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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WEBER'S THESIS AND ISLAM'S IMPLOSION

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ABSTRACT

The genius from Heidelberg and Freiburg, Weber chose around 1900 the theme of modern capitalism for his early globalisation studies on the largest social sciences aggregate, the civilisation. Today, the focus is not upon his favourite, i.e. Protestantism, but the incredible tremors in the Muslim world, at home and abroad. If the level of political violence stays as high as now with all the civil wars, bombings, hostage takings and general terrorism writ large, then the Koranic civilisation will founder. What awaits the civilisation of Islam is endless conflicts between radical Sunnis, moderate Sunnis and Shias as well as Kurds. The reason is the major reinterpretation of The Koran by the three fundamentalists; Maududi, Qutb and Faraj. Their booklets are spread and taught all over the Moslem world, calling forth the martyrs, These theological and philosophical disputes result in the untold sufferings for ordinary Sunnis and Shia. They will spread to outside the Middle East in the form of terrorism. The Muslim civilisation must come together and halt the massacres of Moslems, putting an end to religious struggle. Only the Muslims and their governments can make the characterisation of the greatest sociology ever, Max Weber of Islam as a "religion of warriors" inapplicable. If Islam does not cherish the OPEN SOCIETY for all its sects and groups, it will be crushed by violence.

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INTRODUCTION

The most famous book in the social sciences ever is without doubt Max Weber's study on Protestantism and Capitalism. The first presentation of the so-called *Weber thesis* came in 1904 and many new editions have been published, with one as recently as this year 2016. Presented in German, it has been translated into the major languages of the world, Debated endlessly and criticised at length, the final evaluation is still to come. Weberians like Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils (« idealists ») as well as many comparative religion scholars (von Glasenapp) support his thesis, whereas Marxists tend to reject it straightforwardly completely, preferring to turn him upside down (« materialists ») - Tawney, Rodinson. A fine study by Swedish economic historian Kurt Samuelson (1964) took the position in-between, saying there was no relationship at all, neither from Protestantism to Capitalism nor the other way around. Here, I will suggest an entirely different solution and approach to the analysis of civilisation differences today, recasting the Weber thesis about the rise of modern capitalist spirit from the ethics of *Beruf*, i.e. Calvinism and Lutheranism. What forces us to entirely rethink Weber's civilisation argument

is the ongoing implosion of the biggest civilisation in the world, Islam. Islam is at war with itself in many Muslim countries with unimaginable suffering for Moslems. And it has started a most violent vendetta against the West for interfering in the wars of Muslim civilisation.

Weber's unique methodology

Following the 1904 booklet on Protestantism and Capitalism was a long series of publications on religion and its social consequences, collected after his death in 1920 into a 3-volume publication, re-edited in 1988. One finds passages on religion and social systems in other major works by Weber, as he was convinced that religion had a profound impact upon social action, not reducible to the Marxist thesis of ideological rationalisation and camouflage off the « real » and true economic interests at stake. Thus, to defend his thesis about the rise of modern capitalism, he engaged in vast studies of the world religions and their business ethics. Islam was examined in his opus major: *Economy and Society* (1978) – to this day an unsurpassed inquiry in political sociology. He engaged a set of methodological principles, derived from German post-Kantian philosophy of science that are to be found in almost all his enquiries, although never explicitly put down in a text-book

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form. Weber mastered universal history, German economics, jurisprudence and the social sciences. Thus, we have the following steps in his conduct of any inquiry:

- 1) Modelling : Weber's ideal-types or “*ideal-typus*” ;
- 2) Intention and motivation : the rejection of English behaviouralism and the emphasis of subjective meaning : « *Sinn* » and « *Sinnzusammenhänge* » ;
- 3) Empirical verification : grasping the essential features, outlined in the ideal-types, as they unfold empirically, i.e. in the myriad of data.

This is Kantianism writ large : no model, data is amorphous ; no data, the model is empty. Completely neglected is Weber's anti-behaviourism of the standard American kind : social life consists of words and objects, ideas are just attitudes or signs, etc. Weber claimed that ideas play a major rôle in social life, and one must pay attention to the content and logic of the human ideas, i.e. *Sinnzusammenhänge*. Yet, Weber certainly also rebutted Hegelianism, as ideas are important to real life only through their actual impact upon real behaviour and real human relationships.

Consequently, he changed the study of religious beliefs by underling the necessity to grasp their logicness on the level of *subjective meaning*. Of course, religious believers adhere to the notion of objective meaning for their notions, but this Weber regarded as mere superstition. Thus, his inquiry comprised the following steps, when approaching the world religions :'

- a) Subjective meaning of the religion, to be found among its *virtuosi* ;
- b) Subjective meaning of modern capitalism ;
- c) Degree of logical coherence between a) and b) ;
- d) Empirical verification through data on believers and capitalists, (micro /famous people) as well as macro (countries).

He dealt lengthily along these lines a)-d) with Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism as well as Judaism. But in his many books one finds similar type arguments about Islam, Orthodoxy and Catholic religion. He shared many of the prejudices of the time against animism, shamanism and the Orient (« *orientalism* », regarding monotheism as more rational than other kinds of religious belief

Legal-rational authority = Rule of Law

Weber focussed upon the economic effects of the world religions, searching for the origins of modern capitalism, which he equated with the requirements of rationality or modernisation. Of the link he suggested in 1904-05 – Protestantism and market economy, there remains nothing today, as other civilisations or economic centres display presently as much, if not more economic dynamism than the Western ones. Let us instead search for civilisation effects outside of the global economic system, within politics, following another Weberian piste, and a more fruitful one. Weber saw modern capitalism, or the institutions of the market economy, as the giant difference maker among the civilisations of the world, resulting in economic rationality meaning

affluence and power. If capitalism is merely a motivation force (greed), then it has always existed as the incessant search for economic advantages, profits and success. However, if “capitalism” stands for a set of institutions, or rules, then one may wish to enumerate a number of different types of capitalisms during known history: ancient, state, feudal, prebendal, modern, financial, etc. Weber summed up his position as follows:

“It is only in the modern Western world that rational capitalistic enterprises with fixed capital, free labor, the rational specialization and combination of functions, and the allocation of productive functions on the basis of capitalistic enterprises, bound together in a market economy, are to be found.” (Weber, 1978: 165) But the institutions of modern capitalism can be exported and adopted by other civilisations, learned and refined, which is exactly what occurred in the 20th century. Thus, even if Protestantism, or Protestant ethics denying the possibility of magic had something to do with the origins of modern capitalism in the West – i.e. economic rationality or overall rationality (“*Entzauberung der Welt*”), which though remains an essentially contested issue, it could never guarantee any persisting advantage. Today, modern capitalism, at least when measured in terms of output, is perhaps stronger in East and South East Asia, with a few strongholds also within Islam, like for instance the UEL, Koweit and Qatar.

Now, let us turn to Weber's chief accomplishment in political sociology, namely that he identified four types of political regimes: naked power, traditional, charismatic and legal-rational authority – a most often used typology also today. However, he was not clear about the nature of the last type, linking wrongly – I wish to argue - legal-rational authority with his ideal-type model of bureaucracy. Typical of legal-rational authority is, I would wish to emphasize, government based upon rule of law. Let us first state the definition of “legal authority” from Weber:

“The validity of the claims to legitimacy may be based on: 1. Rational grounds – resting on a belief in the legitimacy of enacted rules and the rights of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority).” (Weber, 1978: 215)

The key terms in this general definition is rules or institutions. Yet, he moves on to equate legal-rational authority with bureaucracy:

“The purest type of exercise of legal authority is that which employs a bureaucratic administrative staff. “ (Weber, 1978: 220).

Yet, bureaucracy, as a mechanism for carrying out the policies of rulers has, historically speaking, never operated according to the Weberian ideal-type. Bureaucracies have been invaded by affective ties, embezzlement, tribal loyalties and opportunistic selfishness in search of turf. 20th century research into the bureaucratic phenomenon has resulted in numerous findings that question the applicability of Weber's bureaucracy model. As a matter of fact, bureaucracies can support traditional domination, as within Chinese Empires or Ottoman Rulership. It may also figure prominently in charismatic rulership, as with The Third Reich or the Soviet State.

Legal-rational authority emerges in a state that honours rule of law. This involves the employment of LAW, both in high politics and in low politics. It differs from all other forms for the exercise of political power by complying with norms and by offering ways to correct abuses of these norms. Thus, this regime is not only legal but also rational in the meaning of the introduction and observation of a set of norms that are secular in nature, protecting the common best of the political community. Kant called this state a *Rechtsstaat*. It is the core meaning of the model of legal-rational authority, and not ureaucarcy as with Weber. And rule of law is the great difference make among the civilisations in today's world.

Civilisational Differences

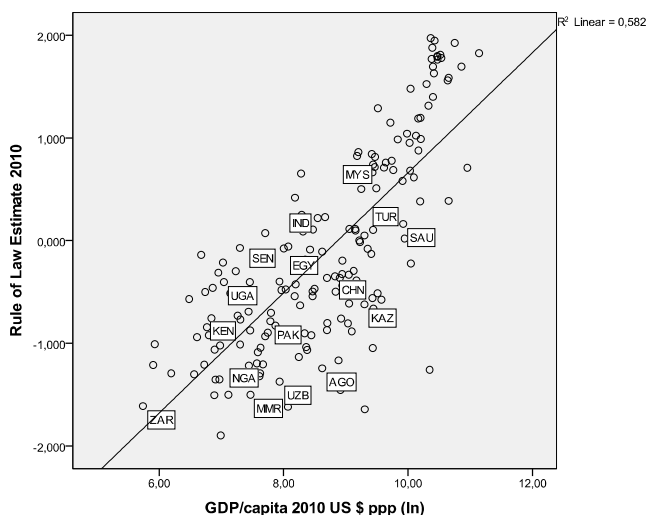
The Governance Project of the World Bank has made a tremendous effort at quantifying the occurrence of rule of law, employing all the indices in the literature – see Appendix in Governance project (Kaufmann et al.). The findings are summarized in a scale ranging from +2 to -2 that is a ratio scale. Table 1 presents the aggregated scores for the civilisations, introduced above.

Table 1. Civilisations and Rule of Law

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.
Communist	-.75477454	.38326537	6
Hindu	-.53253257	.64282829	2
Muslem NONARAB	-.72383263	.65613238	21
Africa	-.8007729	.62152836	38
Arab	-.30380348	.71516745	18
Asia	.47479719	.96324657	9
Latin America	-.18484119	.78842261	34
Orthodox	-.50737586	.35506152	8
Pacific	-.18705963	.63026857	16
Western	1.1971701	.66793566	38
Total	-1.0664712	.98442144	190

One may employ Diagram 1 to portray the same findings as in Table 1. It should perhaps be pointed out that poverty accounts to some extent for the disrespect for due process of law – see Diagram 1.

Diagram 1. Rule of law (RL) and affluence (GDP per capita)



However, culture also matters in the form of civilisations, especially Islam and Buddhism, and Orthodoxy – negatively – as well as Calvinism and Lutheranism – positively.

RL cannot be introduced or upheld in a country with considerable tribalism and clan structures. Similarly, RL is not feasible in a country where Sharia has constitutional status. In many countries in the African and Asian civilisations there is both ethnic diversity and Islam.

One may employ the regression technique in order to examine the impact of these factors upon RL: - Ethnicity: The fragmentation of a country into different ethnic groups (language, race); - Religion: The proportion of Muslims in country population; the proportion of Buddhist/Confucians in the country population; - Affluence: GDP in 2010. Table 2 displays the findings from an estimation of a regression equation.

Table 2. Regression model for rule of law (RL) (N = 162)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-4,216	,471		-8,948	,000
ln2010	,507	,047	,657	10,847	,000
Ethnic	-,474	,222	-,126	-2,139	,034
Muslim	-,003	,002	-,118	-2,192	,030
budd2000	-,002	,003	-,027	-,517	,606
		Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
R	,771	R Square	,595	,584	,621331

Sources: Kaufmann, D. A. Kraal and M. Mastruzzi (2012) Worldwide Governance Indicators; Pew Forum (2009) Mapping the Global Muslim Population; World Bank (2012) World Bank Databank; Barrett, D. B. et al. (2001) World Christian Encyclopedia.

Importance of Rule of Law

Rule of law, whether combined with any form of democracy – referendum type, parliamentary type, presidential dispensation – or not, as in semi-democratic countries that are one party states. comprises (Raz, 2009):

Predictability: Public law when properly implemented makes it possible for people to increase the rationality of behaviour. They know what rules apply, how they read as well as how they are applied consistently. This is very important for the making of strategies over a set of alternatives of action.

Transparency: Societies operate on the basis of norms prohibiting, obligating or permitting certain actions in specific situations. Rule of law entails that these norms are common knowledge as well as that they are not sidestepped by other implicit or tacit norms, known only to certain actors.

Due Process of Law: When conflicts occur either between individuals or between persons and the state, then certain procedures are to be followed concerning the prosecution, litigation and sentencing/incarceration. Thus, the police forces and the army are strictly regulated under the supervision of courts with rules about investigations, seizure, detainment and prison sentencing. No one person or agency can take the law into their own hands.

Fairness: Rule of law establishes a number of mechanisms that promote not only the legal order, or the law, but also justice, or

the right. For ordinary citizens, the principle of complaint and redress is vital, providing them with an avenue to test each and every decision by government, in both high and low politics. Here one may emphasize the existence of the *Ombudsman*, as the access to fairness for simple people. People have certain minimum rights against the state, meaning that government respects obligations concerning the protection of life and personal integrity. Thus, when there is due process of law – procedural or substantive – one finds e.g. the *habeas corpus* rights.

The civilisation that deviates the most from the *Rechtsstaat* is the Moslem one. This is due to the un-recognised and not fully understood revolution in the mind sets that we call Sunni fundamentalism or radical Islam. It now has started to appear in many Western countries with dire effects.

The Koranic Revolution in the 20 Century (Deobandi Islam)

The subjective meaning of Islam – its theology and philosophy – emerges fairly clearly around 1 000 after Christ and some centuries thereafter. Remember that The Koran was not established until some 100 years after the Prophet. The pattern was as follows:

- i) Sunni moderates: the four schools of jurisprudence (*fiqh*): Islam as just the 5 principles or rules;
- ii) Shias: Various sects – radical twelvers, moderate seveners and fivers: Charismatic Islam;
- iii) Sufism: Dervish: emotional Islam and mysticism in both Sunni and Shia;
- iv) Salafism: the return to 622 after Christ: Islamic Sunni fundamentalism.
- v) Wahabbism: Saudi Arabia Sunni fundamentalism (not recognised outside S.A.).

It remained like this for centuries with fighting mainly between Sunnis and Shias, as well as among Sunnis and among Shias. Or conflicts between states adhering to Sunni or Shia creeds, like Ottomans against Iran.

Three scholars changed entirely this pattern in the 20th century from within Sunni Islam. Neglecting them, and you cannot account for the rise of Islamic terrorism in e.g. France. They are:

- Maududi: complete islamisation of society;
- Qutb: re-introduction of Caliphate;
- Faraj: total jihadism.

The most important thinker in 20th century Islam was Maududi with his *DEOBANDI* background. Qutb and Faraj added unrestrained violence and the ISIS or ISIL turned it into terrorism.

Their texts are read all over the Moslem civilisation: prisons, madrasa, universities, colleges, mosques, etc.

Until new Muslim scholars step forward rejecting their teachings, presenting a strong case for some secular version of The Koran, Koranic terrorism will only gain strength and spread, despite the war efforts against the ISIS. Of course, Maududi, Qutb and Faraj dismiss entirely rule of law.

Conclusion

The coming of high level political violence in connection with the Moslem civilisation – inside as well as outside - has shocked the world. Its victims are to be found both in the Middle East, South Asia and in the West. Explaining ISIS and other similar factions, scholars talk about return to Medieval Salafism, expansion of Saudi Wahhabism, and the mixture of monotheism with pre-prophet tribal practises. Wrong!

The theological and philosophical revolution, led by Sunni scholars Maududi, Qutb and Faraj, is today legitimating Koranic terrorism as well as the violent activities by groups like for instance ISIS. Only the moderate Sunnis can deliver an appropriate philosophical and theological response, launching tolerant and semi-secular Islam in education facilities and society at large. Even the very knowable French experts on Islam express their surprise and indignation against political Islam they declared losing, as well as still state their “passion” for Arabia (Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Irak?). In general, life is badly supportable in civilisations where rule of law is absent, and there is no end to all the political violence among the Moslems. Rule of law in the sense of due legal process, rights and judicial autonomy is the difference maker between civilisations in a globalised world today. And it forbids the senseless killings of both Shias and Sunnis as well as Westerners by Moslem terrorists. With rule of law, the tragedies in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria would have been much less likely, but the teachings of the *Gang of Three* continue, in *madrasas*, colleges and universities and consequently new martyrs are forthcoming.

Time has come now after the destruction of Iraq and Syria to arrive at a *modus vivendi* in the Koranic civilisation, binding groups, sects and government to respect the *Open Society*. Otherwise hell on Earth.

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