberian thesis has been hotly debated.

British scholar R. H. Tawney in "*Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*" (1926) noted that Weber treated multi-faceted reformed Christianity as though it were equivalent to late-era English Puritanism, the period from which Weber's most telling quotes were drawn. Tawney observed that the "iron collectivism" of Calvin's Geneva (indeed, some go even further, calling Calvin's sect a totalitarian one: note- J.T.) had evolved before Calvinism became harmonious with capitalism: "(Calvinism) had begun by being the very soul of authoritarian regimentation. It ended by being the vehicle of an almost Utilitarian individualism" (Tawney 1962, 226–7). [...] Roland Bainton [...] disputed Weber's psychological claims. Despite the psychological uncertainty Weber imputed to Puritans, their activism could be "not psychological and self-centered but theological and God-centered" (Bainton 1952:252–53). That is, God ordered all of life and society, and Puritans felt obliged to act on His will. And if some Puritans scrutinised themselves for evidence of election, "the test was emphatically not economic activity as such but upright character ..." He concludes that Calvinists had no particular affinity for capitalism but that they brought "vitality and drive into every area ... whether they were subduing a continent, overthrowing a monarchy, or managing a business, or reforming the evils of the very order which they helped to create" (255). (Frey 2001)

Somewhat similarly, Samuelsson (1993: 27–48), argued that Puritan leaders did not truly endorse capitalistic behavior. Rather, they were ambivalent. Given that Puritan congregations were composed of businessmen and their families (who allied with Puritan churches because both wished for less royal control of society), the preachers could hardly condemn capitalism. Instead, they clarified "the moral conditions under which a prosperous,

even wealthy, businessman may, despite success and wealth, become a good Christian" (38). But this, Samuelsson makes clear, was hardly a ringing endorsement of capitalism. (Frey 2001), as Weber would have it.

However, apart from Weber's possible misinterpretation of Puritanism, there is also another serious question- that of his misinterpretation of capitalism as a result of exaggerating the importance of asceticism. Weber's favourite exemplar of capitalism, Benjamin Franklin, did advocate unremitting personal thrift and discipline. There is no denying that some quarters within capitalism did advance by personal thrift. However, Samuelsson (83–87) argues that thrift could not have contributed even in a minor way to the creation of the large fortunes of capitalists.

Frey argues that: "Perhaps more important than personal fortunes is the finance of business. The retained earnings of successful enterprises, rather than personal savings, probably have provided a major source of funding for business ventures from the earliest days of capitalism." All his counterarguments notwithstanding, Frey ends up *de facto* undermining Weber's interpretation of the capitalist spirit: "And successful capitalists, even in Puritan New England, have been willing to enjoy at least some of the fruits of their labours. Perhaps the spirit of capitalism was not the spirit of asceticism" (Frey 2001). And, unfortunately, Weber's thesis cannot be saved by, according to the researcher being cited, its last pillar. It is true that:

Weber was influenced by the writings of Benjamin Franklin, [...] Weber quoted Franklin early in his work and based many of his ideas on Franklin's writings: For six pounds a year you may have the use of one hundred pounds, provided you are a man of known prudence and honesty. He [...] Weber then said, "Truly what is here preached is not simply a means of making one's way in the world, but a particular ethic ... It is not mere business astuteness, that sort of thing is common enough, it is an ethos. The earning of money within the modern economic order is, so long as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling; and this virtue and proficiency are, as it is now not difficult to see, the real Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic". (Pierotti 2003).

However, Weber's interpretation of Franklin has not gone unchallenged; in particular, it has been pointed out that "far from demonstrating a commitment to the 'spirit of capitalism,' and the accumulation of wealth as an end in itself and moral duty, Franklin's writings are in fact evidence against the existence of such a spirit" (Dickson and McLachlan 1989). The two aforementioned writers point out that the title of the work from which Weber quoted is "Necessary Hints to Those That Would Be Rich." They assert, "This suggests that what Franklin is offering is prudential advice, rather than insisting on a moral imperative, which makes a lot of difference in terms of the Weberian thesis. The gist of Dickson's and McLachlan's argument is that Weber misinterpreted Franklin's writings as moral ends. They deny that Franklin was preaching a Protestant work ethic and assert that all Franklin was saying was that if a person is interested in being successful in life and commerce, here are some virtues to follow. Which sounds a bit different from what the German scholar was up to.

Dickson and McLachlan conclude with a clear statement of their criticism of Weber's hypothesis: "It seems clear to us that Weber misinterprets Franklin and that the latter was not imbued with the ethos which Weber attributes to him. It is not in dispute that a methodological lifestyle is conducive to the accumulation of wealth. What is at issue concerning Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis is the impetus for such a lifestyle".

To be fair, Weber's misinterpretation of Franklin does not in itself, to be sure, invalidate his methodology or his thesis. Nonetheless, it does suggest a rather cavalier attitude towards

evidence, particularly as the writings of Franklin are the only “evidence” that he presents in his original essays to demonstrate the existence of the ‘spirit of capitalism’” (Pierotti 2003).

Indeed, Weber was not able to show (empirically) that Calvinists became capitalists: not in the 1600s, nor in 1905.

While this doesn’t undermine the logic itself, it raises questions about the data. An even more troublesome problem for Weber’s theory arises from a question: To what extent can religious doctrine be seen as a reflection of changing medieval economic conditions?¹² Putting it differently, one should ask to what extent was the response to Luther and Calvin economically determined. Did the followers use these religious ideologies simply to justify working in the world and not donating to churches?

This more far-reaching argument, amounting to the reversal of the logical order of priority pertaining to the facts involved is at odds with the logic of Weber’s reasoning. Weber’s thesis is weakened still further in confrontation with a more elaborate and magnified version of the above-mentioned counter-argument:

R. H. Tawney, perhaps Weber's most famous and powerful critic, agreed with Weber that capitalism and Protestantism were somehow connected. However, Tawney overturned Weber’s view as to their relationship. In his 1926 work, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, he states that Protestantism adopted the risk-taking, profit-making ethic of capitalism, not the other way around. How come? Tawney claims, with some good measure:

“There was plenty of capitalist spirit in fifteenth century Venice and Florence, or in south Germany and Flanders, for the simple reason that these areas were the greatest commercial and financial centres of the age. The development of capitalism in Holland and England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were by any means due, not to the fact that they were Protestant powers but to large economic movements, in particular the Discoveries and the results which flowed from them.”

... in Europe prior to the Reformation, [t]he Italian merchants and the Dutch clothiers operated under a rational economic system. Double-entry bookkeeping was invented in Italy and adopted by other merchants throughout Europe ... it is obvious that several factors were at work in Europe during the long sixteenth century, which led to the growth and dominance of capitalism. (Pierotti 2003)

Thus, one fairly widespread line of attacking Weber’s thesis boils down to a contention that modern capitalism might have arisen before reformed Protestantism or in places where the reformed influence was much smaller than admitted Weber (which is rather strange given Weber’s enormous historical knowledge; but, sadly, many scholars indulge in the procedure of cherry picking, that is to say, taking consideration of merely such data that are consistent with their preconceptions or beliefs):

recall that During the early twentieth century, historians studied the timing of the emergence of capitalism and Calvinism in Europe. E. Fischhoff (1944, 113) reviewed the literature and concluded that the "timing will show that Calvinism emerged later than capitalism where the latter became [...] powerful," suggesting no cause-and-effect relationship.[...] Bainton also suggests that the Reformed contributed to the development of capitalism only as a "matter of circumstance" (Bainton 1952, 254), which does not look like as a ringing endorsement of the Weberian thesis.

The Netherlands "had long been the mart of Christendom, before ever the Calvinists entered the land." Finally, Kurt Samuelsson (1957) concedes that "the Protestant countries,

¹² Indeed, as Antonio Labriola aptly noted, “ideas do not fall from heaven.”

and especially those adhering to the Reformed church, were particularly vigorous economically" (Samuelsson, 102). However, he finds much reason to discredit a cause-and-effect relationship. In actual fact, sometimes capitalism preceded Calvinism (Netherlands), and sometimes lagged by too long a period to suggest causality (Switzerland). Sometimes Catholic countries (Belgium) developed about the same time as the Protestant countries. Even in America, capitalist New England was cancelled out by the South, which Samuelsson claims also shared a Puritan outlook.

Weber himself, perhaps seeking to circumvent such evidence, created a distinction between traditional capitalism and modern capitalism. The view that traditional capitalism could have existed first, but that Calvinism in some meaningful sense created modern capitalism, hinges upon too fine a distinction according to critics such as Samuelsson. (Frey 2001)

As a matter of fact, it is not that the above distinction is too fine but rather that both critics and defenders of Weber's thesis lack sufficiently fine conceptual apparatus to effectively address such questions. In particular, what would be incredibly useful in the context under consideration is a distinction between, on the one hand, capitalist modes of production and more generally economic activity and, on the other, the capitalist economic formation of society as comprising all those modes. We have used a plural mode, because historically there have been (and there still are today) a variety of different bourgeois modes of production (and of economic activity), e.g. a slave-capitalist mode, as distinct from the position framing capital as a universal base on free labour power, whereas in actuality capitalism has encompassed alsoe. semi-slave labour power (the case of bonded labour, in more colloquial terms). Suffering from such glaring gaps in one's theoretical framework, one has no other option but to conclude that in light of rigorous canons of science, and: "because of the impossibility of controlled experiments to firmly resolve the question, the issue will never be completely closed" (Frey 2001).

The strongest link that Tawney saw between capitalism and Protestantism was rationality. Protestantism was a revolt against traditionalism and as such advocated rationality as an approach to life and business. Tawney proposed that the rationality inherent in capitalism became a tenet of Protestantism because rationality was diametrically opposed to the traditionalism of Catholicism. Others regarded rationality as a value label, which functioned to place value on Western civilisation, and devalue others. Scholars used the aforementioned political aspect of "modernisation" to create a critique of all theories that had a "modernization" component. Accordingly, Weber **Bląd! Nie zdefiniowano zakładki.** was interpreted as embodying this perspective of "modernisation" by such academics. And because the modernisation theory went out of fashion (together with the entire current of structural functionalism which promoted it), some sociologists have levelled criticism against him for this perspective. At the same time, other commentators drew attention to the existence of the different types of rationality in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. For example, in Roger Brubaker's "*The Limits of Rationality*" (1984), he identified several different types of the latter (deliberate, systematic, calculatable, impersonal, exact, purely qualitative, rule-grounded, predictable, methodological, sober, scrupulous, logical, intelligible, consistent, anti-emotional, and conscious self-scrutiny).

To return to Tawney's important work, he reckoned that early Protestant leaders recognized that hard work and rational organization of time were capitalist virtues which fit very nicely into the concept of living one's life in the service of God. Tawney saw the

capitalist concepts of division of labour and planned accumulation as being reflected in the dogma of Protestantism which urged its followers to use one's calling on earth for the greater glory of God. According to Tawney, capitalist precepts and Protestant dogma fit hand in glove, as he put it.

As a historian, Tawney did not see a linear relationship between capitalism and Protestantism, however. He considered Weber's thesis to be too simplistic to explain historical events. History, in his view, tends to be non-linear, and attempts to draw straight casual lines between events are shaky at best.

That Weber's methodological approach was contestable is also evident from some other scholars' arguments, two of whom wrote commentaries on the original 1904–5 thesis: Karl Fisher in 1907 and Felix Rachfahl in 1909 (Chalcroft 2001). They interpreted Weber as arguing that the development of religious thought in Protestantism caused (in a mono-causal and linear fashion) capitalism. Both of these writers admonished Weber on his use of concepts such as the "capitalist spirit," the "protestant ethic" and Luther's "calling."

The historian Carlo Antoni even argued that Weber's methodology held him back from discovering the true nature of the phenomena that he wanted to investigate. His methodology created a theory that reduced logical struggles and grand dialectics to mere psychological origins, and discarded the modern (in terms of the search for natural laws) for the classical (the use of "ideal types," which Antoni, and not without reason, identified with the archetype-models of Plato) (Antoni 1959).

To comment briefly on the latter point, not dwelling on what Weber himself had to say on the status of his ideal types, one should note that genuine sociological research, as opposed to metaphysical deliberations, precludes any use of anything like Platonic ideas since concepts deployed in an empirical investigation, by definition, have to have some empirical referent. Pure fictions are one thing, pure types, as the concepts concerned could be called, are another. The latter represent a real structure or a set of relations from which -for the sake of argument-all the redundant elements have been deleted or eliminated. Even so, such a model or system is anything like a fiction or a concept referring to the non-existent state of affairs. On the contrary, the referent of the concepts under consideration exists to a greater degree in ontological terms, so to speak. Furthermore, one can imagine conditions under which even those idealised conditions would be realised in practice; for instance, many types of space research, provides a case in point. In the pure, free from any influence of disturbing factors environment that is attainable in the space labs, one can, for example, manufacture certain goods, conduct a number of experiments that are feasible merely in such sterile circumstances. And in Weber's case, his dependence upon the overblown notion of rationality, commented on above, makes the matter even worse, which is another way of saying that drives his approach in the direction of epistemic idealism and away from realism or materialism, since in epistemology those two terms could be said to refer to roughly the same thing.

To return to Tawney's rejoinder to Weberian methodology, he opined that "The Protestant ethic, with its insistence on hard work, thrift, etc., had contributed to the rise of capitalism, but at the same time Protestantism itself was being influenced by an increasingly capitalistic society." It is important to note that as Tawney's proposition stands, it sticks firmly within the bounds of interactionism which is as equally a simplistic form of thinking as the unilinear approach allegedly pursued by his opponent. For the said proposition to move beyond those narrow bounds, it should be subordinated to a dialectical approach whose

outline we have attempted to lay out below. By the same token this remark applies to others who have contended that Weber “in his work employed a multi-causal explanation model (in the words of Daniel W. Rossides [1978], a model of "pluralistic sociocultural positivism" [353]) that was superior to the mono-causal model that was often associated with positivism” (Gannon 2002–3)

An even more radical, if at all possible, U-turn was performed by economic historian Jacob Viner (1976), who used pre-eighteenth century Scotland as a case study to demonstrate that where Calvinism was a state religion, it tended to have a restraining rather than freeing effect on economic development. He quotes a letter from John Keats in support of his thesis: “... the ecclesiastical supervision of the life of the individual, which, as it was practised in the Calvinistic State Churches almost amounted to an inquisition, might even retard that liberation of individual powers which was conditioned by the rational ascetic pursuit of salvation, and in some cases actually did so.” Viner points out that until well into the eighteenth century, Scotland was a desperately poor country. Contemporary commentators often remarked on the lack of economic initiative and ambition and on the general lack of enterprise and economic discipline of the population. Several of these reporters attributed Scotland's economic backwardness in large part to the deadening effect of Calvinist doctrine as forcibly applied by both the Church and the State. In his fascinating-owing to the usual association being made between the said national environment and the flourishing of capitalism (take Adam Smith and other suchlike examples), Viner quotes Henry T. Buckle who, in his 1857 treatise *Introduction to the History of Civilization in England*, wrote concerning the economic teachings of Scottish Calvinists in the seventeenth century as follows:

To wish for more than was necessary to keep oneself alive was a sin as well as a [...] violation of the subjection we owe to God. [...] He was no lover of riches[...] To be poor, dirty, and hungry, to pass through life in misery, [...] to suffer constant affliction, and to be tormented in all possible ways; to undergo these things was deemed proof of goodness, just as the contrary was a proof of evil. (Pierotti 2003)

As a matter of fact, the opposition of Scottish Calvinism to capitalism was so well known in Europe that some English commentators such as Roger L'Estrange urged English businessmen to look at the record of the Scottish Presbyterians in interfering with commerce and industry for religious reasons before supporting Cromwell's cause.

To be fair to Weber and his thesis, one should point out, though, that there are also other case studies leading to opposite conclusions,(specifically, Norway) which, though, will not be discussed here.

Any, comprehensive or not, review of economic historians shows that they have given little explicit attention to Weber in recent years. However, they show an interest in the impact of cultural values broadly understood on economic growth. In this connection it is indicated that a modified version of the Weberian thesis has also found some support in empirical economic research. Granato, Inglehart and Leblang (1996:610) incorporated cultural values in cross-country growth models on the grounds that Weber's thesis fits the historical evidence in Europe and America. They did not, to be sure, focus on Protestant values, but accepted "Weber's more general concept, that certain cultural factors influence economic growth..." Specifically they incorporated a measure of "achievement motivation" in their regressions and concluded that such motivation "is highly relevant to economic growth rates" (625).

And conversely, they found that "post-materialist" (i.e., environmentalist) values are correlated with slower economic growth. (Frey 2003)

This research, one cannot fail to notice, suffers from serious methodological limitations which render it implausible. What is most problematic about these and other similar studies is their way of collecting data. The empirical status of the latter is, as a matter of fact, very suspect, as they come from statistical surveys, and this sociological technique suffers from unalienable problems. Survey designers and executors fail to realise that each such a survey constitutes in fact a kind of experiment (Szczerkiewicz 1969) which underlies an artefactual and epiphenomenal nature of its results—surveys take place in an artificial environment forcefully detached from their respondents' social environment. Subjects are not investigated as embedded in complex social networks but, conversely, artificially isolated from those settings. Survey respondents may not have any particular view on the matters touched by the questions put to them and so they frequently *ad hoc* generate respective answers in the form of a series of verbal utterances. Those are unavoidably incredible as indexes of actual behaviour. For one thing, respondents may not understand questions they face, they can also simply tell lies or, in a more complex but equally frequent case they are not able to articulate their own attitudes whether owing to their lack of semantic competence or, as both Freud and Bourdieu, amongst others, would have it, because such attitudes function at a subconscious level. For all those reasons, it is most unlikely that a collector of such verbal utterances would reveal real practical efficacy, i.e. functioning at a level of actual behaviour, revealing real motives of human action. However, the above objections do not apply to Barro's (1997:27) study as it referred not to purportedly individual, but instead to social consciousness. The researcher modified Solow growth models and found that a "rule of law index" is associated with more rapid economic growth. This index is a proxy for such things as "effectiveness of law enforcement, sanctity of contracts and ... the security of property rights." As a corollary, "recalling Puritan theologian William Ames' definition of a contract, one might conclude that a religion such as Puritanism could create precisely the cultural values that Barro finds associated with economic growth" (Frey 2001).

Be that as it may, the enduring appeal of Weber's thesis can be measured by how many first-class minds have participated to date in the debate over its meaning and validity. As an argument to this debate, another limitation to Weber's approach, corresponding to our above critical comments on conventional sociological methodology, lies in the fact that he focuses on the motives imbedded in the leaders' doctrines rather than on the followers' actual ideas and motives of conduct, thereby recreating the division of the societal community into the lite and masses—a division that he himself would find, in other contexts, hardly acceptable.

In addition, Weber's examples of ethical change do not come from the bourgeoisie as such, but from the petty bourgeoisie (which for the reasons illuminated elsewhere is termed by the present author 'the autocephalous class, which itself is the term borrowed from Weber). The saying that a "Penny saved is a penny earned" has little in common with capital accumulation of the real bourgeoisie. Furthermore, Weber's examples are from the 1700s, two hundred years after the Reformation, and by then the doctrines concerned had been considerably watered down.

If we are to believe his critics (and their arguments are not easy to dismiss), Weber committed more such historical errors.

H. M. Robertson, a historian at the University of Cape Town, asserted in "A Criticism of Max Weber and His School" that the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches stressed the

same precepts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He states that Weber's assertion that the concept of the "calling" was novel to Luther and Protestantism was not established in Weber's writings. Robertson supports his thesis by quoting Aquinas: "There seems to be no essential difference between the doctrine of the Catholics and the Puritans on this point (the calling). St. Thomas Aquinas' teaching on distributive justice was that:

This division of men in different occupations occurs in the first place through divine providence, which distributes the condition of men in such a way ... and also in the second place from natural causes, as a result of which it happens that there are different aptitudes for different occupations amongst different men." Robertson continues to argue in support of his thesis: "The Jansenists ... reminded their flocks that the Christian life was 'a serious life, a life of toil and not of diversion, play or pleasure' so that one ought never to forget that it 'should be filled with some useful and sober occupation suitable for one's state of existence.' The Jesuits stressed almost the same beliefs. In France the Church went out of its way to welcome the honest bourgeois on the ground that he was the only type of man who followed God's commands and lived in a "calling." (Pierotti 2003).

It is precisely on the concept of Beruf that another of Weber's polemicists focuses. Malcolm H. MacKinnon contends that Weber misinterpreted what the Calvinists understood by the concept of the calling and good works. He claims that:

There are two fundamental theological flaws in Weber's line of reasoning, flaws that mean that Calvinism did not give a divine stamp of approval to earthly toil. [...] in Christianity generally and Calvinism in particular, works have nothing to do with mundane activities. As soteriologically conceived in relation to salvation, works are spiritual activities that call for obedience to the Law. MacKinnon goes on to explain that Weber's major failure is his misunderstanding of the Calvinist meaning of the calling. Using the Westminster Confession as his primary source, MacKinnon explains what the term "calling" meant to the Calvinists: There is a heavenly calling and an earthly calling or callings, the latter disqualified from making a positive contribution to our deliverance . . . Above all else, the devout must ensure that their mundane callings in no way impede the prosecution of the greatest good of all: their heavenly calling. Correspondingly, believers are sanctioned to "choose that employment or calling in which one may be most serviceable to God. Choose not that in which you may be most honorable in the world; but that which one may do most good and best escape sinning."

MacKinnon concludes by stating that it was Weber's misfortune to choose part of the Calvinist philosophy which, upon close examination, not only fails to support his fundamental thesis but in fact undermines it. "Again, the significant point here is that temporal obligations are at best indifferent and at worst sinful; they cannot make a contribution to the realization of celestial paradise. It is a grim twist of irony that Weber would choose such a spiritually worthless vehicle to realize his causal ambitions."

Amintore Fanfani, an economic historian in Rome in his article "Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism" emphatically disagrees with Weber concerning the role that Protestantism played in the development of a capitalist spirit in Europe. At the very outset he states his argument as follows:

Europe was acquainted with capitalism before the Protestant revolt. For at least a century capitalism had been an ever growing collective force. Not only isolated individuals, but whole social groups, inspired with the new spirit, struggled with a society that was not yet permeated with it. Once we have ruled out that Protestantism could have produced a

phenomenon that already existed, it still remains for us to enquire whether capitalism was encouraged or opposed by Protestantism.” (Pierotti 2003).

He adds another sociological variable to the equation indicating that it was “not the Protestant Ethic which encouraged the growth of capitalism but the fact that many Protestants were forced to leave Catholic countries to escape persecution which ‘fosters in the emigrants an internationalism that is no small factor in capitalist mentality’. In fact, he says that many early Protestant leaders opposed capitalism, including Luther and Calvin: "Luther's conservatism in economic matters, to which his patriarchal ideas on trade and his decided aversion to interest bear witness. Even Calvin ... condemns as unlawful all gain obtained at a neighbor's expense, and the amassing of wealth." The Huguenots and Dutch Reformers also preached against various aspects of capitalism: "... through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we find a continual repetition of the prohibitions of usury issued by the synods of the Huguenots and by those of the Dutch Reformers, whose ethical code also condemned even excessive labour, as robbing time and energy from the service of God, and held action born of desire for gain to be a sign of madness".

Fanfani argues that capitalism as we know it today was born in the Italian merchant states under the religious umbrella of Catholicism, but he discounts the effect that religion of any kind had on the growth of capitalism as the major world economic system. He concludes his article by stating that "The creation of a new mentality in the economic field cannot therefore be considered as the work of Protestantism, or rather of any one religion, but it is a manifestation of that general revolution of thought' that characterizes the period of the Renaissance and the Reformation, by which in art, philosophy, morals, and economy, the individual emancipates ... himself from the bonds imposed on him during the Middle Ages” (Pierotti 2003).

In addition, it should be pointed out that Weber’s picture of Calvinism is one-sided, and thus incredible. It has a communal emphasis, after all and moreover, this observation has in fact more general relevance; both Weber and most supporters of his thesis downplay the role of-strange as it may seem-sociological, as opposed to religious, moral or ideological factors, in particular the specific character of closely knit communities in question by virtue of their strong social control over their members and thus capable of enforcing desirable behaviour) as well as an individual one.

One's duty was to Work in the world to establish God’s kingdom. This, as mentioned above, did not fit Weber’s theories, so he played it down. Nevertheless, to be fair, it is Weber who was the first to treat seriously the idea that individual ethics (really group ethics practiced by the individual) could have unanticipated macrostructural consequences.

All in all, though, it must be admitted that Weber did not prove that the Protestant ethic was a necessary (albeit not sufficient) cause of capitalism. One of such unintended consequence of the popularity of Weber’s work, which is in many cases superficially read, is the circumstance that most scholars (including many textbooks), think that “The Protestant Ethic” is “a disproof” of Marx. In Weber’s eyes, it was no such thing.

It is not for me to speak on Marx’s behalf, but what I can do is to present a very brief outline of the approach to the issue taken by socio-economic structuralism. As is repeatedly underlined in my publications, this theoretical position has nothing in common with any view that would deny that ideas and forms of social consciousness inclusive of religion can powerfully influence individual and collective action. The thing is that for such relationships to be investigated scientifically one must take into consideration two sets of circumstances:

firstly, to what degree an idea in question is itself conditioned by material, including economic conditions, and secondly how its influence on action is mediated by other societal structures and relations, not forgetting economic ones. It is only through such inquiry that one would be able to ultimately confirm or refute the famous Weberian thesis.

On the other hand, with the benefit of hindsight one can point to quite a few empirical cases of thriving capitalism on the grounds of non-Protestant religions, including those whose causal power in that regard were definitely rejected by Weber. Evidence casts doubt on Weber's (and other writers') association of managerial achievement motivation with the Protestant ethic of hard work. As the above-cited scholars argue, almost the exact opposite is true to the effect that managers and others with a high need for achievement seek to reduce their work by becoming more efficient, i.e. by obtaining the same result with less effort or in less time (McClelland & Burnham 1995). In this sense, the Protestant and any ethic of hard work, perhaps counter-intuitively, falls short of complete efficiency and rationality. This seems in part ironic given the much-celebrated impact of Protestant doctrines on the spirit and practice of modern capitalism at least since Weber (1933).

Furthermore, notably in the Anglo-saxon variety of capitalism, it is instant gratification rather than deferred gratification that constitutes the governing principle, and this refers both to corporate managers who not without reason are accused of short-termism, which applies both to their conduct of business and personal orientation (e.g. executive bonuses and stock options) and consumers whose high rates of spending underlie the prosperity of the economies concerned and whose reduction plunges them, as a rule, into recession.

To be sure, Weber's thesis has its defenders as well. One of them holds that "History shows us that in fact those nations which were predominantly Protestant showed economic growth much greater than those which were predominantly Catholic. Even Jacob Viner's argument that the repressive nature of Scottish Calvinism does not damage Weber, since he acknowledged that once a religion becomes a creature of the state it then tends to oppress people rather than free them" (Pierotti 2003).

However, recent studies (Collins 1997) definitely suggest that Protestantism was not the only factor in the historical emergence and expansion of capitalist production. In this view, such non-Protestant doctrines as Buddhism, especially its religious economy in the monasteries, played a significant historical role in the emergence as well as development of what is identified as the capitalist mode of production in Asia centuries ago. More frequently, researchers notice the strong effect of Confucianism on the nature and development of capitalist production in this region recently, with some attributing the rise of the East Asian economic tigers, including China, to this cultural pattern. For some of them, this East-Asian development model, just as that of Protestant Europe and America, re-actualizes the broader question as to what extent the economic and sociocultural features are causally linked (Berger and Hsiao 1993, 5). In comparative terms, the observed economic effect of Buddhism and Confucianism in Asia appears as an analogue to the much-celebrated impact of Protestantism on Western Europe and North America (Zafirovski 2002).

The above claim appears, however, to be too hastily constructed by analogy with Weber's famous thesis. Meanwhile, considering a bewildering gamut of varieties of religion (and political regime, for that matter) co-existing in this region of the world with economic progress (from the post-war Japanese economic miracle through rapid growth of Singapore, Indonesia, or South Korea to China and India's recent spectacular economic advancement), not to mention successful capitalisms of Ireland and Italy which are of course typical Catholic

countries, the point attributing to them a causal power becomes highly doubtful. The conventional wisdom also has it, let us add, that Poland, another Catholic country, is a case of the most successful capitalist transformation as far as Eastern Europe is concerned. The consideration of that view goes beyond the span of the present essay, but cf., e.g.: (Tittenbrun 2008, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2011a).

Primitive Accumulation

While in his account of capitalism as a mature socio-economic system Weber, as we have seen notably in the section on formal and substantive rationality, offers a rich, multifaceted analysis, "*The Protestant Ethic*" suggests, conversely, a biased, stylised picture of the emergence of this economic order. And it is much more limited, too, in particular in its class focus. An alternative, wider view of the spectrum of social classes, those movers and shakers of history, is provided by Marx's theory of primitive accumulation,¹³ subsequently developed and modified by a range of historians. To begin with, it is useful, however, to consider a critique of a faithful follower of Weber by the aforementioned Polish Marxist economist:

First, Weber's follower is cited:

According to him, Max Weber has shown," the functioning of capitalism requires of the masses a completely new ascetic attitude to the labour process," one which "cannot be achieved through a legal compulsion to labour in the form of serfdom". Accordingly, "it becomes necessary to supplement the legally established moral minimum with a religious or other form of normative moral maximum" (Borkenau, 152). This task, the argument runs further, is performed by Calvinism, which educates the masses in labour discipline. Which "masses" does Franz Borkenau mean when he speaks of the new "mass morality" and of a "completely new ascetic attitude of the masses towards the labour process?" The working masses come to mind. On occasion, Franz Borkenau states that "Calvinism (was) an instrument of mass domestication for the bourgeoisie" (169), that "religion is an indispensable means of mass domestication" (208). He speaks of the "compulsion for the labouring strata to adapt to capital" (161) and of the "new ascetic attitude". Borkenau's Marxist critic recalls that He speaks of the development of a new "mass morality" by which really means the emergence of a "capitalist morality" (160).

Grossman argues that "through its application to the working class, [Borkenau]'s characterization of Calvinism loses all meaning"; in the latter theorist's opinion, the doctrine of "inner-worldly asceticism", really refers to occupational asceticism. More important, the said description focuses on the situation of the craftsmen who were-as Borkenau says-the chief bearers of Calvinism. Although Borkenau is speaking of the origins of capitalist morality, his whole section on Calvinism shows that he tailors the problem of the new morality, Grossman points out, to this, as he calls it, craft stratum (153–70).

This problem of the new "mass" morality—totally borrowed by Borkenau from Weber—is only the logical and self-evident consequence of the theory, likewise taken from

¹³ The concept was initially named in different ways, and the expression of an "accumulation" which is at the origin of capitalism, began to appear with Adam Smith in book two of *Of the Nature, Accumulation, and Employment of Stock*. (1776): "... the accumulation of stock must, in the nature of things, be previous to the division of labour" Smith, in his English language *The Wealth of Nations* spoke of a "previous accumulation." Karl Marx, in the German language *Das Kapital*, reprised Smith's expression, translating it as *ursprünglich*, literally "original accumulation" or "primeval accumulation." Marx's translators rendered it back to English as "primitive," in German: *ursprüngliche Akkumulation*, literally "original accumulation" or "primeval."

Max Weber, that capitalism originated among the craftsmen, which, note, has been alluded to above.

For our purposes it is important what Grossman writes further about his intellectual opponent, that "The complete intellectual dependence of Borkenau on Weber is revealed in this formulation of the moral problem of the age, tailored to the craft stratum, as the fundamental problem of emerging capitalism". His opposition to Weber's thesis merely concerns details— what for Grossman controversially refers to Borkenau's polemics against Weber's attempt to formulate "a positive refutation of the materialist interpretation of history" (154) and against his idea "that capitalism was essentially conditioned by religion" (158). The Weberian interpretation, Borkenau shows, "is typical of the way in which the transformation of Marxist insights forces its way into non-Marxist science" (154). Again, whilst Weber's class theory, for instance, bears in fact a far-ranging resemblance to the Marxian framework, his theory of the origin of capitalism is marked rather by his emphasis on the alleged differences with the Marxian approach, and-as argued above-the performance matches the intention.

Grossman, though, is not convinced by this argument. He states: "whatever the validity of the objections that Borkenau raises regarding Weber's methodology (158), the contents of his own employment of it are typical of the way in which Weber's petit-bourgeois ideology forces its way, unchanged, into Marxist science".

Then Grossman asks what is largely a rhetorical question: "Wherein lies the difference between Weber and Borkenau? Both start from the taken-for-granted assumption that capitalism originated among the rising craftsmen, and that-together with the petty nobility-it was above all they who, "when their guild-life was shattered, became the chief bearers of the Calvinist religion in France, Holland and England (156)" (Grossman 1934).

The term "stratum", middle or whatever, is out of place in the context under consideration Both Borkenau and his commentator seem to restrict the notion of class to capitalism, as though the feudal economic formation of society were devoid of its own class structure. Accordingly, the latter pertained also to the feudal guild mode of production, its principal mode of non-agricultural economic activity:

The failure of the Weberian theory consists, according to Borkenau,(as interpreted by Grossman) precisely in the fact that Weber thinks that he has refuted the materialist interpretation of history through the establishment of this "fact." According to the "mechanistic thinking" of Max Weber, "the bearers of a logically consistent capitalist religion" ought to have been "the capitalistically most progressive stratum of the time" (158). Grossman reconstructs the thought of his opponent further: "If that were not the case, then the materialist conception of history is refuted. As the unsettled small craftsmen adopted the Calvinist work ethic in order to ensure victory for themselves "in the competitive struggle, through rationalised, limitless effort", it is demonstrated that "this Calvinist work ethic preceded its application to that capitalist labour process," that, therefore, "capitalism is essentially conditioned by religion" (158).

The critic whose counterargumentation we are tracing here, contends that "Borkenau accepts Weber's claims about actual events: "M. Weber's thesis that the capitalistic way of thinking of these strata preceded their capitalist way of life is thus correct" (157). Weber has "for the first time provided concrete and irrefutable proof of the connection between religious doctrines and economic action" (154)".

Grossman, however, believes that Weber's conclusions are wrong. The fact that non-capitalist strata are the bearers of capitalist ideology is no refutation of the Marxist conception of history. Rather, "the problem consists precisely in the investigation of "why these not yet capitalist strata adopted a 'capitalist ideology' (157)".

Grossman challenges the aforementioned follower of the German sociologist, but on fair terms: to his mind the upshot of Borkenau's analysis is that "The relationship between a religion and the class which bears it hardly ever takes the form of the religion expressing the true life-conditions of that class" (159). Then, Grossman puts forward his own view of the matter, beginning with distancing himself from what could be called a naive epiphenomenalism or extreme metaphysical determinism: "As a mere reflex, religion would indeed be meaningless. The function of new religions consists, as is the case with all ideological processes, of facilitating difficult social adaptations". Which position, however, smacks on its part of an equally problematic functionalism. He goes on to argue that "Calvinism is at first the denomination of non-capitalist groups which react to the capitalist process of decomposition with an adaptive shift" (157) and, by striving "to assert themselves in the context of a changing social totality, these groups direct their energy towards a way of life that is not yet at hand" (159). His further argument is even more interesting: "This means that they become 'increasingly bourgeoisified'" (157). The gist of Grossman's argument in the aspect under consideration is the claim that where the capitalist society does not yet function "automatically," [...] In such a society, "the norm of the capitalist labour-process can only be irrationalistic-religious" (162).

This summary of Borkenau's account, coupled with a critical analysis corroborates indeed that there is a whole chain of misunderstandings, inherent in it. The Polish Marxist concerned says rather cautiously that "however correct his polemic against Weber and the latter's supposed refutation of the materialist conception of history may be, it nevertheless shows that the issue here is not by a long chalk "the fundamental problem of emerging capitalism" and the latter's causation by religion, but concerns a remnant of earlier economic formations which stands outside the nexus of capitalism (capitalists/workers). It is a question, as Borkenau himself says elsewhere, of the "adaptation of the middle strata" (168) to the new mode of production. In other words, Calvinism is neither a question of the morality of the capitalists nor a mass morality, but—argues Grossman—a problem of petit bourgeois morality! "It is only in this connection that Calvinism acquired a meaningful significance, as the religion of the threatened middle stratum and as its doctrine of self-justification, the effort to succeed in a changing society by means of "limitless effort." Only in this connection does it become understandable why these non-capitalist strata accepted the typically petit bourgeois (and not, as Borkenau has it, 'capitalist') ideology of social ascent through limitless effort" (Grossman 1934).

Whilst his critical discussion has much to be said for it, it is clouded by Grossman's eclectic and inconsistent theoretical language. As repeatedly pointed out in other publications (cf. Tittenbrun 2016a, 2016b), the concept of stratum is inconsistent with the analytical framework Grossman is keen to employ, and the adjective "middle" makes it only clearer. The issue is important, since it exposes the existence of serious gaps in Grossman's understanding of Marxist class theory the relevance of which to his above-discussed argument is beyond any question.

Anyway, this does not necessarily mean that all his criticisms against Weber/Borkenau's framework should be dismissed:

"Calvinism had nothing at all to do with the origin and development of capitalism. Historically, this is apparent in the fact that the emergence of capitalism certainly lies much further back than Calvinism and the Reformation.[...] the bearers of the capitalist mode of production were neither the "aspiring Calvinist little people" (90), nor the "up-and-coming craftsmen" but those who accumulated large capital through trade and usury and who employed the proletarian elements that were being displaced by the decomposition of medieval organization in town and country. It was they who created in the putting-out system and later in manufacture what was, although on a craft basis, a superior economic form. Under pressure from this massive capitalist form of production, unhampered by guild regulations, backward, small-scale craft production, which suffered from lack of capital, could only be preserved 'by unlimited effort', that is, by an unlimited exploitation of the workers employed, such as has since become typical of craft production. This had nothing to do with 'rationalised' effort (1971, 161). One has rather to speak of an irrational, almost limitless waste of labour which is characteristic of petit-bourgeois morality" (Grossman 1934).

And again inconsistent with the theory of class, those "small producers" are not classified correctly as small capitalists, since the petty bourgeoisie (the autocephalous class) comprises only those who are self-employed, i.e. do not employ other people's labour power.

Again, this does not diminish the validity-consistent with some views cited earlier-of the position taking issue with the view that Calvinism or some related religious current did form a necessary precondition for the origins of capitalism and that the "creation of a capitalist mass morality" can only succeed on the basis of religious irrationalism" on the base of the historical fact that capitalism emerged two centuries earlier in Italy without any help from religious irrationalism, without the help of Calvinism! Borkenau himself calls Italy the land "of religious indifference," "of the most radical break with religious tradition" (101). The clear, rational, sober-minded spirit of the Florentines [...] brings us to the second characteristic feature of Borkenau's theory. Following Weber, he places exaggerated stress on the significance of Calvinism for the education of the masses in labour discipline and describes the new mass morality as a necessary precondition (169) for the emergence of capitalism. He also asserts that the functioning of capitalism made necessary a 'new ascetic attitude of the masses towards the labour process' (152). According to Grossman, such a view "follows directly in the footsteps of the petit bourgeois ideology of Max Weber, in which the history of emergent capitalism is an idyll. However, as Marx already showed, the "real history" of the educational methods used to instil labour discipline was "anything but idyllic". Whilst it is true that brutal, direct violence was the chief means used for compelling people to work, The advance of capitalist production, develops, however, according to Marx, a working class, which, by education, tradition and habit, looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as "self-evident natural laws" (1976 [1867]: 899). "The religious education of which Weber and Borkenau speak is only a part of the general capitalist education of which Marx speaks" (Grossman 1934).

The law of over-population that, according to Grossman, was an effective instrument of the aforementioned discipline should, to be sure, be understood in socio-economic rather than purely demographic terms- as "the reserve army of labour", or more precisely- labour force, whose size and the very presence result from the workings of capitalist economic system rather than some Malthusian population laws.

“The combined working of all these forces-and not just the religious education one-sidedly stressed by Weber and Borkenau-set the seal on the capitalist's domination of the worker” (Grossman 1934).

Grossman (1934) goes on to argue that:

However, it should be borne in mind that these “soft” means were insufficient in the period of capitalism's emergence, and the rising bourgeoisie still availed itself of “direct extra-economic force” to impose labour discipline (Marx 1967 [1867]: 899).

It is not the case-as Borkenau believes-that, with the disappearance of the traditional order of social estates, “a space emptied of law” arose (Borkenau, 152), which had to be filled by the new religious morality.[...] It was not through 'inner-worldly asceticism', not through Calvinist morality but through “Bloody legislation that the process of capitalist education to which the newly born proletariat had been subjected took place.

Seen in the light of historical facts Grossman points out, "the petit-bourgeois ideology he takes issue with " evaporates without a trace". Borkenau renounces “descriptive historical accounts” (xii). Precisely because he has devoted his chief attention to the French case, it is pertinent to present concrete historical material regarding France, argues Grossman, in order to show -he says ironically-how far in reality religious education in mass morality was created by “inner-worldly asceticism.”

The bloody legislation in England has been known since Marx's "*Capital*". However, in France, too, the mass of the agricultural population were dispossessed and condemned to “idleness” with the decomposition of the old feudal social order and the breakthrough of the commodity-money economy.

For instance, the edict of 1601 confirms the existence “of an incredible number of poor vagabonds” (Hauser 1927, 172). Fifteen ... years later, Montchrestien (1615) speaks of the “million poor people,” composed of “vagabonds, beggars, idlers, pickpockets, girls, women, children and unemployed workers who hang around all day and acquire the habits of all the vices of idleness”[...] As early as 1604, de Laffennas offered some suggestions for the “education” of the unemployed and youth to labour in public workhouses. “The means that he suggests to counter unemployment are not public assistance but the suppression of vagabondage. He [...] Laffennas's proposals are for the erection of two public workhouses in every city, one each for men and women. “This was forced labour, those dwelling in these charitable buildings were constrained to ‘labour’ by shackles and confinement” (Hauser 1927, 178).

This moving depiction of working conditions under this early capitalism highlights that the then workers differed from their counterparts under regular, fully-fledged capitalist conditions in that the former did not own their labour power, cannot freely dispose of it.

Together with the unemployed, criminals and public prostitutes, “abandoned infants” should also be educated in these buildings. Following the already existing practice of the Grande Aumône of Lyons and the “red children” of Paris, Laffennas wants the workhouse to make its pupils available to masters as that precious and rare commodity, apprentices (Hauser 1927, 178). “He was already uttering that terrible phrase: take the children” (Hauser 1927, 12). [...] M[ontchrestien] sees clearly that the money economy has completely undermined the feudal society with its old class structure and traditional morality, and that “private profit” has become the driving force of the new society. [...] With regret, he asserts that “in matters of profit there are not many people who remain loyal” (1615, 90). Worried by the alarming increase in anarchy, he turns to the King with the request that he prevent the impending

misfortune of the “corruption of our ancient discipline.” [...] With pathetic brutality, he describes the “do-nothings” and suggests measures that would compel the poor to labour, without burdening the state: “slothful stomachs, useless burdens on the earth, people born into the world solely to consume without producing! ... It is rightly against you that the authority of the magistrate must be deployed! It is against you that he must aim his just severity; it is for you that there are whips and canes.[...] In relation to this sort of people, one may justly employ violence[...] in a certain building which they call the workhouse (*Werkhuis*) where labour makes some new miracle every day”.

The word "miracle" bitterly contrast with the mundane conditions of exploitation to which those early pioneers the industrial working class have been subordinated-but the essential feature of this early phase of the capitalist economic formation is the combination of ruthless exploitation on a capitalistic basis with basically feudal methods of putting the then direct producers to work.

Yes, it was in France, this kingdom of high culture, high society and what have you that the following guidelines were formulated:

"One should already begin this education through forced labour in childhood, which means that the children of the poor must be locked up in compulsory workhouses, too". [...]

The edict of 1662 demanded [that] in every city and town buildings bearing the revealing name “general manufacturing hospital” (*hôpital général de manufacture*) should be found. A In fact, they had nothing at all to do with hospitals in the modern sense. “These sorts of establishments,” says Cilleuls, “had as their immediate aim the curbing of vagrancy, correcting by enforced labour the habits of idleness.” The operation of these methods was not to be confined to those compulsorily detained occupants of the institutions.

The rest of the “layabouts” were to be moved by the deterrent effect of these compulsory workhouses to take up labour voluntarily (Cilleuls 1898, 25).

"Prison, compulsory labour in chains, the over-exploitation of child labour, the extremely brutal misuse and waste of human lives-these were the means which marked the road to “the strictest rationalisation of labour” (Borkenau, 157) in the period of emergent manufacturing.

There were similar “manufactories” in the cities of England, Holland and Belgium. The Copenhagen prison bore the revealing name of “Spinhuis.”

That said, Grossman goes on to argue that: "once it is demonstrated that Calvinism did not have the function in the emergence of capitalism that M. Weber and Borkenau attribute to it, [...] the question nevertheless still remains of whether it played an especially important role, not in the advance of capitalism but rather in making its operation possible by means of “the ascetic attitude of the masses towards the labour process.” Thus, Grossman tries to do the best he can to do justice to the theory he is dealing with. The result: "even for this formulation of the thesis, however, Borkenau in his book neither offers historical documentation nor otherwise shows of what the “ascetic attitude of the masses to the labour process” consists. The doctrine of “ceaseless effort as a result of the lack of certainty of success in the capitalist competitive struggle” (176), tailored for the petite bourgeoisie, is not applicable to the working class. It was not even the specific doctrines of Calvinism which made it suitable for “keeping the masses obedient” (214) but rather the generally irrational presuppositions[...] Calvinism, just like every other religion, is an instrument for distracting the masses from the struggle for a rational structuring of their fate in life-an instrument of mass domestication. In the light of this conclusion, the Weberian thesis, which Borkenau accepts, of the special role

of the Protestant Ethic in the origins and development of capitalism appears as the legend that it really is. Specific religious currents in Catholicism, not only Jesuitism in the form of Molinism, which was aimed directly at securing the obedience of the masses, but also Jansenism, were in principle better suited than Protestantism to become an instrument of mass domestication" (Grossman 1934).

Thus, despite some inconsistencies of the above account as regards the volatile use of such terms as "classes," "strata," "groups" and "masses," it is clear that an approach to the emergence of capitalism in terms of preceding it with original accumulation makes it possible to present a far wider panorama of social classes and class struggles than the narrow Weberian conception, which concentrated on an ideational rather than economic structure, viewing their relationship in a rather problematic way at that. It is fair to say that the former approach, being more faithful to historical realities and much broader in scope than its alternative, considers not so much the economic efficacy of religion and work ethics as the economic function of the political structure, i.e. the state in relation to the economy at this early stage of capitalist development. Both those aspects are apparent in Marx's classic account of the process in question. In *Capital* (Vol. I, Chapter 26), Marx writes in his witty style, implicitly or indirectly pinpointing some weak points in Weberian theory:

... a primitive accumulation (previous accumulation of Adam Smith) preceding capitalistic accumulation; an accumulation not the result of the capitalistic mode of production, but its starting point ... plays in Political Economy about the same part as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote of the past. In times long gone by there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defence of property. M. Thiers, e.g. had the assurance to repeat it with all the solemnity of a statesman to the French people, once so *spirituel*. But as soon as the question of property crops up, it becomes a sacred duty to proclaim the intellectual food of the infant as the one thing fit for all ages and for all stages of development. In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part. In the tender annals of Political Economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and "labour" were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.

It is useful to clarify the theoretical content of the concept under consideration:

In themselves money and commodities are no more capital than are the means of production and of subsistence" . But their transformation into capital can only take place under certain circumstances, viz., that two very different kinds of commodity-possessors must come face to face and into contact; on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence, who are eager to increase the sum of values they possess, by buying other people's labour power; on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their

own labour power [...] Free labourers, in the double sense that neither they themselves form part and parcel of the means of production, as in the case of slaves, bondsmen, etc., nor do the means of production belong to them, as in the case of peasant-proprietors; they are, therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. With this polarization of the market for commodities, the fundamental conditions of capitalist production are given. The capitalist system presupposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realise their labour. As soon as capitalist production is once on its own legs, it not only maintains this separation, but reproduces it on a continually extending scale. The process, therefore, that clears the way for the capitalist system, can be none other than the process which takes away from the labourer the possession of his means of production; a process that transforms, on the one hand, the social means of subsistence and of production into capital, on the other, the immediate producers into wage labourers".

Well, it may seem surprising to many a reader that at this point we choose to take issue with some Marxian formulations. And yet, his framing of capitalist workers, or more broadly employees as the sellers of their labour power is arguably mistaken. Let's put aside the historical cases discussed below wherein any talk about anything like free exchange of the parties to the capitalistic work contract appear to be utterly misplaced. But in point of fact, this is the case in more general terms as well. Marx in that context fails to draw full conclusions from his own concept of ownership of the labour power. By the way, it is the fact that the concept plays a relatively minor role in the Marxian discourse; as does the entire notion of labour power, for that matter. Yes, there is a notion of value of labour power, some remarks on the relation between the value and the price of that specific commodity, but overall, as in many other cases, the topic is under-developed. Meanwhile, it could be argued that precisely from the standpoint of the ownership of labour power pertaining to the worker under the capitalist mode of economic activity (this is a broader notion than the mode of production, usually used, as neither commerce, nor finance or services, etc. are not production, that is, material production in any sense whatsoever. A critique of some conceptions of non-material labour, as developed by the so-called autonomist Marxist can be found in, inter alia, (Tittenbrun 2011b, 2016b). The point is there is a lot of difference between the slave and the capitalist worker. Compare the latter's situation as the alleged object of sale to that of any consumption good purchased by any customer. The latter, as a consequence of parting with some of her money, can deal with the good in question in any manner she wishes, or almost-barring the situations violating the law and the social order: she can eat the loaf of bread she has just bought, but she can also donate it to the needy beggar, and so on, or else the article may be thrown out to the bin or otherwise destroyed. Thus, the possessor of such a good is able to realise in relation to it all the functions conventionally attributed to ownership by orthodox property theories. Meanwhile, the relationship between the worker and the owner of the means of production, or any other means of economic activity, for that matter, is quite different. What is being purchased by the latter is the ability to dispose of the worker's capacity to work during a certain period of time, for a definite compensation. All the capitalist owner can do with what he has just bought is to allocate the worker to the process and means of production, make her execute certain definite tasks, and so on. But he cannot dispose of her labour power at will, cannot, for instance, exploit it as a source of satisfying his sexual desires, and so forth. For this to happen, the worker need be a slave. Which she precisely is not. This is the case because she is the owner of her labour power, and remains one even after the work contract has been signed by both parties. The

most vivid manifestation of that ownership is the fact that the worker is in a position to withdraw her labour power, e.g. through the strike or another kind of industrial action. She can also, being dissatisfied with the working conditions at the firm that currently employs her switch her employers, i.e. move to another firm. All this indicates, to my mind, that instead of sales one should frame the relation concerned in terms of lease. There is a parallel here between the landowner who leases out his land, or part thereof to the farmer who cannot, after all, build a house on it or plant a forest, or something. The contract envisages that he should cultivate, e.g. yeast for which use of the plot of land he must pay a rent to the landholder... This shows that the parallel works only so far; it is, after all, the worker who is being paid for her work by the owner of the means of production, and not the other way round. Or rather, this is thus in a typical modern situation, since historically, and even today, on the margin there appear cases in which the employee pays a definite sum of money for an access to a job. But the core of the matter is the ownership of labour power that is manifested empirically in some definite socio-economic relations and actions-the circumstance that is inconsistent with the theory according to which the worker sells her labour power (interestingly, bourgeois economists would essentially agree, only substituting the concept of labour as a factor of production for that of labour power, which is of course the only one representing a scientifically valid approach to the matter; there is no such a thing as the so-called 'labour market', the only commodity in that contest is the worker's labour power, as labour or work does not ontologically exist on the market-it will only appear in the context of the capitalist enterprise).

To return to the Marxian exposition, he asserts that:

The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the prehistoric stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it.

The economic structure of capitalist society has grown out of the economic structure of feudal society. The dissolution of the latter set free the elements of the former.

The immediate producer, the labourer, could only dispose of his own person after he had ceased to be attached to the soil and ceased to be the slave, serf, or bondsman of another. To become a free seller of labour power, who carries his commodity wherever he finds a market, he must further have escaped from the regime of the guilds, their rules for apprentices and journeymen, and the impediments of their labour regulations. Hence, the historical movement which changes the producers into wage-workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freedmen became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire.

Marx sketches out the background to this class war, which is worth recalling:

"The industrial capitalists, these new potentates, had on their part not only to displace the guild masters of handicrafts, but also the feudal lords, the possessors of the sources of wealth. In this respect, their conquest of social power appears as the fruit of a victorious struggle both against feudal lordship and its revolting prerogatives, and against the guilds and the fetters they laid on the free development of production and the free exploitation of man by man" (Marx 1977).

A recent supplement to Marx's theses has been contributed by Brenner (1996), who explains the transition from feudalism to capitalism in terms of:

the rise of a "capitalist aristocracy" which was presiding over an agricultural revolution. While the peasants possessed the means of production—land—the feudal class could appropriate part of their production only by juridical and political power, backed by force. The weakening of that power, as a result of peasant resistance, caused a crisis from which the feudal class recovered by shifting from claims to power over people to claims to power over land. Smaller holdings were consolidated into larger farms, which were cultivated not for subsistence but for the market, by means of wage labour. "Landlords entered into contractual relations with free, market-dependent commercial tenants (who increasingly hired wage workers) ... [...]"

Capitalism developed in England from the end of the medieval period by means of the self-transformation of the old structure, specifically the self-transformation of the landed classes" (Manning 1993).

In contrast to Brenner's focus upon the aristocrats transforming themselves from feudal lords to capitalist landowners, Dobb's (1964) focus was on small producers rising to become capitalists. Dobb followed closely the aforementioned Marxian chapter in Volume One of "Capital", wherein the first stage of the development of capitalism was the emergence of richer peasants who expanded their holdings and employed wage labour, so that "... at the close of the 16th century, England had a class of capitalist farmers ...". Also "... many small guild masters, and yet more independent petty artisans or even wage workers, developed into small capitalists; and later (extending by degrees the scale of the exploitation of wage labour, and thus extending accumulation) some of them developed into full-blown capitalists."

Dobb pointed to "the rise of relatively well-to-do peasant-farmers in the village," who, by taking advantage of local trade and local markets, accumulated small amounts of capital, improved their lands and enlarged their holdings, and hired the services of their poorer neighbours".

We do not want to appear overly pedantic, but the fact of the matter is that the term of services has been used in the above context in an incorrect manner. Paradoxically, what is at stake is in all likelihood material work that had been solicited by The aforementioned would-be candidates for capitalist farmers.

16th century "... saw a considerable growth of independent peasant farming by tenants [...] Dobb saw the point of transition as occurring when the "growth in the resources of the small man" became "sufficient to cause him to place greater reliance on the results of hired labour than on the work of himself and his family, and in his calculations to relate the gains of his enterprise to his capital rather than to his own exertions ...". Thus a capitalist class was born "from the ranks of production itself."

A similar process also took place, according to Dobb, in industry, as the next and most vital stage of the transition to capitalism. "... This final stage generally seems, as Marx pointed out, to have been associated with the rise from the ranks of the producers themselves of a capitalist element, half-manufacturer, half-merchant, which began to subordinate and to organise those very ranks from which it had so recently risen"-under the so-called putting out mode of production. The beginning of the 17th century witnessed the beginnings of an important shift in the centre of gravity ..." "the rise among the craftsmen of a richer, capitalist element who wished to invest their capital in the employment of other craftsmen and themselves to assume the role of merchant-employers [...] there had to be the developments

such as Dobb described if there were to be the developments such as Brenner describes, for there had to have come into existence, before the aristocracy could be transformed, richer peasants who could afford to lease the larger farms, and who had the capital to invest in wage labour and improving production. “The breakthrough from below of the yeomanry on the basis of petty capitalist accumulation,” as Colin Mooers says, “was a crucial intervening stage in the later development of large-scale capitalist farming.” Landlords were responding to changes taking place within the peasantry. Patricia Croot and David Parker comment that Brenner's 'concept of capitalist relations is too narrow and cannot do justice to the perhaps decisive role played by the small capitalist farmers at least from the early 16th to the mid-17th century. Dobb thought that before the revolution the ruling class was still by and large feudal in character, maintaining that “the majority of small tenants, although they paid a money rent (which was, however, more often a customary payment than an economic rent), were still largely tied in various ways and subordinated to manorial authority” and that labourers still often had some land and common rights and were not solely dependent on wages: “Social relations in the countryside between producers and their lords and masters retained much of their medieval character, and much of the integument at least of the feudal order remained.” In that earlier debate on the transition Hilton and Hill agreed with Dobb, Hilton saying that “... however important were the changes which gave free reign to the agricultural and industrial commodity producers, there was no transformation of the basic relations constituting the feudal mode of production,” and Hill saying that the partial emancipation of the petty-commodity mode of production does not in itself change the economic base of society (and still less the political superstructure), although it does prepare the conditions for the development of capitalism. Dobb added, however, that “... in many places the feudal integument was wearing very threadbare,” and though the form of exploitation of the petty mode had not shed its feudal form, it was “a degenerate and rapidly disintegrating form.” Those are rather bold assertions, and whether the focus is upon the aristocrats or the yeomen, there is a problem about how far capitalism had advanced by 1640, and whether the mode of production had changed. It is not just a question of how many peasants and artisans had become petty capitalists or how many landlords had become big capitalists, but also how far the poorer peasants and artisans had been reduced to the ranks of the proletariat. Capitalism presupposes the existence of a proletariat,” wrote Dobb, who stressed what Marx said on “Primary Accumulation”:

“... primary accumulation ... is nothing other than the historical process whereby the producer is divorced from the means of production. It assumes a 'primary' aspect because it belongs to the primary phase that is traversed immediately before the history of capitalism begins, immediately before the establishment of the method of production proper to capitalism.”

It could be added that Marx himself conceptualised this distinction in terms of the division between formal and material capitalist mode of production. The phrase 'formal' was to indicate that at a given stage capitalism had not yet generated its own industrial base, which occurs only with the machine-based mode of production-which in popular narratives is couched as the industrial revolution. Capitalism is formal because the immediate producer can at that stage change his classposition, he is not -in economic and material terms tied to the capitalist enterprise as such, i.e. is able to become an independent owner, be it a small one himself. However, when the worker's labour power comes to be reduced to a detailed one, the worker loses that capability. He is now the capitalist worker in the full sense of the word,

must acquire his means of subsistence by leasing out his labour power to one capitalist or another; it is generally impossible for him to become an owner at a par with the established capitalists.

It has to be pointed out that in his account of the transition Brenner leaves out industrial developments, which is problematic because if agrarian developments were transforming economic and social structures in some areas, so were industrial developments in others. This is shown in two recent books, one by David Levine and Keith Wrightson on the impact of coal mining on an agricultural community, and the other by David Rollison on the impact of clothmaking on a rural district before the revolution. It is a one sided view to focus on agrarian changes in the 16th and early 17th centuries to the exclusion of the contemporaneous restructuring of rural societies in a number of regions—economically, socially and intellectually—by the development of clothmaking, metalworking and mining. Brenner's concentration on the landowners, and to a lesser extent his focusing on merchants, do not permit him adequately to explain both the transition to capitalism and the English Revolution. Although he holds that the ruling class was already a capitalist class before the revolution, Brenner's theory of the transition cannot account for the revolution (e.g., he does not any inner conflict within his 'ruling class') whereas Dobb's can.

Dobb's thesis that capitalism in its revolutionary form developed from the ranks of the small producers allowed him to point out that the smaller gentry and rising yeomen 'were a most important driving force in the bourgeois revolution of the 17th century. Brenner's thesis, however, ignores industrial development before 1640 and so cannot explain why industrial districts—not all of them—provided a main base for the parliamentary and revolutionary parties. Dobb emphasised the development of industrial capitalism before 1640 and the parliamentarianism of industrial districts in the civil war. This is supported by modern research and, for example, Rollison says that without the manufacturing districts there would have been no effective parliamentary party in Gloucestershire.

Recall that manufacturing, as Marx claimed, was the dynamic element in the political field. The fact of the matter is, it alone made the kind of civil war which took place in the 1640s possible.

Brenner builds on Marx's stress on the role of colonisation in primitive accumulation, but Marx also "linked it to the proletarianisation of the masses: 'the veiled slavery of the European wage earners became the pedestal of unqualified slavery in the New World'" (Manning 1993)

Thus, it is fair to conclude that post-Marxian scholarship, while here and there enriching the general picture and filling in some gaps in Marx's analytical framework, has left it essentially unscathed.

So we can safely return to further claims put forward within the said framework:

The starting point of the development that gave rise to the wage labourer as well as to the capitalist, was the servitude of the labourer. The advance consisted in a change of form of this servitude, in the transformation of feudal exploitation into capitalist exploitation. To understand the process in question, one need not go back very far, according to Marx. The first beginnings of capitalist production took place as early as the 14th or 15th century, sporadically, in certain towns of the Mediterranean, the capitalistic era dates from the 16th century. Wherever it appears, the abolition of serfdom has been long effected.

Speaking about the history of primitive accumulation, Marx stresses its key revolutionary moments, acting as levers for the Janus-headed process of capital accumulation

by the nascent bourgeois class and The expropriation of the masses, wherein the dispossession of the agricultural producer, or of the peasant was the foundation of the entire process. The history of this ownership transformation takes a slightly different form in particular countries. "In England alone, which we take as our example, has it the classic form" (Marx 1967).

The above description of the class structure of the feudal economic formation of society shows, *inter alia*, its material classes in the form of agrarian holders of the means of production, including land, but deprived of ownership of their labour power (ascription to land in the classic case). Marx substantially enriches this picture as he continues his narrative in Chapter 27, supplementing, as he does, at the very outset, his outline of the feudal economic formation of society with an important peasant mode of production based on common property:

In England, serfdom had practically disappeared in the last part of the 14th century. The immense majority of the population consisted then, and to a still larger extent, in the 15th century, of free peasant proprietors, whatever was the feudal title under which their right of property was hidden. In the larger seignorial domains, the old bailiff, himself a serf, was displaced by the free farmer. The wage labourers of agriculture consisted partly of peasants, who utilised their leisure time by working on the large estates, partly of an independent special class of wage labourers, relatively and absolutely few in numbers. The latter also were practically at the same time peasant farmers, since, besides their wages, they had allotted to them arable land to the extent of 4 or more acres, together with their cottages. Besides they, with the rest of the peasants, enjoyed the usufruct of the common land, which gave pasture to their cattle, furnished them with timber, fire-wood, turf, etc. In all countries of Europe, feudal production is characterised by division of the soil amongst the greatest possible number of subfeudatories. The might of the feudal lord, like that of the sovereign, depended not on the length of his rent roll, but on the number of his subjects, and the latter depended on the number of peasant proprietors. Although, therefore, the English land, after the Norman Conquest, was distributed in gigantic baronies, one of which often included some 900 of the old Anglo-Saxon lordships, it was bestrewn with small peasant properties, only here and there interspersed with great seignorial domains.[...] The prelude of the revolution that laid the foundation of the capitalist mode of production, was played in the last third of the 15th, and the first decade of the 16th century. A mass of free proletarians was hurled on the labour market by the breaking-up of the bands of feudal retainers".

The great feudal lords created an incomparably larger proletariat, though, by the forcible driving of the peasantry from the land, to which the latter had the same feudal right as the lord himself, and by the usurpation of the common lands through the so-called enclosures. Marx states that "The petty proprietors who cultivated their own fields with their own hands, and enjoyed a modest competence ... then formed a much more important part of the nation than at present. If we may trust the best statistical writers of that age, not less than 160,000 proprietors who, with their families, must have made up more than a seventh of the whole population, derived their subsistence from little freehold estates. [...] the number of persons who tilled their own land was greater than the number of those who farmed the land of others." Even in the last third of the 17th century, 4/5 of the English people were agricultural.[...] We must never forget that even the serf was not only the owner, if but a tribute-paying owner, of the piece of land attached to his house, but also a co-possessor of the common land.

The process of forcible expropriation of the people-writes Marx-received in the 16th century a new and frightful impulse from the Reformation, and from the consequent colossal spoliation of the church property. The Catholic church was, at the time of the Reformation, feudal proprietor of a great part of the English land.

Thus, Marx appreciates the role of the Rformation in the rise of capitalism, but views it in different class and ownership terms than Weber:

"The suppression of the monasteries, etc., hurled their inmates into the proletariat. The estates of the church were to a large extent given away to rapacious royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens, who drove out, en masse, the hereditary sub-tenants and threw their holdings into one. The legally guaranteed property of the poorer folk in a part of the church's tithes was tacitly confiscated. [...] The property of the church formed the religious bulwark of the traditional conditions of landed property. With its fall these were no longer tenable".

Marx recalls that even in the last decade of the 17th century, the yeomanry, the class of independent peasants, were more numerous than the class of farmers". But about 1750, the yeomanry had disappeared, and so had, in the last decade of the 18th century, the last trace of the common land of the agricultural labourer.

Marx states that he leaves out of the picture the purely economic causes of the agricultural revolution and look at the process concerned merely in terms of the forcible means employed in the latter.

After the restoration of the Stuarts, the landed proprietors carried, by legal means, an act of usurpation, effected everywhere on the Continent without any legal formality. They abolished the feudal tenure of land, i.e., they got rid of all its obligations to the State, "indemnified" the State by taxes on the peasantry and the rest of the mass of the people, vindicated for themselves the rights of modern private property in estates to which they had only a feudal title, and, finally, passed those laws of settlement, which, mutatis mutandis, had the same effect on the English agricultural labourer, as the edict of the Tartar Boris Godunof on the Russian peasantry.

The "glorious Revolution" brought into power, along with William of Orange, the landlord and capitalist appropriators of surplus-value. They inaugurated the new era by practising on a colossal scale thefts of state lands, thefts that had been hitherto managed more modestly. These estates were given away, sold for a song, or even annexed to private estates by direct seizure. All this happened without the slightest observation of legal etiquette. The Crown lands thus fraudulently appropriated, together with the robbery of the Church estates, as far as these had not been lost again during the republican revolution, actually form the basis of the present-day princely domains of the English oligarchy.

This class war of massive proportions aimed at the establishment of new private property relations:

The bourgeoisie favoured the operation with the view, among others, to promoting free trade in land, to extending the domain of modern agriculture on the large farm-system, and to increasing their supply of the free agricultural proletarians ready to hand. Besides, the new landed aristocracy was the natural ally of the new bankocracy, of the newly-hatched haute finance, and of the large manufacturers,¹⁴ then depending on protective duties.

¹⁴ Thus, the aforementioned Brenner's thesis, hailed by many as absolutely innovative, upon closer scrutiny loses this supposed merit.

Given the whole buzz of bourgeois propaganda around the legality and legitimacy of the state in capitalism, it is worth bearing in mind that in the epoch under consideration, the law itself becomes the instrument of the theft of the people's land, though the large farmers make use of a range of independent methods of their own as well. The parliamentary form of the robbery, which deserves to be named the misuse or abuse of law, is that of Acts for enclosures of Commons, in other words, decrees by which the landlords grant themselves the people's land as private property, decrees of expropriation of the people. The reader's attention may be drawn on the figure of Sir F. M. Eden who tried to represent communal property as the private property¹⁵, expressing the interests of the great landlords who had taken the place of the feudal lords in demanding a "general Act of Parliament for the enclosure of Commons" (admitting thereby that a parliamentary coup d'état is necessary for its transformation into private property); and moreover called on the legislature for the indemnification for the expropriated poor.

If one wonders wherein one could find that thing called the Marxian class theory, the answer is that it is implied in his class/property analysis, such as the following: Whilst the place of the independent yeoman was taken by tenants at will, small farmers on yearly leases, a servile rabble dependent on the pleasure of the landlords, the systematic robbery of the Communal lands helped especially, next to the theft of the State domains, to swell those large farms, that were called in the 18th century capital farms or merchant farms, and to "set free" the agricultural population as proletarians for manufacturing industry

[...] From little occupiers of land, they are reduced to the state of day-labourers. [...]

The last process of wholesale expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil is, finally, the so-called clearing of estates, i.e. the sweeping men off them. [...] They conquered the field for capitalistic agriculture, made the soil part and parcel of capital, and created for the town industries the necessary supply of a 'free' and outlawed proletariat" (Marx 1967).

MARX'S approach, and the "spirit" of Protestantism

The following paragraph may be viewed as a direct polemic with Weber in the south of England certain landed proprietors and well-to-do farmers JOINED THEIR INTELLECTUAL POWERS and propounded ten questions as to the right interpretation of the poor-law of Elizabeth: "Question 9—Some of the more wealthy farmers in the parish have devised a skilful mode by which all the trouble of executing this Act (the 43rd of Elizabeth) might be avoided. They have proposed that we shall erect a prison in the parish, and then give notice to the neighbourhood, that if any persons are disposed to farm the poor of this parish, they do give in sealed proposals, on a certain day, of the lowest price at which they will take them off our hands; and that they will be authorised to refuse to any one unless he be shut up in the aforesaid prison."¹⁶ the abolition of the property of the agricultural

¹⁵As an author of a four-volume study on Poland's privatisation, and another one devoted to the privatisation process in general, the similarity of the latter as a method of primitive capitalist accumulation to those characteristics pinned down by Marx is striking.

³⁵ Marx notes that "When the steam-engine transplanted the factories from the country waterfalls to the middle of towns, the "abstemious" surplus-value maker found the child-material ready to his hand, without being forced to seek slaves from the workhouses. An intimate friend of Ricardo, said in the House of Commons: "It is notorious, that with a bankrupt's effects, a gang, if he might use the word, of these children had been put up to sale, and were advertised publicly as part of the property. A most atrocious instance had been brought before the

labourer in the soil made him a proletarian, and eventually a pauper.[...] Professor Rogers, although formerly Professor of Political Economy in the University of Oxford, the hotbed of Protestant orthodoxy, in his preface to the "History of Agriculture" lays stress on the fact of **the pauperisation of the mass of the people by the Reformation** (author's emphasis) [...].

Depopulation and transformation into sheep-walks were the most convenient means for getting an income without expenditure(which is, of course, the definition of rent that constitutes the substance of economic ownership-cf. (Tittenbrun 2011b). "A deer-forest in place of a sheep-walk was a common change in the Highlands. The landowners turned out the sheep as they once turned out the men from their estates, and welcomed the new tenants" (Marx 1967).

The devastating effects of the political legislature on the human side of the capitalistic equation are depicted in Chapter 28 of "*Capital*", whose detailed account allows us to grasp those class links in the transformation chain that are still missing:

The proletariat created by the breaking up of the bands of feudal retainers and by the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil, this "free" proletariat could not possibly be absorbed by the nascent manufactures as fast as it was thrown upon the world. On the other hand, these men, suddenly dragged from their wonted mode of life, could not as suddenly adapt themselves to the discipline of their new condition. They were turned en masse into beggars, robbers, vagabonds, partly from inclination, in most cases from stress of circumstances. Hence at the end of the 15th and during the whole of the 16th century, throughout Western Europe a bloody legislation against vagabondage. The fathers of the present working class were chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers. Legislation treated them as "voluntary" criminals, [...]

In England this legislation began under Henry VII [...] sturdy vagabonds[...] are to be tied to the cart-tail and whipped until the blood streams from their bodies, then to swear an oath to go back to their birthplace or to where they have lived the last three years and to "put themselves to labour." [...] In 27 Henry VIII. the former statute is repeated, but strengthened with new clauses. For the second arrest for vagabondage the whipping is to be repeated and half the ear sliced off; but for the third relapse the offender is to be executed as a hardened criminal and enemy of the common weal. Edward VI.: A statute of the first year of his reign, 1547, ordains that if anyone refuses to work, he shall be condemned as a slave to the person who has denounced him as an idler. The master shall feed his slave on bread and water, weak broth and such refuse meat as he thinks fit. He has the right to force him to do any work, no matter how disgusting, with whip and chains. If the slave is absent a fortnight, he is condemned to slavery for life and is to be branded on forehead or back with the letter S; if he runs away thrice, he is to be executed as a felon. The master can sell him, bequeath him, let him out on hire as a slave, just as any other personal chattel or cattle. If the slaves attempt anything against the masters, they are also to be executed. Justices of the peace, on information, are to hunt the rascals down. If it happens that a vagabond has been idling about for three days, he is to be taken to his birthplace, branded with a red-hot iron with the letter V on the breast and be set to work, in chains, in the streets or at some other labour. If the

Court of King's Bench two years before, in which a number of these boys, apprenticed by a parish in London to one manufacturer, had been transferred to another, and had been found by some benevolent persons in a state of absolute famine. Another case more horrible had come to his knowledge while on a (Parliamentary) Committee ... that not many years ago, an agreement had been made between a London parish and a Lancashire manufacturer, by which it was stipulated, that with every 20 sound children one idiot should be taken."

vagabond gives a false birthplace, he is then to become the slave for life of this place, of its inhabitants, or its corporation, and to be branded with an S. All persons have the right to take away the children of the vagabonds and to keep them as apprentices, the young men until the 24th year, the girls until the 20th. If they run away, they are to become up to this age the slaves of their masters, who can put them in irons, whip them, etc., if they like".

It is instructive to bear in mind what kind of development lies at the root of the most perfect of all politico-economical regimes, especially when its champions repeatedly talk about the horrors of the Stalinist mode of industrialisation, with its canals built by the slave labour force, and so on. This does not mean, needless to say, that one should turn oneself into a supporter of the Gulag Archipelago.

Every master may put an iron ring round the neck, arms or legs of his slave, by which to know him more easily and to be more certain of him. The last part of this statute provides, that certain poor people may be employed by a place or by persons, who are willing to give them food and drink and to find them work. This kind of parish slaves was kept (sic!: note: J.T.) up in England until far into the 19th century under the name of "roundsmen." [...]

These statutes were legally binding until the beginning of the 18th century. [...] Thus were the agricultural people, first forcibly expropriated from the soil, driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system.

This dramatic class narrative of capitalism's origins extend its class lens to include not only lumpenclasses (beggars etc.) but also, as it turns out, slaves, i.e. persons deprived of ownership in their labour power.

It is not enough that the conditions of labour are concentrated in a mass, in the shape of capital, at the one pole of society, while at the other are grouped masses of men, who have nothing to sell but their labour-power. Neither is it enough that they are compelled to sell it voluntarily. The advance of capitalist production develops a working class, which by education, tradition, habit, looks upon the conditions of that mode of production as self-evident laws of Nature.[...] The dull compulsion of economic relations completes the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist". Marx explains, as has been already noted above, that: "Direct force, outside economic conditions, is of course still used, but only exceptionally. In the ordinary run of things, the labourer can be left to the "natural laws of production," i.e., to his dependence on capital, a dependence springing from, and guaranteed in perpetuity by, the conditions of production themselves. It is otherwise during the historic genesis of capitalist production".

In theoretical terms, it should be mentioned, those Marxian remarks still do not conflict with the aforementioned Weberian distinction between the economic and the political; recall that Weber's fine-grained framework identifies, inter alia, such relationships as economically oriented political actions, which allows for an analysis of different mixed and at first bluishambiguous cases.

Anyway, Marx is certainly correct pointing out that the bourgeoisie, at its rise, wants and uses the power of the state to "regulate" wages, i.e., to force them within the limits suitable for surplus-value making, to lengthen the working-day and to keep the labourer himself in the normal degree of dependence. This is an essential element of the so-called primitive accumulation.

The class of wage labourers, which arose in the latter half of the 14th century, formed then and in the following century only a very small part of the population, well protected in its

position by the independent peasant proprietary in the country and the guild-organisation in the town. In country and town master and workmen stood close together socially. The subordination of labour to capital was only formal—i.e., the mode of production itself had as yet no specific capitalistic character. Variable capital preponderated greatly over constant. The demand for wage labour grew, therefore, rapidly with every accumulation of capital, whilst the supply of wage labour followed but slowly. [...]

Legislation on wage labour from the very outset, aimed at the exploitation of the labourer, and always equally hostile to him. English and French legislation [...] aim at compulsory extension of the working-day, which is linked to Marx's theory of two forms of surplus value, with absolute surplus value historically preceding the relative one.

Two points should be made at this juncture. Our class evolution is now complete—between post-feudal peasant classes and the capitalist working class stands the autocephalous¹⁷ (petty bourgeois) lumpen class, since to it that the above-mentioned robbers, pickpockets, vagabonds etc. belong. It should be clarified that the concept of the lumpeneconomy refers to what conventionally is called the underground, shadow or unofficial economy; its differentia specifica lying in it being restricted to the relations of private ownership: both of means of economic activity and labour power. This is another way of saying that a regular capitalist economy is a mixed one, wherein the nation as a whole—by the mediation of the state budget—is the shareholder; for taxation is at its root similar to the distribution of dividends by a capitalist corporation, to take but one example. This is the case because the essence of ownership is constituted by benefit, or more precisely by rent (cf. Tittenbrun 2011b). However, the lumpeneconomy is based on the tax evasion or avoidance, so the agents involved are engaged in the relations of pure private property, without any unwelcome public ingredients. And the lumpeneconomic structure, of course, begets a class structure of its own.

Naturally, the above general statement could be modified upon closer examination of particular cases, e.g. when gangs of criminals are concerned, individuals at the top may well occupy such a class position that is analogous to that of bourgeoisie rather than petty bourgeoisie, which implies that other, rank-and-file members of a gang are lumpenproletarians. Second, the guild mode of production ought to be described a little more precisely than it was by Marx. An important feature of that mode of production (or trade or services, for that matter) is that it has a built-in route of class advancement, i.e. those at the bottom of the hierarchy have a reasonable chance of reaching the status of a master. What is more, this blurring of class divisions was grounded in common ownership; an apprentice shared with his master the common fund of consumption or, in more plain terms, a table, which commensalism means precisely common property. In contradistinction to Marx, Weber probably would not have overlooked this proprietary character of the said mode of production given that he repeatedly used the term “commensalism.”

To return to the misfortunes of early-capitalist lumpen classes:

"A tariff of wages was fixed by law [...] It was forbidden, under pain of imprisonment, to pay higher wages than those fixed by the statute, but the taking of higher wages was more severely punished than the giving them", so in this instance, too, the bourgeois law does not lose out its sharp class edge. "So also in Sections 18 and 19 of the Statute of Apprentices of Elizabeth, ten days' imprisonment is decreed for him that pays the higher wages, but twenty-

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one day for him that receives them.) A statute of 1360 increased the penalties and authorised the masters to extort labour at the legal rate of wages by corporal punishment. All combinations, contracts, oaths, etc., by which masons and carpenters reciprocally bound themselves, were declared null and void. Coalition of the labourers is treated as a heinous crime from the 14th century to 1825, the year of the repeal of the laws against Trades' Unions". And it is well to bear in mind that similar restrictions still do hold today in relation to the working and employee classes in many countries, including those most developed.

The spirit of the Statute of Labourers of 1349 and of its offshoots comes out clearly in the fact, that indeed a maximum of wages is dictated by the State, but on no account a minimum, which, it seems, would be the dream of many a today's capitalist and his intellectual agent.

Marx's purpose is to give as objective a picture of the phenomena under consideration as possible:

"In the manufacturing period par excellence, the capitalist mode of production had become sufficiently strong to render legal regulation of wages as impracticable as it was unnecessary; but the ruling classes were unwilling in case of necessity to be without the weapons of the old arsenal. [...] Only in 1813, the laws for the regulation of wages were repealed. They were an absurd anomaly, since the capitalist regulated his factory by his private legislation

With the whole uniqueness of its proud history in which the progressive Revolution played a prominent part", Marx goes on to argue that: "the developments in the land of Rousseau and Voltaire were strikingly similar:

During the very first storms of the revolution, the French bourgeoisie dared to take away from the workers the right of association but just acquired. By a decree of June 14, 1791, they declared all coalition of the workers as "an attempt against liberty and the declaration of the rights of man," punishable by a fine of 500 livres, together with deprivation of the rights of an active citizen for one year. This law which, by means of State compulsion, confined the struggle between capital and labour within limits comfortable for capital, has outlived revolutions and changes of dynasties. Even the Reign of Terror left it untouched. It was but quite recently struck out of the Penal Code. Nothing is more characteristic than the pretext for this bourgeois coup d'état. "Granting," says Chapelier, the reporter of the Select Committee on this law, "that wages ought to be a little higher than they are, ... that they ought to be high enough for him that receives them, to be free from that state of absolute dependence due to the want of the necessaries of life, and which is almost that of slavery," yet the workers must not be allowed to come to any understanding about their own interests, nor to act in common and thereby lessen their "absolute dependence, which is almost that of slavery;" because, forsooth, in doing this they injure "the freedom of their cidevant masters, the present entrepreneurs," and because a coalition against the despotism of the quondam masters of the corporations is—guess what!—is a restoration of the corporations abolished by the French constitution" (Marx 1967).

The preceding "picturesque" account brings its author to the following key question:

"Now that we have considered the forcible creation of a class of outlawed proletarians, the bloody discipline that turned them into wage labourers, the disgraceful action of the State which employed the police to accelerate the accumulation of capital by increasing the degree of exploitation of labour, the question remains: whence came the capitalists originally? For the expropriation of the agricultural population creates, directly, none but the greatest landed

proprietors. As far, however, as concerns the genesis of the farmer, we can, so to say, put our hand on it, because it is a slow process evolving through many centuries. The serfs, as well as the free small proprietors, held land under very different tenures, and were therefore emancipated under very different economic conditions. In England the first form of the farmer is the bailiff, himself a serf. His position is similar to that of the old Roman villicus, only in a more limited sphere of action. During the second half of the 14th century he is replaced by a farmer, whom the landlord provided with seed, cattle and implements. His condition is not very different from that of the peasant. Only he exploits more wage labour. Soon he becomes a metayer, a half-farmer. He advances one part of the agricultural stock, the landlord the other. The two divide the total product in proportions determined by contract. This form quickly disappears in England, to give the place to the farmer proper, who makes his own capital breed by employing wage labourers, and pays a part of the surplus-product[...] to the landlord as rent. So long, during the 15th century, as the independent peasant and the farm-labourer working for himself as well as for wages, enriched themselves by their own labour, the circumstances of the farmer, and his field of production, were equally mediocre".

The Especially the initial portion of the above text could be mistaken for those of another theorist of great or expert knowledge in the field of economic history, i.e. Max Weber. However, not all of the later formulations are likely to be found in Weber's writings. Marx abides by his class-ownership standpoint stating that:

"agricultural revolution which commenced in the last third of the 15th century, and continued during almost the whole of the 16th (excepting, however, its last decade), enriched him just as speedily as it impoverished the mass of the agricultural people.

The usurpation of the common lands allowed him to augment greatly his stock of cattle, almost without cost, whilst they yielded him a richer supply of manure¹⁸ for the tillage of the soil. To this was added in the 16th century a very important element. At that time the contracts for farms ran for a long time, often for 99 years. The progressive fall in the value of the precious metals, and therefore of money, brought the farmers golden fruit.¹⁹ Apart from all the other circumstances discussed above, it lowered wages. A portion of the latter was now added to the profits of the farm. The continuous rise in the price of [...] all agricultural produce, swelled the money capital of the farm without any action on his part (which, again, forms a classical definition of rent as the core of economic ownership, whereas in the subsequent sentence the term has been used in a more specific sense referring to the kind of economic benefits due to the landowner by virtue of her land ownership in case the latter, or its part has been transformed into a semi-property of the tenant (semi-property because the tenant can enter into just one of the two basic relations composing ownership, i.e. she cannot sell or otherwise alienate and thereby monetise it).), whilst the rent he paid (being calculated on the old value of money) diminished in reality. Thus they grew rich at the expense both of their labourers and their landlords. No wonder, therefore, that England, at the end of the 16th century, had a class of capitalist farmers, rich, considering the circumstances of the time.

In France, the régisseur, steward, collector of dues for the feudal lords during the earlier part of the middle ages, soon became an homme d'affaires, who by extortion, cheating, etc., swindled himself into a capitalist. These régisseurs themselves were sometimes noblemen. [...] in all spheres of social life the lion's share falls to the middleman. In the economic domain, e.g., financiers, stock-exchange speculators, merchants, shopkeepers skim the cream.

¹⁸And again, note how well those two elements fit the rent theory of ownership.

¹⁹This colourful phrase refers, naturally, to economic ownership.

A counterpart to the capitalist farmer within the industrial bourgeois mode of production is, of course, the industrial capitalist whose genesis Marx sheds light on in Chapter 31 of *Capital*. His initial comment explains that “industrial here is meant in contradistinction to agricultural. In the ‘categoric’ sense the farmer is an industrial capitalist as much as the manufacturer” is unclear. It may well be that Marx here refers to standard official classification according to which manufacturing, farming, education, health care and even government are all ‘industries’.”

But another possibility remains, one that does not, to be sure, confound the economic with non-economic domain, but exposes Marx to a much more serious criticism. It appears as though he would not be able to take advantage of his own analytical framework in which, after all, the concept of property figures prominently. From the standpoint of economically conceived property, owners of agricultural, manufacturing and extractive means of production are by no means members of the same class. To be precise, they all belong to the capitalist megaclass but at the same time to three different capitalist classes owing to considerable differences in their respective objects of ownership. The full sense of this statement cannot be made clear here because of space limitations.

Marx contends that: The genesis of the industrial capitalist did not proceed in such a gradual way as that of the farmer. Doubtless many small guild-masters, and yet more independent small artisans, or even wage labourers, transformed themselves into small capitalists, and (by gradually extending exploitation of wage labour and corresponding accumulation) into full-blown capitalists. [...] The snail’s pace of this method corresponded in no wise with the commercial requirements of the new world market that the great discoveries of the end of the 15th century created. But the middle ages had handed down two distinct forms of capital, which mature in the most different economic social formations, and which before the era of the capitalist mode of production, are considered as capital *quand même* (all the same)—usurer’s capital and merchant’s capital”.

His further comments are even more insightful:

“At present, all the wealth of society goes first into the possession of the capitalist ... he pays the landowner his rent, the labourer his wages, the tax and tithes gatherer their claims, and keeps a large, indeed the largest, and a continually augmenting share, of the annual produce of labour for himself. The capitalist may now be said to be the first owner of all the wealth of the community, though no law has conferred on him the right to this property²⁰ ... this change has been effected by the taking of interest on capital ... and it is not a little curious that all the law-givers of Europe endeavoured to prevent this by statutes, viz., statutes against usury²¹ ... The power of the capitalist over all the wealth of the country is a complete change in the right of property, and by what law, or series of laws, was it effected?”²²

The money capital formed by means of usury and commerce was prevented from turning into industrial capital, in the country by the feudal constitution, in the towns by the guild organisation. These fetters vanished with the dissolution of feudal society, with the expropriation and partial eviction of the country population. The new manufactures were

²⁰And here, in contradistinction to the above-mentioned lapse, the author of *Capital* speaks truly economic-property language not conflating economic property relations with legal or moral rights.

²¹Marx adds that “even as late as 1794, the small cloth-makers of Leeds sent a deputation to Parliament, with a petition for a law to forbid any merchant from becoming a manufacturer.”

²²The author should have remembered that revolutions are not made by laws.

established at sea-ports, or at inland points beyond the control of the old municipalities and their guilds. Hence in England an embittered struggle of the corporate towns against these new industrial nurseries.

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.

These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation.[...]

In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But, they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hot-house fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power".

Again, it could be a matter of dispute which of the two theorists provides a conceptual tool kit that better captures the systemic transition under consideration. It is another matter that the pattern underlined by Marx applies equally to the case of transforming the so-called real socialism into capitalism, which in precise terms is a capitalist restoration. Be that as it may, the role of the state as the driving force of the process of privatisation and marketisation in Poland and other societies of Eastern /Central Europe is beyond question.

Marx would not let his reader to forget that:

"The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder, floated back to the mother-country and were there turned into capital. [...]

The public debt becomes one of the most powerful levers of primitive accumulation. As with the stroke of an enchanter's wand, it endows barren money with the power of breeding and thus turns it into capital, without the necessity of its exposing itself to the troubles and risks inseparable from its employment in industry or even in usury. The state creditors actually give nothing away, for the sum lent is transformed into public bonds, easily negotiable, which go on functioning in their hands just as so much hard cash would. But further, apart from the class of lazy annuitants²³ thus created, and from the improvised wealth of the financiers, middlemen between the government and the nation – as also apart from the tax-farmers, merchants, private manufacturers, to whom a good part of every national loan renders the service of a capital fallen from heaven – the national debt has given rise to joint-stock companies, to dealings in negotiable effects of all kinds, and to agiotage, in a word to stock-exchange gambling and the modern bankocracy".

There can be no denying that all those reservations pale into insignificance in comparison with the merits of Marx's unique pen as the historical materialist par excellence:

"With the national debt arose an international credit system, which often conceals one of the sources of primitive accumulation in this or that people. [...]

Colonial system, public debts, heavy taxes, protection, commercial wars, etc., these children of the true manufacturing period, increase gigantically during the infancy of Modern Industry. The birth of the latter is heralded by a great slaughter of the innocents. Like the

²³In fact, as mentioned above, it is not as simple as that. Marx fails to make the necessary distinction between savings and capital (there are several socio-economic criteria for differentiating between those, and [Tittenbrun 2011b] only capital holders may be classified as a class.).

royal navy, the factories were recruited by means of the press-gang. Blasé as Sir F. M. Eden is as to the horrors of the expropriation of the agricultural population from the soil, from the last third of the 15th century to his own time; with all the self-satisfaction with which he rejoices in this process, “essential” for establishing capitalistic agriculture and “the due proportion between arable and pasture land” — he does not show, however, the same economic insight in respect to the necessity of child-stealing and child-slavery for the transformation of manufacturing exploitation into factory exploitation, and the establishment of the “true relation” between capital and labour-power [...] to establish the “eternal laws of Nature” of the capitalist mode of production, to complete the process of separation between labourers and conditions of labour, to transform, at one pole, the social means of production and subsistence into capital, at the opposite pole, the mass of the population into wage labourers, into “free labouring poor,” that artificial product of modern society²⁴. If money, according to Augier, “comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek,” capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt [...] Capital eschews no profit, or very small profit, just as Nature was formerly said to abhor a vacuum. With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent. will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent. certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent., positive audacity; 100 per cent. will make it ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent., and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged. If turbulence and strife will bring a profit, it will freely encourage both. Smuggling and the slave-trade have amply proved all " (Marx 1967).

CONCLUSIONS

While Weber is, and rightly so, regarded as the founding father of modern sociology, including economic sociology, upon closer examination his famous work on the origins of capitalism displays some sociological and equally strange, considering his huge historical erudition, historical failings. It is fair to say that the narrative of primitive accumulation does justice to history more satisfactorily than Weber’s one-sided account.

Primitive Accumulation and Globalisation

There are some important ramifications to the central issue considered in the preceding part of the paper. Marx states that: “Expropriation is the starting-point of the capitalist mode of production, whose goal it is to carry it through to completion, and even in the last instance to expropriate all individuals (Marx 1981, 570–1). Indeed, contrary to what is commonly assumed, one should not relegate primitive accumulation to the pre-capitalistic past. As a matter of fact, the material in Part 8 of *Capital*, “The So-Called Primitive Accumulation,” does not appear to be very dissimilar from what is found in the previous chapter entitled “The

²⁴ Thus, it turns out that the contemporary buzzword “working poor” is no conceptual novelty; on the contrary, it is several centuries old; “The phrase, “labouring poor,” is found in English legislation from the moment when the class of wage labourers becomes noticeable. This term is used in opposition, on the one hand, to the “idle poor,” beggars, etc., on the other to those labourers, who, pigeons not yet plucked, are still possessors of their own means of labour. From the Statute Book it passed into Political Economy, and was handed down by Culpeper, J. Child, etc., to Adam Smith and Eden. After this, one can judge of the good faith of the “execrable political cant-monger,” Edmund Burke, when he called the expression, “labouring poor,”—“execrable political cant.” (Marx 1967).

General Theory of Capitalist Accumulation." Furthermore, when Marx's study of primitive accumulation finally reaches the subject of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, Marx does not in fact qualify his appreciation of the father of modern colonial theory by limiting its relevance to the specific socio-historical time-space—thanks to his work the notion is usually linked. Quite the contrary, he holds that Wakefield offered significant insights into the England where Marx lived and worked. (Marx 1977, 940; see also Marx 1853, 498)

No matter, though, what Marx's views on the question of temporal location of the process of primitive accumulation eventually were, what is crucial in this regard is not Marx's authority, undisputable as it is, but the historico-sociological facts. And the fact of the matter is that the separation of people from their traditional means of production did not end with the developments described by Marx under the rubric of primitive accumulation. Conversely, it occurred over time as capital gradually required additional workers to join the labour force.

¹ In my multi-volume work on Poland's privatisation (1998) I have demonstrated it to be a side effect of the privatisation process, an advantage of which—from the standpoint of the authorities—has been the weakening of workers' resistance.

¹ From the perspective of socio-economic structuralism, however, the most crucial facts lying behind this claim, as reported below, should be interpreted differently: Comparing the average annual increases in earnings in the USA, Japan, Germany, the UK and Sweden since 1960, a picture emerges of a high degree of wage standardization in manufacturing. The overall differences in wage developments between the countries in 1989–95 are less than half the figures for 1960–1979, and substantially lower than in the 1980s. To an extent the trend towards wage standardization in manufacturing may be explained by reference to the intensified competition between national economies.

What seems to be more important is that wage negotiations in Europe as well as in North America and Asia are increasingly coupled to global wage standards at the level of firms, sectors and nations. Employers and trade unions use international industrial statistics and trend extrapolations in conjunction with national and local negotiations. Employers as well as trade unions are trying to legitimize their bargaining demands by referring to the situation in other countries. A good illustration of how cross-country comparisons may influence national wage negotiations is provided by the 1999 collective bargaining round in Germany. Employer federations rejected union wage claims based on internationally high wage costs. IG Metall argued that they have a special responsibility as "trend setters" in other European countries.

The outcome of these negotiations between IG Metall and the German employers has had a clear impact in terms of setting the negotiation standards for smaller economies such as Sweden whose representatives from the LO were even invited as observers to the negotiations between IG Metall and the German Metal Employers in 1999.

In most cases wage standardization of the kind reported above, is a more implicit process. That this kind of standardization may also be formally institutionalized is illustrated by the Belgian "Law of Competitiveness" 1997–1998, enacting a legal wage norm based on average wage increases in France, Germany and the Netherlands (Eironline 1999). Overall, trade unions seem to have become more active than employer federations in terms of adopting strategies aimed at improving cross-national co-operation in wage bargaining issues. However, it is reasonable to assume that the relative importance of European wage bargaining standards will increase with a view to improving national competitiveness. Similar strategies and attempts to set standards for wage negotiations are also to be found in the USA (cf. The

Bureau of National Affairs 1998). At the level of individual employers it seems that a number of multinational companies are trying to work out joint or similar bargaining objectives in their countries of interest.

At the national level we may observe a high degree of synchronization in hourly earnings within industrial production ever since the 1960s. What appeared as relatively large differences in annual wage increases between some highly developed capitalist economies prior to 1989 reveal at once relatively small differences within countries.

Thus far, there are no indications of a qualitative break and a restructuring of wages according to pure market criteria. (Hass & Leiufrud 2002)

These trends testify to the formation of international and cross-national ownership of labour power.

From a slightly different viewpoint, it could be argued that the process of primitive accumulation is a matter of degree. As a matter of fact, an all out primitive accumulation would not be in the best interest of capital. Instead, capital would manipulate the extent to which workers relied on self-provisioning in order to maximize its advantage As will be seen, the issue at stake directly refers to the famous Rosa Luxembour's critique of the Marxian schemes of reproduction as not providing for the external markets whose necessity for the very survival of the capitalist mode of production was stressed by the author of "The Accumulation of Capital". However, one of gaps in Luxembour's argument is the omission of internal markets which capitalism creates for its own needs.

Anyway, the continuity²⁵ of primary accumulation contrasts with its conventional image as the one-time destruction of the peasant economy, the immediate effect of which was to create a society with capitalists on the one side and workers on the other. This typical understanding is perhaps understandable, but misleading. Indeed, it should be borne in mind that whilst on the eve of capitalism, the majority of people were peasants or at least had some connection with farming, but "primitive accumulation was not limited to agriculture. It extended across many, if not all, sectors of the economy" (Berg 1986:70), occurring in the city as well as in the countryside. After all, urban people provide for themselves directly in a multitude of ways other than the growing of food. The point is that depriving people of these means of provision ensures a greater dependence on the market just as surely as restricting their access to the means of food production.

Take a relatively modern example. Packing people into crowded urban quarters leaves little space for doing the laundry, and as a result, people become dependent upon commercial laundries.²⁶ In post-World War II United States, the ability of the typical family to produce for its own needs continued to diminish, despite the widespread availability of household appliances such as washing machines that should make many types of self-provisioning much easier. In our terms, this process should be interpreted as the shrinking of the area of quasi-work being squeezed out by Labour for wage taking place within the commercial sector of the economy.

Similarly, Paul Sweezy thinks that Japan's vast entertainment sector can be considered a partial result of living in such small quarters that people are unable to socialise in their homes (1980:13). The need to purchase such services creates by the same token substantial pressures

²⁵ Some portions of the text in this section draw on De Angelis (1999).

²⁶ It has to be pointed out that from the standpoint of socio-economic structuralism, this example concerns indirectly material work rather than so-called services which term has its specific meaning in the analytical framework of the above-mentioned theory.

to lease more labour. The impact of such pressures has surfaced in the recent increase in numbers of women in the labour force. Gabriel Kolko calculates that the share of life years available for wage labour for the average adult has increased from 39% in 1900 to 44.4% in 1970, despite rising education, child labour laws, and a shorter work week (Kolko 1978, 267). Since that time, work has demanded a rapidly escalating share of the typical family's time. (Schor 1991)

And the fact is that this process can feed on itself. Because people have to earn more wages to compensate for the increased difficulty of providing for their own needs, they have less time to do other sorts of work on their own, inducing families to transfer still more activities from the household to the commercial sector. Child care centres are an obvious example of this process. In addition, the prosperity and commercial success of fast-food industry is predicated on the difficulty of working at a job and performing a multitude of other chores in the same day.

The foregoing discussion suggests that wage labour and nonwage labour (which are the terms often employed in the literature) or, from the viewpoint of socio-economic structuralism, quasi-work, are inextricably linked. The analysis of the one category necessitates consideration of the other. The reader may be forgiven if the sheer number of modern-day examples of goods and services that were once produced within the household, which became commodities²⁷ and are sold by commercial firms, comes as a surprise. This new arrangement is related, at least in part, to the pattern of ownership of the means of creating these goods and services in the household. The lack of ownership of a workspace for doing laundry may be likened to the lack of ownership of the parcel of land on which a household once grew its own food, insofar as the latter produced only for satisfaction of its members' needs. For goods produced for sale are private rather than personal property, as in the former case, which converts quasi-work from the former example into regular work. At any rate, in either case, the denial of ownership to a particular means of production creates a change in the mix of work and q

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