Perspectives

Newsletter of the ASA Theory Section

A Message from the Editors

There are many reasons for the continued currency of the "sociological classics." Some see them as the cultural element that unites the discipline (e.g. Alexander 1987) while others take a more cynical stance, viewing them as purely institutional window dressing used for legitimating purposes (Connell 1997). Regardless of the position that we may take on this particular debate, one thing that cannot be denied is the intellectual flexibility with which the classical theorists can be adapted to understand and deal with rapidly changing contemporary conditions. Thus, one key to the longevity of the classics certainly has as much to do with the imaginative ways in which they are used and deployed by living sociologists today as with their "intrinsic" merits. Not bad for a set of authors putatively constrained by the limiting conditions afforded by the late nine-

teenth century "modernizing" European experience.

The essays included in this issue were selected as concrete exemplifications of this point. They all show how certain key ideas inherited from the classical theorists can be put to use in creative ways. Bergesen adapts Weber's notion of "inner worldly asceticism" for the understanding of contemporary suicide terrorism, while McDonnell explores the relevance of rethinking Weberian bureaucracy as a form of institutionally mediated and interactionally reproduced "subculture." Finally, Bentel and Yoshida attempt to reinvigorate the Durkheimian notion of "culture" as that which brings individuals together and come up with an insightful analysis of individualism as a "lack of culture." All three of the essays, in their unique ways, show that the ideas inherited from the classics have currency and

continue to be compelling even when "stretched" beyond the geographic, temporal and cultural bounds in which they were produced.

References

Alexander, Jeffrey. 1987. "The Centrality of the Classics." Pp. 11-57 in Anthony Giddens and Jonathan H. Turner (eds.) *Social Theory Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Connell, R.W. 1997. "Why is Classical Theory Classical?" *American Journal of Sociology* 102:1511-57.

As Editors, we are interested in your contributions and reactions. If you have material that you wish to see included in future newsletters, please let us know (olizardo@nd.edu).

—Dustin Kidd, Erika Summers-Effler & Omar Lizardo

Chair's Corner

Greetings to everyone in TheoryLand. The Theory Section program and activities at the ASA meetings in August promise to be full and interesting. We have six sessions beginning with the traditional mini-conference that explores the relationship between micro and macro approaches to sociological theory. See the full listing of these sections on page 6 of this newsletter. In addition, be sure to join us at the business meeting at which this year's award winners will be announced.

Section Officers

The Islamist Ethic and the Spirit of Terrorism

Albert J. Bergesen
University of Arizona

Terrorism is a traditional weapon of the weak[1]. In recent years this centuries old tactic has taken a new turn, variously called "suicide terrorism", "suicide bombers" or "Martyrdom Missions." There is, though, little systematic sociology about such practices (Bergesen, 2006a). What is proposed here seeks to begin filling this gap. The idea is this. If an economic practice like capitalism might have an ethical base rooted in religion (Max Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis) perhaps a practice of political violence, in the form of martyrdom operations/suicide terrorism might also have an ethical justification/motivation in religion as well. If there was a Protestant ethic and a spirit of capitalism, might not there also be an Islamist ethic and a spirit of martyrdom operations? This proposition is tentative, constituting something of a rough outline of possible dynamics. Hopefully what follows will stimulate further discussion and research.

The transformation of the age old act of terrorism, the use of violence against non-combatants to psychologically affect a third party, into a practice where initiating actors also kill themselves is, perhaps, the defining form of political violence of our time (Gambetta, 2005; Bergesen and Lizardo, 2004, 2005; Bergesen and Han, 2005). Such martyrdom missions are, by and large, associated with radical Islamist organizations[2] (Bloom, 2005; Davis, 2003; Devji, 2005; Khosrokhavar, 2005; Gambetta, 2005; Oliver and Steinberg. 2005; Pape, 2005; Reuter, 2004; Sageman, 2004). This raises the question of the influence of religion upon political violence.

One possible source of explanatory theory is Max Weber (1992) who thought the Protestant Reformation produced an ascetic work ethic that had a natural affinity with the spirit of capitalism as it emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries. He died before what many see as the Islamic Revival or Reformation of the 20th and 21st centuries. Had he had lived longer he might have noted not only the effects of puritanical ascetic religious ethics on economic life, but also upon political violence. Who knows, he might even have written a second book: The Islamist Ethic and the Spirit of Martyrdom Missions.

This paper proposes a similarly controversial thesis, that the ascetic self-discipline associated with radical Islamist groups generates a jihadic ethic, which is the bedrock of modern Islamic suicide terrorism, that is, martyrdom missions. For Weber religious belief in no way constituted the sole cause for the rise of capitalism, but comprised more of a psychological or motivational component that supported the new form of economic life. I take the same position. An ascetic Islamist ethic, should one exist, is in no way the single cause of suicide terrorism. As capitalism also involves economic factors, so do modern terrorist practices involve questions of power, resistance, competition, strategy, and other political factors. But radical Islam is, I feel, in some fundamental way clearly associated with the outbreak of this type of violence. Such a linkage of religion and political violence is controversial and there is little precise understanding of the nature of these practices. I offer my thesis only as a first step in starting a social science dialog as to the nature of the Martyrdom Mission. The Weberianesque account offered here involves some modifications of Weber's initial assumptions.

First, I do not assume that the 16th century Protestant Reformation was a one-time world historical event. Reformations, as religious crises and revivals, are endemic to the geopolitical tensions and crises of the ongoing world-system. This means the oft discussed Islamic Revival/Reformation of the 20th century is a repeat of the more general globological process of crises in existing belief systems generating reformulations and new moral orders, that the world-system witnessed some 500 years earlier in central Germany.

Second, I do not assume that Protestantism can be understood as just another religious belief system, but must instead be seen as a resolution to a crisis that struck Latin Christendom as a whole. The same holds for today's global jihad, which can be seen as a reaction to a more general crisis in traditional jihadic theory and practice.

Third, I do not assume that ascetic self-discipline is unique to Protestantism and monastic religious life. Instead I hypothesize that the ascetic component is at the heart of all religions, which involve moral imperatives for the self to discipline itself to perform religious tasks of one sort or another. What is important is the placement of such ascetic self-discipline in the overall flow of religious behavior.

The Protestant Reformation

Bergesen, continued

Traditional Catholicism assumed that humanity was weak, being in its natural condition a religiously unregulated state of nature. As such, now and again, mankind was open to sin. For the Catholic believer this act of sin triggered a compulsive asceticism to perform a variety of atonement practices: go to confession, light a candle, pray to a saint, attend Mass more often, and so forth. Once the proper Church practices were performed, atonement was attained, and the believer returned to the original state of unregulated nature. As Weber noted this was the classic Catholic cycle of sin, atonement, redemption, and release. But for the new radical Protestants these post-sin atonement practices, this safety net, so to speak, was now eliminated by the Reformation's rejection of Church ritual. The replacement moral order centered upon pressing the pre-sinning self into service by self-disciplining it to never sin in the first place.

In effect, what Protestantism did was to move the ascetic in Catholicism up front, prior to the act of sin. If Catholics were guilty for what they had done, Protestants were now guilty for what they might do. The old trigger of a behavioral act of sin was no longer necessary, for now the Protestant was self-disciplining the self 24/7. The radical Protestants put the atoning cart before the sinning horse, as the Protestant life now involved, in Weber's words, "a life guided by constant thought… it was this rationalization which gave the Reformed faith its peculiar ascetic tendency."

The key change wrought

by the Reformation was that ascetic self-discipline was now trigger-free, hence a 24/7 constant moral self disciplining by the Protestant of their daily, in this world, self. This meant the object of religious discipline was also no longer Church sanctioned practices (various sacramental and atonement rites) but the believer's ordinary, daily, natural, in this world, self. One manifestation of such self-monitoring in this world was self discipline at work and hence the classic Weberian observation about the emergence of a work ethic. This brings us to another reformation/revival, the Islamic Reformation from the late 19th through the early 21st century (for a summary of the indicators of an Islamic Reformation see, Bergesen, 2006b).

The Islamic Revival/Reformation

Both Reformations share a key similarity: ascetically driven religious practices are moved from having to be triggered by some uncontrolled event to being the moral responsibility of the believer prior to, and independent of, any triggering event. As noted Catholic atonement rites had to be triggered; but the same held for traditional Muslim jihadic practices. Reflecting the core differences between the more communal and individualist orientations of Islam and Christianity, the equivalent of sin as a trigger was various geopolitical events/crises within the international system. War, conquest, border disputes, or the ebb and flow of raids, constituted triggers that often resulted in the call for traditional Jihad (Bonner, 2006). But even here jihad still wasn't a personal responsibility, for classic jihad had to be called by the Caliph, led by a leader of the Muslim

community, and there were elaborate rules and procedures as to when to fight, who could be killed, treatment of women, children, prisoners, and so forth. Like Catholic dogma, church rules and rituals, over the centuries Muslim jurists and religious scholars, spelled out the specifics of appropriate jihadic practices.

The dependence of the command to fight (the ascetic compulsion, the thing to do) on a triggering event can be seen in Quranic quotes, such as Surah 9 verse 12: "But if they break their pledges….then fight these archetypes of faithlessness who have no [respect for a] binding pledge, so that they may desist." Here breaking the pledge is the trigger followed by the command to fight. But such traditional logic is now changing, for many argue Jihad is no longer required to be either set off by a triggering event, nor constrained by the institutional procedures spelled out in centuries of juridical rulings. What this means is that the practice of jihad is less and less a defensive response to some triggering geopolitical event.

Consider the influential Muslim Brotherhood theorist Sayyid Qutb (see Bergesen, 2008). He argues, "Islamic jihad…has nothing to do with the wars people fight today, or their motives…" What we see now are centuries of juridical specifications for appropriate conditions for jihadic practices being swept aside by the new reformers/radicals, much as radical Protestant reformers swept aside centuries of Catholic post-trigger atonement practices 500 years earlier.

Weber once commented that the ascetic had been freed from medieval monasteries and let loose on daily

life. So too with jihad. It is now being freed from its institutional constraints and transformed into a personal proactive moral responsibility. Referring to jihad, Qutb argues, "what kind of man is it …who…still thinks that it is a temporary injunction related to transient conditions and that it is concerned only with the defense of the borders" (Qutb, 2003a: 8, nd: 64). Jihad is less and less defensive, meaning it is less and less activated by a triggering event like an attack on national borders. In these newer formulations it is becoming more proactive. "Those who believe in God… do not want permission in order to fight for God's cause" (Qutb, 2003b: 182). And why? Because he argues, "Jihad, or striving for God's cause, is a deal made by every believer….It is a course of action that is necessary….The deal made by every believer must be fulfilled, or else he is not a believer" (Qutb, viii, 269). That is, as he says, "The motives of Islamic jihad can be found within the nature of Islam" (Qutb, vii, 8). The jihadic cart is being placed before the defense of borders trigger.

In the pre-Protestant moral universe one worked for only material rewards and in the pre-Islamist universe one only engaged in jihad when Muslim lands were attacked and/or in response to the Caliph's call. But for Protestant radicals one now worked for the sake of work and for today's Islamist radicals, one engages in jihad for the sake of jihad. The new mandate is quite clear. One shouldn't limit, "jihad to the narrow sense of defending the 'land of Islam'…[for] these verses here declare very clearly the need to fight

Bergesen, continued

unbelievers…without reference to any aggression they might have perpetuated" (Qutb, viii, 266). The classic trigger is gone. And the response is to move the ascetic discipline to fight in the cause of God up front, prior to any trigger. It now also becomes, for the believer, a 24/7 responsibility. Jihad has gone from a defensive-after-a-triggering-event communal responsibility to an a-priori-proactive-personal-responsibility. There was a natural uncontrolled randomness to international life that triggered jihad (raids, border skirmishes, war, invasion, etc.) but with the radical Islamist believers this trigger was is unnecessary. Jihad is now a condition of faith. It need not be triggered. This we could call the first stage in the rationalization of jihadic practices. A second stage centers upon martyrdom.

Martyrdom

The new a priori proactive logic for jihad also operates for becoming a martyr that is dying while fighting in the cause of God. Death, as the gateway to martyrdom, is no longer left to the ebb and flow of battle but is now moved up front, a priori, before battle, to become a moral responsibility of the believer. Like traditional jihad (fighting in the cause of God), traditional martyrdom (dying while fighting in the cause of God) was also a triggered response, for if, from fighting in God's cause you were killed, then you became a martyr and were taken to Heaven by God. As fighting in the cause of God (jihad) was moved up front prior to a triggering geo-political event, so now, in turn, is a martyred death moved in front of fighting in God's cause. This is the second rationalization of jihadic practice. Jihad before trigger, and martyred death before jihad.

A martyred death no longer comes at the hand of the unbeliever, but now from the faithful jihadi, for the ascetic Islamist is now so self disciplined that they can self control themselves to the point of death, and, thereby, in effect, front end martyrdom, making what was previously triggered by others a moral mandate for self to do to self.

In comparative terms, broadly speaking, why wait for the trigger of a sin to trigger that ascetic discipline to lead a believer to Catholic atonement rites, and now, 500 years later, why wait

for the trigger of death at the hands of the enemy to attain martyrdom? Why not take that into one's own hands? That is, in traditional Islam you fought in the cause of God and maybe you died and maybe martyrdom was awarded. Now you die before you fight to guarantee martyrdom. It is the modernist project of further rationalizing life identified by Max Weber now taken to a new level by the new ascetic Islamists, the analog's to yesterday's ascetic Protestants. Earlier the irrationality of adventure capitalism was standardized by the moral compulsion that was the Protestant work ethic. Today the irrationality of possible death in the ebb and flow of battle as a trigger for the status of martyr is now standardized by the moral compulsion that is something like a jihadic ethic. The irrationality of natural fighting as a trigger for martyrdom is now removed as the source of that religious status. You can now attain it on your own. It is the Protestant Ethic taken a) to a new institutional domain (politics not economics) and b) deepened in its ascetic hold on individual self-discipline. Martyrdom is no longer something that randomly happens as a by-product of the nature of human conflict; it is now a calling, a task, hence a "martyrdom mission" like a "work ethic" earlier.

The Weber observation about asceticism is, in effect, doubled. The Protestant denies the self this and that and lives the austere life. But while more ascetic than the traditional Catholic, it turns out that this is perhaps only a halfway asceticism. There was, it turns out, another step to go. Weber died too soon to see this; he never saw the martyrdom mission. He never wondered how is it that a belief system can be so austere that it eliminates the belief's holder, which, if I may digress for a moment, suggests a distinctly Weberian theory of suicide.

At present the sociology of suicide is dominated by Emile Durkheim's (1951) groupist account. Social integration—very strong, or very weak, or abrupt in changing—generates rising an falling rates of suicide. But what if there was also a Weberian theory of suicide as well? What if, regardless of the degree of integration of the group, the beliefs of

radical sects were of such a nature that the denial they commanded of the self was of its own existence?

For Weber it seemed odd, if not unnatural, that one would work for the sake of work, or accumulate for the sake of accumulation, regardless of the amount attained or the human needs met or satiated. There was no natural account for such action, and so Weber hypothesized it was the product of a cultural code, or ethic, initially possessed by radical religious sects, his radical Protestants.

And now does this not repeat? Do we not witness, again, a new set of behaviors that seems unnatural, that seem to run against natural propensities to life and well being. That one could kill others for cultural reasons as part of a political act is the hallmark of modern revolutionary violence, but here is a new addition: now in the name of a cause is not only the moral mandate to kill others but to kill self as well. Here death isn't about being caught as a terrorist, or about a bomb accidentally going off in one's hand, or of being turned in, or seen, or shot. No, it's none of these, for these are how perpetrator's die in "traditional terrorism," where the perpetrator killed others, for a cause, and even innocents for a distant target, but not self, unless that accidentally happened. But now? It's all moved up a moral notch. The asceticism has increased. Self control; self monitoring; self discipline has been retched up. The old radical puritans, the old Protestants, even the old revolutionary socialists of the 19th and 20th centuries, wouldn't recognize the new martyrdom mission. Calm, cool, rational, planned, and not out of desperation but in a positive way, a life takes, at one and the same time, itself and the other. And this is done on a scale that crosses groups, countries, nationalities, and global regions. It is something that social science barely grasps at all.

Summary/Conclusion

A number of hypotheses were advanced:
1. Reformations/Revivals recur, and given the heightened moral integration of the world-system over time, the Islamist Reformation of the 20th century should have a higher degree of ascetic self discipline at it's moral core than the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. As an

A Subcultural Theory of the Origins of Bureaucracy

Erin Metz McDonnell
Northwestern University

Despite long sociological interest in bureaucracy, and its recent renaissance within the discipline, scholars still know surprisingly little about the conditions that lead to the emergence of Weberian-type bureaucracy. In my recent research, I propose a new framework – a "subcultural" theory of bureaucracy – for identifying the mechanisms and conditions under which bureaucracy will (and will not) take hold from prior forms of organization. The theory fuses cultural and structural perspectives on bureaucracy, and provides an alternative to top-down models of bureaucratic transition. It suggests that bureaucracy first emerges as a niche (i.e., a subculture) within a larger state system marked by non-bureaucratic norms and orientations. These niches may or may not spread more widely within the state. This theory proposes new hypotheses for understanding when and where nascent pockets of bureaucracy emerge and then diffuse (or not) within the larger state system.

Many scholars still study bureaucratic capacity as a uniform feature of a state, which I argue undermines understanding of the origins of bureaucratic practice. Instead, I believe it is more fruitful to approach the contemporary origins of state bureaucratization as *subcultural*. Recent theoretical arguments about the need to disaggregate the state open up an alternative perspective on contemporary development of Weberian bureaucracy in new states. Disaggregation conceives of states as complex, interrelated systems of agents and agencies, rather than monolithic actors (see Migdal et al. 1994, Steinmetz 1999). Such a viewpoint accommodates the fact that successful developmental states have substantial pockets of corruption, but also that states conventionally regarded as failures may have highly effective agencies.

A bottom-up approach to bureaucratic development suggests that nascent bureaucracy is subcultural because it emerges as a niche within a larger culture, characterized by beliefs and practices inconsistent with those of the dominant culture. The term subculture often evokes ideas of oppositional youth cultures, that may, at first glance, not seem a particularly apt model for the development of bureaucratic norms and practices. Initial skepticism of this juxtaposition highlights why a subcultural perspective is such an important corrective to our theoretical understanding of bureaucratic transition as institutional change. Although bureaucratic practices are taken for granted—even popularly vilified—in the industrialized West, a subcultural approach underscores exactly how fragile, unusual, and even deviant, practices of bureaucracy can be when they first take hold.

My empirical research elaborates these arguments in the context of African states, looking at Ghana in particular, to better understand how bureaucratic practice develops in new states. The study examines successful cases of bureaucratic niches within the government, selected by surveying more than 20 civil society organizations, including local think tanks, in-ternational NGOs, and development partners/donors. Thus, the frame of comparison is centered on variations within the Ghanaian state itself.

Ghana provides excellent opportunities for analyzing the early development of bureaucracy precisely because bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic administrative practices coexist within this state. By contrast, many states studied as successes within the developmental state literature already possess a dominantly bureaucratic administrative system, although they may also possess some non-bureaucratic features or niches. Internal variation in such systems may suggest differences in how administration is enacted, but I argue that the features associated with bureaucratic elements in the state change when bureaucracy becomes dominant, rather than a cultural interloper. By contrast, perennial examples of failed states, such as Zaire, are so thoroughly dominated by non-bureaucratic practices that pockets of bureaucracy, if they exist, would be difficult to find. Moreover, cases would be so few as to preclude meaningful comparison among successful cases to better establish shared features of nascent bureaucratic development.

Approaching the origins of bureaucracy as subcultural reveals how conditions that protect *nascent pockets* of bureaucracy are precisely the opposite of features associated with *fully developed* bureaucracy. By overlooking this paradox, policy advocates continue to espouse strategies that fail to cultivate effective administration, and social theorists miss a rich twist to classical bureaucracy theory. For example, theory holds that discrete jurisdictions lead to efficiency, while redundancy promotes inefficiency. Yet in my research, every one of the studied success cases utilized redundancy of job tasks as a critical strategy to maintain internal stability and productivity in the face of unpredictable challenges resulting from embeddedness in a larger non-bureaucratic culture.

Similarly, scholars since Weber have accepted hierarchy of authority as one of the defining features of bureaucracy. Chibber's contemporary work in this vein suggests autonomous agencies reduce efficiency and effectiveness of developmental planning (2002). However, a subcultural perspective on the development of bureaucracy clarifies this misapplication of fully-bureaucratic theory to early bureaucracy by focusing on the social logic of conditions at the point of transition to bureaucracy. In the period of transition to bureaucracy, autonomy makes possible early niches of bureaucratic effectiveness within a non-bureaucratic environment. My research finds that autonomy over personnel and resources makes possible the development of subcultural practices that deviate from administrative cultural norms. Such autonomy can be used to insulate bureaucratic groups from contrary practices of patronage, enable meritocratic reforms, and structure internal incentives to collective goals. An emphasis on the sub-state development of bureaucracy thus clarifies the social wizardry of change: agency-level autonomy and unique processes for recruitment give rise to niches of meritocracy without inciting organized resistance from patronage beneficiaries.

ASA THEORY EVENTS

THEORY MINI CONFERENCE 2009

Issues in Micro Theory
Saturday, August 8, 4:30pm-6:10pm, Hilton San Francisco
Session organizer and presider: Peter J. Burke, *UC Riverside*

Accidental Explanation: On the Signal Importance of Noise
    Michael Macy, *Cornell University*
Language Use and Interaction in the Context of Ethnomethodology and Pragmatism
    Douglas Maynard, *University of Wisconsin*
Expanding the Domain of Expectation Research Programs
    Robert Shelly, *Ohio University*
Identity Theory in Sociology
    Jan Stets, *National Science Foundation and UC Riverside*

Issues in Macro Theory
Sunday, August 9, 8:30am-10:10am, Hilton San Francisco
Session organizer and presider: Anne Kane, *University of Houston*

Building Macro-Theory from Comparative Cases: Balancing the Singular and the General
    Jack Goldstone, *George Mason University*
When Does Reasonable Persistence Become Falsification Denial?
    Patrick Nolan, *University of South Carolina*
Macrosociology in the Global Age
    George Ritzer, *University of Maryland*
Globalization and Macrosociologies
    William Robinson, *UC Santa Barbara*

Issues in the Interface of Micro and Macro Theory
Sunday, August 9, 10:30am-12:10pm, Hilton San Francisco
Session organizer and presider: Peter J. Burke, *UC Riverside*

At the Crossroads of Microsociology and Macrosociology: Toward a Theoretical Unificiation
    Guillermina Jasso, *New York University*
Causal Relations between Micro and Macro
    R. Keith Sawyer, *Washington University*
A General Theoretical Scheme for Linking Levels of Social Reality
    Jonathan Turner, *UC Riverside*
Social Exchange and the Micro-Macro Interface
    Linda Molm, *University of Arizona*

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Open Submission Session: Linking Micro and Macro Approaches to Meaning
Saturday, August 8, 8:30am-10:10am, Hilton San Francisco
Session organizer and presider: Anne Kane, *University of Houston*
Session discussant: Isaac A. Reed, *University of Colorado Boulder*

Micro, Macro and the Varying Things in between: The Field of Humanitarian Relief
    Monika Krause, *University of Trent*
Moving on from the Objectivity Obsession: Toward a New Theory of Media, Opinion Formation, and Deliberative Politics
    Ron Jacobs, *SUNY Albany* and Eleanor Townsley, *Mount Holyoke College*
Switchings under Uncertainty: The Coming and Becoming of Meanings
    Harrison White, *Columbia University*

Theory Section Business Meeting
Saturday, August 8, 11:30am-12:10pm, Hilton San Francisco

Lewis A. Coser Memorial Lecture and Salon
Saturday, August 8, 2:30pm-4:10pm, Hilton San Francisco

This session honors the recipient of the 2008 Lewis A. Coser Memorial Award, **Loïc J. D. Wacquant**, who will give the memorial lecture. Professor Wacquant's lecture will be followed by a salon and reception with wine and food.

The Body, the Ghetto, and the Penal State
    Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *UC Berkeley*

Theory Section and Section on Sociology of Culture Joint Reception
Saturday, August 8, 6:30pm-8:10pm, Parc 55 Hotel

THEORY SECTION OPEN ROUNDTABLES

Saturday, August 8, 10:30am-11:30am, Hilton San Francisco
Organizer: Seth Abrutyn, *UC Riverside*

Table 1: Community and Social Relationships
Charles A. Plante, *McGill University*
Jeff Livesay, *Colorado College*
Tad P. Skotnicki, *UC San Diego*

Table 2: Contemporary Theoretical Issues I
Sean O'Riain, *National University of Ireland, Maynooth*
Russell James Funk, *University of Michigan Ann Arbor*
Youn Ok Lee, Clinton Key, Kimberly R. Manturuk and Sondra J. Smolek, *UNC Chapel Hill*
Hilary Anne Davidson, *University of Notre Dame*

Table 3: Contemporary Theoretical Issues II
Margareta Bertilsson, *University of Copenhagen*
Daniel Silver, *University of Chicago*
Mucahit Bilici, *University of Michigan Ann Arbor*

Table 4: Issues in Classical Theory
Vincent Jeffries, *California State University Northridge*
Paul Stanley Kasun, *University of Texas Austin*
Leon H. Warshay, *Wayne State University*
Ryu Sung Hee, *Korea University*

Table 5: Issues in Environmental Sociology
Christopher S. Oliver, *Michigan State University*
Andrew V. Bedrous, *University of Nebraska Lincoln*

Table 6: Issues in Post-Modern, Post-Industrial, and Post-Structural Theory
Calixto Melero, *Texas A&M University*
Nathan Michael Jurgenson, *Universeity of Maryland College Park*
Gordon C. Chang and Josh D. Shapiro, *UC San Diego*

McDonnell, continued

Focusing on variation within the state can better specify how cultural practices and organizational systems interact to structure particular opportunities for the development of bureaucratic practices. For example, the case evidences makes clear that the way in which autonomy contributes to bureaucratic development is nuanced. Autonomy enables the development of bureaucratic subcultures by introducing opportunities for variation into the system; such variation permits the development of *subcultures*, but is not sufficient to explain the development of *bureaucratic* subcultures. Through historical and inter-organizational comparison, I argue that locus of recruitment and number of veto players are important variables for promoting bureaucratic subcultures through recruitment procedures. This effect can be seen by comparison among cases, but also by examining within-case historical variation. Changes in recruitment policies in the 1990s provide a compelling natural experiment to examine the effects of moving from a centralized civil service recruitment process to recruitment handled at the Ministry level.

I find that mid-level recruitment of civil servants has a stronger negative impact on the development of meritocracy (a key feature of bureaucracy) than either centralized or localized recruitment. With localized recruitment, professional interdependency ensures that the recruiter personally bears some of the costs of recruiting a less capable candidate through nepotism. In centralized recruitment, the number of networks with access to key decision-makers are limited. Mid-level recruitment increases the sites for influencing recruitment by multiplying the decision-makers, but does not sufficiently distribute the risks of nepotistic recruitment onto the decision-makers themselves. Similarly, I argue that multiple veto players—particularly when there are multiple rounds of recruitment involving actors at different organizational levels—reduces nepotism and corruption by numerically and qualitatively complicating the networks needed to exert influence.

Contribution to Existing Theory

The demise of bureaucracy, repeatedly proclaimed (Barzelay and Armajani 1992; Osborne and Plastrik 1997), has been greatly exaggerated. Two movements have renewed sociological interest in bureaucracy. First, neoinstitutionalism argues that contemporary increases in bureaucratization and institutional convergence were no longer driven by technical benefits, as Weber argued, but by power to signal institutional legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell 1983). In contrast, developmental state theory espouses the technical imperative for bureaucratization, asserting that institutions still enjoy technical gains from adopting Weberian bureaucratic forms and practices. This research continues to accumulate case-based evidence highlighting bureaucracy's role in state directed development (Kohli 2004; Wade 1990; Woo-Cumings 1999), including quantitative analysis demonstrating correlation between Weberian bureaucracy and economic growth (Evans and Rauch 1999).

Generations of scholars made careers challenging Weber's claim that bureaucracy is a technically superior form of administration, an organizational juggernaut. Scholars attempted to show that bureaucratic practice differed from the Weberian ideal-type, proposed typological variations (Adler and Borys 1996; Litwak 1961; Samuel and Mannheim 1970) and alternatives to bureaucracy (Stinchcombe 1959; Ouchi 1980), including the rise of "new managerialism" (Barzelay and Armajani 1992). Despite, however, almost a century of works designed to supplant, correct, add to, or otherwise modify Weber's original scheme, Weber's characteristics still remain the starting point for contemporary researchers. This, combined with empirical evidence linking Weberian bureaucratic characteristics to economic growth, means that while I acknowledge the possibility of varieties of bureaucracy, my core theoretical interest is in the development of Weberian bureaucracy. For brevity, in this essay I will simply use the term "bureaucracy" when referring to Weberian-type bureaucracy.

Neoinstitutionalism

A subcultural perspective on bureaucracy rethinks the application of neoinstitutional theory. The foundational statement of neoinstitutionalism implicitly acknowledges a limiting condition: it applies to already extensively bureaucratized social spheres. As such, neoinstitutionalism is not well positioned to elaborate the conditions that cultivate bureaucracy within non-bureaucratized settings. It is vital to think critically about how neoinstitutional processes, empirically present, function non- and quasi-bureaucratic developing states. Neoinstitutionalism asserts that practices of bureaucracy are borrowed ideas and lays out three mechanisms for diffusion: imposition from above, self-initiated borrowing from peers, and the circulation of professionals (DiMaggio & Powell 1983). Where adaptation confers technical advantages and not just legitimacy, borrowed institutions must be localized, and capacity to localize varies. Imposition from above and imitating peers are both flawed systems leading to incomplete borrowing. Incomplete adaptation arises from imperfect knowledge of peer institutions and the social milieu in which they are embedded, or from the incomplete ability of coercive partners to monitor (Henisz et al. 2005). This leads to a bureaucratic façade familiar in many developing states. In my fieldwork, informed state actors lamented the veneer of functionality that obscured inner chaos, unclear boundaries, and ineffective adjudicating functions.

By contrast, the circulation of professionals has the capacity to produce deep borrowing of bureaucratic practices by agents with the dual cultural sophistication to localize practices. A subcultural perspective further clarifies the role of professionals in creating bureaucratic subcultures, because not all forms of circulation produce a balance of expertise in bureaucratic and local culture. Migration for education exposes actors to bureaucratic norms during a period where transnational connections remain strong. As such, educational migration plays a critical yet understudied role in cultivating a corps of actors exposed to functioning bureaucratic environments while still retaining expertise in local practices.

McDonnell, continued

This is another reason why Ghana is a particularly propitious case for the development of a subcultural approach to the origins of bureaucracy: during key periods of Ghana's history, the *proportion* of all college-going nationals who received education abroad was higher than most other countries in the world. In the mid-1970s, when most of the current cohort of upper-level civil servants were educated, an average of 20% of all Ghanaian post-secondary students were studying at universities in the United States alone. By comparison, only 2% of Korean students were receiving education abroad anywhere in the world (Amsden 1989). These internationally educated (and bureaucratically exposed) Ghanaian nationals were also uniquely likely to return home afterwards: at the time, Ghanaian students were more likely to return home after receiving their degree than students from any other country in the sample, with return rates double the international average (Glaser & Habers 1974).

Developmental State Theory

Developmental state theory claims bureaucratic capacity is a necessary condition for economic development, but fails to provide compelling theory explaining the genesis of bureaucracy. The focus on macro-level conditions of success cases has prevented developmental state scholarship from analytically distinguishing nascent causality from conformity: that is, distinguishing conditions that lead to bureaucracy from conditions that lead to conformity within an already bureaucratic system. Often studies explain bureaucratic development as the intended result of decisions from state leadership—an authoritarian ruler or foreign conquerer—that imposes reforms. Such explanations may accurately describe some bureaucratic transitions, but the dominance of this top-down explanation has precluded theoretical exploration of alternative pathways to bureaucratic development.

Even among some of the foremost scholars in developmental state theory, linkages between institutional structures and bureaucratic culture are concealed by conventional institutional language that obscures social actors. Therefore scholarship struggles to answer critical questions about bureaucratic transition: How are agents able to institute a set of abstracted rules that are contrary to existing popular practices? How do they monitor behavior or so structure interaction that subordinates comply? A subcultural theory of the origins of bureaucracy focuses on how this critical reorientation occurs as organizational processes. A cultural framework is an ideal accompaniment to established institutional approaches: it attends to norms, values and practices as social goods that are actively created, contested, and disseminated. This contributes micro- and meso- conditions and change mechanisms to a literature dominated by rich macro-centered theories of bureaucratization and state development.

Conclusion

Disaggregating the state reveals how macro-level conditions of state bureaucratic quality emerge out of the coordination and contestation of niches within the state. Such a shift takes seriously the power of pre-existing and competing organizational forms. In contrast to top-down views that see bureaucratic transition as the result of intentional imposition by an authority, a subcultural approach makes possible bureaucratic transition as the result of small seemingly inconsequential changes, many of which originate in niches. Examining bureaucratic genesis as situated in niches makes observable greater variation in bureaucratic quality among state agencies, and highlights multiple channels of causality as the clustered features of bureaucracy emerge.

A subcultural perspective helps clarify some of the traditional theoretical challenges that have dogged explanations of bureaucratic practice: migration and the circulation of professionals, combined with the idea of subcultural niches, helps explain how actors resolve the collective action problems posed by early adoption of bureaucratic practices. Bureaucratically exposed and experienced actors are more willing to invest in bureaucratic practices because they have experienced the benefits from operating in a bureaucratic environment. When such vested actors enjoy marginal power to structure incentives or control hiring, they can exercise tools that cultivate a group of individuals who converge on bureaucratic practices. Moreover, a subcultural approach to bureaucratic development makes space for trial and error that scholars are beginning to assert is critical not only for modern localization of bureaucracy, but was essential for the historical development of bureaucracy within the English church (Lancaster forthcoming). Indeed, similarities between the processes of bureaucratic development within niches of modern African states and the original development of bureaucratic practice within the medieval church are tantalizing. Parallels in the processes suggest that subcultural origins of bureaucratic practice may be a more general feature of nascent bureaucratization, not merely a process unique to the contemporary development of bureaucracy in young states.

Approaching bureaucratic transition as structural but also cultural builds on Weber's attention to how ethos animated bureaucratic structures, and makes explicit claims of cultural causality that lurk throughout developmental state studies. A cultural framing of bureaucracy repositions the concept as a complex cultural schema requiring localization. It also puts emphasis on investigating the strategies and conditions that protect nascent pockets of bureaucratic practice, a blindspot in more conventional top-down theories of bureaucracy. A subcultural perspective focuses theoretical attention in alternative ways, suggesting analysts be attentive to varying degrees and sources of autonomy for units within states and consider how conditions that promote *incipient* bureaucracy may be at odds those of well-developed bureaucracy.

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On Individualism as an Absence of Culture

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Few would argue with the idea that the United States is an individualistic culture. Americans shun civic organizations, rarely vote, focus intensely on personal achievement, ignore their neighbors, and prefer the immediate gratification of electronic entertainment to group interaction. Going to a party in the United States can be an unpleasant experience because guests are expected to boldly break into conversations as opposed to being embraced by the group or automatically included in structured activities. When a friend moves away, we say we're going to keep in touch – but we usually don't.

While we are easily organized by employers and the state, organizing ourselves is a harrowing task. University students start new organizations regularly but few last more than a few months. Once the novelty fades – once community becomes work – no one can be bothered. Faculty senates nationwide complain that administration is too powerful, yet very few pursue organizational steps to address the problem. American labor unions are essentially defunct. In general, individuals are simply too focused on their own careers and security to take risks or go out on a limb for others.

The American family is a more or less cloistered affair. While people generally perceive the "American Family" to be in trouble, they overwhelmingly view their own as doing well. This suggests a lack of experience with other families (and perhaps too much experience with network news channels). Families are smaller today, with the one child family now more common than the two. This trend has impacted the essential characteristics of what has been dubbed the "millennial generation" – a cohort not so different from the "little emperors" of China raised during the one-child policy. The millennials experience intensive parenting by what have been named "helicopter parents" who "hover," trying to protect their children from any kind of suffering – even the sort required to foster independence and discipline. Millennials often report that their parents are their best friends, and that they would be unable to cope with life without them. This dependent relationship is facilitated by the rampant use of the cell phone, sometimes called "the world's longest umbilical cord."

As the American family has focused intensely on its small and therefore precious number of offspring, it has withdrawn from community life. This withdrawal probably has as much to do with time lost to the demands of a two-worker family and the seduction of electronic media as it does with time spent doting on an only child, but the end result is the same: today's citizen has learned that life is all about "me." There is no sense in calling this generation spoiled – every generation feels that subsequent generations are. The point is that the cohort epito-

mizes American individualism. Each of its members feels he or she is the most important thing in the world. The wearing of a shirt that says "Treat me like the princess I am" exemplifies the locus of the millennial's attention.

To say American culture is individualistic is not particularly interesting, but we make the claim, as suggested by the title of this essay, that our American "culture of individualism" is not culture at all. In doing this, our goal is to better integrate cultural theory with sociological ideas related to moral integration and the shift towards greater rationality. In a nutshell, what we are saying is that culture should be defined in terms of its function for social integration, that individualism therefore denotes an absence of shared culture because it works at cross-purposes with social integration, and that rationalization in the Weberian sense is required to pick up the slack left by an absence of culture. This theoretical goal requires a reconceptualization of culture and a distinction between two types of individualism, tasks we take in turn in the following sections.

What is culture?

Despite the importance and common usage of the term, the concept of *culture* is rather broadly and loosely defined in sociology. Introductory textbooks typically define culture as 1) ways of life of society that are 2) shared, and 3) transmitted socially (as opposed to biologically). Culture includes material aspects such as tools, artifacts, and clothing as well as non-material aspects such as values, norms, beliefs, and symbols. It varies from society to society, and changes over time.

The content of culture may vary, but there is no such thing as society without culture. When the existence of a social force is universal, we assume its utility: it is obvious that culture plays an essential role in maintaining societal cohesion. Regardless of how members of society feel about their own culture (e.g., whether or not they are happy with a given cultural element), what culture is supposed to do is to make society possible. For Durkheim (1982), culture is one of the *social facts* that put constraints on the individual's conduct, thoughts, and feelings. In other words, shared values and norms facilitate the transformation of mere aggregates of humans into that entity we call society.

We hold this constraining function to be an essential component to the conceptualization of culture, but the limits culture places on individuals do more than constrain behavior. Culture and the shared view of reality it facilitates allow predictability in social interaction that makes life easier. We need not negotiate, make decisions regarding, or search for directions for every action and interaction in which we take part (Berger and Luckmann [1966] 1967). Anthony Giddens (2002) discusses the related concept of social structure – a social force that both requires and is intimately intertwined with culture. Giddens notes that social structure is not just constraining/ controlling but also *enabling*: We are able to communicate and accomplish things collectively due to shared knowledge and expectations.

Thus, we define culture as shared and transmitted ways of life that function, or at least functioned at some point in history, to hold a society together. Culture is a *continued on next page*

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source of *primary social control* and allows *predictability* in human interactions. This definition necessarily excludes certain values and other elements that, while they may fit accepted definitions of culture, do not function or did not function in the sense of contributing to societal cohesion.

The new individualism

Individualism, as an idea or set of ideas, emerged in seventeenth century Europe in opposition to arbitrary control imposed by monarchy and aristocracy (Bellah et al. [1985] 1994). It is understood to be a modern Western phenomenon linked to Enlightenment ideals of individual rights and personal freedom. All of these ideas place great value on the well-being of the individual as opposed to that of the larger group. They also imply a certain faith in the efficacy of the individual actor as opposed to the pre-modern tendency to place trust in tradition or gods. What the Enlightenment thinkers and nineteenth century social theorists expected was that the operation of modern society would increasingly depend on two layers of rationality: *social* rationality and *reason* of individuals (Mills [1959] 1961). Individuals can be truly free only if they are freed from authoritarian political controls and, through reasoned (rational, logical) thinking, freed from the more metaphorical chains of pre-scientific modes of understanding (e.g., religion).

Somewhere in the history of Western society, this libertarian meaning of individualism seems to have become distorted. Today, individualism is typically held in contrast to *collectivism*. Collectivism is a value that demands that the individual reciprocate, cooperate, respect others, conform, and in general put aside his or her own wants and needs in favor of the collective good. But consider "individual rights." If we are to ensure individual rights, it is necessary for each member of society to respect the rights of *every* individual. This means that "Others' rights are just as important as yours," not "You can do anything you want, even if your actions trample others' rights." To value individual rights is to respect others, and this value manifests itself in reciprocity, concern for others, cooperation, and even conformity. Individualism cannot be an antonym of collectivism. To the contrary, the rights of the individual cannot be ensured without consideration for the collective well-being.

Collectivism is a basic component of culture that has made society possible throughout human history. Individualism in its classical, libertarian sense is rather an effort to modify or curb collectivism that *over*-emphasizes self-sacrifice for the collectivity. In other words, the concept that stood in opposition to individualism was *authoritarianism*, not collectivism. This is an essential distinction.

The fact that today individualism is routinely contrasted with collectivism elucidates how the meaning of individualism has changed. Though contemporary thinkers (intellectuals and laymen alike) still include and appreciate the original meaning of individualism (human rights and personal freedom), the term has also come to imply that value should be placed on allowing or even expecting the individual to give his or her own needs and wants priority, to avoid reciprocation when possible, to

shun conformity if undesired, and in general to abandon showing concern for others if it is not beneficial to self. Because of this ambiguity in meaning, some contemporary sociologists have coined new terms to describe this type of individualism, such as "expressive individualism" (e.g., Bellah, et.al [1985] 1994) or "wilding" (Derber [1996] 2004).

Individualism as an absence of culture

We propose that this type of individualism be conceptualized theoretically as an *absence* or *decline* of culture, rather than as a *form* of culture connected to the emergence of modernity. Though individualism clearly falls into the category of "values" or "ideas," qualifying it as "culture" by conventional definitions, we must consider the established understanding of how culture is supposed to *function*. Review our definition of culture in the previous discussion, then consider (expressive) individualism: a set of values that put emphasis on individuals and individuals' interests. Its antonym is collectivism – not, as was the classic case, authoritarianism. In fact, individualism may serve an authoritarian system. Individualism today often justifies the pursuit of individual needs and wants and does not encourage cooperation, reciprocity, conformity, and concern for others. It may even discourage these.

Does this value of individualism work to constrain the individual's thoughts and conduct (a crucial function in the realization of society)? Do norms based on this value allow us to predict the actions of others? Do we even have, based on the value of individualism, a set of norms that bind us?

In a society based on the value of (expressive) individualism, the only prediction that can be counted on is that others will act in their own interests, and no one else's. But since we can never know the true interests of others, unless perhaps we become well-acquainted with them, in such a society we would have to accept and be prepared for behavioral unpredictability. In direct opposition to the enabling character of true culture, we would have to: determine probable behavioral outcomes based on our observations of each individual and transaction (e.g., "Is this person kind? Will I be taken advantage of if I respond to her request for help?"), negotiate (e.g., "I think you owe me a favor since I did something for you last week."), and expect very little from others (e.g., "Others won't show concern for me, so why should I bother being nice to them?"). If norms do not prescribe conduct, trust must be worked out in each transaction (Giddens 2002). In general we can expect members of such a society to be fearful and mistrusting because, like sociopaths (Black & Larson 2000), they have learned that there are no moral rules – no dependable modes of behavior that will yield positive results. For these persons, the world is a cruel, dangerous place.

In his book *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills (1956) coined the term "crackpot realism" to describe a belief, commonly held by persons in the US, that other nations were more or less plotting to attack, could not be trusted, and are best dealt with militarily. It is possible that this American paranoia, painfully obvious today, stems to a degree from an orientation to others resulting from a lack of culture.

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Individualism and anomie

In describing the phenomenon in question, we do not seek to coin a new term. Sociology already has a commonly understood concept denoting a lack of normative constraint: *anomie* (Durkheim [1984] 2003). Our proposal is that sociological thinkers need to take a fresh look at the so-called "cultural" value of individualism, and consider what we have concluded: there is no difference between saying that individualism, as a value, dominates a society and saying that society is in a state of anomie.

An individualistic society is in a state of anomie because individualism does not prescribe norms. In fact, according to the value of individualism, constraining norms are nuisances – impediments to achieving selfish goals. But according to Durkheim, collective acceptance of (at least some) norms and social organization go hand in hand. Individuals cannot be bound into a society without common acceptance of unifying norms. Under the value of individualism, actors lack predictable interactions; they cannot trust and reciprocate. Social integration and organization become problematic, and society as a whole fragments and becomes ripe for disintegration.

Formal rationality: a surrogate for culture

Does this freedom from constraining norms mean that such a society will be left in a state of total chaos and disorganization? Some postmodern theorists expect as much – or assert that society has already entered such a stage (Calhoun et al. 2002). Given the human species' tendency to search for certainty – to strive for predictability and control – this outcome seems unlikely. For most of human history, religion and other traditional cultural meanings provided this certainty and moral guidance. In modern society, rationality and reason were expected to assume the role once filled by religion and traditional culture generally. Though Durkheim's ([1984] 2003) idea of organic solidarity can be understood as a rational organization of society (at least when compared to the binding power of tradition in mechanical solidarity), it was Max Weber who discussed extensively the process that defined modern society: rationalization ([1921] 1968).

Weber distinguished between types of rationality, using the mode he called *formal rationality* to characterize systems that efficiently maximize the achievement of a given goal, regardless of what that goal was (e.g., profit, genocide, taxation) . Under this condition, characteristic of modern Western society, people are no longer bound by general value systems (such as religion) or by the arbitrary rules of despotic authority. Instead, individuals' actions are dictated by bureaucratic, systematic, institutionalized rules and regulations, as well as all-encompassing social structures built upon such principles (Weber 1974). This type of rationality allows efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control (Ritzer 2004).

The elements of formal rationality most pertinent to the present discussion are
predictability and *control.* As might be expected, rules that are systematically spelled out provide decidedly clear guidelines to modern actors, making their behavior predictable and controlled to fit the goals of the rational system (in a capitalist economy this goal is typically profit). What is of interest here is that social predictability and *constraint* (Durkheim preferred this term to "control") are functions of *culture* that serve to *integrate and unify* society, while *rational* predictability and *control* are elements within a cold, non-cultural system that serve the value of individualism.

Classical social theorists such as Weber and Durkheim, as well as the Enlightenment thinkers, anticipated that modern society would become increasingly characterized by rationality. In reality, traditional social control, or *primary social control,* persists. Modern children are subjected to primary social control during early socialization (typically within the family group), during which they are expected to internalize rational rules alongside what are often rather irrational values and beliefs. Thus, it may be more productive to think of modern society as one that relies on both *primary* social control (by culture) and *secondary* social control (by rational systems and institutions), and to consider the degree to which each has influence in different
societies.

Our argument is that when the primary social control is weak, secondary social control must take its role. In other words, when society is anomic, it must rely heavily on rational systems. As discussed in previous sections, in a society characterized by individualism (anomie), people cannot predict the behavior of others, and trusting, bonding relations cannot be expected. Thus, individuals have no other option but to turn to rational bureaucratic systems for needed social control. This control will be secondary, but bring some measure of predictability to social relations. We believe this analytic framework will increase our understanding of many social phenomena observed in modern societies – and U.S. society in particular.

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alternative, or supplementary hypothesis, perhaps Islam is more ascetic than Christianity to begin.

2. All religions have an ascetic dimension. It is the moral compliance component that disciplines the self to perform a variety of religious practices. In traditional religion (Christianity or Islam) the ascetic component is often activated by a triggering event. In traditional Catholic Christianity given the triggering event of a sin believers feel the ascetic self discipline to engage in a variety of atoning practices. In traditional Islam given the triggering event of war, border disputes, invasions, and/or calls from a Caliph, the Muslim community feels the ascetic discipline to engage in jihadic action.

3. Given a Reformation/Revival, such ascetic components are moved prior to the triggering event, thereby eliminating the practice's dependence upon external events to put them in motion. In effect, the radical Protestant puts the atoning cart before the sinning horse, and the radical Islamist puts the jihadic horse before the geopolitical triggering event; the radical Muslim engages in jihad in a proactive, a priori, manner.

4. Radical Islam is different from radical Protestantism, for it has a double ascetic quality. The first ascetic self discipline is to take away the accidental nature of triggering events to set jihadic practices in motion. Like the radical Protestant the radical Muslim is now personally responsible for jihad and can, and should, be its sole initiator.

5. The second ascetic involves the further rationalization of jihadic practices, including the removal of the accidental nature of death from jihadic fighting as a condition for martyrdom. Death is now moved up front before battle, which itself had been moved up front before the geopolitical trigger. For the radical Islamist, death is a personal responsibility, which precedes both jihadic fighting and the geopolitical trigger.

6. There may be an elective affinity between this double ascetic of the radical Islamist ethic and the psychological logic, or "spirit" of suicide terrorist practices, yielding martyrdom missions.

In sum, then, did the Protestant Ethic cause the rise of capitalism. No. Weber never argued that. Does an Islamist double ascetic ethic, should it exist, cause suicide terrorism. Probably not in the strong sense of cause. Is it the case that a social science of suicide terrorism can be derived from an extreme version of an ascetic ethic held by puritanical fundamentalist groups. Maybe. It is certainly an hypothesis worth investigating further.

Notes
[1]When used by powerful states, terrorism, obviously, becomes a weapon of the strong.

[2]Other groups have also used suicide practices, ranging from Japanese kamikaze pilots, Arafat's Fatah faction, and the Tamil Tigers from Sri Lanka.

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