

The Concept of Class in the Writings of Max Weber

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Abstract

This paper attempts to uncover the Weberian concept of class through a critical assessment of Weber's writings and a systematic reconstruction of the Weberian framework. Even though it is incomplete, Weber's major work, *Economy and Society*, still offers us a detailed view not only of his ideas concerning class, status and parties, but also insight into domination and bureaucracy. We show that its careful reading reveals the more lasting salience of his discussions concerning sociological research than in commonly assumed. Weber held that economic class, social status and political parties are aspects of power distribution within communities; Part One of our paper considers each of these categories separately. Next, we focus on the phenomenon of domination (i. e. the exertion or exercise of power), to understand yet another aspect of power. Part Three brings together these different lines of discussion with a detailed examination of the impact of class on the bureaucracy. After summarising the characteristic elements of a comprehensive Weberian approach to social stratification, we attempt to advance his theoretical framework by going beyond Weber's own work.