I. Max Weber

1. Social Context

1. unification

2. political conflict

3. WWI

1. Theoretical Assumptions
   1. Positivism

a. no laws of cause and effect

b. empiricism not adequate for understanding human world

2. History

a. not universal

b. not social evolution (stages)

c. societies: unique cultural and social formations

3. Method

a. interpretation

i. meaning to individual actors

ii. importance of world view

b. study of history: complex of relationships between ideas and material forces

c. ideal types

i. theoretical construct

ii. ex: capitalist entrepreneur

4. Reason

1. different types of reason: rationality

i. value rationality

ii. affective rationality

iii.traditional rationality

1. dominant type: instrumental rationality
2. dystopian

II. Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

A. Subject: cultural factors for the emergence of capitalism

B. Goal: explain rise of capitalism

1. contra Marx

2. western society: unique (causes) preconditions

C. Assumptions:

1. Marx’s explanation not adequate
2. conditions existed in other societies but no capitalism

3. “spirit of capitalism” necessary precondition to capitalism:

a. individual rational pursuit of the accumulation of wealth

b. ethic: “this-worldly” asceticism

i. attitude that seeks profit rationally and systematically

ii. avoidance of pleasure

iii. “time is money”, “be frugal,”

iv. duty: increase wealth ceaselessly

D. Argument

1. Protestantism and rise of Protestant Ethic was the unique historical

condition that explains the “spirit of capitalism”

2. Protestantism created anxiety

a. eliminated the priest as mediator between the individual and god

b. substituted the justification by faith for justification by works

c. introduced idea of predestination

i. salvation for the few

ii. salvation predetermined

d. anxiety: who is saved? And would one know?

e. sign: this worldly success

3. Protestant ethic

a. work: “religious vocation”

b. success: salvation

c. not consumption: “this worldly asceticism”

1. Consequences:

a. spirit of capitalism

b. justification: ruthless pursuit of profit is moral

c. compliant work force: “work ethic”

d. legitimated inequality

III. Weber and Enlightenment

A. Rationalization

1. All aspects of western society becoming more rationalized

a. institutions

b. culture

c. social interactions

2. Def: social organization based on instrumental rationality

a. most efficient means to achieved desired ends

b. aka technological or formal

3. Characteristics

a. efficiency

b. calculability

c. predictability

d. control

4. Social action: instrumental rationality

B. “Ideal type” bureaucracy

1. hierarchical

a. impersonal exercise of authority

b. authority: rational-legal (vs traditional or charismatic)

2. general rules and regulations

3. offices

a. defined by function

b. authority with office

c. limited sphere of competence

4. positions require expertise

5. extensive record keeping

D. Irrationality of Rationality

1. Obvious

a. red tape

b. self-perpetuating

c. unfreedom

2. Dehumanization

a. eliminates the unique

b. those being processed: number

c. bureaucrat: small cog. . .prescribed behavior

3. Anti-democratic

a. authoritarian personality

i. obedience

ii. respect for authority

iii. Milgram: obedience and authority

b. eliminates critical thinking/imagination/uniqueness

c. creates passivity

1. Rationalization, Bureaucratization and the Holocaust
   1. efficiency, predictability, calculability, control

b. Wannsee Conference: Fordism

1. deportation to transportation to extermination

d. “banality of evil”

IV. McDonaldization of Society

1. George Ritzer: amplification and extension
2. Model of Rationalization
   1. fast food industry
   2. Fordism to food processing

a. Big Macs

b. fries

1. Four characteristics

1. Efficiency

1. Calculability
2. Predictability (standardization)
3. Control: non human technology
4. Process

1. Production

a. monocrop farming: crops

b. factory farming: animals

c. meat processing

i. concentration

ii. disassembly line

2. Transportation

3. Store

a. non human technology

b. assembly line

E. Irrationality of Fast Foods

1. Environment

a. monocrop farming

i. loss of top soil: 24-26 billion tons

ii. chemical pollution

iii. siltation/ dead zones

b. factory farming

i. ground water pollution

ii. overuse of anti-biotics

iii. air pollution

iv. black flies

c. meat processing

i. contaminated food

ii. chemicals

d. store

D. Wal\*Mart: rationalization of retail