

EX CONTINGENTE NECESSARIUM or A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF  
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WEBER AND MARX

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## ABSTRACT

### *EX CONTINGENTE NECESSARIUM* Or A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WEBER AND MARX

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Max Weber and Karl Marx have been compared in various ways, especially since Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was first published in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The general claim was that their perspectives are completely different from each other. With the analysis of Protestant Ethic, they claim, Weber came up with a negative answer to Marx in terms of his analysis of the relationship between society and economy. However, in this study it is indicated that Weber's analyses were in close proximity with those of Marx's and these similarities can be seen in Weber's both early and late period works such as "The Social Causes of the Decline of Ancient Civilization", *Economy and Society* and *General Economic History*. Weber's approach in this all corpus can be considered to be "a quasi Marxist perspective". In these texts, he refers widely to Marx and elaborates the factors which he thought Marx had excluded from his analysis. Although he accused Marx of using a one-sided causal interpretation of history, Weber's approach in relation to Marx has close parallels with historical materialism.

**Keywords:** Max Weber, Karl Marx, Early and Late Period Weber, Weber as a Quasi Marx, Capitalism.

## ÖZ

### *EX CONTINGENTE NECESSARIUM* (RASTLANTIDAN ZORUNLULUĞA) YA DA WEBER VE MARX ARASINDAKİ BAĞLANTININ FELSEFİ BİR ANALİZİ

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Max Weber'in *Protestan Etik ve Kapitalizm'in Ruh'u*'nun ilk kez yayınlandığı 20.yy.'ın başından bu yana çoğunlukla Weber ve Karl Marx çeşitli şekillerde karşılaştırılmaktadır. Genellikle onların perspektiflerinin birbirlerinden bütünüyle farklı olduğu iddia edilmektedir. *Protestan Etik* analizleri aracılığıyla Weber'in, toplum ve ekonomi arasındaki çözümlemeleri açısından Marx'a karşı bir cevap olduğu iddia edilir. Ancak bu çalışmada, Weber'in çözümlemelerinin, Marx'ınkilerle büyük bir yakınlık gösterdiğine işaret edilmektedir ve bu benzerlikler "Antik Uygarlıkların Çözülüşü'nün Toplumsal Sebepleri", *Ekonomi ve Toplum* ve *Genel Ekonomi Tarihi* gibi hem erken hem de geç dönem Weber çalışmalarında görülebilir. Onun bütün bu külliyatındaki yaklaşımı, "bir Marksist benzeri" perspektif olarak dikkate alınabilir. Bu metinlerde Weber, Marx'a sayısız göndermeler yapar ve onun analizlerinde boş bıraktığını düşündüğü faktörleri ayrıntılandırır. Weber, tarihin tek yönlü sebepsel yorumlamasını kullandığı için Marx'ı suçlasa da; onun Marx'a yaklaşımı tarihsel materyalizme yakın paralellikler taşımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Max Weber, Karl Marx, Erken ve Geç Dönem Weber, Bir Marx benzeri olarak Weber, Kapitalizm

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I wish hereby to thank all my friends and colleagues in the Department of Philosophy at Middle East Technical University and Kastamonu University. Furthermore, special thanks to Kerziban.

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*Dedicated to My grandfather, an honoured member of  
Turkish Working Class, “Temel Reis”,  
And to whom I owe all my intellectual passions  
And my life, My beautiful mum.*

*“They have merely interpreted Marxism in various ways,  
The point, however, is to change it.”*

Karl Raymond Popper  
(Objective Knowledge, An Evolutionary Approach)



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# **CHAPTER I**

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION**

### **1.1. The Starting Point and A Study Proposal**

The main aim of this investigation is to attempt to compare two great social philosophers modestly. However, this attempt is not only a stereotypical or routine comparison, but an endeavour to eliminate an inaccurate and deficient assumption. Its aim is to conclude a so-called hostility that has two sides: Max Weber (1864-1920) and Karl Marx (1818-1883).

There are several reasons why this comparison was chosen as a master dissertation. Contrary to the frequent discussions that were held on the relation between Weber and Marx in the context of their reciprocal antinomy so far, I tried to display especially some crucial points on where their ideas met with each other's. Therefore, rather than the word "relation", I find the word "connection" to be more appropriate for the titles of my study. In order to facilitate this discussion, it would be better to begin with what I mean with the terms such as "connection."

These two critical thinkers have been extensively depicted in an inadequate picture since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, I shall argue, so they were presented as two theorists who have nothing to do with each other, except their common study subject, which is capitalism. What is more, they are labelled as contradictory thinkers because of that their analyses of capitalism have been perceived as incompatible with each other. As a result of this extensive scene, the comparative works that are based on the commonalities or the similarities between Marx and Weber are rarely seen in the literature. In this sense, this work, on the one hand, may contribute in filling some gaps in this area in a modest way, and on the other hand, it may provide a possibility to bring Weber and Marx together. Moreover, it

may raise the awareness regarding Weber's connection to Marx. As a result, my primary purpose will be to connect Weber with Marx, because the conclusion will be that Weber generally represents "a quasi Marxist perspective", or he has some similarities to Marx in his general approach.

Of course, several troubles were experienced in the representation of Weber's connection with Marx, that is, both have a comprehensive and detailed perspective which is quite challenging to cope with. In addition to this problem, the job of finding secondary literatures that are essential to express and reinforce my claims was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Yet, after a certain point, instead of striving to find secondary sources, I realized that I could discover the materials I was looking for in Weber's and Marx's own writings, and this realization saved me from limiting my study with secondary sources alone.

Before I begin to this fascinating discussion, I will set out with the contemporary reflections of these two great thinkers on the academic and political fields of the 20<sup>th</sup> century globe. In this way, both the differences that lie behind Weber's and Marx's claims which were explained with reference to the conditions of their life period and the way in which the followers of these two thinkers approach one another will be revealed.

This study consists of six chapters along with this introduction and the conclusion chapter at the end. In chapter two, I will try to give a brief summary of Weber's *Protestant Ethic* and its relation with Marx's general views, and the consequences that lead this so-called hostility. In this context, I will try to underline that Marx's statements on Protestantism, indeed, overlaps with these of Weber.

In chapter three, I will try to explicate that in his early years of philosophizing Weber was in a search for a way that would save him from making statements that resemble the idealist elements in his *Protestant Ethics*. I will attempt to demonstrate convincingly that in his early works Weber's narrations on Antiquity go along with

those of Marx's in their widest sense. I believe that it would be worthwhile to see how Weber initially approaches historical materialism in his analysis on Antiquate. Also, Weber's notion of class on his ancient texts, I will argue, overlaps with Marx's historical materialism.

Chapter four will focus on the late period Weber and his *Economy and Society* and *General Economic History*. The latter can be considered to be one of the most substantial exhibitions of Weber's mature system. I will try to clarify the affinities between the concepts of rationality and alienation which play an important role in Weber's and Marx's theory of capitalism and I believe that it is still a considerably interesting discussion in social sciences. Furthermore, the discussions on base/superstructure in the Marxian sense and Weber's view on them are other issues that I will point out in this chapter. On the other hand, Weber's relation with his own early and late period will be further illuminated as well as the connection between Weber and Marx.

And finally, in chapter five, I will deal with the problem of methodology. As is known, Marx never wrote a methodological work; instead, scattered references exist throughout his extensive corpus, but Weber developed a formal theory of methodology. Therefore when I was dealing with this issue, this situation caused a disadvantage in comparing Weber's position with Marx's approach.

## **1.2. A Reminder: The Reflections of the Tension in Academia and Political Arena**

As stated above, when a discussion about Weber and Marxism is in question, the first thing that comes to people's minds is that Weber was not sympathetic towards Marxism; at least in his writings on the sociology of religion. This perception, however, have been originating from exaggerated discussions on political Marxism. For example, although Weber in his lifetime was not hostile to (German) Social

Democratic Party (SDP), he continuously reacted to SDP's way of understanding Marxism which was based on the oversimplification of history and of contemporary society.<sup>1</sup> Weber in his entire life admiringly respected Marx as a thinker, but he also considered the Marxism of his time as "a nonsense theory by reason of its exaggerated economism."<sup>2</sup> It is enough to maintain that Weber generally seems to avoid the strictly economic interpretation. For him, "the 'one-sidedness' and unreality of purely economic interpretation of history is in general only special case of a principle which is generally valid for the scientific knowledge of cultural reality."<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, Weber in fact is against one-sidedness, but somewhere else, when he advertises a new review in which he writes, he says that the *advancement of the economic interpretation of history* is one of the most important aims of our journal<sup>4</sup> (I will also be concerned with this dispute in chapter 5). On the other hand, in spite of Weber's rejection to the one-sidedness of interpretation of history, he is still perceived as a thinker who claims that a religious movement is a *causa sui* for the development of capitalism, and he is accused of being a one-sided spiritualist.

Another issue is Weber's relation to Marxism and his views about real socialism; accordingly, he often criticized real socialism and said, "I will not join this sort of church"<sup>5</sup>, and he also underestimates the Soviet Union because of its highly bureaucratised state apparatus. In this sense, we can clearly say that the real socialism of his life did not have a positive effect on Weber's perception. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Kilcullen, John. (1996). *Reading Guide: Max Weber*. Macquarie University (Modern Political Theory Course Notes) p.1

<sup>2</sup> See, Forte, Juan Muel. (2008). "Religion and Capitalism: Weber, Marx and the materialist controversy." *Philosophy & Social Criticism*. May, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 427-447.

<sup>3</sup> Weber, Max (expression quoted from, Zeitlin, Irving M. (1968). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. p. 115

<sup>4</sup> Weber, (expression quoted from, Zeitlin, Irving M. (1968). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. p. 114

<sup>5</sup> Weber, (expression quoted from, Giddens, Anthony. (1996b). *Max Weber Düşüncesinde Siyaset ve Sosyoloji*, Vadi Yayınları, Ahmet Çiğdem (Trans. and Ed.). Ankara. p. 39

light of this historical knowledge, we can say that Weber's connection to Marx has been generally evaluated in a prejudiced position.

In addition to this discussion, most dramatically Weber and Marx have been represented to be enemies especially by their adherents. For example, according to Talcott Parsons, a well-known sociologist who introduced Weber to the world of U.S. Academy and translated *Protestant Ethics* firstly into English in 1950's,

Although Marx and Weber agreed about the task of providing an account of modern capitalism as the sine qua non of any valid social theory, Weber provided "a new anti-Marxian interpretation of it and its genesis."<sup>6</sup>

Parson also remarks that main target of the Weber's thesis in his *Protestant Ethic* is to become "a refutation of Marxian ideas in a particular historical case."<sup>7</sup> One of the American scholars known to be a Weberian, C. Wright Mills had firstly seen Marxism as "only a simple version of utilitarian economics" and then criticized it as a "quite handicapped" theory. Because of some aforementioned reasons or similar prejudices, Weberian scholars generally considered Marx or Marxism to be worthless. It is indisputable that for the Weberian scholars in U.S. academia Weber's observations constitute a counter-attack against Marxism, accordingly,

The originality of Max Weber's sociology lies in its dual rejection of both Marxism and the theory that is modelled after the natural sciences...Thus, as in *the Protestant Ethic*, Weber's analysis of social stratification also... refuted the Marxist emphasis on economic factors as the primary causal agents in history.<sup>8</sup>

As it can be seen, according to some scholars, Weber and Marx do not overlap under any circumstances. At the same time, some exponents of Marx and the

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<sup>6</sup> Parsons, Talcott, (expression quoted from, Turner, Bryan S. (1995). *For Weber, Essays on the Sociology of Fate*. SAGE Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. p. 6)

<sup>7</sup> Bendix, Reinhard and Roth, Guenther (1971). *Scholarship and Partisanship: Essay on Marx Weber*. University of California Press. p. 228

<sup>8</sup> Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, p. 194

theorists of official Marxism labelled Weber as an apologist for capitalism. Similarly, long before Max Weber was declared to be a reactionary German sociologist, historian, and an economist, Neo-Kantian, the malicious enemy of Marxism in the second edition of *the Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* (Bol'saja Sovjetskaja Encyclopaedia) in 1951, the spiritual and charismatic leader of official Marxism, Lenin had described Weber as the "professorial wisdom of the cowardly bourgeoisie".<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, this statement has a positive aspect as well, for Weber is mentioned as a wise, but bourgeois scholar, a position which was dishonourable at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, one of the most influential Marxists of the same period, George Lukacs characterized Weber as a subjective idealist as well. In a nutshell, because of such expressions that are explained above, the reciprocal connections inside the works of Weber and Marx have been neglected once again.

Now, I want to begin with the origins of the so-called tension, namely with the discussion on *Protestant Ethic*.

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<sup>9</sup> Weiss, Johannes. (1986). *Weber and Marxist World*. London, Newyork: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p. 16



## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE BASIS OF THE TENSION BETWEEN WEBER AND MARX:**

#### **PROTESTANT ETHIC**

Although it has been generally pointed out that Marx's and Weber's perspectives are not completely different from each other, the varied interpretations have been intensively discussed after the death of these two great thinkers who have a crucial influence on the social philosophy. Before I go through the analyses regarding the probable similarities between Marx and Weber in the following chapters, I want to briefly present an illuminating sketch of their opposite positions and the reasons that lie behind this opposition. To this end, first of all, I will begin with explaining Weber's statements in his *Protestant Ethic* and the book's relation to Marx's general views. While representing this connection, I would also scrutinize the pivotal role that was played by Weber's *magnum opus* in social sciences. In addition to general tendency of his own time, Weber in his work implied the importance of cultural (or religious) causes as the decisive factors in the theoretical explanation of social phenomenon. While I read Weber's assertions on Protestant sects, the most crucial things I noticed that Marx, in fact, like Weber, was aware of the significance of Protestantism in the shaping of modern capitalism and its working conditions.

#### **2.1. *The Protestant Ethic* or The Birth of a So-called Disagreement**

Max Weber, who nowadays turned into a living thinker from a dead saint, as Eric Fromm underlined, was born as the son of a famous liberal politician in 1864, when Karl Marx was calling for the foundation of International Labour Association at the

that time. While Weber gained a reputation owing to a thesis the main idea of which was briefly that a religious movement played a vital role in part in creating suitable conditions for the development of a new type of economic civilization, or the capitalism, he even could not foresee the influence that his thesis would have on his living century. Weber's thesis would be perceived as if it was as a counter argument against the Marxist themes, which were based upon the relationship between base and superstructure. And as if Weber roughly supposed that capitalism as a historical economic system was promoted or improved by a religious movement, Calvinism<sup>10</sup>. The main theme of this assertion is defined in a way that the cultural and religious values became prior to the economic base which was, formerly, accepted to be the determinant. In this respect, Weber's work refers to the facts of superstructure in the Marxian sense of the word, rather than the base.

At the beginning of his study, Weber identifies the aim of his observation as “a contribution to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history in a modest way form.”<sup>11</sup> These words could easily be understood as if Weber declared himself to have an idealist stance against the general materialist postulate or Marxism in its modern version that stresses the traditional tension between idealism and materialism. Therefore, Weber's argumentations have been read as announcements of idealist philosophy before everything else, but as we present the following chapters, it will be clear that it is false to label him this way. As stated above, while he starts his work with some expressions that imply a one-sided idealistic position, on the other hand, Weber completes his work with striking sentences that have more rigorous statements where Weber declares his aim is not to “substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal

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<sup>10</sup> Kilcullen, John. (1996). *Marx Weber: On Capitalism*, Macquarie University (Modern Political Theory Course Notes), p.1

<sup>11</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p. 48

interpretation of culture of history”<sup>12</sup> Due to this reason, we can draw some possible conclusions that show Weber does not share a vulgar and anti-Marxian attitude in his capitalism theory at all.

From the beginning to the end of his works, Weber in detail deals with general Calvinistic argumentations, their outcomes and effects on modern economical change. According to this Calvinism argumentation (with a brief summary), “the spirit of capitalism... was present (itself) before the capitalistic order”<sup>13</sup> In this sense, Calvinism and its *predestination doctrine* regard the God as a being who decides the salvation of some and the damnation of others. However, anybody can know who was chosen by God to go to heaven.<sup>14</sup> This situation had turned into an ethical conditioning with time, because in pursuit of spiritual salvation, the individuals relentlessly strive to arrive there. As the time passes, the real content of salvation was altered and the word was transformed into an ethical conditioning. As Weber states,

In fact, the *summum bonum* of this ethic, the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life....Man is dominated by the making money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life...The earning money within the modern economic order is... the result and expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling, which means a duty ethic.<sup>15</sup>

In this way, as can be seen, after the ethical activity starts to become independent from its religious essence, this duty ethic imposes its force on daily life practices, and it wraps this essence with an ascetic attitude, which is much more important for us. As far as Weber is concerned, this ethic “was decisive in its influence on practical life must always be borne in mind in order rightly to understand the

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<sup>12</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *Ibid.* p. 125

<sup>13</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* p. 20

<sup>14</sup> Kilcullen, John. (1996). *Marx Weber: On Capitalism*, Macquarie University (Modern Political Theory Course Notes), p.1

<sup>15</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* p. 18

influence of Calvinism.”<sup>16</sup> The other characteristic of Calvinism was to deny all worldly pleasure. For instance, when somebody asked the question “What is happiness?” to Luther, his answer was too dramatic: “Is it happiness, ohh no, misery misery, pain pain!..”<sup>17</sup> Only in the light of this aphorism, we shall argue, it is true that earning money and making profit is not for pleasure, but only for arriving God’s grace and kindness. To sum up, with Weber’s words, Calvinist ascetic “conduct(s) a rational planning of the whole of one’s life in accordance with God’s will.”<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, one asks how a modern economical system had started to be seen in this ritualistic situation. In fact, Weber in “Ascetism and Spirit of Capitalism”, the last chapter of *Protestant Ethic*, puts forward his main ideas decidedly as the following:

When the limitation of consumption is combined with this release of acquisitive activity, the evitable practical result is obvious: *accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save.*<sup>19</sup>

The question articulated above refers to, for Weber, capitalism as an economic system was derived from a religious movement or there was a reciprocal relation between Capitalism and Calvinism in the sense of capitalistic accumulation. The thesis quoted above may be claimed to be contrary to Marx’s theory on capitalism, but it is not entirely incompatible Marx’s general system.

As it might be remembered, according to Marx’s general perspective, the repulsive force (or decisive factor) that directs and mobilizes both the capitalism and the bourgeois class is capital and the foundation of this element depends upon primitive

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<sup>16</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *Ibid.* p. 77 Also there is a similar relation to Islam too, see Ceylan, Yasin (2004). “The conflict between state and religion in Turkey”, *Studies in Intercultural Philosophy: Civil Society, Religion and the Nation Modernization Context: Russia, Japan, Turkey*

<sup>17</sup> Cited by Isaiah Berlin, Magee, Bryan. (1985). *Yeni Düşün Adamları*. Mete Tunçay (Ed.) Birey ve Toplum Yayınları s.11

<sup>18</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p. 100

<sup>19</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *Ibid.* p. 116

capitalistic accumulation. As Marx expresses, a primitive accumulation is the “preceding capitalistic accumulation; the accumulation not the result of capitalist mode of production but its starting point.”<sup>20</sup> In conclusion, Marx, instead of Weber’s religious or cultural analyses, puts primitive accumulation (a material element) as a starting point in the rise of capitalism. Again, one asks how primitive or first accumulation could be firstly identified in history. Marx narrates this process in his monumental works and in *Capital* in detail. According to this, the process of primitive accumulation, which Marx defines as the ancestor of capital accumulation, had continued from the last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> century and to the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century via *expropriation*. Although the “history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods”<sup>21</sup>, it led to the same consequence. Marx assumes that agrarian soil was taken from their owners by way of coercion and despotism and wealth accumulated in the hands of the first usurers and merchants in the course of time. As Marx claims, “in actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly forces, play the great part...As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.”<sup>22</sup>

Afterwards, Marx gives an account of the process of *expropriation* again, and then passes into examples of primitive accumulation. Despite the fact that Weber in general discusses the reformation with cultural and religious terms, Marx is concerned with its results and materialistic presuppositions and that is why the process of expropriation in 16<sup>th</sup> century was started with the spoliation of the church property. In this respect, what Weber regards as cause is, in fact, for Marx only a

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<sup>20</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Progress Publishers., Part VIII, Chapter 26, p. 447

<sup>21</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Ibid.* Part VIII, Chapter 26, p. 449

<sup>22</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Ibid.* Part VIII, Chapter 26, p. 447

result. Therefore, whereas the church properties “given away to rapacious royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to speculating farmers and citizens”<sup>23</sup> after reformation, are the most vital object of investigation for Marx, Weber is concerned with reformation as a cultural process. In Marx’s works, what is important is that the spoliation of church properties, common lands, state territories, feudal and clan properties had also been exploited, but in Weber’s work what the spoliation of church properties caused seems to be particularly notable.

To sum up, *in abstracto*, if we organized Weber’s theoretical components, they would be “ascetism, calling, religious duty, whereas they would be “expropriation, rent, surplus value, and causeless enrichment” for Marx. As can be seen, since the former stresses primarily the cultural reasons, and the latter more economic and materialistic reasons, Weber and Marx have been continuously evaluated in terms of their antagonisms since *Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* was first published.

## 2.2. From Weber to Marx

Weber’s makes his one of the most interesting observations when he says “business leaders and owners of capital, as well as higher grades of skilled labour are overwhelmingly Protestant.”<sup>24</sup> This observation that draws our attention to the fundamental phenomena of the modern economic life, refers to a close connection between Protestant sect and the modern business world for Weber. At the first glance, Weber’s observation seems to be a quite innocent declaration, but when looked more carefully, it will be noticed that Weber makes a strict distinction between the Protestant sects such as Pietism and Calvinism. Accordingly, although

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<sup>23</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Part VIII, Chapter 27, p. 452

<sup>24</sup> Giddens, Anthony. (1996a). *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. 19<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cambridge University Press. p. 124

“the virtues favoured by Pietism were more those on the one hand of the faithful official, clerk, labourer, or domestic worker; ...Calvinism appears to be more closely related to the active enterprise of bourgeois-capitalistic entrepreneurs.”<sup>25</sup> If we examine it closely, we can see that Weber deals with the question of class. As quoted, there are minimum two classes different from each other and on the hand the workers, labourers and the officials believe in Pietism, which praises a more passive belief and faith, on the other hand, the second class (bourgeoisie or capitalists) has a distinctive belief, Calvinism, which praises a more strict and active belief rather than in the first group. After referring to two definite classes that are under the influence of two difference sects due to their different economic characters, Weber declares that the first of them or Pietism to be “a religious dilettantism for leisure classes.”<sup>26</sup> To summarize, according to Weber Pietism is a sect that is influential in the lower ranks of industrial society as a kind of toy (dilettantism), a statement parallel to Marx’s opium analogy regarding the function of religion on the masses of society.

In those statements, at the broadest level I pursue a double line of arguments which show first of all that it is reasonable to claim that in this specific discussion Weber considers the religion (or a sect of Protestantism) along with its sedative effects on the lower ranks of the society and secondly that he thinks one of the most vital characteristics of a belief to be its harmony with class position (or situation). Accordingly, it can be asserted that if a belief does not promise a harmonious world view to a group or class that is willing to engage itself with it, this belief will not be successful to realize its purpose. Therefore, as long as Calvinism could not exercise its influence over the worker class, Pietism fills the blanks with its own world view. On the other hand, while Weber goes further in the analysis of Protestantism, he also reminds us that one must take account of the economic conditions and stresses

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<sup>25</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p. 88

<sup>26</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *Ibid.* p. 88,89

on the importance of the economic factor.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, in my opinion, Weber's design about the reciprocal relation among the Protestant sects relies on economical conditions.

Now, up until this point, from Weber's theoretical explanation, it can be deduced that both Calvinism and Pietism or Protestantism as a whole play an ideological role for all classes. The traces of a similar perspective can be interestingly found in Marxian side. Years after Marx died, his closest friend and intellectual partner, Friedrich Engels notes that the bourgeois class finds its ideological means in Protestantism, because, in Engels' opinion, "the ineradicability of the Protestant heresy corresponded to the invincibility of the rising burghers."<sup>28</sup> After he, in his work, mentions 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century political change decidedly, Engels claims that Calvinism "provided "the ideological costume" for the second act of the bourgeois revolution" and it "justified itself as the true religious disguise of the interests of the bourgeoisie of that time."<sup>29</sup> Without investigating in detail, Engels describes, moving from political developments in Europe, Calvinist Reform as a worldly costume for the rising class such as bourgeois and worker class against the nobility that symbolize the existing order in the reformation period. From this point of view, Weber's statements on the economical aspect of Protestantism are actually compatible with Engels' excellent definitions.

As for Marx, in a similar vein, Protestantism as a sect of Christianity provides the most convenient atmosphere for a society determined by capitalism, because this form of society is "based upon the production of commodities" and individuals that "reduce the standard of homogeneous human labour" and so,

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<sup>27</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *Ibid.* p. xxxix

<sup>28</sup> Engels, Friedrich. (1994). *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (first published in 1886) Online Version: Translated from the German by Progress Publishers in 1946. Transcribed and published on the internet by [director@marx.org](mailto:director@marx.org). p. 32

<sup>29</sup> Engels, Friedrich. (1994). *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*. p.32



Christianity with its *cultus* of abstract man, more especially in its bourgeois developments, Protestantism, Deism, etc. is the most fitting form of religion.<sup>30</sup>

Marx's analysis above as a parallel evaluation to these of Engels', assumes that the capitalistic system and the bourgeois developments had a ritualistic environment in which the Protestant sects satisfy its needs. As different from Engels' class emphasis, Marx is especially inclined to the analysis of the system and its connection with Protestantism. Marx pays attention Protestant sects, because it presents an ethical impulse to the needs of capitalism of that period. As explained in the preceding sentences, the key and the motto of Marx's capitalism theory which was also called as the original sin by him, is "the primitive accumulation". Protestantism is dealt by Marx to the extent that it contributes to the formation this primitive accumulation. As Marx says, "Protestantism, by changing almost all the traditional holidays into workday, plays an important pan in the genesis of capital."<sup>31</sup> What Marx underlines, in fact, is not at odds with Weber's some passages quoted from the traditional Protestant conception. For instance, some statements such as "time is money", "a waste of time is in principle the deadliest of sin" and "every hour lost is lost to labour for the glory of God"<sup>32</sup> and so forth, they look as if they were the expanded forms of Marx's evaluations. In this regard, it is not inaccurate to say that Weber's analyses seem to be complementary to Marx's capitalism theory in this meaning, despite his analyses of Protestant Ethic caused various discussions.

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<sup>30</sup> Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. p. 228

<sup>31</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Part III, Chapter X, Section VII, p. 191

<sup>32</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p. 104 and also see, Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, p. 202

### 2.3. Concluding Remarks

As a religious belief, Protestantism had a vital effect not only on Weber's theory and works, but also on his own personal life. Weber often joined Protestant Evangelical-Social Congress as an enthusiastic supporter of the Protestant movement in his early years.<sup>33</sup> In this respect, it can be claimed that Weber also had a commitment to the values of Protestantism. The root of this claim can be seen in his works, for example, in the introduction of *Protestant Ethic*, Weber begins to make statements that imply the Christian civilization has been responsible for the fullest and finest developments of every kind in human life.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, Weber's attitude to religion occasionally seems to be personal<sup>35</sup>, for example, when he talks about the characteristics of Protestant entrepreneur, as if he mentioned about his grandfather, as a bourgeois noble and the founder of large corporation.

In fact, this personal commitment has caused Weber to get into contact with Marxism since his early years, because Marxism as an ideology that demands a new social order has been irritating the Protestant Church, and Weber and his friends hoped that "Marxism would be conquered from within by a living and developing Christianity and that a Christian-Social era would replace Social Democracy."<sup>36</sup> Of course, we have no intention to make a psychological analysis, but these anecdotes can provide an illuminating approach to Weber's some exaggerated and unfair evaluations on Marxism in his various works.

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<sup>33</sup> See, Weber, Marianne Schnitger. (1975). *Max Weber: A Biography*. English language edition copyright: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. United States of America. pp.130-137

<sup>34</sup> Trevor, Ling. (1980). "Weber and Indian Religion" In *Karl Marx and Religion*. Barnes and Noble, Hong Kong. p.83

<sup>35</sup> See for a discussion, Trevor, Ling. (1980). "Weber and Indian Religion" p.83

<sup>36</sup> Weber, Marianne Schnitger. (1975). *Max Weber: A Biography*. p. 134

Stating that his “aim is not substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture of history”<sup>37</sup>, Weber accepts that the thesis of Protestant ethic does not imply that religion is a unique decisive factor in the formation of capitalism and other social phenomena, but on the other hand, he calls Marxism as a one-sided materialistic causal interpretation of history. From this point of view, it can be deduced that Weber regards his theory as a methodology reflecting the reality with all its aspects, whereas Marxism does not. I will attempt to compare Weber’s and Marx’s methodology in the following chapters (Chapter 5), but in the point we arrive at least it can be stated that Weber does not reduce its capitalism theory to religion (or ideas) against economy (or matter, material), so it cannot be said to be an anti-materialist about Weber, at the very most, Weber accused Marx of using a one-sided causal interpretation of history, nevertheless, even if this allegation is true, Weber’s approach in relation to Marx is closely parallel to economic materialism, and even it complements Marx.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, some cultural, political and religious factors underestimated by Marx gain a legitimate prestige with *the Protestant Ethic* by Weber.

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<sup>37</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p. 125

<sup>38</sup> See, Trevor, Ling. (1980). “Weber and Indian Religion” In *Karl Marx and Religion*. Barnes and Noble, Hong Kong. p.84

## **CHAPTER III**

### **WEBER'S EARLY PERIOD AND HIS RELATION TO MARX'S GENERAL MATERIALISTIC VIEWS**

#### **3.1. A Preface to Weber's Doctoral Dissertation or from the Ancient History to the Marxist History**

As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, I have tried to give a brief summary of Weber's relation to Marx to the extent that generally all scholars have argued out so far, and I have worked to set forth the content of the some of these views, which cause ingrained misunderstandings and prejudices. In addition to these views, some passages produced by Weber and imply an anti-Marxist position and the negative influences of Cold War period have prepared a suitable atmosphere in creating a common irreconcilable perception of Marx and Weber. I have compared Marx's general analysis with Weber's narration of *Protestant Ethic* in terms of its theoretical implications. I tried to discover this tension between Weber and Marx as it appears or is perceived in academia, since the origin of the so-called opposition between Weber and Marx, indeed, is caused by this speculative confusion and indefiniteness. Instead of an extended comparison, I wanted to approach them from the simplest points of debate causing complexity. Now, as different from this sight, I will claim that the distance between Weber and Marx is not as remote as it was thought. In the light of these questions, throughout of this chapter, I will try to show that although Weber is a thinker who claims that the ideas are effective forces of the history (in that sense he is anti-materialist) and opposes Marxism as an ideology, there is still a materialist aspect in his theories since he emphasizes the role of material elements in history as well. Therefore, this chapter apparently will fortify our assertions basing on the claim that Weber's *Protestant Ethic* is, seemingly, a complementary work to Marx's general theory and not conflicting with it.

Now, I want to turn to my subject. When Weber's intellectual life is closely examined, it can be seen that he began his academic life as a law student and an ancient historian who especially worked on the use of Roman lands and the history of German and Roman law. Also, his doctoral dissertation is on Roman Agrarian History and its relation to public and private law (1891).<sup>39</sup> In this sense, Weber in his early academic career perpetually grapples with the ancient problems and their reflexions on social life of Rome. Years after his dissertation, Weber elaborates on his former definitions in his works such as "The Social Causes of the Decline of Ancient Civilization" and *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* in his early academic period. However, none of them have been well known by this time; and only some social scientists were interested with them.<sup>40</sup>

In this section I will compare Weber's analysis concerning the history of ancient period with the Marx's notions of economy and classes. I believe the comparison between Marx's and Weber's views of the early Roman socio-economic system to be quite interesting as well. To begin with, I should emphasize that at the time Weber wrote his doctoral thesis, *A Study of Roman Agrarian History in its relations with state and private law*<sup>41</sup>, as a philosophy, economy and law student, he was just 27 and kept to his tutor Theodor Mommsen's course, one of the greatest classical historians of the nineteenth century. According to Weber, there are two momentous implications of this period of the Roman Empire, that are, according to his thesis, "major social struggles over land took place periodically as Rome expanded"; and "Roman political developments were very closely connected with this class

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<sup>39</sup> See Mueller, G. H. (1986). "Weber and Mommsen: Non-Marxist Materialism." *The British Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 37 No.1. pp.1

<sup>40</sup> For instance, the English edition of *Agrarian Sociology* had eventually been translated in 1976, but Weber's doctoral dissertation has not been translated yet. When even this detail is only known, it can be understood that Weber's early writings has been overlooked.

<sup>41</sup> The original name is *Die Römische Agrargeschichte in ihrer Bedeutung für das Staats- und Privatrecht*

conflict”.<sup>42</sup> At first sight, these may be rather perplexing claims for some readers who do not know Weber’s theory with all its aspects very well. Before inquiring what two thinker’s similarities are, I want to say that both Weber and Marx begin their works with the ancient civilization. In fact, Weber, like his tutor, did base his ideas on the original state of affairs at the political system of Rome. Also; it is well known that Marx begins to investigate the analysis of the ancient society from the period of Rome as well.<sup>43</sup>

Weber meanwhile focuses on Roman law and also concentrates upon Roman land system because this is the very basis on which Rome was established. According to this land ownership system, a Roman individual could only hold in his hand, with the exception of his wife and children, portable properties such as slaves and cattles, but he was not permitted to hold immovable properties, namely *ager publicus*, a kind of state land, clan land, common land or the public land of the Roman people. In the other words, a Roman individual had merely the right to use the land through membership and the individuals cannot dispose of their houses or lands.<sup>44</sup> As the time passed, Roman agrarian and land system underwent a rudimentary and inexorable change, so long as the Romans occupied various areas and began to emerge as a colonial power. Since its earlier times, Rome had leased out the conquered land under some definite condition in order to increase the state revenue.<sup>45</sup> It was noticed that this system worked for the benefit of patricians and conquered lands were allocated to them against ordinary individuals and peasants in

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<sup>42</sup> Love, John R. (1986). “Max Weber and the Theory of Ancient Capitalism.” *History and Theory*. May, Vol. 25, No. 2. p.153

<sup>43</sup> See, Marx, Karl. (1980). *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. Hobsbawn, E. J. (Ed. with an introduction) and Jack Cohen (Trans.) 9<sup>th</sup> edition, London, Lawrence & Wishart

<sup>44</sup> Love, John R. (1991). *Antiquity and Capitalism, Max Weber and Sociological Foundations of Roman Civilization*, Routledge, New York. p. 15

<sup>45</sup> For example, ordinary citizens paid fixed payment, that is, one-tenth for plowed land, an done-fifth fort he treed land; cleared land in the Common Mark was free. Love, John R. (1986). “Max Weber and the Theory of Ancient Capitalism, p.155.

this process. What is more, mighty patricians shunned to pay their rent obligation. Patricians who did not perform payment obligation surprisingly were not penalized by state, as Weber says, “...they (the mighty patricians) remained immune from prosecution because they aligned themselves with the political power struggle of the day”<sup>46</sup> Taken at face value, Weber’s statements look very encouraging in terms of our assertions, because Weber claims that patricians behave fairly consistent with their own interests and class positions (or situation). In the light of these explanations, it can be said that Weber looks towards Roman system from the perspective of class struggle and extension just as Marx did. When Marx writes on the class struggle between patricians and plebeians in the ancient Roman period, he emphasizes that patricians exploited the plebeians via usury and this process deprived the latter of their means of production and land.<sup>47</sup> Upon first glance, it can be seen that there are strong parallels between Marx’s understanding of the Roman system and Weber’s doctoral thesis due to power struggle between classes such as patricians and plebeians.

Another issue in Young Weber’s thesis is an association formed between the ancient regime and the capitalist mode of production. When Weber talks about the ancient system, he often uses various words such as capitalist method and capitalist economy and that shows apparently Weber was concerned with Roman patrician as a capitalistic class in the ancient period.<sup>48</sup> If this statement which is expressed in here attributes continuity to his historical class concept, in fact, Weber would probably overlap with Marx’s historical materialism. It could be remembered that Marx posed in his *Communist Manifesto*:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles...Freeman and slave, *patrician and plebeian*, lord and serf,

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<sup>46</sup> Weber, Max Love, John R. (1986). “Max Weber and the Theory of Ancient Capitalism”, p. 155

<sup>47</sup> Giddens, Anthony. (1996a). *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. 19<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cambridge University Press. p. 27-28

<sup>48</sup> Love, John R. (1986). “Max Weber and the Theory of Ancient Capitalism”, p.156

guild-master and journeyman, in a word, *oppressor and oppressed*, stood in constant opposition to one another...In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights and plebeians, slaves...(the seconds of) these classes, again, subordinate gradations.<sup>49</sup>

From this point of view, it can be said that Marx, like Weber did in his thesis, believes that there is a master class and there is another subordinating to the former for every epoch and thus he supposes that “we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank”<sup>50</sup> Notwithstanding Marx’s historical materialism and his evolutionary approach are more comprehensive than Young Weber, Weber attributes a continuity to his historical class concept and settles down similar position with Marx.

Before I continue this discussion, I want to put forward a point of differentiation that separates Marx from Weber in this context. As long as Weber emphasizes class continuity, he is considerably at odds with Marx’s theory of capitalism in the same time, because Weber regards the ancient period as an abstract and agricultural form of capitalism owing to his master Mommsen’s influence as mentioned above. To this end, Weber thinks that the ancient regime had similar characteristics to capitalistic regime in terms of capital and the social structure. Moreover, Marx in his *Capital* vehemently denounces some ancient historians such as Mommsen and labels their statement as *nonsense*.<sup>51</sup> Some statements in Mommsen’s *History of Rome* such as “in the ancient world capital was fully developed, except that the free

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<sup>49</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. (First published in February 1848) (Trans.) Samuel Moore (with annotations by Friedrich Engels, 1888). Open Source Socialist Publishing, Utrecht, p. 6

<sup>50</sup> Love, John R. (1986). “Max Weber and the Theory of Ancient Capitalism”, p.156

<sup>51</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Progress Publishers. (First English edition of 1887) Transcribed: Zodiac, Hinrich Kuhls, Allan Thurrott, Bill McDorman, Bert Schultz and Martha Gimenez. Moscow, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Transcribed for the Internet: meia@marx.org. Part II, Chapter VI, p. 111



labourer and a system of credit was wanting”<sup>52</sup>, which would probably be justified in Weber’s dissertation, are denied by Marx. Weber and Mommsen have supposed that under the conditions where money making and private acquisitiveness reached to a definite point could be marked as capitalism.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary, Marx in his *magnum opus*, *Capital*, unveiled the pre-condition of capitalist system for us. According to this, capitalistic regime involves “parcelling of the soil and scattering of the other means of production, concentration of these means of production and the economizing of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined, the complete separation of the labourers from all property, socialized labour, especially the integration of all peoples in the net of the world-market” and so on.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Marx ridicules the theories which they base on the existence of ancient capital just as Weber and Mommsen have and accordingly; “Were the term capital to be applicable to classical antiquity, then the nomadic hordes with their flocks on the steppes of Central Asia would be the greatest capitalists, for the original meaning of the word capital are cattle.”<sup>55</sup> In the light of those statements of Marx, it can be seen that Weber’s and Mommsen’s approaches are quite naive and invalid because they regard antiquity as a capitalist society.

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<sup>52</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Ibid.* p.111

<sup>53</sup> Love, John R. (1991). “Max Weber and the Theory of Ancient Capitalism”, p.156

<sup>54</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Part VIII, Chapter XXXII, p. 485

<sup>55</sup> Marx, Karl. (1980). *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*. Hobsbawn, E. J. (Ed. with an introduction) and Jack Cohen (Trans.) 9<sup>th</sup> edition, London, Lawrence & Wishart p.

### **3.2. As far as Weber is Doing Well, Influence of Marx on Weber is increasing: “The Social Causes of the Decline of Ancient Civilization”**

I tried to give a brief summary of Weber’s doctoral dissertation on Roman Agrarian History and its connection with Marx’s general thoughts, and now I will continue on another study about ancient regime, in which Weber outlines the basic causes of the fall of Rome Empire (in 1896). In this work, Weber focuses on Roman mode of production and its political effects. He makes the following statements: “the disintegration of Roman Empire was the inevitable political consequence of a basic economic development.”<sup>56</sup> Only from this quotation, it can be understood that Weber is in quest for establishing a more valid and materialistic ground in the discussion about Rome and ancient regime. Weber, as a matter of fact, just right at the beginning of his article exactly objects the argumentation which assumes that the fall of Rome was owing to external and individualistic factors such as the superiority of its enemies, alleged luxury consumption of upper class, despotic administration or the incapacity of Rome’s leaders so on.<sup>57</sup> Instead of searching for external and subjective factors, Weber turns his attention to internal and objective reasons that brought the fall of Rome, such as economic and social factors and limits. To this end, Weber first examines Rome’s social situation in order to understand why Rome had fallen. For Weber, Roman civilization had a minimally developed market economy, and the products of urban artisans were only exchanged between rural neighbourhoods. However, ancient economy was not able to create a fully-fledged mass market for consumer goods.<sup>58</sup> Rome society and its city life had a significantly self-sufficient economy and generally used unfree

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<sup>56</sup> Weber, Max. (1976b). “The Social Causes of Decline of Ancient Civilization.” In *the Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. R.I. Frank (Trans.) NLB Press, London. p.408

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p.389

<sup>58</sup> Love, John R. (1991). *Antiquity and Capitalism*, p. 24

labour, namely the form of economic progress was the exploitation of slave labour. For this reason, according to Weber, slave enterprises prospered, and this form of economic development precluded the more advanced form of economic growth. That is, he assumes that economic prosperity is a barrier against the capitalistic form of economic development, an approach which is reminiscent of Marx's in *Grundrisse*. Similarly, for Marx,

All previous forms of society foundered on the *development of wealth*. With the development of wealth, the economic conditions of on which the community rested were dissolved along with the political relations of various constituents of the community which corresponded to those conditions.<sup>59</sup>

Marx also thinks that even the ancient philosophers who were aware of this reality directly denounced wealth as the cause of dissolution of the community.<sup>60</sup> As can be seen, the wealth which could not be transformed into international trade caused the dissolution of the community in the ancient society. The economic structure of Rome substantially depends on stagnant economic activities. To illustrate, it can be said that even Grain as the most indispensable product, was hardly profitable since state regulates both its stocks and transportation. Also this production needs a definite proficiency and qualified labour power instead of slave labour. As a result, agricultural activities in part performed by leasing the state land in small parcels.<sup>61</sup> Whenever the Empire expanded, its borders reached from coastal areas to inland areas and commercial activities turned to be difficult because the transportation costs were too much in the inland areas compared to Rome's old coastal areas. So as to decrease the transportation costs, Roman regime developed a slave system and

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<sup>59</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse, The Foundation of Critique of Political Economy* (Rough Draft), Martin Nicolaus, (Trans. with a foreword). Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, London, England. p. 540

<sup>60</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Ibid.* p.540

<sup>61</sup> Weber, Max. (1976b). "The Social Causes of Decline of Ancient Civilization. p. 396

so the “slave-owners became the dominant figure in the economy of Antiquity.”<sup>62</sup> Not only the slave-owners but also the aristocracy undertook the business of plundering and searching new areas, and as Weber says, “The lands were formed into domains, leased for exploitation to wealthy contractors.”<sup>63</sup> As an effect of those, Roman land and property system and class form, of course, had been changed since Rome’s empire period.

So let me begin with an even comprehensive claim. When Weber clarifies the economical conditions and activities in ancient Rome, he used Marx’s base/superstructure opposition to explain the interrelation between economy and trade:

In antiquity the development of international trade was connected with consolidation of unfree labour in large slave household. Therefore the exchange economy was *a sort of superstructure*; beneath it was a constantly expanding *infrastructure of natural economy* in which needs were met without exchange, the economy of the slave establishments which perpetually absorbed human material and satisfied their consumption needs mainly out of their own production rather than from the market.<sup>64</sup>

As mentioned above, Weber’s analysis is in close proximity with Marx’s conceptualization of the base and the superstructure, because as it can be remembered from Marx’s well-known work, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), Marx arrived some crucial conclusions which were summarised in the following manner:

The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real *foundation*, on which arises a legal and political structure...The changes in the economic foundation lead

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 395-396

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* p. 395

<sup>64</sup> Weber, Max. (1976b). “The Social Causes of the Decay of Ancient Civilization” p.394

sooner or later to the transformation of whole immense  
*superstructure*.<sup>65</sup>

These points are important because both Marx and Young Weber of “the Social Causes of Decline of Ancient Civilization” speak of a foundation, economy, and of a superstructure, which consists of political, social and some trade organizations (in Weber), although the latter of them focuses only on a more specific period, that is the antiquity, the other one is interested in general world history at the broadest level because of his political priorities.

Elsewhere, Weber also articulates that, by reason of growth of Rome, it was necessary to have a strong military service for the defence of the Empire, but this necessity was not provided by the slaves. Although the potential grain demand rose especially within cities, the low production volume of grain could not satisfy necessities, because there was a need for highly motivated workers in agriculture. This meant that, slaves could not be used in this area. Besides, because of the nature of the barrack system, slave numbers could not be sustained by breeding. Barrack system precluded the growing of children on enough amounts which was important to reproduce the slave population.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the reproduction of labour was an inevitable necessity. As the reproduction of labour continued, a transformation from the ancient system to feudal system, which depends on the lord and the serf, came about. Serfs could marry and live as families, but slaves were condemned to live in barracks which did not allow them to reproduce themselves.<sup>67</sup> Besides, serfs could work at jobs like such as agriculture and military that demand high motivation. Consequently, as stated above, Weber declared that providing

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<sup>65</sup> Marx, Karl. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Maurice Dobb (Ed.) Progress Publishers, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Moscow, The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. pp. 20-21

<sup>66</sup> Love, John R. (1991). *Antiquity and Capitalism*, p. 27, 31

<sup>67</sup> Weber, Max. (1976b). “The Social Causes of Decline of Ancient Civilization. p. 396 and also see, Love, John R. *Antiquity and Capitalism*, p. 27

reproduction of labour, namely, for a specific form of production, created its population. Similarly, Marx explained in his *Grundrisse* as such,

The amount of overpopulation posited on the basis of a specific production is thus just as determinate as *the adequate population*. Overpopulation and population, taken together, are *the population which a specific production basis can create*.<sup>68</sup>

As seen above, the strong parallels between Marx and Weber are remarkable; only, Weber generally elaborates the historical factors which Marx had defined insufficiently. What is more, Weber in his same work gives an account of the social causes of the decay of Rome again, “A great civilization apparently approaches “*the height of perfection* then *loses its economic basis* and crumbles away.”<sup>69</sup> At first glance, as can be noticed, Weber’s thesis on Rome civilization signifies the resemblance of Marxist historical materialism, because Weber defines Rome civilization like an organism growing, developing and then dying. Elsewhere, when speaking about the fall of Rome, Weber remarks that Roman Empire, its administrative system and political superstructure *essentially* disappeared because it could not adapt itself to the infrastructure of nature economy.<sup>70</sup> As matter of fact we can remark that Weber’s view is compatible with Marx’s evolutionist view of history. As Marx says “as soon as (highest development of forces of production) this point is reached, the further development appears as decay, and the new development begins from a new basis.”<sup>71</sup> As can be seen, Weber, like Marx attributes a necessity and determinism to the transition of a historical period to another one. Weber states his aim explicitly, namely he assumes that “natural economy had always formed the infrastructure of ancient civilization.”<sup>72</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>68</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse*, p. 605

<sup>69</sup> Weber, Max (1976b). “The Social Causes of The Decay of Ancient Civilization” p. 410

<sup>70</sup> Weber, Max (1976b). *Ibid.* p.408

<sup>71</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse*, p.541

<sup>72</sup> Weber, Max (1976b). “The Social Causes of The Decay of Ancient Civilization” p. 410

for Weber, if a political and cultural system cannot adapt itself to a new economical change; this system inevitably collapses or this is valid at least for Roman civilization. As far as we know, no social system that comes into a conflict with the new superior relations of production can exist, and the material conditions which are antagonistic with existing economic conditions are replaced by another material condition, and this antagonism is then solved; such says the historical materialistic theory of Marx.<sup>73</sup> At the broadest level, there lies the connection between Weber and Marx regarding Rome's social and economic system and their assessments coincide, though Marx sets forth more detailed and valid for every historical period, as for Weber examines so far a more specific period, Rome, but more comprehensively.

### **3.3. The Pursuit of a Systematic Explanation: The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations**

Unlike his earlier works mentioned above, Weber's *the agrarian sociology of ancient civilizations* (originally written 1896-1897) refers either to the fall of Rome, that is the last period of Rome civilization, or to the foundation of Rome, the origin of Rome civilization and early periods. However, Weber analyzes the classic period of Rome and other ancient civilizations in the *Agrarian Sociology (AG)*. The first section of *AG* initially starts with the chapter titled Economic Theory of Ancient Civilization, and the second part of the works is composed of The Agrarian History of the Major Centres of Ancient Civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, Greece, Hellenistic Age, Roman Republic and Roman Empire. However the most stunning contentions were presented in the sections where Roman period is examined. Wherever we look, it can be seen that Weber makes an effort to represent a more detailed and comprehensive historical approach. In this section, I

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<sup>73</sup> See, Marx, Karl. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. p. 21

will work to display the theoretical improvement in Weber's theory and its relation with Marx's general views.

I want to make this point clear with the help of an example. As we have seen, with Rome's expansion, *ager publicus*, a kind of Roman state land (originally *Ager Publicus Populi Romani*) was allocated to patricians by way of fraud and intrigue. In *AG*, Weber also mentions that the lands on the public domains were given away for only private benefits by means of the agrarian law of 111 B.C. After 111 B.C. the entire Italy was generally in the hands of estate owners and this situation involved the social degradation of the peasantry.<sup>74</sup> In addition to ancient class conflicts between peasants and estate owners, there was also a large struggle between estate owners themselves as well. In a passage that defines the causes of the fall of Roman Empire, Weber again underlines the concept of "class" and accuses great landowners. Since they demanded a military protection to their large estate, Roman military power was scattered through a large area on Roman lands.<sup>75</sup> Thus, Roma army took a defensive position against the barbarian strikes such as Celts, Goths and Vandals' instead of an offensive one. As having a superior position, landowners, causing both political and economic consequences, according to Weber, affected in part the military policies of Roman Empire.

Weber's analyses to the aforementioned debate are consistent with his earlier works, namely states, Weber, "we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank." From this point, we claim that Weber attributes "continuity" to the concept of "class", but such a clear statement where Weber makes about ancient period cannot be found, so it was not possible to indicate it. Nevertheless, Weber sets forth a connection between mediaeval and ancient conditions. According to Weber,

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<sup>74</sup> See, Weber, Max. (1976a). *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. R.I. Frank (Trans.) NLB Press, London. p. 321

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p. 360



The urban conflict of the *High Middle Ages* (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), centring round the opposition between guilds and great clans, can be compared to the struggles within the *polis* in the Middle Ages' of *Antiquity*; the great issues in both were deprivation of political rights, oppression by fiscal authorities, and unfair disposition of common lands.<sup>76</sup>

To sum up, in order to show the reciprocal relation between these periods, Weber uses various historical examples, and he emphasizes mutual impressions such as deprivation, oppression and unfairness in history. To turn to Marx, in passages about transition from a definite form of production to a new one, in spite of a certain number of technical and social changes, some mutual impressions in part, as Weber has highlighted, have remained. For Marx, a new form of production has established a new historical period and new classes, but "new condition of oppression, new form of struggle in place of the old ones."<sup>77</sup>

The quality of the class structure, of course, changed from ancient to mediaeval in Weber. The craftsmen, for instance, in ancient period had a low status but merchants were considered to be occupying an important position. However, as the time passed by the craftsmen gained political and economic recognition in mediaeval period, while the merchants had a subordinate status this time.<sup>78</sup> To this end, the struggle against urban patricians was taken up by guilds, but unlike guilds, ancient class struggle had been performed by peasants against patricians. Similarly, Marx claims that the ancient regime did not have a privileged guild system like the mediaeval period, also craftsmanship was thought to be a sign of dishonour in ancient world, especially for the Roman citizen.<sup>79</sup> In this sense, Weber claims that the organization of free workers in a guild can be seen as a new kind of labour

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, p.342

<sup>77</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. p. 6

<sup>78</sup> Weber, Max. (1976a). *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. p.340

<sup>79</sup> See, Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse*, p. 478

structure and so mediaeval city was much closer to the development of modern capitalism than the ancient world was.<sup>80</sup>

Maybe the most influential and materialistic point in Weber's *Agrarian Sociology* is the explanations that imply every epoch had risen on the foundations of the preceding one. On the other hand, this approach can be called as the evolutionary or historical materialist approach that is parallel to Marx's view. According to Weber, for instance, "modern capitalism emerged on the basis prepared by the mediaeval organization of commerce and industry, using its material and legal forms."<sup>81</sup> Likewise, in another passage, Weber represents the relation between mediaeval and ancient world. As the ancestor of limited liability companies of 13<sup>th</sup> century, or as a form of commerce which was based on that, the *commenda* goes back to ancient times. Moreover, when Weber emphasizes modern capitalism, he claims that mediaeval city was much closer to the development of modern capitalism than was the *ancient polis*, in this respect as if he had attributed mediaeval regime a more progressive role in an evolutionary historical framework. I want to use the original quotations from Marx and especially from Weber again, in order to avoid the possible misconceptions that I might have completely changed Weber's arguments for the sake of justifying my thesis. Let us turn and compare Weber with Marx. For Marx,

The anatomy of man is a key to the anatomy of the ape. On the other hand, rudiments of more advanced forms in the lower species of animals can only be understood when the more advanced forms are already known. Bourgeois economy thus provides a key to the economy of antiquity, etc. But it is quite impossible (to gain this insight) in the manner of those economists who obliterate all historical differences and who see in all social phenomena only

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<sup>80</sup> See, Wiener, Jonathan M. (1982). "Max Weber's Marxism, Theory and Method in The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations." *Theory and Society*. May. Vol.11, No.3. p. 394

<sup>81</sup> Weber, Max. (1976a). *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. p.354

bourgeois phenomena. If one knows rent, it is possible to understand tribute, tithe, etc., but they do not have to be treated as identical<sup>82</sup>

As can be seen, different from Weber, Marx reads this process reverse, and basing himself on bourgeois society, he reaches a knowledge concerning the ancient period. This means if a modern term is investigated in relation with the ancient or mediaeval world; it is possible to comprehend it in a larger dimension, according to Marx. In this respect, Marx goes beyond Weber's historical examination and presents us a method especially about political economy. Marx mentions not only a historical relation between tithe and rent, but also, he thinks in order to understand the rent, one must know tithe, or vice versa in part. In fact, Marx introduced a methodology that explains why we should deal with the material structure of the bourgeoisie to understand the ancient or mediaeval world. Namely, Marx is interested in mediaeval or ancient regime in terms of its relation with bourgeois regime. In contrast, beginning with the very first years of his interest in history, Weber had examined ancient period with the idea that it has a unique value and then he found out both methodological and historical connections. In fact, in a passage of "social causes of decline of ancient civilization" Weber interestingly illuminates us about how he sees the ancient period as the following: "there is little or nothing which ancient history can teach us about our social problems."<sup>83</sup> The only aim of these works is to explain that period. Neither he, like Marx, devised a modern period to facilitate our understanding about the antiquity nor he read the process reversely; but on the contrary he thinks that ancient period has in part a specific and unique character as different from modern period.

It is remarkable that one of the most crucial theories in the social theory is the surplus value theory, which is also thought to be the secondary important discovery after the historical materialism in Marxist theory. According to Marx's famous

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<sup>82</sup> Marx, Karl. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. p. 211

<sup>83</sup> Weber, Max (1976b). "The Social Causes of The Decay of Ancient Civilization" p. 391

example, it would be enough for a worker to work half a day to make her living, but she works whole day.<sup>84</sup> The other half of her working day is forced labour or surplus labour according to the surplus theory of Marx. This theory is usually used to bring an explanation to the conditions of modern exploitation, though Engels, Marx's loyal partner and supporter, underlined that surplus labour or the exploitation of labour is common to all forms of society that have existed hitherto.<sup>85</sup> When Weber in *Agrarian Sociology* speaks of the economic relations in the ancient regime, he says that "the economic surplus of ancient city always had its original basis in the rents which the landed princes and noble clans derived from their estates and from levies on their dependants."<sup>86</sup> From this point, it can be understood that superior classes have wrested surplus value from subordinate classes by way of forcing, levying and bullying them and again it can be said that Weber's way of forming his historical analyses is similar to Marx's historical materialist method.

The use of slave labour (or unfree labour) and calling the exploitation of the slave labour as *a means of production* are other Marxian argumentations in Weber's *Agrarian Sociology*, where Weber considers the use of slave labour to be profitable only when the land is fertile and the market price of slaves is low.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, Marx sees slave labour as a means of production or a fixed capital like machinery and houses and claims that the depreciation of this kind of capital is determined by

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<sup>84</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse*, p. 324

<sup>85</sup> Engels, Friedrich. (1996). *Anti-Duhring, Herr Eugen Duhring's Revolution in Science* (Written: September 1876 - June 1878. Published: in German in *Vorwärts*, January 3 1877 to July 7 1878 *Published*: As book, Leipzig 1878. (Trans.) Emile Burns (from the 1894 Stuttgart, third edition) Transcribed for the Internet: media@marx.org. p. 145

<sup>86</sup> Weber, Max. (1976a). *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. p.48. See also Wiener, Jonathan M. (1982). "Max Weber's Marxism, Theory and Method in The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations." p.394

<sup>87</sup> See for this usage, Weber, Max. (1976a). *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. p. 54, 55

the active period of the slave until his or her life expires.<sup>88</sup> As can be seen, on many points Weber and Marx are not as irreconcilable as it was conventionally assumed.

In the aforementioned discussion, we tried to uncover Weber's doctoral dissertation on Roman Agrarian History and its relation between public and private law. We said while Weber mentions the ancient system, he usually uses various words such as capitalist method and capitalist economy. Moreover, Roman patrician is seen as a capitalistic class by Weber. Hence, it can be claimed that apparently Weber is eager to accept the existence of capitalism in ancient regime in his thesis. In *Agrarian Sociology*, however, he asks himself: "did a capitalist economy exist in Antiquity?" Weber replies that "capitalist economy did not play a dominant role in Antiquity", because what Weber understands from modern capitalism, when looked in Weber's days, is the existence of large firms run with free-wage labour and a society formed by them.<sup>89</sup> However, Weber suggests a definition about capitalism, namely,

Where we find that property is an object of trade and is utilized by individuals for profit-making enterprise in a market economy, there we have capitalism. If this be accepted, then it becomes perfectly clear that capitalism shaped whole periods of Antiquity.<sup>90</sup>

As is indicated above, different from his thesis, Weber conscientiously chooses his words and acts carefully when he is to give a definition on capitalism in the ancient world. Even though he regards ancient capitalism to be more specific and independent from modern period capitalism, Weber believes the existence of a capitalist understanding on the ancient period. One can think if we talk about capitalism in antiquity, it would be also possible to speak about the forms of capital investment in Antiquity. The following examples are brought about by Weber: government contracts, mines, sea trade, plantations, banking and related activities,

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<sup>88</sup> Marx, Karl. (1967). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume II-The Process of Circulation of Capital*. (Ed.) Friedrich Engels (First Published, Hamburg-Verlag von Otto Meissner, 1893) International Publishers, New York. p.478, 479

<sup>89</sup> Weber, Max. (1976a). *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*. p. 48, 50

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51

overland trade, leasing out slave and lastly capitalist exploitation of slaves.<sup>91</sup> Now, the kind of capitalism that described by Weber is open to discussion; it is not modern but what? Weber also clarifies how the ancient capitalism must be perceived and read. Different from his first doctoral thesis, he names ancient capitalism as a political capitalism and tells that Roman emperor regulates some systems such as tax, private profit, so the source of profit was blocked and ancient capitalism lost its profit development sources.<sup>92</sup> Weber's political capitalism in ancient world created various obstacles against the development of modern capitalism, namely the limits on market economy, unstable structure of capital, limits on the exploitation of slave labour, impossibility of calculability in slave labour.<sup>93</sup> In fact, ancient political theory praises a self-sufficient economic life unlike an understanding nourished from profit impetus but similarly causes a stagnant social and economic structure. This understanding, in spite of the structure of tremendous wealth, precluded capital and investments in especially Rome Empire. In this respect, it can be stated that ancient capitalism has not rational qualities in Weber's view.

### **3.4. Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I have attempted to indicate that Weber's claims on Antiquity in his own dissertation and early works go along with those of Marx's. Weber as an ancient historian firstly comes under the influence of his professor Theodor Mommsen who believes the existence of capitalism in its modern meaning in the ancient period because he attributes a unique value to Antiquity in history. In addition, Weber was a famous member of "German Historical School", whose

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* p. 51

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 364

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67

historical method is to grasp the political economy as a science that discovers the laws of economic and social life. As a professor of political economy at Freiburg University since 1894 at the same time, Weber had interpreted historical events more through their structural and historical specificity. German Historical School sees the individuals generally as restricted and unfree agents who are bounded with social structures; “the existence of free will” was excluded and some members of the historical school regard national economy as a biological organism.<sup>94</sup> One of the methodological failures of this school is to accept empiricism as the unique source for historical investigations without giving a place to a priori sources. Although Weber does not regard nation as an organism and avoids vulgar empiricist statements in his early writings, it would be recognized that Weber inquests for establishing a historical specificity and bases himself more on structuralist analysis in his ancient regime discussions.<sup>95</sup> Maybe, discussing Max Weber’s central importance and influence in the German Historical School by far exceeds the limits of a master or doctoral dissertation, but at least, it can be said that Weber, of course, was influenced from Carl Menger’s general law of social life, Buecher and Meyer’s stage of historical development and Schmoller’s historical depiction.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, since Marx and Engels are the pupils of this school and same German philosophical culture as well, Marx’s influence on Weber or the similarity of Weber with Marx and Marxian approaches are not unusual.

By the way, one of the most important and transparent distinctions between the statements of Marx’s and Weber’s is not economic but about the meaning of

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<sup>94</sup> Hodgson, M. Geoffrey. (2001). *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*, London; New York: Routledge. p. 58,62,63

<sup>95</sup> There are definite indications that Weber in his maturity years deals with to discover underlying causal relations in social and historical events, hence he uses both empiricist statements and especially a priori statements which would be named as famous “ideal types” in his maturity studies. Those of Weber will be examined next chapters.

<sup>96</sup> Kalberg, Stephen. (2009). *Max Weber’i Anlamak*. Lotus Yayınevi, Bedri Gencer (Trans.) Ankara. p.35

culturally and politically overdeveloped ancient civilization. In fact, because of only these non-rational elements stated above, it can be said that Weber believed that ancient culture had created miraculous and inspiring works of art which are also inspiring to modern human for this very day. The non-existence of what would be called as “bureaucratization” by mature Weber in the years to come and the relative economic freedom were the sources of a powerful cultural heritage.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, Marx appraises ancient culture as awe-inspiring and romanticizes its highly intellectual arts. After Marx expresses that the Greeks or Romans were normal children of their times, he discusses and asks himself why we never return to historic childhood of humanity as a stage or reproduce it as an eternal charm. His answer is quite clear, as a man cannot become a child again; similarly we can never return advanced ancient culture and political life, because only under these conditions, ancient people could produce an advanced convention.<sup>98</sup> As it is understood, Marx sees Antiquity on the one side as a childish purity maybe because of the absence of alienation that time, on the other side, as a period depends upon an underdeveloped economical base, despite its overdeveloped cultural superstructure. Due to this reason, Marx goes beyond Weber’s ancient analysis and also emphasizes the base/superstructure relationship in addition to a humanistic understanding.

To summarize, before he goes into the sociology of religion and makes his ideal type conceptualization, Weber as an ancient historian seems to be close with Marx’s general materialistic views. It can be enumerated as following,

Firstly, Weber’s statements seem to be united within the same framework regarding the definition of the problem of capitalist improvement. This definition brings Weber’s analysis closer with that of Marx’s.

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<sup>97</sup> For an interesting discussion, see, Nafissi, Mohammad R. (2000). “On the Foundations of Athenian Democracy: Marx’s Paradox and Weber’s Solution.” *Max Weber Studies*. Vol.1 pp. 56-83

<sup>98</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse*, p. 111.



Secondly, Weber evaluates class struggle within its historicity and he also attributes a continuity to it. In this respect, Weber's notion of class would probably overlap with Marx's historical materialism. A class analysis that originates from the historical development of the relations of production has explicitly neglected by the scholars of Weber.

Thirdly, it is seen that Weber certainly took Marx's base/superstructure conceptualization together with historical examples and counterpart in his ancient works. Similarly, this aspect of Weber's ancient writings has not often examined.

Fourthly, it is well known that Marx sees Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production as progressive epochs in the economic foundation of society.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, Weber has a same evolutionary approach in his early works.

Fifthly, When Weber explains the social causes of the fall of Roman civilization; he uses internal reasons and economic terms such as *exchange economy* and *slavery* instead of those of external such as the barbarian invasions and military problems of Rome. This situation indicates, on the one hand that Weber approaches historical events from materialistic view, on the other hand, that Weber has a more scientific point of view which differentiates him from a traditional historical understandings like story-telling.

As a summary, Weber in the first part of *Protestant Ethic* (under the title of problem), while he speaks of topic of his study, he says that "the following study may thus perhaps in a modest way form a contribution to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history".<sup>100</sup> Similarly, Weber in his *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* says, "historical influence of ideas in the development of social life has been and still is so great that our journal (Weber refers "Archives for Social Science and Social Welfare", a journal Weber published

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<sup>99</sup> Marx, Karl. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. p.21

<sup>100</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p. 48

it with Werner Sombart) cannot renounce this task”<sup>101</sup>. From only these passages, various evidences about Weber’s anti-materialism and his underestimation of the material forces in history can be found. However, contrary to expectations, this chapter strongly indicates a counter-claim, and provides a distinct awareness concerning this discussion.

Now before going on with the new chapter, I should focus on a question whether Weber’s approach listed above changed or remained in his subsequent works. And if not, it can be thought to be a coincidence, therefore, in order to profess Marx’s influence on Weber, it is essential to examine and go over Weber’s mature period works scrupulously. At the same time, it is worth to show in advance whether my claims are consistent or inconsistent with regard to Weber’s evaluations. To this end, I will attempt to give some evidences in the following chapters.

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<sup>101</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. Edward A. Shils, Henry A. Finch (Trans.) The Free Press, New York. p.54

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **MATURE WEBER AND HIS RELATION WITH MARX'S GENERAL MATERIALISTIC VIEWS**

After providing a general presentation of the relation between “early Weberian” claims and Marx’s general views, now I will proceed to the essential point, namely how Weber in his mature works settles account with Marx. In fact, social scientists usually investigate this period and emphasise this settlement of the account. In this chapter, I will mainly focus on Weber’s most important writings concerning his general methodology, thoughts on social and historical problems and on the inner structure of capitalism. For this aim, firstly, while I introduce some key points in Weber’s *Economy and Society* and *General Economic History*, I will also define the strong parallels between Weber and Marx, the most of which was put forward in preceding chapter. Also, is in this chapter one of the most striking controversies for us is whether or not Weber presents a different approach from his early seminal writings and to what extent Weber gets closer to Marx, as different from his earlier works.

#### **4.1. Economy and Society**

##### **4.1.1. Rationality or Alienation: Towards *Absolute Loneliness***

To begin with, I want to open up a different discussion and to compare these well-known figures with regard to the phenomena they examine. As known, Weber elaborates his rationalization theory in *Economy and Society* at the broadest sense. However, just like the premise of the dialectic method which says an object has its inner contradictions, similarly, Weber’s concept of rationalization includes both an

idea of development and its *par excellence* to present social and bureaucratic world but also its irrational elements and negative aspects. In this sense, it can be claimed that there is a tremendous relation between Weber's process of rationalization and Marx's conception of alienation. Now, I want to put forward this original and interesting discussion with attractive aspects.

As Löwith, who studied on this issue over many years, claims, "Weber attempted to make intelligible this general process of the rationalization of our whole existence precisely", but "the rationality which emerges from this process is something specifically *irrational* and *incomprehensible*."<sup>102</sup> From this, it can be said that as a process affecting our life, the rationality, in fact, consists of a contradiction or irrationality in itself. This situation creates a tragic consequence, of course, because Weber regards rationalization as the destiny of our era that is based on the disenchantment of the world.<sup>103</sup> In spite of its negative meanings, firstly, it has to be indicated that Weber used the concept of rationalization with positive meanings for various institutions such as economy, law, state, but he gazed especially at the state and government organizations and services, besides at political parties, churches, educational institutions, and private businesses, and many other institutions that have bureaucracies of course. The rationalization process is one of the most vital issues given in *Economy and Society*. Yet, for Weber the term *bureaucracy* was inseparable especially from the term *rationality*. For example, the modern bureaucrat, the agency of bureaucracy, is a full-time, life-time professional. This requires a sufficient salary and job security, and if bureaucrats do not work, modern institutions would not be efficient and system would not be successful. By the way, Weber's rational bureaucracy has its own characteristics, namely, it supposes a formal hierarchical structure, and management performs by rules, also this

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<sup>102</sup> Löwith Karl. (1993). *Max Weber and Karl Marx*. Hans Fantel (Trans.) and Bryan Turner (Intro.) London; New York: Routledge. p. 62

<sup>103</sup> Löwith Karl. (1993). *Max Weber and Karl Marx*. p. 62

managerial approach is organized by functional speciality, maybe the most importantly, employment is based on some technical qualifications. There is also an impersonal relation among institutions, and ultimately, all of them are in conformity with each other, according to rational bureaucracy in Weber.

One can ask how the rationality transforms to irrationality while it is necessary for the modern world system, and provides limitless social opportunities. Namely, earning money in order to bear one's standard of living is rational and intelligible, but earning money for the sake of making money as an end in itself, certainly is an irrational act in Weber.<sup>104</sup> When examined, as long as earning money is a humanistic and essential act, it is rational, yet beyond that point it would be seen as an irrational action and loses its end.

In order to clarify the negative aspects of the rationalization of bureaucracy, Weber applies Marx's explanation about the concentration of means of production. Parallel to the separation of the workers or producers from their means of production and to the concentration of means in one's hands, there are also various concentrations and separations at the different areas. To illustrate, since modern armies are bureaucratized, the modern army has had a general staff who command the army. Different from ancient times, modern soldiers now do not have their own weapons, which means they have been separated from their means of war. On the contrary, Ancient people, when called to war, come equipped to a certain standard, in line with their taxation forms. However, as Weber says, only the bureaucratic armies' structure allows for the development of the professional standing armies which are necessary against the distant enemies, especially the enemies overseas.<sup>105</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>104</sup> Löwith Karl. (1993). *Ibid.* p.62

<sup>105</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Ed.), Ephraim Fischhoff, Hans Gerth, A.A. Henderson, Ferdinand Kologar, C.Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Max Rheinstein, Gunther Roth, Edward Shils and Claus Wittich (Trans.) and Gunther Roth (Introduction by). University of California Press Berkeley. Los Angeles. London. p. 981

bureaucrats do not own the means of administration; they work only for a fixed fee at the fixed time period. The process mentioned above have developed in all other spheres of life, namely, it also spreads through scientific research and instruction. As a result of this situation, scientific and instructional means have been concentrated in the hands of some privileged and the mass of researchers and instructors are separated from their intellectual means.<sup>106</sup> The immense concentration of power in many areas such as bureaucracy, science and army and so on in the hands of a privileged class or group can be dangerous for individual freedom, because all power gradually accumulates in fewer and fewer hands.

In the passages where Weber establishes the relation between rationality and bureaucracy, he notices that the process gets out of control and creates a dehumanized world. In this score, modern human being in Weber, in deed, appears as the bearer of a function, as in Marx's concept of human self-estrangement. Accordingly,

Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is "dehumanized", the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is appraised as its special virtue by capitalism.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, the rationalization also presupposes a new world order for life. Weber courageously indicates that rationalism's doctrine has wiped out whole traces of old ages and beliefs and established a new order based on the empirical realities of the world. Yet, the order Weber explained is dull and meaningless at the same time, even the people who encounter with these realities cannot find a harbour to shelter. Since, according to Weber,

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<sup>106</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II.* p. 983

<sup>107</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 974

As intellectualism suppresses belief in magic, the world's processes become disenchanted, lose their magical significance, and henceforth simply "are" and "happen" but no longer signify anything...The conflict of this requirement of meaningfulness with the empirical realities of the world and its institutions, and with the possibilities of conducting one's life in the empirical world, is responsible for the intellectual's characteristic flight from the world. This may be an escape into *absolute loneliness*, or in its more modern form, e.g., in the case of Rousseau, to a nature unspoiled by human institutions.<sup>108</sup>

These sentences can be a key to understand the problem of irrationality. From Weber's points of view, the concept of "irrationality" in *Economy and Society* is the reminiscent of Weber's writings regarding the evolution of an iron cage, a technically ordered, rigid, dehumanized society in *the Protestant Ethic*. Accordingly, Weber claims that the people who live in this cage would not know under any circumstances what to expect from the future. The people will consume their lives without understanding whether the modern developments will lead to the expectations inspired with hope, or not. Maybe, at the end of the day, as Weber said, there will be a society in which "specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart", however, these meaningless and footling beings, or as Weber words this nullity, will probably imagine that they attained "a level of civilization never before achieved".<sup>109</sup> It is dramatic that Weber affirms the problem of irrationality and as its consequence *absolute loneliness* in the full and original sense of the term. Hence, when looking at the modern man, his hopelessness can explicitly be seen from Weber's eyes.

When looked from Marx's position, following statements, in fact, can summarize his views on the modern world and its institutions,

This is why the childish world of antiquity appears on one side as loftier. On the other side, it really is loftier in all matters where

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<sup>108</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume I*, p. 506

<sup>109</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p.124

closed shapes, forms and given limits are sought for. It is satisfaction from a limited standpoint; while the modern gives no satisfaction; or, where it appears satisfied with itself, it is *vulgar*.<sup>110</sup>

As stated above, while Marx pays attention to a distinction between modern and old, since the modern includes a total alienation, he also points out the miseries that modernity has created and the process of “dehumanization”. In a sense it echoes Weber’s absolute loneliness in Marx’s sentences. The similarities of passages quoted from two thinkers are surprising. Not only loneliness and hopelessness replace dissatisfaction in Marx, but also Marx called it as alienation and elaborated on it virtually in all his opuses. Accordingly, Marx’s conception of alienation can be classified in four manners. I want to borrow Anthony Giddens’ conceptualisation based on the main dimensions of Marx’ discussion on alienation in order to systematize my claims.

1. Firstly, the worker in modern capitalist society has no power to determine the future of what he produces, so the worker is alienated from his own production. As if he were a commodity, he can be bought and sold for market condition, the worker, in fact, is not the owner of his products, hence the more value he creates the more worthless he becomes.
2. The worker works under a condition which does not provide him a work satisfaction neither physical nor mental. Like a slave, he spends his energy in a meaningless form, for only survive.
3. As a result of 1 and 2, the worker is forced to live in a world where human relations are reduced to market relations. The material things, such as money and precious metals gain an importance against humanistic values in modern society. Therefore, economic alienation will leads to a social alienation.

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<sup>110</sup> Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse, The Foundation of Critique of Political Economy* (Rough Draft) p. 488



4. Lastly, the worker as a member of human species with an active inner-relationship his own and natural world alienated himself. He loses human productive activity and transforms an object or alienated labour reifies it as an object. To this end, as a being with creative activity which distinguishes him from animals alienated from his own essence.<sup>111</sup>

As mentioned above, Marx looks at alienation from the broadest perspective, though this discussion by far exceeds the limits of a doctoral dissertation, at least, it can be said that Marx only refers to proletariat class as the victim of this modern process, but, at same time he underlines the effects on the bourgeois class.

The propertied class and the class of the proletariat present the same human self-estrangement but the former class feels at ease and strengthened in this self-estrangement, it recognizes estrangement as *its own power* and has in it the *semblance* of a human existence. The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in estrangement.<sup>112</sup>

Marx becomes aware of both of the victims and, in fact, understands that they are transformed into something which is not themselves at all, but also that the first of them grew stronger, as second one lost its power with this process.

Weber touches on the issue that modern individual or modern economy does not make a promise to the notion of freedom in close future, but he represents a solution, namely, “true freedom will light up only when the present “anarchy of economic production... will be abolished...”<sup>113</sup> From this, it can be frankly claimed that the condition of the absolute freedom depends upon a condition where the existing economy of production is abolished. In fact, these statements mentioned by Weber refer an unexpected revolutionary approach, especially from an academician

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<sup>111</sup> See, Giddens, Anthony. (1996a). *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory. An analysis of the writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*. p. 12-13

<sup>112</sup> Schmit, Richard. (1997). “Alienation” In *introduction to Marx and Engels, A critical reconstruction*. Westview Press, Dimensions of Philosophy Series. Norman Daniels and Keith Lehrer, (Ed.). Oxford. p. 121

<sup>113</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II, p.1403*(organized by me)

like in his situation. Weber does not suggest a rational solution like Marx's socialist solution to existing conditions, because he is irritated by it. In the basis of this irritation, there is a problem represented as the underlying reason of this complexity, which is the centralization in the whole area of life. According to Weber, "the whole process of rationalization, in the factory as *elsewhere*, and especially in the bureaucratic state machine, parallels the centralization of material implements of organization in the hands of the master."<sup>114</sup> Considered closely, Weber's concept of centralization of the entire life is reminiscent of Marx's approach in his monumental works, in *Capital*, which is about the centralization or concentration of capital. "A capitalist always kills many" said Marx regarding to the centralization of capital.<sup>115</sup> In this way, both the capital is centred by the strongest capitalists and expropriation is implemented for Marx. However, Weber utilizes this for much more varied areas such as bureaucracy, state and war.

Instead of an extended comparison, I want to turn to what I want to say, in brief, Weber, being different from Marx, in fact, going beyond Marx, explained the concentration of power not only for economic sphere but also for other areas by extending this thesis. To this end, it can be said that Weber elaborated Marx's theory, because Marx's concentration of the means of production is only one side of concentration, but the control over the means of violence, political administration and scientific research are other sides of concentration by which Weber makes a contribution to the social theory. Moreover, Weber's conception of irrationalism as a result of rationalization process is in a close contact with Marx's alienation conception. Therefore, Weber does not come into conflict with Marx, on the

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<sup>114</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p.1156

<sup>115</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Part VIII, Chapter XXXII p.485

contrary, as can be seen as Irvin Zeitlin asserts, they are “an adaption of Marx’s theory to twentieth century conditions”.<sup>116</sup>

#### 4.1.2. Which one, Technology or Economy?

One of the things that Weber’s criticizes in *Economy and Society* regarding Marx’s statements is his concept of mode of production that blur the technological and economic aspects. In fact, Weber not only refers Marx’s *the Poverty of Philosophy* but also attacks it. According to Marx,

Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist<sup>117</sup>

Weber’s answer for this passage,

To my knowledge, Marx has not defined technology. There are many things in Marx that not only appear contradictory but actually are found contrary to fact if we undertake a thorough and pedantic analysis, as indeed we must. Among other things, there is an oft-quoted passage: The hand-mill results in feudalism, the steam-mill in capitalism. That is a technological, not an economic construction.<sup>118</sup>

As can be seen above, Weber especially thinks that Marx imagines a society determined by technology but not economy. Therefore, one can say that Marx, in

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<sup>116</sup> Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7th Edition. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. p. 233

<sup>117</sup> Marx, Karl. (1955). *The Poverty of Philosophy. Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon*. (Originally written). First half of 1847. (Trans.) from the French by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, 1955. Progress Publishers. p. 48-49

<sup>118</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume I*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Ed.), Ephraim Fischhoff, Hans Gerth, A.A. Henderson, Ferdinand Kogegar, C.Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Max Rheinstein, Gunther Roth, Edward Shils and Claus Wittich (Trans.) and Gunther Roth (Introduction by). University of California Press Berkeley. Los Angeles. London. p. LXX

fact, implies technology when he talks about base or infrastructure. However, none of them is correct. When we look above to Marx's original statements, it would be seen that what Marx tells is that different technologies demand different sorts of social organizations. In a well-ordered capitalist society, of course, machinery will increase the rate of surplus because of the rising of productivity. The societies that use the means with low productivity level can only supply their essential needs instead of producing for external trade. From this point, it can be said that the societies with different technological developments will have very different and opposing social organisations with each other. Hence, it will be not false to say feudalism has different social, political, cultural and economical organisations from capitalism, or vice versa. At the same time, feudalism's hand mill, of course, will not be similar to capitalism's steam mill in my opinion. On the other hand, like many readers Weber is interested only in Marx's aphorism that indicates the relation between hand mill and steam mill. Nevertheless, Marx in his same works explains that "labour is organised, is divided differently according to the instruments it disposes over. The hand-mill presupposes a different division of labour from the steam-mill."<sup>119</sup> Marx also supposes that the instruments of labour not only promote the level of development to which human labour has arrived, but also they are the indicators of the social conditions.<sup>120</sup> From this quotation, we can understand that Marx aims to say that the instruments of labour diversify according to the diversification of division of labour. In this respect, Weber's assertion about Marx's contradiction on technology and economy does not appear to be coherent for us.

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<sup>119</sup> Marx, Karl. (1955). *The Poverty of Philosophy*. p.60

<sup>120</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Chapter 7, p.116 and also see for an interesting discussion Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. p. 161

### 4.1.3. What is Class, What are Status and Party? Who is Right?

Another topic of discussion from *Economy and Society* will be on the concept of class again. As known, Marx shows his last and substantial analyses concerning the notion of class in the third volume of *Capital*, although these analyses cover only one and a half page owing to the fact that he could not finish them and passed away, unfortunately. Therefore, at the end of the pages titled with “classes”, Engels glosses a footnote, “at this point manuscript breaks off.”<sup>121</sup>

Marx, in his work, mainly divided classes in modern society as *wage labourers*, *capitalists* and *landowners*. At this point, if Marx had finished his book, he would have answered a grave question about “what makes a class” or “what makes wage-labourers, capitalists and landowners the formative elements of the three great social classes”, but he never could. Thereafter, when Weber elaborates on social classes, he reminds of Marx’s claims and adds, “The unfinished last part of Karl Marx's *Capital* apparently was intended to deal with the issue of class unity in the face of skill differentials.”<sup>122</sup> After Weber refers to Marx’s system of class, he defines social classes, which are composed of *the working class* as a whole (1), *the petty bourgeoisie* (2), the *propertyless intelligentsia and specialists* such as technicians (3), civil-servants (4), and lastly *the classes privileged through property and education* (5). When we look Weber’s four classes, it would be seen that Marx collects the lower strata of middle class such as the small tradesmen, handicraftsmen and peasants, that is, Weber’s (2), (3) and (4) under the title of “proletariat”<sup>123</sup>. Therefore, in fact, it can be said, as if Weber worked to go into the

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<sup>121</sup> Marx, Karl. (1991) *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume III*. (ed.) Friedrich Engels (First Published, Hamburg-Verlag von Otto Meissner, 1894) (Intro.) Ernest Mandel. (Trans.) David Fernbach. Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, London, England. p. 1026

<sup>122</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume I*, p. 305

<sup>123</sup> See, Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. p. 16

details and reorganized some points left outside by Marx's theory of class.<sup>124</sup> More importantly, Weber claims, in such a manner that is reminiscent of Marx's approach, that "property and lack of property are the basic categories of all class situations".<sup>125</sup> Meanwhile, I must state, "the class situation is ultimately market situation" in Weber.<sup>126</sup> At the same time, the notion of class is the main origin of power for him too. As it might be remembered, Marx decidedly indicates that every class struggle is a political struggle in his *Communist Manifest*<sup>127</sup>; hence it cannot be false to say that the winner of this struggle is also the owner of power. To this end, when Marx and Weber are evaluated carefully, their notions of class are similar to each other. However, there is a single difference between their notions of class, that is the notion of class may influence social construction but only to the extent that the status and the party permits it to influence the society for Weber. Therefore, up to a point Marx's notion of class is valid in the analysis of society, according to Weber, but the noneconomic forms or the origin of power should be included in the analysis. Like classes, *status groups*, and *parties* are also the phenomena of the distribution of power within a community<sup>128</sup>. Nevertheless, Weber also defines *status* (or *stande*) as a considerable factor to understand the social life.

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<sup>124</sup> For example, according to Zeitlin, Weber witnessed the development of modern class movements, so he could revise Marx theory in respect of present requirements. Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. p. 231.

<sup>125</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p. 927

<sup>126</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p.928 and also Weber, Max. (1946). *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*. H.H. Gerth-C. Wrights Mills. (Trans., Ed, and with an Introduction) Printed in the United States of America. Oxford University Press, New York. p. 182

<sup>127</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. p. 16

<sup>128</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p. 927

Unlike the classes or class situation, status situation is not determined only by economic elements, but also by a specific and social honour as the normal and ordinary component of the life of men. In contrast to class position, having a property is not a necessary condition for a status honour. For instance, a man with property may have the same status with a man who has no property. It also hinders the strict and pure mechanism of market principle, whereas the class situation is ultimately the market situation as defined by Weber above. The concept of status also includes some social label called as prestige and the life of style. According to Weber, the notion of status has sometimes overshadowed the class situation, for example, stratification according to status situation, in reality, is against the development of the open market, material interests and classes and can also preclude some acts directed towards them. In fact, in the middle ages, there were struggles between the guilds of artisans which have the sole purpose of occupying a place from front seats in Lord Mayer's parade rather than defending an economic interest, says Weber.<sup>129</sup> Because status honour need not to be always linked with a class situation necessarily, according to Weber's view. As a matter of fact, Marx emphasizes the importance of status, for example, in a passage,

All the preceding *class* that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired *status* by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation...The proletarians, (on the other hand) have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify.<sup>130</sup>

From this, though Marx accepts the existence of status, it can be claimed again that the notion of status includes always an economic meaning and it is not independent from the notion of class in Marx. At first glance, it seems as though Weber with his status situation went beyond Marx's class situation. As the result of Weber's formulation of a theory which is constructed according to the non-economic

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<sup>129</sup> Kalberg, Stephen. (2009). *Max Weber'i Anlamak*. p. 79

<sup>130</sup> Cited in Schmit, Richard. (1997). *Introduction to Marx and Engels, A critical reconstruction*. p. 212

elements in his social analyses, Weber also develops a non-economically oriented political theory, but despite that, he never neglects the importance of economy in political processes. For example, it can be said that modern state is a derivative of market economy in Weber's views. However, since the modern state is a production of western capitalism too (as it was mentioned in chapter I); Weber searches for the specialization and bureaucratization in the all extensions of life, and so, while Weber's bureaucratic state was defined as a neutral element, Marx's state has a definite class identity. According to some scholars, Weber's notion of status belongs to more local and administrative systems, like feudalism, where social hierarchy was determined with regard to *status*, instead of *the relation of production*.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, in modern capitalist society, social relations depend on the relations of production; hence the main determinant is class. In order to verify their argumentations, these scholars make a quotation from Marx and Engels' *German Ideology*, as the following: "By the mere fact that it is a class and no longer an estate, the bourgeoisie is forced to organise itself no longer locally, but nationally..."<sup>132</sup> Therefore, bourgeoisie as a result of its universal tendencies is against a local and feudal organization, so it need not to be dependent on a status group. The mainstay of these assertions is Weber's some statements in *Economy and Society* again. As mentioned above by Weber, the class situation is ultimately a market situation, and so class situation has begun with a primitive form of the relation between creditor and debtor, basing on a class situation firstly in cities with a credit market. Therewith, according to Weber, "class struggles begin."<sup>133</sup> From this point of view, if "the class" is a peculiar form that belongs to capitalist market

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<sup>131</sup> For a controversy see, Gülalp, Haldun. (1993) *Kapitalizm, Sınıflar ve Devlet*. Belge Yayınları (publisher), Osman Akınhay, Abdullah Yılmaz (Trans.), İstanbul. pp. 18-21

<sup>132</sup> Marx, Karl. (1968). *The Critique of German Ideology*. Originally written: 1845. First published: 1932 Tim Delaney, Bob Schwartz (Trans.) Progress Publishers. Online Version: Marx/Engels Internet Archive (Marxists.org). p. 31

<sup>133</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p.928



conditions, a different concept is needed for the pre-capitalistic forms of social stratification system.<sup>134</sup> As these scholars claim, Weber indicates status condition. Namely, he says,

Those men whose fate are not determined by the chance of using goods and services for themselves on the market, e.g., slaves, are not, however, a class in the technical sense of term. They are, rather, a status group.<sup>135</sup>

Weber's classification begins in two main periods, which are defined as capitalist and pre-capitalist. In the pre-history of capitalism social stratification was determined by status, but later, together with capitalism it is determined by class. When we look from this view, it would be seen that only distinction between those of Weber's and Marx' is the concepts they chose in their analyses. While Weber applies two different concepts, Marx does only one.

However, looking closely at this picture, I think that Weber worked to elaborate Marx's more general views, maybe without the conscious intention to do so. Therefore he presents a more specific social analysis, like in his historical analysis. In order to show what might be invisible in the text, I want to remind Weber's earlier period in his academic life explained before. Weber looks towards the system of ancient and Middle Ages from the point of class struggle therein. In addition, Weber accepts, of course, the struggle of the propertyless of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages against monopolies, withholding of goods in his late period, similarly, there is a struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie because of a central issue about the determination of the price of labour.<sup>136</sup> But this time, seeing the primitive acquisition of the surplus value as a natural consequence, mature Weber no longer attributes a special importance to the preceding period.

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<sup>134</sup> Güllalp, Haldun. (1993). *Kapitalizm, Sınıflar ve Devlet*, p. 18

<sup>135</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p.928

<sup>136</sup> See, Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p. 931.

Weber defines why people react on a rational basis against the existing class structure, namely (1) “the given distribution of property” or (2) “the structure of concrete economic order”.<sup>137</sup> First of them was seen in ancient and middle age period, but second is the class situation of modern proletariat.

Elsewhere, Weber touches upon the status situation once again, but this time he explains it in modern life condition. Weber works to illuminate the distinction of class and status in many passages of *Economy and Society*. According to the last definition on this issue, “*classes* are stratified according to production and acquisition of goods; whereas *status groups* are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special styles of life.”<sup>138</sup> From this, it is clearly seen that status, at the same time, or sometimes, refers to the modern life styles, as different from traditional life style. Weber utilizes an interesting example, when an American gentleman as a boss who is playing cards in a club behaves equally to a person who works with him in spite of the fact that he is a capitalist at the factory his employee works.<sup>139</sup> Maybe it stimulates one of the most striking discussions on class position, which can affect Marxism’s political views. However, aforesaid gentleman as a member of his class stratification must not have played cards with his employee as the necessity of his class situation. What Weber wants to add on class discussions, at this point, status group may also be significant in modern social life without carrying an economical meaning.

Weber is in a quest for illuminating the main three areas such as economy, society and politics. Whereas the first of them is defined within the framework of class situation, social area is an expression of status situation. On the other hand, the concept Weber utilizes for political area is lastly “party situation.” The parties in

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<sup>137</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 929

<sup>138</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p. 937

<sup>139</sup> Weber, Marx. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 932

part are fed by class and also status in the same time, but maybe by neither of them. According to Weber, parties, “always struggle for political control” and they have a strict organisation structure.<sup>140</sup> In this way, it is believed that parties can influence existing policy and mass.

Consequently, I have briefly touched on one of the most controversy issues. According to this, Weber suggests a three dimensional explanation to social stratification that consisting of the triple concepts such as class, status and party. The first one is defined by Weber just like Marx. When inquiring Weber’s class situation, Marx’s echo will be heard powerfully. Regarding Weber’s status situation, while it is accepted to be explanatory for the situations referring pre-modern period, Weber is not seen to be the opposite of Marx’s class theory. One can say that Weber is interested in economical, political and social areas as a whole, and as a result of this, he uses three different concepts. However, Marx only deals with the economical sphere, which determines other spheres, therefore it can be claimed that Weber develops a much more comprehensive theory. I partly agree with this view, Weber, of course, offers a more detailed explanation on stratification, but this notion does not conflict with Marx’s views. Weber, in fact, has an advantage by reason of being a social philosopher in academia, so he could elaborate his theory more analytically than Marx did. What is more, he is a more contemporary thinker than Marx; therefore he could give a comprehensive answer to the problem of modern life condition. All reasons concerning the differences between Weber and Marx are an indication that Weber expands Marx’s context on class discussion rather than clashing with him in my opinion.

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<sup>140</sup> Weber, Marx. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 939

#### 4.1.4. Law and Ideology: Yet Another Common Conceptualization

One of the main discussions related to the connection between Marx and Weber especially in modern political philosophy is on law and ideology. As known, Marx did not write a special work on law or ideology but gave a detailed place to them in his early and late period of studies.

The source to which I have to refer when it comes to the question of how Marx conceived the concept of law, is based on the relation between the infra- and superstructure. In a similar form in which Marx defines other important factors like philosophy, culture, ideology, ethics, politics etc., the law is also defined to be inside the superstructural institutions. From this, it can be seen that the law is an agent with a subordinate importance and is under the influence of the base, economy. As mentioned in a discussion in Chapter II, Marx implies it in a relevant passage, “the changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of whole immense *superstructure*.”<sup>141</sup> However, this and same statements have caused some problems in Marxist theory since 19<sup>th</sup> century, as if it represented an oversimplified explanation in relation to theory and social reality. After Marx’s death, Engels undertook the duty of disposing of some misunderstandings on economic determinism and the agencies of superstructure. To this end, some statements and words are utilized in Engels’s texts such as “in the final analysis” and “in the last instance”.<sup>142</sup> In a letter send by Engels to M. Block argued out the issue of economic determinism, accordingly,

If somebody twists this ultimate determining factor into saying that the economic factor is the only determining one, he transforms that

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<sup>141</sup> See p.8 in this thesis, and Marx, Karl. (1977). *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Maurice Dobb (Ed.)

<sup>142</sup> I benefit from Milovanovic’s working for Engels’s statements in his letter; also he investigates in detail the relation between Marx and Weber especially on law. Milovanovic, Dragan. (2002). *Weberian and Marxian Analysis of Law, Development and Functions of Law in a Capitalist Mode of Production*. Ashgate Publishing Company, Burlington, USA. p. 42

proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase...although the economic movement is finally bound to assert itself; other factors will also exercise their influence.<sup>143</sup>

As can be seen, Engels appears to evade a vulgar style of determinism and he regards economy not as the only factor but as the most decisive factor among others. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the other factors do not have an effect on social life, or that they are insignificant. Also Engels elsewhere turns his attention on this issue again and says,

Although political, legal, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development... all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base.<sup>144</sup>

In the light of these declarations, it can be asserted that though Engels regards economy as a decisive factor, he believes that other factors can affect economic factor (base) too, as they affect each other. Hence, it can be said that there is an interaction among all factors, including the economic factor, in spite of that the economy is the most decisive factor. In any case, the law can be thought to be an agent which has a relative-independency within the bounds economic base. Investigating Marx's influence on Engels greatly exceeds the limits of a master dissertation, of course, but I believe that we can arrive some certain conclusions at this point. Since Engels's statements have been doubtless accepted to be belonging to Marx as well, whenever Engels talks about anything in an intellectual discussion, it is as though Marx's tone were heard because of the loyal friendship and partnership between them for over many years.

On the other hand, Weber elaborates his theory of legislation, and begins with its definition; accordingly, what law refers is simply an "order". "Guaranteed law" as a concept of law, implies the utilization of coercion which allows the legal norms to

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<sup>143</sup> Cited in Milovanovic, Dragan. (2002). *Ibid.* p. 42

<sup>144</sup> Cited in Milovanovic, Dragan. (2002). *Ibid.* p. 43

be implemented in the empirical world.<sup>145</sup> Therefore, firstly what we must understand from law is that it is an order consisting of norms; secondly it is established by way of coercion and violence by legal organs. After defining the concept of law, Weber speculates its relation with economy this time. “Today economic exchange is quite overwhelmingly guaranteed by the threat of legal coercion” says Weber.<sup>146</sup> In this given situation, as a social factor, the economy is under the assurance of the legal system for Weber. Also, Weber elsewhere underlines the importance of economy on law, and he declares that “economic interests are among the strongest factor influencing the creation of law.”<sup>147</sup> After Weber utters the importance of economy in social structure, he thoroughly recounts its historical reflection in the light of this issue. For example if the economical regulations and similar situations are considered, it could be possible to change the individual and social behaviours and actions. Prior to modern capitalism in China, if a person who granted a loan could not take his money back, might have threaten to commit suicide, and in the face of the possibility of not taking his loan back, he could even kill somebody. In India a creditors were used to sit in front of the debtor’s house, go to hunger strike and even hang themselves there.<sup>148</sup> On the other hand, in the modern society, if “a purposive contract” was prepared previously, the creditor can apply to a law court in case the debtor does not pay his debt back; in this way the creditor can collect the money without no one being killed. The liability (or obligation) to a purposive contract has replaced the liability to a person. The law and the contract system designed in line with the modern economic needs force the personal relationships to be transformed from a primitive stage to a more complex and non-humanistic stage. Accordingly, there is not only a reciprocal and

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<sup>145</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume I*, p. 313

<sup>146</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 329

<sup>147</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 334

<sup>148</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*. p. 678

interactive relation between economy and the legal law system and also a relation determined, although it is not that simple, by economic factors and needs in Weber's perception.

Weber's another interesting statement on law is his thought that in the market economy the law is related with the ruling classes. This is to be kept in our minds, because Weber speaks of a pressure exercised to a considerable extent by the private owners of the means of production, and this situation originates from the law guaranteeing the property of private owners.<sup>149</sup> At this point, Weber's approach reminds us the statements of Marx about the law as a supportive means of ruling classes in order to establish legal pressure on working class. In short, I think, it can be said that although economy is not the sole decisive factor on law and on its legal implementation, as Marx states, Weber regards economy as the most effective factor on whole other factors. At the same time, the institute of law is not pure and naive but it appears to be subordinated to the influence of the class that dominates economical interests at least in the market economy for Weber.

As I said above, on the other hand, Weber stresses on formal coercion and violence, when he talks about legal rules. The word *coercion* has two different meanings in Weber's works. First of all, as it was mentioned before, coercion is implemented by the state apparatus to execute legal norms and the rules of law, so it is political. As Weber states, that "every state is founded on force" is indeed right and "force is a means specific to the state"<sup>150</sup>. Weber says in the same place,

Like the political institutions historically preceding it, the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 730

<sup>150</sup> Weber, Max. (1946). *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*. H.H. Gerth-C. Wrights Mills. p. 78

<sup>151</sup> Weber, Max. (1946). *Ibid.* p.78

From this, it can be seen that Weber highlights the violence and coercion as the confinement of men's independence through legal norms of state. Also, Weber draws attention on this discussion under the title of "freedom and coercion" in his *Economy and Society* in the widest sense of the word. Here Weber broadly deals with economical coercion especially in addition to his former approach. Although Weber attributes a positive qualification to the development of law in terms of the freedom of individual, at the beginning of his sentences, Weber regards this situation to be to the disadvantage for labourers, indeed. For example, with improvements in law, contract system emerges in business sector, but according to Weber, under the modern working conditions, no contract could guarantee the determination of working statuses of the workers themselves.<sup>152</sup> If we open up Weber's statement, it can be easily realised that there is an additional similarity between Weber and Marx; because the coercion is both political and economical in Marx's corpus too. It is economical, because in modern market economy, individual capitalists force the workers to accept the wages they are offered.<sup>153</sup> Also, it is political because state supports a minority, bourgeois class, against the social majority, proletariat (worker class), for this it is obliged to use violence and coercion to provide social order. While citing about worker class, Marx says, "not only they are slaves of the bourgeois class, they are slaves of the bourgeois state"<sup>154</sup> In fact, Marx regards the relation between state and bourgeois as a total intertwinement.

To summarize, I think that Weber both distinctly attributes a decisive role on economy beside other social factors such as politics, law, religion, science and

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<sup>152</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II*, p.729

<sup>153</sup> See, Wood, W. Allen. (2004). *Karl Marx*. New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: Routledge and Kegan Paul Plc. p. 253

<sup>154</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. p.15



defines coercion and violence similar with Marx's thoughts, therefore Weber meets with Marx once again.

## **4.2. General Economic History**

### **4.2.1. The Presuppositions and Characteristics of Capitalist Mode of Production in General Economic History**

Up to this in third chapter, I have worked to investigate some examinations which are momentous in the discussion Weber and Marx; I have referred to some titles that take place in Weber's *Economy and Society* and in Marx's general views. After this point, I want to enlarge the existing context with Weber's last period works. By this way, it will be possible to make a detailed assessment of Weber and to compare Weber's former works with it.

*General Economic History*, as one of Max Weber's mature period works, is composed of his lecture notes delivered by him under the title of "Outlines of Universal Social and Economic History". The lectures were given in the winter semester of 1919-1920, therefore, it can be said that these outlines are Weber's last theoretical writings before he died.

In the preface of *General Economics History* (GEH), it was already declared that "the significance of the work lies, not in the detail content, but in the penetration of the conception according to which *a scheme of analysis of economic life* is fitted to exposition of the preparation for and development of modern capitalism."<sup>155</sup> From this point, as can be seen, Weber pays attention to an institutional theory of capitalism in his last work and especially in the last part of his this work and

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<sup>155</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History*. H. Knight (Trans.) First Collier Books Edition, USA. p. XVII

represents *presuppositions and characteristics of capitalist mode of production*. According to this,

1. *The appropriation of all physical means of production-* land, apparatus, machinery, etc. as disposable of *autonomous private industrial enterprises*.
2. *The freedom of market*, which is the absence of irrational limitations on trading in the market.
3. The rational *technology* that capitalistic accounting presupposes
4. *Calculable law and administration* to the capitalistic form of industrial organization.
5. The *Free labour* which is represented legally in the position. The development of capitalism is impossible, if such a propertyless stratum is absent.
6. *The commercialization of economic life*<sup>156</sup>

If we examine the fourth article, it can easily be seen that the state administration and political institutions are treated as the sub-branches of the materialistic production. After defining a reciprocal relation between law and administration within the industrial organization, Weber remarks how this process is going to be, namely if a rational economy is desired, economy must be constituted of a suitable administrative and juridical system. For example, when Weber indicates that “the Bank of England was suited only to a republic, not to a monarchy,” indeed, he emphasizes that banking business can only be independently practicable under the control of the capitalist groups.<sup>157</sup> Elsewhere Weber cites an example from far-east, ancient China: If a man sold his house to another and after selling if he has been through a impoverishment, he could stay that house as a renter without paying money, thanks to the spiritual traditions. According to Weber, under this conditions

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<sup>156</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *Ibid.* p. 208

<sup>157</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *Ibid.* p. 198, 208

mentioned above, capitalism cannot operate, the conditions and institutions capitalism need to operate like a machine.<sup>158</sup> In brief, the superstructure establishments in the Marxian sense such as law and administration or state institutions are seen subordinate in the face of capitalism, or economic system. As can be remembered; early Weber had a similar understanding, which was declared to be a Marxian approach in terms of the administration-law and materialistic production, because as Engels states, “the rationalization process in law, then is initially a development by which contradictions are eliminated when translating economic relations into a set of legal principles.”<sup>159</sup> Therefore, Weber meets with Marxian view with regard to that every economic regime creates its own suitable administrative and juridical system.

At the fifth article cited by Weber as the presuppositions and characteristics of capitalist mode of production, *free labour* is put forward as a *sine qua non* presupposition to the development of capitalism. Weber has already emphasized the importance of free labour for capitalism, which differentiates it from other periods like ancient and mediaeval, in his early writings. Similarly, an understanding of capitalism without free labour is a contradiction for Marx as well. As Marx says that “the capitalist system pre-supposes the complete separation of the labourers from all property in the means by which they can realize 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”<sup>160</sup>

Another issue examined under this article is the organization of free labour. In an illustrative manner, and without any censoring, Weber illuminates how labour was jammed into factories. Accordingly, if a person who voluntarily did not have an

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* p. 252

<sup>159</sup> Milovanovic, Dragan. (2002). *Weberian and Marxian Analysis of Law, Development and Functions of Law in a Capitalist Mode of Production*. Ashgate Publishing Company, Burlington, USA. p. 43

<sup>160</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Chapter 26, p.448

employment took a certificate from his master, then he is pushed inside a workhouse, but if the person was considered to be a vagabond or an idler, or if he was an unemployed who did not have an employment, then he is never supported in terms of finding an employment. As Weber says,

In this way the first labour force for the factories was recruited. With difficulty the people adapted themselves to the discipline of the work. But the *power of the possessing classes* was too great; they secured the support of the political authority through the justices of peace, who in the absence of binding law operated on the basis of a maze of instructions and largely according to their own dictates.<sup>161</sup>

Seemingly, Weber's statements explicitly direct our attention to three main points which we can numerate respectively,

1. It is possible to talk about the existence of a superior class, like early Weber mentioned (hence Weber still continues his materialistic line according to our approaches in his mature writings) and this class by way of oppression operates its factory order and rules.
2. Possessing class (or bourgeois class) has also power to steer both law and its executives such as judges and magistrates. At the same time, they are secured by political authority too. (As only the result of this premise, it can be claimed that law in fact is law of the superior class, and state institutions such as political and juridical authority are at the aforesaid class' service in a Marxian meaning.)
3. Lastly, not with Calvinist ethic but with possessing class's oppression, labour is organized according to factory mechanism. Thus, we say not an inner religious ethic that originated from Protestantism but an outer effect is responsible for the modern capitalistic organization.

To turn to Marx, similarly, he discusses the organization problems of the labour under the new conditions of production, and gets to the core of the issue. According

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<sup>161</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History*. p.228

to Marx, in fact, “the father of present working class was chastised for their enforced transformation into vagabonds and paupers.”<sup>162</sup> Yes, vagabonds and idlers were enforced to have a job, but in the beginning of the capitalistic process, men had already been enforced to be a vagabond or idler too. What Marx criticizes at this point is the law which considers them as voluntary criminals and treats them as if they live according to their own will and decisions independently from the existing social conditions. Marx records interesting cases where people adapted themselves to the discipline of the work. For example, if anyone refuses to work, he would be condemned to be the slave of the person who has denounced him as an idler, also if one is a vagabond and has been idling for three days, he is to be taken to his birthplace and branded with a letter V (the first letter of vagabond) on the breast.<sup>163</sup> As can be understood from those of Marx’s, Weber’s statements in preceding paragraphs regarding the discipline of work and some legal regulations in social life, exactly overlap those of Marx’s. Moreover, at the same pages of his *General Economic History*, Weber says that the “free labour” offers itself, contrary to all assumptions, “actually under the compulsion of whip or hunger” albeit in the formal sense it might seem to be voluntarily.<sup>164</sup> In fact, unless a class was compelled to sell his labour to live, capitalism would not be existent for Weber. In principle, Marx also claims that without compulsion and oppression on the labour power, capitalism would end operating. So let us continue with a larger passage from Marx,

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

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<sup>162</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Chapter 28, p. 463

<sup>163</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Ibid.* Chapter 28, p. 465

<sup>164</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History*. p. 209

voluntarily...The dull compulsion of economic relations completes the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist<sup>165</sup>

Briefly, it seems that both Marx and Weber agree that the origin of modern capitalism lies in the free labour and its organization into modern industry.

After comparing Weber with Marx, we shall turn Weber's presuppositions on the capitalistic form of production. According to Weber, the seventh article of the aforementioned (p. 22) presuppositions in *General Economic History* is the speculative economic crises of capitalism. For instance, the first speculative crisis in the world history is "the great tulip craze" in Holland for Weber. Crises, say Weber have recurred almost regularly at interval of about 10 years -1815, 1825, 1835, 1847- etc. in capitalism.<sup>166</sup> After presenting this information about crises, Weber modestly quotes Marx's assertion on crises, that is, "they manifest themselves as a signal for downfall of capitalism." Another characteristic of the crises is that they have progressive aspects. For example, Weber firstly articulates the reasons of crises such as chronic unemployment, destitution, glutting of the market etc. and those are an imminent factor of the *economic order*; however, crises may cause positive effects, for example, if such a crisis event had been absent, rational socialism would never have existed, because crises brings about unemployment, destitution, political disturbance, as a result of these, workers start to think about changing the social order with a new one.<sup>167</sup> Same thoughts can be seen, of course, in Marx, it may be somewhat stereotypical to give place to well-known statements of Marx's *communist manifesto*, but it will expertly set forth relationship, it's as follows

It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put the existence of the entire bourgeois society on its trial, each time more threateningly. In these crises, a great part not only of

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<sup>165</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital I*. Chapter 28. p. 464

<sup>166</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History*. p. 217

<sup>167</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *Ibid.* p. 218

the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, is periodically destroyed. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity – the epidemic of over-production<sup>168</sup>

In the meanwhile, as Weber quotes above, Marx sees “socialism” as the only positive result of crises. When also talking about socialism, he proclaims that capitalism or forces of production has progressive effects for the purposes of human being, and he thinks that the development of forces of production means the development of the productive forces of human.

Third article, it would be read as an emphasis on the rational *technology* which is compatible with capitalist developments. In order to understand Weber’s emphasises on technology and modern machinery, firstly, let us begin with Marx this time. As may be remembered, the concept of technology in Marx, when thought independently of the relations of exploitation in the mode of production, is initially perceived to have a positive meaning. In this sense, technology can be thought to have a meaning which opens a free space for the natural and acquired powers of human. However, if we consider it with the mode of production and the conditions of exploitation as a whole, technology immediately takes a negative meaning, and is called as a means for producing surplus-value for capitalists.<sup>169</sup> To illustrate, even only for an envelop, a man folded the paper with the folder, second man laid on the gum, and third man turned the flap over, and also fourth person embossed the device. The hands should change for each of these operations, according to Marx. Nevertheless, an envelop machine could operate all these process at once with more than 3000 envelop in Marx’s times (under 1862’s conditions). With this sample example, Marx strives to underline the opportunity that allows the capitalists to gain free service thanks to the productive power of the machineries. At the same time, booming machinery sector cause some alterations in

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<sup>168</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. p. 13

<sup>169</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital I. Chapter 15*, p. 248

work life, namely, more women and children are introduced to the work places instead of a conscious worker class. Eventually, Marx, about modern technology, says that “it is possible to write only all the history of inventions made since 1830’s for which equipping with arms to capital against only the riot of worker class.”<sup>170</sup>

On the other hand, though the inventions and the technology of pre-capitalistic period was generally in an empiric and coincidental level; both the positive invention and patent laws generate an entrepreneurial spirit and they were to be a driving force to the organization of free labour. At this point Weber uses an example similar to Marx’s envelop case, and marks the developments in the cotton production. Since the spinning tools were not available, the spindling process was not enough for the looms. After the technical improvements and inventions in spindle process were provided, cotton production has displayed an upward tendency in Western Europe. Therefore, it is not false to say that the relation between technology and modern capitalism reciprocal, incentive and inherent in Weber.<sup>171</sup>

Other article of presuppositions in *General Economic History* is the activities of colonization. Although these activities began with feudal form of colonization like that of Portuguese and Spanish, they continued with modern form of colonization like that of England and German. Furthermore, as a result of colonization, slave trade, and especially the black labour, had gradually come into existence in Europe and America. The most important reason for the slave trade in America is that indigenous people could not show enough performance in agriculture, so slave labour was used especially from Asia and Africa. From 1807 to 1848, a further five million slave imported from Africa, and it is estimated that the profit of slave trade at fifteen to twenty pounds sterling per slave per year in England.<sup>172</sup> Colonial trade

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<sup>170</sup> Bottomore, Tom. (Ed.) (2001). *Marksist Düşünce Sözlüğü*. İletişim Yayınları. İstanbul. p. 580

<sup>171</sup> For a controversy, Kundakçı, Deniz. (2008). “Weber’deki Marksizm: Genel Ekonomi Tarihi Üzerine Bir Giriş.” *Toplum ve Bilim*. Temmuz, Sayı: 112, p. 214

<sup>172</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History* p. 222,223



also led to the accumulation of wealth to an enormous extent. Though Weber does not attribute that much significance to colonial trade in terms of the accumulation of wealth in the development of modern capitalism, he firstly uses capitalist accumulation in collaboration with economic elements such as colonial trade, exploitation of labour and value mines rather Calvinist cultural elements like he did in the *Protestant Ethic*. On the other hand, the concept of exploitation and the colonial system like public debts, taxes, commercial wars and so on was defined by Marx just as a child gigantically growing up in the infancy period of modern industry. The appearance of modern industry and primitive accumulation in occident depend not only upon the expropriation of agrarian lands and a national exploitation of surplus value but also upon maritime commerce and the exploitation of precious metals as well.<sup>173</sup> This exploitation took place partly, as Weber articulates above, in a chronological order in Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, France and England. Moreover, Marx speaks of slave trade and because of its efficiency and profitability, young children were kidnapped in Holland for employment purposes and they were compelled to be slave. As a conclusion, it is true that there is a deep similarity between Marx and Weber about colonialism, at least in principle. In this point, the only difference with Weber's illustrative manner compared to Marx's approach is their value judgements on the same process. Weber, of course, like Marx examines the appearance of capital and primitive accumulation and also he thinks that capital originates from colonialism and enslavement programmes. Nevertheless, defines, Marx, as distinct from Weber, capital with an ethical aphorism, as such: "if money 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."<sup>174</sup> As can be seen, Marx, owing to the political aspects of his life, uses more striking sentences and emphasizes the importance of

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<sup>173</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, chapter XXXI, p. 408

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* p. 482

being a proponent of worker class struggle without hesitation. As indicated, Weber's economic statements are not grounded in the notions of human 'need', but he rather seeks to only understand the structural conditions that favoured the growth of a rational money system.<sup>175</sup>

In conclusion, Weber splendidly categorizes the characteristics of modern capitalism and what we find is an institutional theory in *GEH*. Eventually, the factors that produce capitalism, As Weber mentioned, are "rational permanent enterprise, rational accounting, rational technology and rational law, and lastly necessary complementary factors were the rational spirit, the rationalization of conduct of life in general and a rationalistic economic ethic."<sup>176</sup> As can be seen, Weber regards the concepts of ethic and spirit as only complementary factors, not as main factors. Religious organizations play a rather important key role as different from Weber's *Protestant Ethics*; the gravity of this situation should not be overlooked, or underestimated.<sup>177</sup>

#### **4.2.2. The Various Marxist Emphasises in *General Economic History***

After putting in order the presuppositions and characteristics of capitalist mode of production, now we can forward to other Marxist emphasises in *GEH*. Weber, in his work's fifth chapter, strives to present the position of the peasants before the appearance of capitalism in various Western countries, and mentions in detail that with the dissolution of manorial system, peasants did not have the right to property.

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<sup>175</sup> Turner, Bryan S. (1992–1993). *Max Weber from History to Modernity*, London and Newyork, Routledge. p. 181,182

<sup>176</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History* p. 260

<sup>177</sup> Also, for a controversy about this claim, see. Collins, Randall. (1980). "Weber's Last Theory of Capitalism: Systematization." *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 45. p.942

The peasants, as they were separated from their lands, were emancipated, and similarly the lords who own the lands that were acquired through inheritance lost their political and religious privileges and powers. As a result of these radical and fundamental changes, the source of political and religious power changes hands from one privileged class to another in the course of time. With this process, the capitalist tendency had also begun to arise. As for Marx, he names the same process that begins with impoverishment of peasants as the first act of the foundation drama of the capitalist mode of production. As is remembered, Marx, in fact, regards this process as a vital introduction to “primitive accumulation”, the ancestor of modern capital. To summarize, although Weber does not evaluate the dissolution of manorial system and the impoverishment of peasants in terms the emergence of primitive capital just as Marx did, he considers a direct element at the emergence of capitalism. However, even this explanation displays Marx’s impact on Weber’s recent capitalism theory.

Although Weber does not consider the population growth to be important at the development of modern capitalism, this element in Weber’s work provides another Marxist emphasis for us. As it was the case in the example of backward China during Weber’s lifetime, population growth is not a unique element to capitalism. In order to prove that the increase of population is not of significance, Weber applies Marx’s materialistic statement, namely, “every economic epoch has its own law of population”<sup>178</sup> It may not be accepted to be the general form for every epoch, but at least it is justified in the present case, according to Weber. From this point, it will be certainly claimed that Weber appears to have accepted the impact of economy on the growth of population in real terms. Weber, as a matter of fact, not only draws attention the pivotal role of economy, but also presents his respect to the explanation power of Marx’s theory on the current practical cases.

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<sup>178</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History* p. 258

In another passage Weber asks whether there can be a possible limitation to economic interests in the previous epochs, differently from a well-ordered society, namely the modern capitalist society. However, he rejects these type of interpretations and according to Weber, “the notion that our rationalistic and capitalistic periods is characterized by a stronger economic interest than other periods is childish” also, for example, “the moving spirits of modern capitalism are not possessed of a stronger economic impulse than an oriental trader.”<sup>179</sup> Therefore, be in ancient period or in modern period and regardless of men’s living in the west or the east, there are economic interests in every epoch and everywhere for Weber. In this score, it can be understood that, Weber regards capitalism as a more advanced system in terms of conducting economic interest because of the rationalization process. And regarding this as the distinctive character of capitalism, he comes closer to Marx once again, and emphasizes the importance of the economic interests for every epoch.

As I had given as an example before, Weber represented a relation between mediaeval and ancient times. The term *commenda*, as a kind of commerce or as the ancestor of limited liability companies from thirteenth century, was emerged in ancient times. Similarly, Weber, in one of his early period works named *Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*, states that modern capitalism appeared on the basis prepared by the mediaeval commerce and industry organizations and is using its material and legal forms. In this regard, we had expressed it to prove that reference have been given by Weber to the idea of historical continuity or of an evolutionary approach. Now, Weber refers to the implementation of “foenus nauticum” or “sea loan” this time as an institution existing from ancient epochs to medieval period.<sup>180</sup> Accordingly, both the lender and the borrower share high risk on goods to go overseas, and so the responsibility in case of loss of the ship was

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<sup>179</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History* p. 261

<sup>180</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *Ibid.* p. 157

shared by both of them. As can be seen, Weber gave a place to a mediaeval procedure that originated in ancient times, but this time, as different from his early writings, he approaches the issue not in a philosophical but rather in an economical manner.

In the aforementioned discussion from previous section, we quoted from both Marx and Weber, and mentioned Weber's critics about Marx's statements on the relation between hand-mill and feudalism with the steam-mill and capitalism. However, when Weber examines the distinction between apparatus and modern factory in one of the passages of *GEH*; he presents the real distinguishing characteristic of modern factory. Accordingly, the factory system stipulates a precondition that consists of "the concentration of ownership of workplace, means of work, source of power and raw material", in one and the same hand, which is the entrepreneur.<sup>181</sup> If so, Weber on the one hand distinguishes modern factory system from others, and on the other hand, envisages it altogether with an integration leading an entrepreneur and as Weber said, this integration or combination cannot exist before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In sum, Weber constructs a new system, a factory system; presupposes its own social and managerial organization and of course executive classes. Therefore, as Marx indicates, Weber believes that different technologies demand different sorts of social organizations too. Capitalism with a well-ordered factory system both increases the rate of surplus, and takes its place in modern world. At the broadest level, Marx's hand mill and steam mill find themselves in Weber's apparatus and modern factory.

Another issue which has to be clarified in the context of *GEH* is about the future of capitalism, in this sense; it is Weber, rather than Marx, who has pessimistic views. As can be known, afterwards Marx worked intensively on political economy during long years; he suggested an economical system against capitalism, socialism, as a

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<sup>181</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History*. p. 224

solution to people's miseries and the social problems such as unemployment and poverty because he believed that capitalism cannot exist for ages. Until from former writings to late works, Marx always appears to be eager and faithful concerning breaking down of old mode of production. For example, in *Communist Manifest*, Marx speaks of, "in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."<sup>182</sup> As we have already seen, it is clear that Marx draws an optimistic portrait regarding the future of human being. On the other hand, Weber is more remote from an optimistic approach about the fate of capitalism and humanity unlike Marx. Marx examines capitalist mode of production altogether with misery, poverty, and impoverishment, and then he feverishly offers a prescription to these troubles. However, in addition to his pessimism, what Weber did is only analysing existing social conditions without suggesting a solution, though he refuses to deny that there was a problem. According to Weber, "it is the closed national state which afforded to capitalism its chance for development- and as long as the national state does not give place to a world empire capitalism also will endure."<sup>183</sup> From this, it can be understood that Weber underlines an alliance between national state and capitalism, and emphasis only to the extent to which capitalism disappears if the national state give place to a global capitalism, although the opposite of this assertion is valid in present. As mentioned in previous section, Weber interpreted the analogy of "iron cage" in order to explain the pangs of modernization, in this respect it is explicit that Weber has his pessimism in various forms. There are some causes why Weber appears so pessimistic, one of the explanations about this issue put into words by Turner, accordingly, "the unanticipated consequences of action are, for Weber, inevitably unhappy and tragic

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<sup>182</sup> Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich. (2008). *Manifesto of Communist Party*. p. 36

<sup>183</sup> Weber, Max. (1961). *General Economic History*. p. 249

outcomes...This pessimistic view of history was a consequence of his direct and specific engagement with the legacy of the philosophy of Nietzsche.”<sup>184</sup>

### 4.3. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I tried to analyse Weber and Marx with comparative approach, and especially used Weber’s mature and the most significant works such as *Economy and Society* (and *Essays in Sociology from Marx Weber*) *General Economic History*. To begin with, after I investigated the similarities regarding the concepts of rationality and alienation, which I believe to be a considerably interesting discussion in social sciences, I touched on Weber’s some recriminations about Marx’s technology writings and I have worked to save Marx from Weber’s unjust statements and claims with a modest and objective attempt. Under the title of class, status and party, I believe that I have brought Weber and Marx together on a common ground, because I think, at least at the issue of classes or social agencies, Weber has strived to elaborate Marx’s class theory, although he has referred to status groups as an agent that reflects the modern life style.

Of course, the discussions on base/superstructure in social contexts have always intrigued scholars. Having said that Weber emphasizes economy as the most decisive factor, indeed, rather than holding and repeating a traditional but lapsed Weberian approach, I have already spoken of a new Weberian understanding connected to economy. When emphasizing ideology and law with related to economy, Weber gradually seems to have accepted Marx’s general views.

Furthermore, I tried to reflect Weber’s institutional theory of capitalism in *General Economic History*. When we look at the general scope of Weber’s institutional theory in terms of enterprise, class relations, law, ideology, (international)

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<sup>184</sup> Turner, Bryan S. (1995). *For Weber, Essays on the Sociology of Fate*. SAGE Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. p. XI, XXIV

exploitation and accumulation, it would be seen that with his last theory, Weber is at his closest position to the Marx's general approach towards capitalism.

As may be remembered, another controversy was whether there was a change between Weber's early and mature period. Throughout the chapter, I have been in quest for an answer to this question, accordingly, as different from early works, Weber regarded capitalism as the only specific phenomenon originating from modern era. However, similar to his early period, capitalism appears to have been founded on a material ground. At this point, one wonders how is relation between Weber's methodology with that of Marx. I will deal with this question in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER V

### THE METHODOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS

#### 5.1. An Introduction

Up until now, I tried to show the connection between Marx and Weber's early and late writings from their political and economic aspects. The conclusion I can reach from these is that Weber does not distinctly display an opposite attitude against Marx's general perspective. On the contrary, Weber in many respects closely contacts with Marx's social and philosophical subjects. After this, I will try to focus on the methodological relationships between these great social philosophers. To this end, I think it is proper to begin with Weber's methodological approaches, like I did in previous chapters. For this, I substantially benefited from Weber's *Methodology of the Social Sciences* [Part I (1917), Part II (1904), and Part III (1905)], *Protestant Ethic* (1905) and *Economy and Society* (1914). As can be seen, I did not prefer to make a distinction between Weber's early or late writings, because I believe that Weber had a similar methodological vision from the beginning of his academic life, at least since he has published his *Methodology of the Social Sciences*, although he has sometimes approached social and philosophical problems from different starting points.

Having listed the characteristics of his methodology in social sciences, Weber has taken a position against Marxism, not Marx, and hereby he explained the methodological differences. For this, the methodological distinctions can be thought to be the most dramatic conflict between Weber and Marx's theory. Partly, I can agree with these thoughts, but what I believe is that this conflict does not appear as an insuperable problem.

In order to display how we can approach and evaluate this interesting relation this time from methodological point, I want to deal with it under two main titles. Firstly, I will explain Weber's general social and literal method and its counterpart in Marx and after this, Weber's direct and explicit attacks and objections against Marxism and historical materialism will be clarified with the original quotations from Weber. Hereby, Weber and Marx's methods will be compared more exhaustively and clearly. In a sense, it will be an effort to use Weber's own comparative approach against Weber himself this time.

## **5.2. A View of Weber's and Marx's General Methodological Approaches**

Understanding Weber's search for grasping the self-evident truths and concerns that foster his search may give some hints about Weber's thoughts on the nature of the social sciences.<sup>185</sup> Of course, it wouldn't contradict with any philosopher's wishful thinking that the truths were chosen as a starting point by Weber. This type of an approach might be evaluated as a Weberian aphorism, which Weber articulates in his "Archives for Social Science and Social Welfare", a journal founded by Weber with Edgar Jaffe and Werner Sombart.<sup>186</sup> Weber's search for the truth might be defined as an aphorism, but never as a sentence from a manifesto, since Weber's aim displayed in their journal is not an attempt to "offer a solution, but rather to disclose a problem."<sup>187</sup> In fact, the main difference between Weber and Marx is hidden in these statements. Marx's (communist) manifesto is a solution to all social

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<sup>185</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p.50

<sup>186</sup> Weber explains the aim of their journal in the following sentences, "the scientific investigation of the general cultural significance of the social-economic structure of the human community and its historical forms of organization is the central aim of our journal" see also Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p.67

<sup>187</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p.51

and political problems or “social welfare”, of course according to him, but Weber’s journal and his attempt are only an analysis of “social welfare”, despite the fact that methodological issues are dominant in Weber’s journal compared to Marx’s manifesto. The main reason of all potential methodological distinctions explicitly originates from their point of views on problems and their solution.

On the other hand, Weber suggests a modest understanding of science, whose mission is not to say what people should or should not do, but rather science can only say what they can do. Weber does design science as a discipline that “strives for an analytical ordering of empirical reality.”<sup>188</sup> Thus Weber draws the boundaries of science. This “empirical reality” might guide us in providing technical documents about how we can find a convenient way to understand our world and social and philosophical problems.

Another discussion Weber refers is the concept of “general law” and for him these are quite valuable in natural sciences and they have a universal validity. However, unlike natural sciences, Weber tends to avoid making generalizations in the social and cultural sciences, where the more we make generalizations the more we are devoid of content and detail. To this end, Weber advises that social scientists should support an understanding that deals with the reality and truth with a comprehensive approach, because “the richness of reality” and “the common elements of the largest possible number of phenomenon” can be represented only this manner. As Weber says, “in cultural sciences, the knowledge of the universal or general is never valuable in itself.”<sup>189</sup> On the other hand, when economy gets itself involved in the relation between the “law” and the “truth”, in this context, then this relation disappears due to the complexity of social life. In order to justify the necessity of law on economic life, Weber benefits from these,

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<sup>188</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p. 54

<sup>189</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 80

...at least as regards the fundamental phenomena of economic life, the construction of a system of abstract and therefore purely formal propositions analogous to those of the exact natural sciences, is the only means of analyzing and intellectually mastering the complexity of social life.<sup>190</sup>

What Weber emphasizes at this point, although it is impossible to establish an analogy between all disciplines of social sciences with natural sciences, is that the analysis of the phenomena of economic life can be facilitated. To this end, just as in the case of natural sciences, an economical abstraction can be deducted from an economical reality. However, in Weber, nothing is more sharply emphasized than the assertion that economical abstractions are not real and valid as much as absolute laws are. At this point, there is a discernible difference between “economically conditioned” and “economically relevant” according to Weber’s classification and Weber is interested with both of them. First of all, as is known, social institutions and relations are determined or governed by material or economical interests. It can be said that an economically conditioned explanation is concerned with only consequences, but an economically relevant interpretation, on the other hand, especially deals with particular causes. Weber implicitly suggests that both the economically relevant and economically conditioned interpretations allow us to reach self-evident truths.

When Marx’s approach is considered closely, it will be seen to be same with those of Weber. Marx’ economic-historical method, also, as Allen Wood says that it is “not a good guide to the writing of personal biography or the history of some individual’s inner spiritual development.”<sup>191</sup> That is, Marx’ method excludes individuality at the expense of economically conditioned factors; therefore it overlaps Weber’s method originated from social-economic phenomenon.

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<sup>190</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p. 87

<sup>191</sup> Wood, W. Allen. (2004). Karl Marx. New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition: Routledge and Kegan Paul Plc. p. 118

Furthermore, in Marx's general view methodological process flows from concrete to abstract, as it does in Weber's.

Before going further in the analysis of the relation between Weber and Marx, I want to put forward an even larger claim which could be accepted by Weber: In spite of the differences of their expository elements in their epistemological theory, both of them utilize the similar means in pursuit of reality. Now, it would not be false to say that Weber's most crucial assertion in his methodological works is that "the knowledge of social laws is not the knowledge of social reality", but it is only "one of the various aids used by our minds for attaining this end."<sup>192</sup> Therefore, what a social-philosopher does is only a speculation about the world to understand its reality, so the activity of speculation can only be an auxiliary method for philosopher. After this, Weber continues with a different striking statement, "culture is a finite segment of the meaningless infinity of the world process" and "all knowledge of cultural (social) reality is always knowledge from particular points of view."<sup>193</sup> In light of these statements, in fact, it is seen that every explanation of social reality is an abstraction that gives us a particular answer about the *constellations* of reality. All social thinkers approach reality from their own views and accordingly the world gains various meanings and also our cultural world gains a finite form. However, as a result of that every thinker has her own views, every explanation includes subjectivity; our knowledge concerning reality is the variant aspects of the constellations of reality. As Weber recounts, a "point of view" has a vital significance in the construction of a conceptual scheme.<sup>194</sup> At this point, we went back to the square one again, because Weber's main concern is to overcome subjectivity and to constitute an objective scheme in social sciences, but, as declared before, Weber asserts that the knowledge regarding real world comes

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<sup>192</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p. 80

<sup>193</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 81

<sup>194</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 84

from individualistic views. At the first glance, it can be seen as a contradiction, but the (abstract) economic theories present an ideal picture to objective explanation, although it is not possible to mention absolutely objective scientific analysis of cultural sciences. This hypothetical picture is backed by Weber's notion of ideal type and in order to associate this discussion with Marx's methodology, I also want to remind the characteristics of Weber's ideal type.

The full name of Weber's *Economy and Society*, as one of the most polemical works, is "an outline of Interpretive Sociology" and from this it can be understood that Weber predominantly has an interpretive understanding rather than the concrete causal-explanatory approach, and Weber places it on the centre of his methodology. Accordingly, the interpretive understanding (Ger: Verstehen) is concerned with human meaning and its relation with own intentions, belief and desires. In this sense, Weber prefers an internal view to historical and social problems "in their own terms" and evaluates "ideal types" as a convenient method to his approach.<sup>195</sup> Weber's following sentences reflects his view emphatically,

Our aim is the understanding of the characteristic uniqueness of the reality in which we move. We wish to understand on the one hand the relationships and the cultural significance of individual events in their contemporary manifestations and on the other the causes of their being historically *so* and not *otherwise*.<sup>196</sup>

In order to understand and to interpret the reality, the notion of ideal type is used for expository purposes in Weber's terminology, and Weber's own words can be quoted once again in this context: "it [ideal type] is not a description of reality", but an attempt to interpret as an analytical instrument. As was explained before, no theory reflects reality exactly, but some structure can contribute to our perception,

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<sup>195</sup> See, Ringer, Fritz. (2000). *Max Weber's Methodology*. The Unification of the Cultural and Social Sciences, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. London, England. pp.1-3

<sup>196</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p.72

and so, as Weber underlines again and again, the knowledge of historical and social reality is speculated by our perception. Therefore our theories are not certainly the copies of objective facts, which mean that they are not necessarily referring to real social essences. Because of that, ideal types can only give “unambiguous means of expression to a description”. Therefore “the construction of abstract ideal types recommends itself not as an end but as a means”.<sup>197</sup> Besides, Weber decidedly underlines the indispensability of ideal types in the construction of the conceptual schemes, and he demonstrates this indispensability with an example. Accordingly, if a social scientist does not use the ideal type as a theoretical construction in his investigation, probably he has two options to apply: either he utilizes another means without elaborating them logically, or unfortunately he does not arrive on reality, or only he can arrive at the extent of vague and ambiguous.<sup>198</sup> In this score, it can be thought that some a priori assumptions are essentially used for defining and interpreting facts. Because, as Weber assumes, “concepts are primarily analytical instruments for the intellectual mastery of empirical data”<sup>199</sup> In summary, the main notion of ideal types is to understand and eventually to interpret reality.

The other aspect of ideal types is that they enable the scientist to arrange the ideas into a hierarchy, in this manner; the connection between thoughts can be defined in terms of value classification. If it is necessary to give some examples for ideal types, those can be listed as the following: “individualism”, “charisma”, “bureaucracy”, “imperialism”, “primitive society”, “feudalism” etc. If a researcher who employs the ideal types such as feudalism and primitive society in his conceptual scheme attributes more value feudalism, because of the fact that it was more progressive than the primitive society in terms of its means of production, what he actually does is to make a hierarchical rearrangement in his own conceptual

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<sup>197</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 90, 92

<sup>198</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 94

<sup>199</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 104

scheme and to give a definite meaning to the historical epochs. Of course, Weber benefited from ideal types in his own works, an example to this is the presentation of Calvin's doctrine of predestination in *Protestant Ethic* as an ethical postulate which determined a modern mode of production, capitalism as a factor and caused some various historical effects especially in Western Europe.

While Weber declared that Marxism as "a persuasive force of ideas" has an outstanding style, he has actually characterized Marxism as an example to ideal type, like his Calvinist approach.<sup>200</sup> Therefore, it can be accepted that some Marxian concepts such as "mode of production, the means of production, the forces of production, ruling (or bourgeois) classes and proletariat" are kinds of ideal types in Weberian meaning. Weber, on the one hand, defines Marxism as an example of ideal type and he expresses his respect for Marx as a great thinker, on the other hand he in depth describes Marxian scheme in the following style:

We will only point out here that naturally all specifically Marxian "laws" and developmental construct -insofar as they are theoretically sound- are ideal types. The eminent, indeed unique, heuristic significance of these ideal types, when they are used for the assessment of reality is known to everyone who has ever employed Marxian concepts and hypotheses.<sup>201</sup>

As can be seen, Weber's only condition to accept Marxian constructs as ideal types is that they have a sound structure, because the aforementioned qualities are provided, and thus Marxian scheme is considered to be one of the most prominent ideal types. A researcher who uses a Marxian ideal type such as revolution or mode of production is immediately considered to be using the subjective views or assumptions of Marx or to be perceiving the world as Marx was doing, this is because the ideal types or concepts cannot be thought separately from Marx

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<sup>200</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid*, p. 96

<sup>201</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid*, p. 103



himself. Whenever we met with the ideal types of Marx, we can easily think that those types refer to Marx.

Regarding Weber's reflections on Marx's ideal type, I'm in favour of making a particular evaluation on Weber. In this way, I believe that I could provide a ground for the next part as well. Being his wife and the intellectual partner at the same time, Marianne Weber, in *Max Weber's Biography*, proclaims that Weber actually admired Marx's construction of ideal type, but what Weber got irritated was an effort to translate and present Marx's thoughts and his theoretical scheme as an absolute *Weltanschauung* (a kind of secular religion). It is necessary to make a distinction at this point for Weber, only under these conditions; Weber's writings on Marxism can be appropriately comprehended in all its aspects. According to Marianne Weber,

Weber expressed great admiration of Karl Marx's brilliant constructions and saw in the inquiry into the economic and technical causes of events an exceedingly fruitful, a specifically new heuristic principle that directed the quest for knowledge into entire areas previously unilluminated. But he not only rejected the elevation of these ideas to a *Weltanschauung*.<sup>202</sup>

### **5.3. Towards an Anti-Marxist Weber, Despite Marx**

I have worked to represent the connection between early Weber and the last period (mature) Weber in the previous chapters, and according to this, it can be claimed that Weber does not generally go against Marx's general views. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, on account of the Marxian understanding of his life period, that is especially the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, he took an opposite position against

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<sup>202</sup> Weber, Marianne Schnitger. (1975). *Max Weber: A Biography*. English language edition copyright: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. United States of America. p. 335

Marxist and socialist political ideas, and he did not attribute a methodological value to these kinds of the mainstream movements.

Weber, on the one hand, for instance, refuses “the so-called materialistic conception of history as a *Weltanschauung*”, on the other hand, he recognizes “the advancement of the economic interpretation of history” as one of the most important aims of his methodological works.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, he accuses those who believe blindly without criticising and learning about the real or decisive factors or those who do not question if the economy can be the decisive factor everywhere in the last instance. He also accuses those who content themselves with “dogmatic phrases”. Weber praises, however, *The Communist Manifesto* owing to crude but ingenious elements in it about the materialist conception of history. Also, in spite of its prophetic character, “*The Communist Manifesto* is a scientific achievement of the first order” for him.<sup>204</sup>

When the Marxian materialistic conception of history is vulgarised and every social factor are reduced only to the extent to which the economy operates on all conditions, Weber interprets this situation as “an unexampled naiveté”, because all social factors have historically accidental conditions, including the economic factor. Weber approaches this understanding from the simplest vantage point and he continues, for example, if one removes only economic factor from historical analyses, in this situation, he makes an “one-sidedness” explanation and reflected “unreality of the purely economic interpretation of history” for Weber<sup>205</sup>. Therefore, Weber’s some expositions such as “materialism would be an unacceptable mono-

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<sup>203</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. p. 68

<sup>204</sup> Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 68 and Bendix, Reinhard and Roth, Guenther (1971). *Scholarship and Partisanship: Essay on Marx Weber*. University of California Press. p. 243. (the emphasis belongs to me)

<sup>205</sup> See, Oberschall, Anthony. (2007). “An Empirical Assessment of Weber’s ‘Objectivity of Social Science Knowledge.’ ” in *Max Weber’s Objectivity Reconsidered*. McFalls, Laurence (Ed.) University of Toronto Press, Toronto-Buffalo-London, pp.241-245 and Weber, Max. (1949). *Ibid.* p. 70,71

causal theory” can be seen as a direct attack against Marxism. In fact; he defends a constellations method relying on multiple causes instead of singular causes. However, as can be remembered above, while Weber said for his *Protestant Ethic*, “in a modest way form a contribution to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history”<sup>206</sup>, in deed, he had chosen his position in the tension between matter and idea, or materialism and idealism, and so he indisputably gave enough trump on the hands of his dissenters, which caused him to be called as an one-sidedness scholar. Despite of that Weber declares that his aim is not “to substitute for a one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and history”<sup>207</sup>; Weber seems as if he were in search of establishing a new methodological approach. Therefore, it can be said that Weber does not regard Calvinism as the sole decisive factor in the formation of capitalism, but only as a stimulus in creating suitable conditions for the development of a new type of economic organization.

In addition, it is never said that Weber disregards the importance of economical determinants. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, Weber regards economy as the most effective factor among other factors in *Economy and Society*. In this regard, he draws closer to the views of Marx and Engels. Like them, Weber is also concerned with the relations between economy and the other social factors in history. In this regard, the assertion that Weber and Marx are not compatible with each other is untenable at all.

In spite of all these, in a passage about Russian Revolution, Weber establishes a relation between the inherent basic dogmas and Marxist evolutionist

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<sup>206</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. p.48

<sup>207</sup> Weber, Max. (1958). *Ibid*. p. 125. Also there is a common agreement on this issue, for example Weber’s wife thinks that Weber did not intend to replace the materialistic view of history with a spiritualistic one. Weber, Marianne Schnitger. (1975). *Max Weber: A Biography*. p. 335

considerations.<sup>208</sup> Weber elsewhere claims that the theories of natural law are destroyed by “the evolutionary dogmatism of Marxism”<sup>209</sup> From this; it might be thought that there was an irritation in Weber’s mind about official Marxist doctrines in his time. However, I want to highlight once more again that the origin of Weber’s irritation is not Marx, but exaggerated Marxian statements and political movements supported by his followers. There are various interpretations on this issue, for instance, according to a well-known Weberian scholar, Zeitlin; the methodology attributed to Marx is “a rigid, deterministic, supra-historical theory.”<sup>210</sup> Since a vulgar assessment of Marx will be delusive, Marx objects to a one-sided explanation and supra-historical theory as well. From this point of view, a quotation from Marx may be the most effective answer to this discussion,

...events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historic surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by the universal passport of a general historic-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical.<sup>211</sup>

Although Marx occasionally gives place to some deterministic and aggravated declarations in some passages, none of them can be interpreted as if Marx’s methodology is constructed on the truth and the chain of multi-causal explanation is opposite to Weber’s approach. In other words, even though there are several differences in detail between Weber’s and Marx’ methodologies, there is not a distinction in principle.

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<sup>208</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology. Volume II.* Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Ed.) p. 872

<sup>209</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Ibid.* p. 874

<sup>210</sup> Cited in Zeitlin, Irving M. (2000). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. p. 196

<sup>211</sup> Marx, Karl. The statement taken from Forte, Juan Mauel. (2008). “Religion and Capitalism: Weber, Marx and the materialist controversy.” *Philosophy & Social Criticism*. May, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 438

As regards Marx's methodology, there are some limitations and thus a tension in relation with empirical and theoretical world because of his practice and politic desire and expectations. By reason of this, Marx has inevitably tended to avoid blurry statements in theoretical works. As for Weber, it can be claimed that "he emphasized the importance and primacy of theory in any empirical endeavour, while seeking the study of history as an important source of crucial concepts."<sup>212</sup> Therefore, Weber's sociology is known as *Verstehen* or "to understand with interpretation", because while the only important thing was to understand for Weber, Marx's methodology is named as praxis (the composition of theory and practice).

In conclusion, though these two miraculous thinkers have worked partly in different methodological contexts, their opinions about science and their paths in their scientific journeys seem to be similar at least in principle, As Weber declares,

...but we must not and cannot promise a 'fool's paradise and an easy road to it, neither in thought nor in action. (However) It is the stigma of our human dignity that the peace of our souls cannot be as great as the peace of one who dreams of such a paradise<sup>213</sup>

No one knows that if Weber's soul is in peace or not but, Marx's answer is similar: "There is no royal *road* to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits. Believe me..."<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Hodgson, M. Geoffrey. (2001). *How Economics Forgot History: The Problem of Historical Specificity in Social Science*, London; New York: Routledge. p. 127

<sup>213</sup> Weber, Max. (1978). *Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretive Sociology*. p. .XXXIII

<sup>214</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). Preface to the French Edition (1872) *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Progress Publishers. (First English edition of 1887) p.8

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **CONCLUSION**

### **OR A QUASI MARX: WEBER**

When I started this study, my intention was to raise an awareness concerning the existence of a deep connection between Weber and Marx. In contrast to the traditional understanding of materialism or idealism, my suggestion is to bring together Weber and Marx. Of course, while materialism symbolizes Marx, idealism refers to Weber in this traditional but superfluous tension.

On many points Weber and Marx are not as inharmonious as it is conventionally assumed to be. Yet, in the second chapter, my attempt was to investigate the origins of this misperception. As it was mentioned above, various efforts have been made to explain and to interpret the causes of this discussion. For instance, although the Protestant Ethic was the first text that was translated into English and brought a notoriety to Weber in terms of his relation with Marx, his *Economy and Society* was translated relatively late. Secondly, as the former follower of Weber, Talcott Parson's misleading interpretations of Weber's corpus and finally American sociologists' efforts to justify their anti-communist propaganda during the Cold War Period contributed to the formation of a blind prejudice towards the relation between Marx and Weber.<sup>215</sup> In the same way, the official Marxism of the Soviet Union had been occasionally accusing Weber of being ill-minded. The reason for this, among others, was of course Weber's texts on sociology of religion, particularly those on the Protestant Ethic and on the Indian and Chinese religions.

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<sup>215</sup> See, Kalberg, Stephen. (2009). *Max Weber'i Anlamak*. Lotus Yayınevi, Bedri Gencer (Trans.) Ankara.

While Weber was writing *the Protestant Ethic*, he saw himself as a thinker who contributes to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history. In this sense he had taken an opposite position to materialism; elsewhere he would use some inconsistent statements with *the Protestant Ethic*. According to Weber,

Material and ideal interest, not ideas, directly dominate the actions of human being. But: the “world views” created by “ideas” have often served as switched, setting the track along which the dynamics of interest moved the actions forward.<sup>216</sup>

Similarly, Marx declared in his *Capital* that “the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought.”<sup>217</sup> Maybe, the only difference between two statements is the direct emphasis that was placed on the ideas by the former compared to the latter. These and similar quotations forced me to find materialist elements in Weber, and I found them.

When I began, at the very least, I believed that it would be possible to draw certain indications that summarize the conventional and well-known discussion, and it came to be so. However, as can be especially seen from the quotation above, there has been a materialist emphasis in Weber and I have firstly traced them in chapter 3. In this way, I have seized the opportunity to represent a new and exciting view. As known, nothing is more dry and boring than the explanation of a *locus communis* (or then a stereotype statement)<sup>218</sup>. In his early writings, Weber illustrated the disintegration of Roman Empire with some negative consequences over the basic economic development. He was in search for a materialistic ground

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<sup>216</sup> Ringer, Fritz. (2000). *Max Weber's Methodology*. The Unification of the Cultural and Social Sciences, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts. London, England. p.153

<sup>217</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). In the second Preface to the German edition of *Capital*, *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Progress Publishers. p.13

<sup>218</sup> The original expression said by Marx, “Nothing is more dry and boring than the fantasies of a *locus communis*”. Marx, Karl. (1993). *Grundrisse, The Foundation of Critique of Political Economy* (Rough Draft), p. 21

for Rome. And also, in his early writings, Weber utilized some Marxist conceptions and ideal types such as the economic foundation and superstructure and assumed that the fall of a civilization had to be connected with the conflict between “cultural and social construction” and the “economic system”. All these signs indicated a materialistic view in Weber’s perception.

Afterwards, so as to verify whether these signs are coincidence or not, I attempted to make a clarification and set out to find some connections in Weber’s late period works and for this purpose, starting from *Economy and Society*, I worked to identify some points on Weber’s connection to Marx. In this score, I tried to show that Weber’s definition of rationality is compatible with Marx’s concept of alienation, and this became clear after my account of some key points Weber’s philosophy. Marx, as one of the first philosophers who spoke of the objectification and the estrangement of man, converges with Weber’s rationalization process in which the personal interests and the money relation supersede all humanistic values. For instance when a man is asked after the ceremony why he converted into Baptism, the answer to this question probably will be that “he wants to open a bank in M.”<sup>219</sup> All in all, this situation is an indication that the religion loses its internal and moral value in the eyes of an ordinary person, according to Weber. On the other hand, Marx’s works are filled with innumerable similar examples. Marx in the Preface to the First German Edition of *Capital* dated 1867 says, “The English Established Church, e.g., will more readily pardon an attack on 38 of its 39 articles than on 1/39 of its income”<sup>220</sup>. Like Weber, Marx also expresses that the private and material interests seem to become more vitally important in the modern world, therefore the conceptions stated as rationality and alienation find their counterparts both in Weber and Marx in a common ground.

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<sup>219</sup> Weber, Max. (1946). *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*. pp. 304-305

<sup>220</sup> Marx, Karl. (1995-1996). Preface to the First German Edition of *Capital Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Progress Publishers. p.6



Another issue that brings Weber closer to Marx was the assumption that the significance of class situation is determined by economic elements. As we have already expressed, Weber regards classes as a crucial issue in the capitalist market conditions, as Marx does. In addition to classes, Weber mentions the concept of status and party and from this perspective; one can say that Weber develops a much more comprehensive theory than Marx. However, it does not mean that the detailed analysis that Weber offers is in conflict with Marx's class theory; but on the contrary, Weber expanded and enriched Marx's class theory in line with the needs of time.

Furthermore, Weber's contributions to Marx's theory are not limited with these. His definition of state, "every state is founded on force and the force is a means specific to the state directly reflects"<sup>221</sup> closely coincide with that of Marx's. While Marx says that (the proletariat is) "not only slaves of the bourgeois class, they are slaves of the bourgeois state", he emphasized the coercion relation between bourgeois class and the mechanism of state and the great role played by the state. This means that, at the broadest level, they have developed a common approach on legal issues and ideology. Marx, however, could not find an opportunity to develop a formal theory of law and ideology, he has rather scattered allusions in his monumental works.<sup>222</sup>

In his late period Weber developed a scheme of analysis for the economic life, which has been believed to be the closest to Marx's general capitalism approach. The institutional theory of capitalism developed by Weber in his *General Economic History* has caused a discussion about Weber's relation with Marx in a wide variety of fields. The claim that the state administration and political institutions are the

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<sup>221</sup> Weber, Max. (1946). *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*. H.H. Gerth-C. Wrights Mills. p. 78

<sup>222</sup> See for a detail discussions in Milovanovic, Dragan. (2002). *Weberian and Marxian Analysis of Law, Development and Functions of Law in a Capitalist Mode of Production*.

inferior versions of materialistic production, the thought that the economic regime creates a corresponding administrative and legal system, the recognition of the existence of a privileged and upper class in modern era, some statements on free labour as a sine qua non presupposition and the claim that the crises have progressive aspects were only some of the similarities which I have been dealing with in connection with Weber and Marx. In the light of these, I presented the similarities stated above and dealt with a problem whether the early and late Weber's pursuits were different or not. It can be asserted that there is continuity in Weber's corpus at least partly in his conception of class, his scheme of capitalism and his understanding of some political institutions. Therefore, it has been stated that Weber had not been at odds with himself in this intellectual puzzle as well.

In the last chapter where I roughly dealt with a comparison of Weber's methodology with that of Marx's, it is scrutinized whether there is Marx's influence on Weber's methodological approach. Accordingly, Weber advises a modest science understanding that consists of seeking self-evident truths and I suppose that nobody objects if I claim that Marx had the same approach. Being one of the most vital parts of Weber's methodology, the concept of ideal type finds its place in Marxism or among the elements of the "persuasive force of ideas". Hence, in sum, the theoretical components of Marx's views and Weber's concept of ideal type are the different parts of a whole, according to my assertion. As Albert Solomon said, Max Weber became a thinker (or sociologist) "in a long and intense debate with the ghost of Marx."<sup>223</sup>

Needless to say, it is clear that Max Weber and Karl Marx, as the greatest thinkers of the creative thought, have taken their places in history. The former one has been sometimes called as "bourgeois Marx" but sometimes as "the defender of

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<sup>223</sup> Zeitlin, Irving M. (1968). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. p.111

capitalism” or “the most malicious enemy of Marxism”.<sup>224</sup> Similarly, Marx has been criticized for suggesting a one-sided perspective and establishing a dogmatic theory. Of course, I accept the existence of conflicting issues between them; however some superficial differences originated because of the political differentiations in Weber’s and Marx’s Germany. Moreover, some counter propagandas were supported by the exponents of Marx and Weber, after they died, and especially during the Cold War period. However, although all of these can be acknowledged up to a point, the main distinction lies at the root of their starting points whereby their approaches appeared as a result of these. The method called as “interpretative understanding” (*Verstehen*) plays a vital role in Weber’s analysis, but this method, I dare to say, can be related with Weber’s own class situation and his own personal interests. According to Marianne Weber, as one of the closest witnesses of Max Weber’s life,

Weber observed how often a scholar, without being aware of it, speaks within his field not only as a servant of truth but also as *a servant of the existing order*, thus representing “between the lines” a policy coloured by the *interest of his own class*.<sup>225</sup>

As can be seen, in spite of Weber’s search for objectivity, he sometimes had to behave in accordance with the necessities of the existing order. Because the researchers, as Weber says, “belong to the ruling class” and “their interest naturally lies with an order that gives them a privileged position”.<sup>226</sup> In this sense, Weber, unlike Marx, was dependent on the existing order. However these differences, which I consider to be superficial but not fictional, do not reflect an ontological dissociation between Weber and Marx.

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<sup>224</sup> Weiss, Johannes. (1986). *Weber and Marxist World*. London, Newyork: Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.16, and also, Zeitlin, Irving M. (1968). *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition*, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. p. 111.

<sup>225</sup> Weber, Marianne Schnitger. (1975). *Max Weber: A Biography*. Harry Zohn (Trans. and Ed.) p. 317

<sup>226</sup> Weber, Marianne Schnitger. (1975). *Ibid.* pp. 317-318

Due to all these reasons, obviously there were Marxian influences on Weber, so it won't be false to assert that Weber was a *Quasi-Marx* or a Quasi-Marxist thinker.<sup>227</sup> But, I still straightforwardly share the same belief that all criticisms in this context will provide a positive contribution to enrich our minds regarding this discussion. Besides, before I complete this lengthy and legendary discussion, I want to turn to the title of my thesis, namely, to "*Ex contingente necessarium*" or "from contingency to necessity". One can ask why I used such a title, which was used by Marx in his *Capital Volume III*, while he cited about ingrown existence of interest in money capital.<sup>228</sup> Similarly, Marx mentions the relationship between "necessity" and "contingency" in his Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, when he deals with the law of property. As is known, a contingency situation refers to "neither impossible nor necessary"; i.e., "both possible and non-necessary",<sup>229</sup> and there is a contradiction between "necessity" and "contingency". When I first started to study on my thesis, it was a possible hypothesis for me to say that Weber's texts especially the ones on the sociology of religion could be seen as a direct assault on Marx, from an anti-materialist front. But after I scrutinised some arguments in depth, the claims that Weber was an apologist for capitalism against Marx seemed to lost their value for me, and it became a necessity to deal with Weber and Marx from this day forth. In that sense, neither a scholar who studies Weber could be labelled as "the enemy of class", nor a Marxist intellectual could be called as a dogmatic or one-sided theorist. At the very least, my attribute may prove to be a contribution to this understanding.

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<sup>227</sup> I took this conception from Bendix and Roth, they used it as "Quasi-Marxist Influences" in his works. Bendix, Reinhard and Roth, Guenther (1971). *Scholarship and Partisanship: Essay on Marx Weber*. University of California Press. p. 234

<sup>228</sup> See, Marx, Karl. (1991). *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Volume III*. (Ed.) Friedrich Engels (First Published, Hamburg-Verlag von Otto Meissner, 1894) (Intro.) Ernest Mandel. (Trans.) David Fernbach. Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, London, England. p. 518

<sup>229</sup> Audi, Robert (Ed.) (1999). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Second Edition, under the title of "contingent" p. 181

Consequently, before he died in 1920, as if they were the last words of a dying man, modestly but decidedly Weber put these feelings into words as an evaluation which seems worth quoting:

The honesty of a scholar today... can be measured by where he stands in relation to Nietzsche and Marx. Our intellectual world bears to a great extent the stamp of Marx and Nietzsche.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Milovanovic, Dragan. (2002). *Weberian and Marxian Analysis of Law, Development and Functions of Law in a Capitalist Mode of Production*. p. 16

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