

**CULTURE FUNCTION OF THE PROTESTANT ETHICS BY MAX WEBER**

*The article analyzes the significance of the Protestant ethics in the formation of a capitalist society. The author observes that one of the important aspects of the influence of the Protestant ethics on the formation of society is the attitude to work, it draws the reader's attention to the understanding of the assertion «labor as salvation».*

*Much attention is given to the correlation between the ethical guides of religion and the development of society. It is noted that the rational organization of own activity, which leads to the best possible result is a rational organization of salvation of one's own soul. From the cultural background of capitalist development, such values have become elements of modern culture. Due to the Protestant ethics, capitalist activity and activities generally acquire the rational, cultural significance. It is emphasized that it was under the influence of the Reformation that certain elements of the culture of capitalism were formed.*

*The author comes to the conclusion that, according to M. Weber, Protestantism is one of the important factors that influenced the formation of a capitalist society.*

**Keywords:** Protestant ethics, religion, «worldly asceticism», labor ethics.

**Topicality.** The studying of the work of Max Weber is actualizing not only by the problems of the economic or religious dimension, but also shows the ethical and cultural discourse. That's why, the correlation of the ethical doctrine of protestant religion and the establishment of society is relevant.

The aim of this research is the investigation of cultural function of the protestant ethic's doctrine and religion in the Max Weber interpretation.

The tasks of the article are: to analyze the peculiarities of the ethical guidance of the Protestant ethics; to find out the influence of the religious and ethnic factors in the formation of a capitalist society; to determine the role of the ethics of Protestantism in the culture of attitude to work in modern society.

**Historiography.** The analysis of the problem became a subject of interest of scholars in the field of the religious studies, sociology and cultural studies, since the study of this phenomenon requires the use of interdisciplinary approaches. The sources of the research are the works of Max Weber. Accordingly, the researching of the ethics in the interpretation of Max Weber was made by such scholars as P. Gaydenko [2], L. Ionin [3], M. Mnatsakanyan [5], S. Pierotti [9], A. Giddens [10].

**Presentation of the material.** Max Weber is primarily known as the author of one of the landmark books of the twentieth century. «The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism» is the book where the question of the value of the ethical guidelines of the bourgeoisie who professed the Protestantism for the formation of a modern capitalist society was rather deeply investigated. However, from the point of view of culture science, Max Weber is interesting as a person who worked fruitfully in the field of theoretical culture studies and as a scientist who has formulated a number of constructive ideas regarding to the specificity of cognition of culture as a special phenomenon that has no analogues among the objects that fall into the researcher's field of view. Nowadays, when western sociology and cultural anthropology are experiencing a sort of «Weberian Renaissance» the familiarity with Max Weber's views is particularly relevant [8, p. 273].

The significance of the work of M. Weber is that he created such a science of culture studies, where history is connected with the taxonomy and, therefore, does not fit to any of the usual methodological schemes; but precisely because of this she points to the new ways of a special study [6, p. 591].

It is worth to note, that according to the views of the scientist, the notion of culture is a valuable concept. In order of any subject or object became a phenomenon of culture, it correlated

with those values that are significant for a given subject [8, c. 275]. «An empirical reality is for us a «culture» because we associate it with value ideas ... the culture covers those – and only those components of reality that, by virtue of the above attribution, to values acquire significance for us» [1, p. 374].

According to the researcher N. Simbirtseva, the definition of culture given by M. Weber remains relevant today as it refers to the values and significance of the cultural potential of human history in the situation of «living» (that is, here and now) [7, p. 37].

Meaning the culture as a value concept, M. Weber attempted to correlate the formation of capitalist culture and the introduction of value-based guidance of the Protestantism. We can agree with M. Mnatsakanyan, that the protestant ethics had not only historical significance in terms of the formation of the capitalist spirit of the psychological and cultural foundations, but also the wider significance in the formation of the whole capitalist culture. The Rational pattern of behaviors on the basis of the ideas of professional vocation and other ideas of Puritan ethics became one of the «constitutional components» of modern spirit of capitalism and not only of him, but of all contemporary culture [5, p. 39-40].

The scholars proposed a hypothesis of the causal relationship between the upbringing of spiritual qualities, namely: the religious atmosphere of the community, the directions of development, the choice of the profession and further professional development. With the aim of discovering which spiritual quality provides the choice of profession. Referring to the notion of «the spirit of capitalism», Max Weber interprets it as «capitalist culture» or «capitalist ethos». As a genuine core of the spirit of capitalism, the scholar distinguishes between the notion of professional duty, that is, an internal obligation of compliance with the rules of economic behavior. The main of these norms – the rational management, focused on increasing productivity and increasing capital [3, p. 78-79].

As explains A. Giddens in his introduction to Weber's work, while we can «explain» natural occurrences in terms of the application of causal laws, human conduct is intrinsically meaningful, and has to be «interpreted» or «understood» in a way which has no counterpart in nature. Such an emphasis linked closely with a stress upon the centrality of history in the study of human conduct, in economic action as in other areas, because the cultural values that lend meanings to human life, it was held, are created by specific processes of social development. Just as he accepted the thesis that history is of focal importance to the social sciences, Weber adopted the idea that the «understanding» of meaning is essential to the explication of human action [10, p. IX].

As Max Weber points out, «The first opponent who has faced with the «spirit» of the capitalism and which have been a certain lifestyle, was normatively stipulated and manifested in the «ethical» face. It was the type of perception and behavior that can be named traditionalism» [1, p. 79].

Whereas in the traditionalist ethos there are no motives for increasing productivity and increasing capital, it is a culture of reasonable sufficiency. In traditionalism, the position of a person in relation to money is characterized by expressive ethical color: it is not shameful to own the money, but not worthy to pay them too much attention, turn them into an end in itself, do not deserve to devote their lives to increasing capital. Wherever the capitalist norm of increasing the productivity of the enterprise through the increase of its intensity, accompanied by an increase in capital, began to be introduced, it encounters with a hidden or obvious opposition to traditionalism as the cultural dominant of the pre-capitalist form of economic activity.

Accordingly the question arises: «How the transition from traditionalist ethos to capitalism takes place?» The changing of the way of thinking and developing of a new attitude to work, and, consequently, the emergence of the capitalist spirit has been tied by Weber to the religious Reformation. He emphasized that such large-scale cultural forms are «a product of the Reformation». Under the influence of the Reformation the certain elements of the culture of capitalism have been formed, the normative side of the characteristic capitalist behavior [3, p. 46].

As we see, a rational organization of its own activities, which leads to the best possible result, is a rational organization for the salvation of one's own soul. From the cultural background

of capitalist development, such values have become elements of the contemporary culture. These values penetrated all components of the modern culture.

Due to the Protestant ethics, capitalist activity and activity generally acquire a rational, cultural and determinative value. Relations between subjects acquire a social character; the subject becomes a cultural entity. The social order as a result of the meaningful actions also becomes a cultural product. Max Weber, as the main idea of ascetic Protestantism, singles out the idea of the professional vocation and duty. Only systematically organized, methodological work within the limits of the profession and rational activity are acceptable to God. Similar principles created an impetus for the systematic control of their behavior, ascetic lifestyle oriented toward the Divine. Man saves his soul, following the divine commandments, and success in professional activity is a sign of grace as a reward for the hard work [5, p. 39-40].

Especially, the impossibility of rest, the high intensity of labor duty through the abandonment of ordinary earthly joys is the main characteristics of Protestant morality, which Weber called «worldly asceticism». As it was appropriately noted by L. Ionin, «according to Protestant doctrine work is a duty, work is salvation» [3, p. 48].

The entrepreneurs associated with the development of rational capitalism combine the impulse to accumulation with a positively frugal life-style. Weber finds the answer in the «this worldly asceticism» of Puritanism, as focused through the concept of the «calling». The notion of the calling, according to Weber, did not exist either in Antiquity or in Catholic theology; it was introduced by the Reformation. It refers basically to the idea that the highest form of moral obligation of the individual is to fulfil his duty in worldly affairs. This projects religious behavior into the day-to-day world, and stands in contrast to the Catholic ideal of the monastic life, whose object is to transcend the demands of mundane existence. Besides, the moral responsibility of the Protestant is cumulative: the cycle of sin, repentance and forgiveness, renewed throughout the life of the Catholic, is absent in Protestantism.

Moreover, on the pastoral level, two developments occurred: it became obligatory to regard oneself as chosen, lack of certainty being indicative of insufficient faith; and the performance of «good works» in worldly activity became accepted as the medium whereby such surety could be demonstrated. Hence success in a calling eventually came to be regarded as a «sign» – never a means – of being one of the elect. The accumulation of wealth was morally sanctioned in so far as it was combined with a sober, industrious career; wealth was condemned only if employed to support a life of idle luxury or self-indulgence [10, p. XII].

So, the greatest role in reconciling the material activities of man with the religious ideas, according to Weber, played the following ideas:

- 1) Lutheran idea of «vocation» (Beruf) – the notion that God calls a person to a certain sort of activity, and only one person can succeed. Thus, professional success becomes a criterion for the righteousness of the chosen path in life.

- 2) Calvinistic notion of the possibility of revealing what a predetermined person of God – eternal suffering or salvation. The failures or successes of a person in her professional activity indicate a corresponding predefined [4].

M. Weber strives to establish the degree of cultural significance of the ascetic Protestantism in its coherence to other plastic elements of the modern culture. To designate how the Protestant asceticism in the process of its formation in its turn was influenced by the full set of social and cultural factors [1, p. 207]. Namely, the scholar was aimed to trace the mutual influence of these factors.

The practical norms, way of thinking and lifestyle and economical ethos acquire the national-cultural forms, which were rooted in national psychology, self-awareness. It is an important component of the national character.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Weber observed the distinctive peculiarities of the national character of the various peoples of Europe. It manifested itself in relation to professional duty and vocation. In countries, where culture has failed to accumulate rational ideas and norms that are similar to the Protestantism, where the traditionalist ideas show resilience, there market-based relations face the psychological obstacles. For instance, the prolonged domination of the

traditionalist ethics has created serious psychological impediments for the providing of the culture of rational attitude to labor in the national character of the Italians [5, p. 40]. The backwardness of society is a consequence of the weakness of the rational composition of thinking, indicating the weakness of rational principles in culture.

The Protestant Ethic, concerned above all with the origins of modern capitalism, connects up with Weber's indictment of the latter-day progression of contemporary industrial culture as a whole. As A. Giddens said, the Puritanism has played a part in creating the «iron cage» in which modern man has to exist – an increasingly bureaucratic order from which the «spontaneous enjoyment of life» is ruthlessly expunged. «The Puritan», Weber concludes, «wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so» [10, p. XVIII].

According to M. Mnatsakanyan, the development of Asian countries is not through the borrowing of ideas and norms of Protestant ethics, cultural patterns of the West, but on the basis of their own culture, peculiarities of the consciousness and national character, citing the example of Japan. Therefore, we can find the culture instruction designed as norms and aimed as active attitude to the world, on economic development and accumulation of wealth, which spiritually stimulate the labor activity and can play a leading role in the process of socialization [5, p. 41].

As notes Sandra Pierotti, the critics of Weber's Protestantism/capitalism theory have reasonable and logical criticisms. There is no doubt that capitalism in various forms existed in Europe prior to the Reformation. As she thought, it is obvious that several factors were at work in Europe during the long sixteenth century, which led to the growth and dominance of capitalism. All of this taken into consideration, Weber's thesis still stands. His thesis is not perfect; it has all the flaws pointed out by the critics. However, none of the critics managed to destroy the basic premise by which Weber sought to explain the growth of capitalism. Something happened in the long sixteenth century which saw an explosion of capitalist economic activity, free thought, and religious rebellion. Whether the relationship among these is causal or coincidental will be grounds for conjecture for years to come. History shows us that in fact those nations which were predominantly Protestant showed economic growth much greater than those which were predominantly Catholic [9].

As noted in the preface to the book of M. Weber P. Haydenko, it began by «Protestant Ethics...» the theme of communication and the interplay of religion and economy, and it remains still relevant in the further Weberian studies of religion. One of the main themes of Weber in his study of world religions is the influence of religious and ethical guidance on the nature and manner of economic activity and the form of its motivation, as well as the types of economic activities interacting with the religious and ethical principles. In this case, the main means of analysis in Weber is a comparison, as required by his method of ideal typology. The basis for comparison is the degree of rationalization of economic activity, which is allowed by one or another religious ethics [2, c. 29-30].

Thus, the influence of the Protestant ethics on the creation of cultural complexes of a capitalist society is evident. At the same time, the ethical guidelines of the Protestantism are an integral part of spiritual culture, in particular rationality of thinking, «worldly asceticism», an appropriate interpretation of the meaning of labor.

### **Література**

1. Вебер М. Избранные произведения Протестантская этика и дух капитализма: Пер. с нем. / Сост., общ. ред. и послесл. Ю. Н. Давыдова; Предисл. П. П. Гайденко. / Вебер М. – М.: Прогресс, 1990. – 808 с.
2. Гайденко П. Социология Макса Вебера // Вебер М. Избранные произведения. – М., Прогресс, 1990 – Пер. с нем. / Сост., общ. ред. и послесл. Ю. Н. Давыдова; Предисл. П. П. Гайденко. – М.: Прогресс, 1990. – 808 с.
3. Ионин Л. Г. Социология культуры / Л. Г. Ионин; Гос. ун-т – Высшая школа экономики. – 4-е изд., перераб. и доп. – М.: Изд. дом ГУ ВШЭ, 2004. – 427 с.
4. Котусенко В. Макс Вебер: Протестантська етика і дух капіталізму [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: <http://www.management.com.ua/vision/vis016.html>
5. Мнацаканян М.О. Место протестантской этики в концепции капитализма М. Вебера // Социологические исследования. – 1998. – №7. – С. 33-43.

6. Неусыхин А. И. «Эмпирическая социология» Макса Вебера и логика исторической науки / А. И. Неусыхин. // Вебер Макс Избранное: Образ общества: Пер с нем. – М.: Юрист, 1994. – С. 589-657
7. Симбирцева Н.А. Метаморфозы памяти: культурологическая интерпретация // Текст культуры: культурологическая интерпретация: сборник статей / Н.А. Симбирцева. – М. – Берлин: Директ-Медиа, 2015. – С. 32-46.
8. Шендрик А.И. Теория культуры – М.: ЮНИТИ-ДАНА, / А.И. Шендрик – Единство, 2002. – 519 с.
9. Pierotti Sandra Backup of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Criticisms of Weber's Thesis [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: <https://www.csudh.edu/dearhabermas/weberrelbk01.htm>
10. Max Weber The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism / Translated by Talcott Parsons with an introduction by Anthony Giddens. – Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005. [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: [https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/SOC571E/um/\\_Routledge\\_Classics\\_\\_Max\\_Weber-The\\_Protestant\\_Ethic\\_and\\_the\\_Spirit\\_of\\_Capitalism\\_\\_Routledge\\_Classics\\_-Routledge\\_\\_2001\\_.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/SOC571E/um/_Routledge_Classics__Max_Weber-The_Protestant_Ethic_and_the_Spirit_of_Capitalism__Routledge_Classics_-Routledge__2001_.pdf)

### Literatura

1. Veber M. Izbrannyye proizvedeniya Protestantskaya etika i duh kapitalizma: Per. s nem. / Sost., obsch. red. i poslesl. Yu. N. Davydova; Predisl. P. P. Gaydenko. / Veber M. – М.: Progress, 1990. – 808 s.
2. Gaydenko P. Sotsiologiya Maksa Vebera // Veber M. Izbrannyye proizvedeniya. – М., Progress, 1990 – Per. s nem. / Sost., obsch. red. i poslesl. Yu. N. Davydova; Predisl. P. P. Gaydenko. – М.: Progress, 1990. – 808 s.
3. Ionin L. G. Sotsiologiya kulturyi / L. G. Ionin; Gos. un-t – Vysshaya shkola ekonomiki. – 4-e izd., pererab. i dop. – М.: Izd. dom GU VShE, 2004. – 427 s.
4. Kotusenko V. Maks Veber: Protestantska etika I duh kapitalizmu [Elektronniy resurs]. – Rezhim dostupu: <http://www.management.com.ua/vision/vis016.html> perekladu
5. Mnatsakanyan M.O. Mesto protestantskoy etiki v kontseptsii kapitalizma M. Vebera // Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya. – 1998.
6. Neusyihin A. I. «Empiricheskaya sotsiologiya» Maksa Vebera i logika istoricheskoy nauki / A. I. Neusyihin. // Veber Maks Izbrannoe: Obrab. obschestva: Per s nem. – М.: Yurist, 1994. – S. 589-657.
7. Simbirtseva N.A. Metamorfozyi pamyati: kulturologicheskaya interpretatsiya // Tekst kulturyi: kulturologicheskaya interpretatsiya: sbornik statey / N.A. Simbirtseva. – М. – Berlin: Direkt-Media, 2015. – S. 32-46.
8. Shendrik A.I. Teoriya kulturyi. – М.: YunITI-DANA, / A.I. Shendrik. – Edinstvo, 2002. – 519 s.
9. Pierotti Sandra Backup of The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism: Criticisms of Weber's Thesis [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: <https://www.csudh.edu/dearhabermas/weberrelbk01.htm>
10. Weber Max The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism / Translated by Talcott Parsons with an introduction by Anthony Giddens. – Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005. [Електронний ресурс]. – Режим доступу: [https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/SOC571E/um/\\_Routledge\\_Classics\\_\\_Max\\_Weber-The\\_Protestant\\_Ethic\\_and\\_the\\_Spirit\\_of\\_Capitalism\\_\\_Routledge\\_Classics\\_-Routledge\\_\\_2001\\_.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/SOC571E/um/_Routledge_Classics__Max_Weber-The_Protestant_Ethic_and_the_Spirit_of_Capitalism__Routledge_Classics_-Routledge__2001_.pdf)

**Ірина Гутковська**

### Культурна функція протестантської етики Макса Вебера

*У статті аналізуються значення протестантської етики у становленні капіталістичного суспільства. Автор зауважує, що один з важливих аспектів впливу протестантської етики на становлення соціуму є ставлення до праці, це привертає увагу читача до розуміння твердження «праця як порятunek».*

*Велика увага приділяється співвідношенню етичних настанов релігії та розвитку суспільства. Зазначається, що раціональна організація власної діяльності, яка веде до максимально кращого результату є раціональною організацією порятунку власної душі. З культурних передумов капіталістичного розвитку такі цінності стали елементами сучасної культури. Завдяки протестантській етиці капіталістична діяльність і діяльність загалом набувають раціонального, культурного значення. Підкреслено, що саме під впливом Реформації склалися певні елементи культури капіталізму.*

*Автор приходить до висновку, що у розумінні М. Вебера, протестантизм є одним з важливих чинників, які вплинули на становлення капіталістичного суспільства.*

**Ключові слова:** протестантська етика, релігія, мирський аскетизм, трудова етика.

*Надійшла до редакції 5.04.2017 р.*