

Professor Elliott

Sociology 105

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Weber's *The Spirit of Capitalism and the Iron Cage* argues that the religious ideas of Protestant groups played a role in creating the spirit of capitalism. Protestants believed that saving money and being frugal was the pathway to heaven. He particularly focuses on Calvinism and relates to Benjamin Franklin's autobiography where the former president states that his Calvinistic father drummed into him the Bible quote, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings" (Prov. xxii. 29.) Weber also expresses that man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of life.

Karl Marx's *Estranged Labour* discusses alienation and states that commodities can be fetishes. "The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and range. The worker becomes a never cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of things precedes in direct proportion the devaluation of the world of men. Labor produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity and does so in the proportion in which it produces commodities generally."

I believe that both readings illustrate something about modern life that makes sense to me. Every day, people work themselves to the bone and for the majority of their lives in order to acquire money, and the majority of the time, the fruits of their labor don't feel like a product of themselves. I have been very fortunate and have not yet experienced this in my young life but I have known, met, and observed others who experience(d) this.

For example, after Hurricane Florence, my house was under construction for a year. During that period, I met a lovely construction worker named Sandro. He was funny and an amazing conversationalist. I got to know him very well and that is mostly due to the fact that he

before I would even wake up and leave right around dinner. He expressed that it was tough to always be working during daylight hours and have to sacrifice time with his wife and son but his work was in order to provide for his family. In the end, everyone has to work in order to live. Sadly, although he constructs buildings day in and day out, it is never to attain the final product but to attain money. He doesn't construct for his own fulfillment, but to be able to provide.