



# The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

*Max Weber*

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For the first time in 70 years, a new translation of Max Weber's classic *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*--one of the most enduring and influential books in sociology--is available. Translator Stephen Kalberg is an internationally acclaimed Weberian scholar. In this Third Edition, Kalberg offers a precise and nuanced rendering of *The Protestant Ethic* that captures Weber's style as well as the unusual subtlety of his descriptions and causal arguments. Kalberg's standardization of Weber's terminology facilitates understanding of the various twists and turns in his complex lines of reasoning. Weber's original italicization, highlighting major themes, has been restored. A glossary of major terms has been added. In short, *The Protestant Ethic* thesis is presented in a clear and highly readable manner.

There are three compelling reasons to read this classic:

- \* It explores the continuing debate regarding the origins and legacy of modern capitalism in the West.
- \* It helps the reader better understand economic development today around the world, especially in Russia, Eastern Europe, Asia, and South America.
- \* It plumbs the deep cultural forces that affect contemporary work life and the workplace in the United States and Europe.

In his introduction, Kalberg examines the controversy that has surrounded this book for nearly a century and summarizes major aspects of Weber's complex analysis. Kalberg also discusses *The Protestant Ethic* in the context of Weber's other writings. Finally, Kalberg investigates the contribution of this classical study for understanding the role played by cultural forces in modern economic development and discusses the wide-ranging impact today of ascetic Protestantism on the American work ethic. The Third Roxbury Edition includes Weber's 1906 essay "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism." Written after his extensive travels in the United States in 1904, Weber comments here on the diverse ways in which the legacies of early American Protestantism remain influential. Also included in this edition are Weber's masterful prefatory remarks to his *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion*, in which he defines the uniqueness of Western Societies and asks what "ideas and interests" combined to call forth modern Western rationalism.

For students, *The Protestant Ethic* is a starting point toward understanding the multiple dimensions of social change. The continuing debates about the main elements of modern life--capitalism, our "common sense" economic determinism and "rational choices," relationships between cultural forces and social structures, the tension between religion and science, the cultural foundations of democracy, economic cultures and business ethics, and the future of modern capitalism--are very much part of the Weberian project. Small wonder, then, that *The Protestant Ethic* continues to be one of the most frequently assigned readings in sociology.

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