Bureaucratic Mentality and Political Democracy: Weber's Bureaucracies and the Democratization of Charisma

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Weber sets up the problem—the conflict between bureaucracy and democracy—for generations of social theorists to come. His framing of the issue as bureaucracy both *with* and *against* democracy is significant given his own historical context. His narrative went against the conventional view of bureaucracy as a Prussian, monarchical political system, distinct from the parliamentary systems of Western Europe. Weber’s account is novel in that he shows bureaucracy to be a phenomenon that these democracies cannot avoid as a type of administrative organization. These governing forms—bureaucracy and democracy—had now to be understood as “competing dimensions of one and the same political order.”

This paper is part of a project that addresses two related issues in connection with this problem. First, Weber’s conception of bureaucracy is much broader than the specific institutional ideal type of monocratic bureaucracy. It also encompasses his ideas on the rationalization of modern life in general, bureaucracy within capitalism, as well as the opposition he frames between the mentality of the politician and that of the official. I aim to link these different elements in order to develop a concept of bureaucracy as a mode of thought rather than a specific and limited institutional form. Bureaucratic thinking involves the application of technical knowledge and skills, with a claim to universality and objectivity, in order to produce results and promote consensus and social harmony. I argue that this conception allows us to better recognize the contemporary diffusion of a flexible, decentralized type of bureaucracy and situate it within the history of affinity and tension between bureaucratic and democratic principles.

His description of bureaucracy, both the institutional form and the mentality, also reveals significant connections between government administration and the capitalist firm regarding their joint attempts at calculation and control. Weber’s discussion of the co-development of capitalism and bureaucracy is important since ‘regulation’ is often presented as a capitalistic alternative to bureaucratic state control. By understanding their commonalities in terms of bureaucratic

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management, we can understand that attempts to replace government with private bureaucracy only beg the bureaucratic question.

Establishing continuity over time, linking present administrative forms to those described by Hegel, Durkheim, and Weber, allows us to evaluate the significance of historical critiques and proposed solutions to the challenge of bureaucratization for our current situation. Thus, my central aim in this paper has to do with a second issue, which is how we may understand and mobilize Weber’s critique in our contemporary context and even against Weber.

He identifies three major types of challenges, the most basic of which involves a paradox internal to democracy. Equality of status, a democratic goal, is manifested in the very form of bureaucracy, in which formal rules are impartially and equally applied. Democracy as a constitutional development sets limits to the arbitrary personal elements of feudal and patrimonial rule. Weber’s concept of democratization here is not about active mass participation. It is instead related to the Tocquevillian notion involving the extension of equal rights, regulated by abstract norms affecting all. Exclusion of rule by notables entails the abstract and formal regulation of the exercise of authority and equality before the law. Because of these conceptual and practical affinities, the pursuit of equality actually works to extend formal rationality. While democracy promotes selection based on merit rather than privilege as a means of realizing substantive concerns, democratic principles are opposed to the resulting creation of a privileged mandarinate. The pursuit of substantive rationality in the form of equality thus paradoxically results in the extension of formal rationality, as a form of domination, to virtually all areas of life. Weber did not see the transcendence of bureaucracy as a possibility. Rather, the best we could do was balance or counter it in a continuous way. He proposed his model of plebiscitary democracy, which should foster individual charismatic leaders, as a counterforce.

Weber also makes the case for an essential distinction between bureaucracy and politics, and this is the solution to a second problem. According to him, bureaucracy, like science, can never provide its own foundation. Values of some type always underpin social scientific research, just as values are always at the root of so-called technical decisions of policy. This calls attention to the necessity of political thinking in a democratic polity. Indeed, interest, conflict, and politics will exist
under the surface whether we like it or not; it is then a question of how we address it. Bureaucracy and politics must be kept separate precisely because this separation is impossible. The attempt at separation, though, forces us to recognize the politics and values that are always present.

Weber promotes political thinking as a counterforce to bureaucratization via his concept of charisma. As a general category, charisma provides a solution to yet a third problem posed by bureaucracy, involving its effects on autonomy and creativity. This is a fundamentally democratic problem if we depart from Weber’s original equality-based definition and focus on political democracy as self-determination. While bureaucracy fulfills its tasks based on pre-determined value structures, charisma offers the possibility of revolutionizing these value structures. It ushers in a Nietzschean revaluing of values. This has to do with its self-determining nature.

“Genuine charismatic justice does not refer to rules; in its pure type it is the most extreme contrast to formal and traditional prescription and maintains its autonomy toward the sacredness of tradition as much as toward the rationalist deductions from abstract norms.”

Instead, “in a revolutionary and sovereign manner, charismatic domination transforms all values and breaks all traditional and rational norms: ‘It has been written …, but I say unto you....’” Charisma—and politics—burst the bonds of the quantifiable and therefore controllable. It contains a passionate emotionalism that represents freedom for Weber in its uncontrollability and because it is the mark of a human being who is whole. The emotionalism contained within charisma appears to be a remedy for alienation or the emotionlessness dictated by bureaucracy. At the same time, emotional force must be harnessed to a genuine cause in the figure of the ideal politician with a calling. It must be channeled and made politically effective by a charismatic politician who also makes productive use of the techniques afforded him via the process of rationalization, itself.

Ultimately, I want to make a Weberian point about the necessary and productive tension between the principles of democracy and bureaucracy. In some ways, the relationship can be compared to a dynamic Weber identified in his sociology of music, in which rational and affective

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2 According to Lindholm, Nietzsche presented a challenge to 19th century utilitarian interest politics in that he highlighted a type of emotionalism or energy that could not be subsumed under calculations of preference. Weber took Nietzsche seriously and incorporated this challenge into his category of charisma.

3 Economy and Society, 1115.
motivations confront each other to produce a sort of dialectical progressive trajectory.⁴ Weber’s analysis of the development of western music of provides a narrative that tracks a process of rationalization, using the work of Greek and Latin music theorists as a point of departure. The Greeks had discovered an arithmetic relationship between pitch intervals, allowing them to express musical ideas in mathematically “rational” terms. Anomalies, however, prevented them from establishing a completely harmonious pitch system, and they were forced to work around these inconveniences, to the eventual benefit of their music. Michael Fend explains:

“The arithmetical method of investigating the relations between sounds and subsequently elaborating these relations to a tuning system for compositional purposes revealed an irrepresible, ‘irrational’ element. Crucially, the problem motivated the ancient music theorists to seek various solutions which resulted in different tunings, musical genera and modes all enriching musical culture. Despite the setback of not finding a coherent system of terms for the conceptualization of the musical material, musical culture thrived nevertheless, after a more complex manner in conceiving of sound systems was embraced.” ⁵

In Weber’s story, the search for harmony is equated with the drive to create order and rationalize, but the subsumption of all irrational elements, or impulses towards unfettered expressivity, is never quite possible. Weber sees this, for example, in the ongoing tension between harmonic and melodic principles. It is precisely this confrontation and the subsequent Aufhebung that results in the most dramatically compelling expressions of western music, according to him.⁶

The dynamic interaction between bureaucracy and charisma in Weber’s political work functions in a similar way. Central to the concept and historical development of bureaucracy is the idea that it serves a dual function in human life. Our desire for absolute control works alongside our simultaneous wish to absolutely give up control, both of these out of fear of uncertainty, contingency, and yet ultimate responsibility under those unstable conditions. Bureaucracy, as an artifice of control, offers us both things at the same time. Weber makes this argument, but despite his fears about bureaucratic overreach, he refuses to believe that this kind of order will ever fully take over. It cannot triumph in the end simply because it cannot work. Bureaucracy is ultimately the

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⁴ This kind of dialectic is also present in his sociology of religion.
⁶ See Radkau, 371.
expression of a utopian view according to which human affairs can be objectively and harmoniously regulated. Instead, Weber asserts an essentially conflictual vision of politics in which society can never be completely reconciled to itself without internal divisions. In this situation, complete legitimation is never possible, and there is always space for contestation.

Charisma is the main counterforce Weber sets forth against bureaucracy. It is to be carried via the charismatic politician who should be cultivated through plebiscitary democracy. If we analyze the twentieth century in terms of Weber’s dialectic between charisma and rationalization/bureaucracy, however, we can see that a new synthesis seems to have been achieved. A sort of Weberian individualistic charismatic heroism has been instrumentalized in the service of a new form of bureaucracy.

Partially in response to this development, I want to shift the focus away from the individual and argue that Weber’s category of charisma captures something important in the democratic principle, namely the force of initiative to break through the status quo and create something new. Taking this view as a starting point, we can begin to understand how democracy and bureaucracy might work together in mutual opposition. Democracy needs bureaucracy in order to give the will of the people its practical and material form in the world, but it must also oppose it in order to avoid undermining itself and to allow for the emergence of the radically different and new.

I will thus discuss the ways in which the category of charisma can be co-opted and yet could serve as a source of democratic liberation. Before turning to this, I begin below by examining Weber’s critiques of bureaucracy, in conjunction with the remedies he proposes in response to specific challenges he saw in his own time.

“Political Science”: Value Neutrality and the Mentality of the Political Man

Two responses Weber mobilizes in the face of the bureaucratic challenge are the separation of bureaucracy from politics and, relatedly, the figure of the charismatic politician with a calling.

The persona of the politician is most extensively described in “Politics as a Vocation” with reference to the famous distinction between the “ethic of ultimate ends” and the “ethic of responsibility.” After describing the dismal state of German party and parliamentary politics, Weber asks nevertheless, “what inner enjoyments can this career offer and what personal conditions are
presupposed for one who enters this avenue?” In other words, what sort of person is the politician and what drives him or her? Politics can be enjoyable, first, because it gives a feeling of power, which “can elevate the professional politician above everyday routine.” Charisma and the political state of being are necessarily intertwined for Weber, and this comes out here. Both politics, as a pure category, and charisma are about transcending the everyday, which is associated with bureaucracy. Politics gets perverted when this element is watered down. At the same time, the politician who is “allowed to put his hand on the wheel of history” must “do justice to the responsibility that power imposes upon him,” and this requires three personal qualities: “passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion.” Passion refers to devotion to a cause rather than passionate excitement for its own sake, and it must be tempered by or channeled through a psychological state of calmness and sense of proportion. Politics is, after all, an intellectual activity. It is “made with the head, not with other parts of the body or soul.” It requires intellectual distance. Weber is very clear about this.

This characterization of the political challenges Marcuse’s accusation according to which Weber has abandoned politics to the irrational and arbitrary. Weber very clearly separates “reason” in the sense of “reasonableness” and political judgment from “rationalization.” The fact that Weber places politics and rationalization in opposition does not imply that politics is necessarily an irrational enterprise. At the same time, politics is not solely intellectual. In order to count as meaningful human action, it has to be driven by passion. Otherwise, it risks becoming abstract intellectualized emptiness. Later in the essay, he writes, “Surely, politics is made with the head, but it is certainly not made with the head alone.” The feelings and sense of meaning that come along with true political action derive not only from the devotion to a cause, but also from the sense of enormous weight and responsibility involved. This is what it means to say, “Here I stand; I can do no other.”

Weber calls this stand taken by a true politician “genuinely human and moving.”

Genuineness is a norm for the political man in a way that it can never be for the official. The

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7 Gerth and Mills, 114.
8 Gerth and Mills, 115.
10 Gerth and Mills, 127.
bureaucrat, motivated by orientation toward a goal, could, by definition, never be “genuine” if that means being moved by human passion. A politician must always act with passion toward a cause, otherwise “the curse of creaturely worthlessness overshadows even the externally strongest political successes.” External, instrumental success can never be fully human. Or rather, the “creaturely” or mechanical / animal side of human beings is “worthless” without the passion that alone can bring meaning to our material existence and successes. The bureaucratic is meaningless material cause-and-effect action, even in success, while the political should be meaningful. Politics, associated with the ethic of responsibility in “Politics as a Vocation,” concerns values even though it is distinct from the *Gesinnungsethik*. If it were value-less, it would be fully *Zweckrational* and inhuman.

The opposition of mentalities corresponds to Weber’s insistence on a cognitive and functional separation between bureaucracy and politics, which, in turn, has its roots in Weber’s thinking on the necessity of value neutrality of science. In my view, Weber argues for a strict separation between politics and bureaucracy specifically because he sees that they can never be totally separate. In other words, because bureaucracy can never be purely practical or technical knowledge—politics always lies beneath it—we need a separate political domain in which value conflicts can be recognized in a transparent way rather than hidden behind a supposedly scientific discourse of the common good. This entails a critique of bureaucracy that is distinct from the identification of a means-ends inversion, according to which bureaucracy is simply a man-made cultural object, a means, which has come to dominate its original ends. Weber makes the additional point that bureaucracy is, in fact, *partial*, while it presents itself as impartial and objective. Indeed, one of the key problems with the German bureaucracy that he identifies in his political writings is the partisan nature of it and the infiltration of the Junker mentality. The Bismarckian bureaucracy had succeeded in imposing Junker values upon all of society, against the national interest.

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11 Gerth and Mills, 117. They actually translate *kreatürlicher Nichtigkeit* as “the creature’s worthlessness,” but I find this to be confusing. “…immer muß irgendein Glaube d a sein. Sonst lastet in der Tat – das ist völlig richtig – der Fluch kreatürlicher Nichtigkeit auch auf den äußerlich stärksten politischen Erfolgen.” PdF p. 438

12 This argument brings Weber close to his contemporary, Georg Simmel. The “tragedy of culture,” exemplified in Simmel’s *Philosophy of Money*, involves the increasing autonomy of man-made cultural forms from the human beings who originally created them for their own purposes.
Max and Alfred Weber specifically made this argument against conservatives, typified by Gustav Schmoller, within the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*. The conservatives held a Hegelian view of the state administration, according to which the bureaucracy was a neutral force embodying the universal interest of society. Weber argued, instead, that bureaucracy reflects the class structure of society; it is not neutral. His judgments on the partiality of bureaucracy are undergirded by his basic view that conflict is eradicable in human society. Where we cease to see this, it is simply because the conflict is hidden:

“Conflict cannot be excluded from social life. Once can change its means, its object, even its fundamental direction and its bearers, but it cannot be eliminated. … It is always present and its influence is often greatest when it is least noticed … ‘Peace’ is nothing more than a change in the form of the conflict or in the antagonists or in the objects of the conflict, or finally in the chances of selection.”

The substantialist Hegelian view assumes, instead, that social peace is able to transcend conflict at some higher level. Weber mobilized his strictly technical definition of bureaucracy against this view. Focusing on his technical description of bureaucracy might lead readers to believe that Weber celebrated bureaucracy as the neutral apex of human technology or organization, but his political essays tell a different story. In the “bureaucracy” chapter in *Economy and Society*, the emphasis is on what bureaucracy can achieve, whereas Weber's political writings speak to its limitations. Even when he describes bureaucracy as a precision technical tool, his point is to argue that it is only a technical tool. It does not consist of a “universal class,” imbued with some sort of spiritual essence. The political and intellectual context of his arguments, highlighted especially by David Beetham, helps to underscore this point.

The idea that Weber held an ideal, mechanical, or closed vision of bureaucracy may stem from a misunderstanding of the “ideal-type” concept and its use in *Economy and Society* and/or Talcott Parsons’ skewed introduction of Weber's work on bureaucracy in the United States. Parsons seemed to think that the ideal-type of bureaucracy was meant to be a normative prescription rather than an explanatory device. This would imply that Weber’s goal was to explain to managers how they might

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13 “Ethical Neutrality,” 27.
14 See Beetham, 63-66.
best structure their organizations. This reading was prevalent in major works on bureaucracy around mid-century, including those by Parsons’ student Robert Merton and Merton’s students Alvin Gouldner and Peter Blau. However, this neglects Weber's concern with bureaucracy as a form of domination. These authors believed they were providing a corrective to Weber by showing that bureaucracy's inefficiencies could undermine its own stated goals, but this was already present in Weber's work. They did amend his account by describing additional ways in which bureaucratic structures could work as mechanisms of control, but these really provided updates or complements rather than a reformulation. Again, they had been assuming that Weber's bureaucracy was meant to be the most efficient and effective method for reaching organizational goals, but looking at his focus as domination, instead, we see that his account is consistent with their additions. For example, if bureaucracy was meant to promote equal treatment under the law during democratization, Weber shows that it has unintended undemocratic consequences. He also recognizes that politics are present within bureaucracy, and his goal regarding the regulative ideal of separating bureaucracy and politics is to unmask this.

The juxtaposition and separation of formal and substantive rationality, calculation and values, or bureaucracy and politics penetrates even Weber's own methodology as he explicitly lays it out. Jürgen Kocka argues that he constructed his notion of politics precisely in opposition with bureaucracy, and his "demand for a clean conceptual as well as practical separation of politics and bureaucracy has its methodological counterpart in his insistence on a sharp distinction between normative and analytical statements, and in his position in the dispute on value-freedom." Just as politics always lies beneath bureaucracy, science always has an underpinning, which is outside of itself. Science cannot declare its own ends, according to Weber, which means there must be something outside of scientific technique. In making this point, Weber is differentiating between a sphere of technique and a sphere of values that is potentially political. By analogy, bureaucracy can

15 Citations! 222
16 footnotes, Weiss article
17 Kocka, 293.
be understood as a sphere of science while politics is the sphere of values and conflict. Science, and bureaucracy, should be value-neutral, but there are always values that underlie its exercise at the beginning. This also allows us to see that, while bureaucracy claims to be ruling in an interest-free and impartial way, values always lie behind it so this can never be true. Claims to impartiality can, thus, actually serve to mask interest by attempting to hide underlying value judgments.

For Weber, a science of human beings cannot exist without value presuppositions because scientific inquiry requires the making of choices about focus and scope.19 Since science aims at an understanding of reality, it cannot simply reproduce it in all its chaotic detail. Instead, the researcher forms concepts and abstractions in relation to the parts of reality that are of particular significance to her, depending on her own socio-historical context and personal value positions.20 We study things empirically, first of all, because we think this specific empirical knowledge is meaningful to us in some way. Scientific inquiry must be guided by our ideas about what constitutes the meaningful.21

Weber’s sociology was meant to provide self knowledge vis-à-vis how we have become who we are, in our historical specificity. This necessarily involves questions of meaning. On this point, Tracy Strong refers to Weber’s claims at the beginning of the Sociology of Religion, in which he intimates that it is “impossible to do social science without acknowledging who and what one is in one’s own history … More accurately, doing social science must at the same time also be an acknowledgment of one’s place in the history one is investigating.”22 Weber’s entire essay on objectivity in science revolves around this idea; thus, it is hard to follow critics like Herbert Marcuse when they claim that Weber was entirely unaware of his own bourgeois context and presuppositions or that he was blind to the idea that the “reason” he dealt with was a product of the capitalist mode

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19 See “Ethical Neutrality,” 22.
20 See “Objectivity”, 110. "The objective validity of all empirical knowledge lies exclusively upon the ordering of the given reality according to categories which are subjective in a specific sense, namely, in that they present the presuppositions of our knowledge and are based on the presupposition of the value of those truths which empirical knowledge alone is able to give us."
21 Löwith, 52.
of production.\textsuperscript{23} Weber explicitly writes that belief in science is the product of particular values.\textsuperscript{24} Science is not meant to replace ultimate cultural values, and scientific truth is not trans-historical or universal, but is rather \textit{itself} the product of history. After all, it is only a “hair-line which separates science from faith,” and “the belief in the value of scientific truth is the product of certain cultures and is not a product of man’s original nature.”\textsuperscript{25} If science always entails value presuppositions, value-neutrality is meant as a regulative ideal in order to force the researcher to recognize underlying value judgments.\textsuperscript{26} Weber has the same view regarding teaching because he “does not wish to see the ultimate and highest personal decisions which a person must make regarding his life, confounded with specialized training.” It is a matter of freedom and responsibility for the student.\textsuperscript{27}

The role of science vis-à-vis value ideas should thus also be radical demystification.\textsuperscript{28} Weber aims to uncover what has been taken for granted. Towards this purpose, science can be used in order to “arrive at a rational understanding of these ‘ideas’ for which men either really or allegedly struggle.”\textsuperscript{29} Weber’s critique of Second International Marxism centers on the claim that Marxists collapse value judgments into science by displaying an uncritical faith in scientific progress.\textsuperscript{30} Referencing historical materialism, he explicitly denounces attempts at importing natural science methods and goals into the social or “cultural” sciences. The search for reliable repetition in human affairs in order to establish iron-clad ”laws” can provide dubious results at worst and mere jumping-off points at best. When the researcher seeks to explain individual historical phenomena, these supposed laws will always be too general, and the more reliable the “law,” the more general and thus less useful it will be. The attempt to collapse politics into an economic or instrumental framework actually masks the value judgments that are inevitably there, both in the political situation under

\textsuperscript{23} Add footnote
\textsuperscript{24} ”Objectivity,” page? See Löwith, 53.
\textsuperscript{25} ”Objectivity” 110, See Jean Cohen, 67. Löwith
\textsuperscript{26} “Ethical Neutrality,” 9.
\textsuperscript{27} “Ethical Neutrality,” 3, 10. See also “Science as a Vocation,” page?
\textsuperscript{28} This is the purpose of Weber’s critiques of Roscher and Knies, in which he contends that they do not recognize the non-scientific assumptions and underpinnings of their work.
\textsuperscript{29} “Objectivity,” 54. See also “Science as a Vocation” page? and Löwith, 56.
\textsuperscript{30} Löwith, 54. See also Mommsen, 49-55.
analysis and in the mind of the analyst. Attempting to separate the scientific from the value-laden presuppositions of the researcher should instead force him or her to recognize both the limits and the uses of his or her own methods.

Weber knew there were limits to scientific specialized knowledge, and he was happy they existed. Former student and friend Paul Honigsheim wrote, “...Weber breathed a sigh of relief as soon as someone once again demonstrated the limits of knowledge, the impossibility of making objective, valid value judgments. ... He demanded instead that men strive for the goals given them by their god or demon.”\textsuperscript{31} These “god or demon”-given goals fall under the category of the charismatic or political. Yet Weber also placed a certain faith in science and its uses in service of charismatic politics: “Science was a means, a possibility, namely of controlling a technical apparatus for the realization of goals that arose from an extra-scientific establishment of purposes which a god or demon had given human beings.”\textsuperscript{32} Science, as a dictator of ends, could be destructive of freedom, but as a means, it could be an enabler.

Science cannot dictate its own ends, but its purpose is rather to act in the service of some external end by providing useful knowledge. Karl Löwith asserts that Weber seeks freedom within rationalization by trying to understand how the progression of rationalization can be put in the service of individual freedom. It is at the same time a constraint and a source of freedom for Weber, in the sense that it helps us to understand means-ends relationships and thus helps us to realize our intentions. This is freedom: having an intention and then realizing it or making it real. This requires rationalization, in order to be increasingly effective. “This link between rationality and freedom … can be perceived … in the inner impulse behind Weber’s practical attitude towards all rationalized institutions, organizations and forms of order in modern life: he fights against their claim to metaphysical reality and uses them as a means to an end.”\textsuperscript{33} For example, bureaucracy is not the Hegelian universal class, but it can be extremely useful for the pursuit of certain power goals. In the

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\textsuperscript{31} Honigsheim, \textit{On Max Weber}, 131-132.  \\
\textsuperscript{32} Honigsheim, \textit{On Max Weber}, 131.  \\
\textsuperscript{33} Löwith, 64.
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same way, science must be value neutral and then placed in the service of ultimate goals, like nationalism, which was Weber’s argument in his “Inaugural Lecture” at Freiburg. These methodological views are directly connected to Weber’s judgment of his own epoch as a “disenchanted” world. As we have seen, the science of sociology cannot avoid values, but simultaneously, science cannot create meaning on its own.35

“The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the meaning of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to create this meaning itself. It must recognize that general views of life and the universe can never be the products of increasing empirical knowledge, and that the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us.”36

Because man has eaten from the tree of knowledge, because of the disenchantment of the world, he must now create his own meaning and recognize the subjectivity and plurality of values. Science cannot generate meaning for him, and it cannot take questions of meaning for granted because there is no longer a singular collective subjectivity. Scientific research should proceed in a value-free manner once these initial concepts and questions have been set, but then values enter the picture again in order to bestow meaning upon the results.

The demand for value freedom in science is linked to Weber’s idealized vision of the politician with a calling, such that they are in some sense one combined response to the challenge of rationalization. “…What does science actually and positively contribute to practical and personal ‘life?’” This is the question posed by Weber’s imagined interlocutor in “Science as a Vocation.” Among other things, he answers, it contributes to the technical control of life, and more importantly it can help one to “gain clarity” as to the practical stand one wishes to take and its relationship to an “ultimate weltanschauliche position.”37 This is political language, even if not exclusively so. Science must be scrubbed of values so that we can understand what the fight is really about, so that the values themselves are laid bare, and so that we face up to the truth of the “war between the gods”

34 See Mommsen, 108-109. “He worked hard to eliminate all value judgments, not so much in order to get rid of value judgments as such altogether, but rather to enable the individual or groups of individuals to bring them to bear all the more powerfully on a given social context and a given situation.”
35 "Science as a Vocation"
36 “Objectivity,” 57.
37 “Science as a Vocation,” 150-151.
and rise to the occasion. At the same time, undiluted, un-deluded science and rationalized technique should be used as tools in the struggle. The demand for value neutrality comes from a desire to lay bare the necessary extra-scientific foundations of scientific propositions and to clarify our own value positions. The responsible political actor, as described especially in “Politics as a Vocation,” should then use the acquired technology in taking his own practical stand and fighting for his cause. In this way, discipline and rationalization can be made to serve charisma.

**Charisma**

In the same way that the bureaucrat and the politician represent opposing mentalities in Weber's universe, the broader categories of bureaucracy and charisma are juxtaposed. The broader charisma/bureaucracy distinction within Weber's thinking is interesting if we think about it operating as two different mentalities or ways of thinking about political questions. Charisma represents a radical form of freedom that rejects fixed rules, conventions, principles, and values. As such it is the very opposite of bureaucracy as a principle and a mentality. Charisma, in its individualized form within the figure of the politician, is also the only hope that Weber holds out against a rationalized future of all-encompassing discipline. If we read Weber against himself, charisma could serve as the potential basis of a political mentality on a collective and democratic level. This is all the more promising and necessary since the reading of Weber as individualist, I argue, has successfully been coopted within logics of “new management” and governance. His historical dialectic between rationalization and charisma seems to have swung in one direction. If we take the dialectic seriously, then a new charismatic moment is clearly required.

According to Weber, the problem of bureaucracy for politics is related to bureaucracy’s effects on autonomy. He claims that bureaucracy results in a complete loss of self-determining power for both the bureaucrats and subjects.\(^\text{38}\) The autonomy-crushing outcomes of bureaucracy become the central feature that Weber attempts to counter with charisma. Weber’s plebiscitary democracy is ultimately built upon this. The charismatic political figure is completely self-

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\(^{38}\)“Moral autonomy, even in Weber’s reduced understanding of it as choosing values and taking responsibility for the effects of acting on them, and bureaucratic claims to legitimacy are incompatible...” Breiner, 138.
determining. As a pure type, the charismatic politician can be seen as a symbolic figure that stands for self-determination, as opposed to the bureaucrat who is determined by external criteria.

"Charisma is self-determined and sets its own limits."39 Because of this, the charismatic is not bound to his followers. In order to exist, he must be recognized, but the followers then have a duty to follow him, on the basis of his mission, as long as his charisma is recognized. He is not dependent on their will; this would be external determination, as opposed to self-determination. Similarly, Weber writes that charisma is not a form of popular sovereignty. It is an individual quality, and "the mission and power of its bearer is qualitatively delimited from within, not by an external order." The individual character of charisma seems to be an aesthetic symbolic feature, in that it is meant to serve as the polar opposite of bureaucratic rationalization. If charisma represents the apotheosis of self-determination, it is because Weber conceives of this principally in individual terms.

The fact that individuality seems to play an especially symbolic role here is illustrated by Weber’s self-contradictions. Not two pages later in Economy and Society, he claims that the charismatic ruler is "responsible" to the ruled because he must prove himself through his heroic deeds and also by bringing about their well being.40 He also tells a different story in his Ancient Judaism. In contrasting the solitary pre-exilic prophets to the early Christians, he writes that “the spirit” in the apostolic age came “upon the faithful assembly or upon one or several of its participants.” “Ecstatic crowds” characterized early Christianity, and “the prophet could experience holiness only in public under the influence of mass suggestion...”41 The community “engaged in mass ecstasy or mass-conditioned ecstasy or ecstatic revivals as a path to salvation.”42 Further,

“The 'spirit was poured out' to the community when the Gospel was preached. Speaking in tongues and other gifts of the spirit including, also, prophecy, emerged in the midst of the assembly and not in a solitary chamber. All these things obviously resulted from mass influence, or better, of mass gathering and were evidently bound up with such, at least, as normal precondition. The culture-historically so extremely important esteem for the religious community as depository of the spirit in early Christendom had, indeed, this basis. The very community, the gathering of the brethren was especially productive of these sacred psychic states.”43

39 Economy and Society, 1112.
40 Economy and Society, 1114.
41 Ancient Judaism, 292.
42 Ancient Judaism, 294.
43 Ancient Judaism, 292.
The ecstasies of the prophetic salvation community "have always inclined men towards the flowing out into an objectless acosmism of love."44 This also fits with Weber's declaration that the paradigmatic moment of charisma is the orgy, obviously a collective enterprise.45 While the image of individual charisma is important for illustrating the self-determining nature of it, the collective dimension will be important for democratic theorists, like Andreas Kalyvas and Jeffrey Green, who want to salvage Weber's category of charisma from its potentially dictatorial trappings.

Ecstasy is the subjective condition that mediates or manifests charisma. Ecstasy, and so charisma, occurs in social form within the orgy, which is also "the primordial form of religious association."46 We may say, then, that charisma refers to the foundational symbolic condition of our living together, which constitutes "the political" in Claude Lefort's sense. Indeed, it is in the nature of the charismatic revelation to create a vision of "the world as a meaningful totality," including "both social and cosmic events."47 Weber's "objectless acosmism of love," into which the ecstatic religious community melds together, recalls Freud's "oceanic feeling" at the base of human religious inclination and sociability (Eros). In a secularized world, political legitimacy takes the place of religious justification as an explanation for people's place in a social structure.48 Charisma has the power to define the foundational attitudes of "the ruled." It has a bearing on the "sacred" in that it "overturns all notions of sanctity."49

Weber's discussion of charisma pushes us towards a broader understanding of his conception of politics, beyond the dry description of the immediate rapport de forces between competing interests, taking place through an instrumentalist logic that is often attributed to him.50

45 Economy and Society, 401.
46 Economy and Society, 401.
47 Economy and Society, 450-451.
48 See Kalyvas, 54.
49 Economy and Society, 1117.
50 For example, Peter Breiner claims that "value-rational motives have only a contingent relation to politics…" (128) because Weber separates the moment of value selection from the moment of strategic choice of means for the realization of these value. Breiner contends that this renders Weber blind to the idea that the means of politics might be the same as the ends, that both might be constitutive of "politics" as such, which would be Breiner's argument for the importance of collective--rather than individualistic--political action. Politics for Weber is then solely defined in terms of purposive rationality: "An association may claim legitimacy on the
Politics is about fighting for power, but it is also, at bottom, a fight for the power to define the
cultural values at the base of a society. Politics, for Weber, is ultimately about values, in the same way
that violence is ultimately always possible in politics, even if it is not directly engaged in every
interaction.\textsuperscript{51} At times, Weber will define politics as the power struggle over the control of the state,
which is, of course, "the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."\textsuperscript{52}
However, he will also describe the state, itself, as the "most important form of the normative
regulation of cultural life."\textsuperscript{53} Culture, by definition for him, is what allows human beings to give
meaning to the world.\textsuperscript{54} Meaning and the realization of values is crucial in politics; power is solely the
inevitable means. Politics is a distinct value sphere, "the values of which can ... be realized only by
one who takes ethical 'responsibility' upon himself."\textsuperscript{55} This is "political action." The power politician,
driven by vanity and "power for power's sake without a substantive purpose," is in fact
"irresponsible," according to Weber. "The mere 'power politician' may get strong effects, but actually
his work leads nowhere and is senseless. ... inner weakness and impotence hides behind this boastful
but entirely empty gesture."\textsuperscript{56} To view politics as power alone is to mistake the means for the end,
which must always involve the definition of values and culture.\textsuperscript{57} The definition of values and culture,
conversely, requires power politics, otherwise more powerful neighbors are likely to impose their
own culture upon you. And the modern polytheism of values means that "at all times [man] will find
himself engaged in a fight against one or other of the gods of this world."\textsuperscript{58} Weber's essayistic

\textsuperscript{51} Kalyvas suggests separating the power struggle element of Weberian politics from the value-based notion,
associating them, respectively, with normal and extraordinary politics. I would argue, instead, that both are
always present in Weber's discussions of politics because politics presupposes values even if they are not
overly discussed or challenged with every "normal" political action.

\textsuperscript{52} "Politics as a Vocation," in \textit{From Max weber}, 78.

\textsuperscript{53} "Objectivity," 67-68.

\textsuperscript{54} "Objectivity," 81.

\textsuperscript{55} "Ethical Neutrality," 15.

\textsuperscript{56} "Politics as a Vocation," 116-117.

\textsuperscript{57} See "Science as a Vocation," 150, in which Weber discusses politics as a struggle over the influence of culture
and Weltanschauung.

\textsuperscript{58} "Between Two Laws," in \textit{Political Writings}, 78-79.
reflections on World War I, from which these passages are drawn, thus neatly show the relationship between the "'power pragma' that governs all political history" and the values that power exists in order to realize. Power, itself, according to Weber, "in the last analysis means the power to determine the character of culture in the future."\(^{59}\)

Thus, politics must also hold out the possibility of radically altering and fighting for fundamental values. While successful politics always takes into account “the possible,” and likewise, the politician must take responsibility for the consequences of his actions, Weber writes that the possible can often only be reached by striving for the impossible. Mere adaptation to the possible is not politics, but rather, “the bureaucratic morality of Confucianism.”\(^{60}\) Charisma, in its ideal and extreme form, refers to the symbolic institution of society and to radical symbolic creativity, whereas bureaucracy applies given frameworks, taking them as neutral.

Charisma is characteristic of the genuine political mentality in opposition to the bureaucratic, and Weber continuously contrasts the two in very general terms. Bureaucracy is about managing everyday economic needs. It is also dependent on economic circumstances in ways that charisma is not. “Charisma lives in, not off, this world,” and this is again a matter of independence and self-determination. Weber declares that it is wholly consistent for modern artistic charismatic movements to require independent means as a condition for membership and, at the same time, for medieval monasteries to demand the opposite—the vow of poverty. Both are conditions of independence.

Charismatic domination constructs itself precisely in opposition to the everyday. It is the opposite of the administration of everyday needs, bureaucracy, and rational domination. The “official” deals with the “day-to-day management” of things.\(^{61}\) By contrast, “All extraordi

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\(^{59}\) "Between Two Laws," 76.

\(^{60}\) "Meaning of Ethical neutrality," 24.

\(^{61}\) Political Writings, 145. “Parliament and Government in Germany”

\(^{62}\) ES, 1111.
leaders in moments of distress," in other words, in extraordinary times. They are the "bearers of specific gifts of body and mind that were considered 'supernatural' (in the sense that not everybody could have access to them)..."63 Politics, as a pure concept, is also about transcending the everyday. The feeling of power enjoyed by the professional politician, according to Weber, "can elevate" him "above everyday routine."64 Again, charisma and politics are intimately and necessarily intertwined, and this comes out here. A true political leader must have "inner charismatic qualities."65 If charisma is meant to provide a limited escape route from all-encompassing rationalization, then Weber must devise a way of bringing charisma into the world. This is the role of the vocational politician with a calling, to be cultivated within plebiscitary democracy, as we will see. This connection again illustrates the intimate link between charisma and politics or the political mentality. Charisma is the political mentality in archetypical form.

Charisma and politics are opposed to the economic and the bureaucratic in that their values are not solely instrumental. Political struggles between parties often have material objectives, but they are also conflicts over substantive goals and worldviews.66 This is why Weber rejects what he deems to be the crass economism of both the liberal and Marxist analyses of politics. It is also why he believes that the peaceful regulation of the world through the calculation of aggregate desires is a false hope:

"Only if one takes the semblance of peace for its reality can one believe that the future holds peace and a happy life for our descendants. As we know, the vulgar conception of political economy is that it consists in devising recipes for universal happiness; in this view, adding to the 'balance of pleasure' in human existence is the only comprehensible purpose our work has. Yet the somber gravity of the population problem alone is enough to prevent us from being eudaemonists, from imagining that peace and happiness lie waiting in the womb of the future, and from believing that anything other than the hard struggle of man with man can create any elbow-room in this earthly life."67

Weber was suspicious of the appearance of "peace" because power relations must lie beneath it, and thus, it could only ever be a cover or mask. The "balance of pleasure" is a reference to Bentham's utilitarianism, but it could just as well refer to Saint-Simon and his desire to replace the rule of men

63 ES, 1112.
64 "Politics as a Vocation," 115.
65 "Politics as a Vocation," 113.
over men with the technical rule of men over things. Because charisma is sovereign and
unpredictable, there is no reason to believe that human motivations and actions could fit together
like neat puzzle pieces, only waiting for the correct technique to complete the picture. Charisma and
politics burst the bonds of the quantifiable and therefore controllable.

Predictability and impartiality are dependent on the rejection of subjective values as irrational
emotional factors needing to be weeded out. The charismatic figure, as the opposite of the figure of
the official, is characterized by a heightened emotional intensity and expressivity. Think of Weber’s
examples of the berserk, the warrior unleashed, and the epileptic. Emotional intensity is enjoined
to charisma and excluded from bureaucratic rationalization insofar as it is creative and extraordinary,
which therefore means it is also unreliable for the purposes of calculation. Weber seems to validate
emotional intensity as freedom enhancing (as opposed to heteronomous) by connecting it with both
creativity and the meaning that human beings are capable of bestowing upon their existence within
the world.

The exclusion of emotion and substantive values from the bureaucratic process,
“dehumanization,” which approaches Marx’s concept of alienation, is a specific restriction of
freedom caused by rationalization. Therefore, the raw emotion of charisma appears to be a remedy.
Alienation involves separation. Both bureaucracy and mass democracy entail the separation of the
public and private realms, which also means a separation of the personal from the political. This
separation is what allows for the neglect of substantive democratic concerns and thus the protection
of privilege under the guise of neutral impartiality. Subjectively, rationalization involves a similar
process of separation within the person. Charisma, on an individual basis, is proposed as a response
to this in that it affirms the person as a reunited whole. As Jean Cohen writes, Weber’s individual
charismatic, responsible politician is presented as,

“the only possibility of salvaging human freedom. ... The point is to salvage the soul against the
impersonal, calculating formal rationality of domination. Self-responsibility is determined by the
individual who acts according to chosen values ... The self-responsible individual, although a
’specialist’ like everyone else, is engagé in every specialty and therefore remains human. He never
conforms to the set role but brings his individuality to it, thus enriching his acts. Thus, Weber

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opposes the political leader to the bureaucratic official (who symbolizes impersonal selfless rule). The political leader takes a stand, he is passionate in his activity. His honor lies precisely in an exclusive personal responsibility for what he does. ... All that the self-responsible individual can do is place himself in moral opposition, abstractly negating this bondage through his subjective attitude.  

The "lost unity" of the person is thus to be recaptured through the self-determining acts of the charismatic individual who exhibits genuine emotion and judgment on a personal and not solely "rational" level. The term, "personal responsibility," might then be reinterpreted not solely as responsibility assumed by the individual, but responsibility assumed by the reintegrated person, unstripped of its wholeness by formal rationality.

On the other hand, though, Weber condemns a type of romantic emotionality that upholds emotional expression for its own sake. This is what he terms, with reference also to Simmel, "sterile excitation" or the "romanticism of the intellectually interesting," running into emptiness devoid of all feeling of objective responsibility." The passion of the vocational politician must instead be harnessed to a genuine cause, and it must be tempered by his "cool sense of proportion" and sense of personal responsibility. Thus, while charisma is made up of an emotionalism that is foreign to bureaucratic discipline, it is an emotionalism that must be channeled and mastered, at least in order to be politically effective. The discipline of Weber's ideal politician is different from the discipline necessary for rational administration, which is foreign to it, but discipline is still present in some sense. The charismatic politician with a calling is a “mastered self,” not unlike the protestant personality. There is an ambiguity in the way Weber evaluates the protestant ethic. He certainly admires the Puritan in that he still has “meaning” in his life. The Puritan is conscious of the discipline he places on himself, whereas bureaucratic discipline is for “specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart.”

Weber is critical of rationalization, but since he understands it as an inevitable development, the task he sets for himself is to conceive of human freedom from within its confines. He sees

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69 Jean Cohen "..." 82.
70 "Politics as a Vocation," 115.
71 Economy and Society, page?
72 PE, 182. Also: “The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so.” P. 181.
freedom as emerging from a dialectic between rationalization and its counterforces, constantly in tension with each other. Freedom involves creativity in positing values and goals, but it also entails the ability to responsibly realize these goals. He admits, then, that rationalization has actually served the cause of individual freedom in that it helps us to more effectively realize our intended purposes by better understanding relationships of cause and effect. The individual freedom that Weber advocates in the end is the heroic freedom of personal responsibility and self-reliance. The ideal heroic figure was made possible by the particular conditions of modernity: the disenchantment of the world has given individuals the freedom to create their own meaning, and advances in technical rationality allow us to better bring our values into being in the world. The problem is the potential for means-ends inversion or the fetishism of rationalization, itself. Charisma is about the continued ability to posit our own goals instead of taking our instruments to be the goals, themselves. I will argue later that Weber's insights into charisma as a particularly political mentality are still helpful in opposing the encroachment of bureaucratic management. However, the restrictive way in which he thought charisma might manifest itself individually may have actually played into the further development of bureaucracy. This is an especially Weberian twist. He did not see that the individualistic, heroic, personal-reponsibility-focused mentality could and would be coopted by systems of management.

Rationalization of Charisma

Weber prophesied that democracy and socialism would only foster bureaucratization as an unintended consequence, even when democrats and socialists were strictly opposed to it. In order to avoid this development, he advocated the cultivation of competition and conflict—between capitalistic firms in economic society, between bureaucratically structured political parties and their leading politicians within parliament, between the firms and the state, and even between nation-states on the world stage.73 He did not foresee that the idea of cultivating charisma through competition could itself be instrumentalized for the purposes of rationalized bureaucracy.

73 Mommsen, Bureaucracy, pages?
To understand what I mean, it will be helpful to recall that bureaucracy for Weber functions similarly within the modern state and the capitalist firm. The modern state, for him, is a Betrieb just like the factory. Both involve the separation of the worker from the means of production and the instrumental calculation of means in relation to ends. The mentality is the same, as well. He writes that “… it is quite ridiculous for our littérateurs to imagine that there is the slightest difference between the mental work done in the office of a private firm and that performed in an office of the state.”74 The way that competitiveness can be instrumentalized for purposes of control is most apparent in new management techniques intended for use within organizations generally, often importing techniques from private enterprise to “reform” supposedly inefficient public bureaucracies. Of course, in his time, Weber recognizes status concerns as a major source of motivation for bureaucratic officials, which is consistent with Taylorist advice to managers from the beginning of the twentieth century. What is different about management via charismatic-competitive drive is that it specifically draws on anti-bureaucratic concerns about individual freedom in order to construct its method. New theories of management within government, attempting to replace public bureaucracy with private-like management, purport to increase efficiency by introducing competition and thus incentive. I argue that this is also bureaucratic; it’s just that competition is now a technical tool for managing people. It still relies on an anti-political view of social relations, according to which everything can be technically regulated, and thus there is no need for deep political disagreement.

In critiques of Weberian bureaucracy as an actually existing entity in the mid-twentieth century, much emphasis has been placed on the impersonal nature of it, and thus attempts have been made to “personalize” or “humanize” the workplace. This critique originates in Weber’s use of formal rationality as the defining essence of bureaucracy. Formal rationality describes action that is oriented towards formal, abstract, impersonal norms, in other words, “to an impersonal order such that calculations can be made ‘without regard for persons’.”75 Weber explains how formal rationality is

75 Cohen, 66.
“extended” “to all areas of life as a form of domination.” This results in a means-end inversion, which is illustrated by the bureaucrat’s preoccupation with impersonal rules rather than substantive ends. Jean Cohen, writing in 1972, explains the problems Weber identifies regarding the dehumanizing tendencies of bureaucracy thusly:

“Formal calculation, ‘means’, becomes the ‘end’, of human activity while man becomes a by-product of ‘rationally’ functioning machines. The irrationality of rationalization lies in the creation of impersonal, meaningless forces which tend to function independently and despite man. It implies the impotence of subjectivity when confronted with these impersonal forces.”

Further:

“Substantive rationality, or action according to particular human needs, is precluded. The official is the perfect embodiment of formal rationality—he is a specialist whose activity depends not on his own personal subjectivity but on an objective impersonal order which denies and fragments subjectivity.”

As a response to these problems, participatory democrats and proponents of self-management attempted to humanize modern organizational forms. Alvin Gouldner, a student of Talcott Parsons, drew on Weber’s conception of bureaucracy in constructing his empirical studies detailed in Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy (1954). His goal was to empirically study the functioning of actual administrative structures, including the real people who made up these structures. He argued that social scientists, including Weber, had ignored the human element and had thus emerged with distorted representations of bureaucracy. A key problem with this, according to him, was that “this has colored some analyses of bureaucracy with funereal overtones, lending dramatic persuasiveness to the pessimistic portrayal of administrative systems.” Gouldner, instead, refused to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of accepting a bleak dichotomy between an unrealistic utopian democracy and the existing democracy which had been deeply undermined by bureaucracy, he hoped to find forms of bureaucracy that might work better from a democratic point of view.

To do this, he constructed a typology of different forms of bureaucracy, two of which he claims to find directly in Weber. The first model, “representative bureaucracy,” is based on expert knowledge and obedience through consent regarding the application of expert knowledge.

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76 Cohen, 66.
77 Cohen, 71.
78 Gouldner, 16.
“Punishment-centered bureaucracy,” by contrast, involves obedience seemingly for its own sake. Gouldner separated Weber’s pronouncements about expertise and discipline in order to create these two distinct ideal-types. He emphasized the importance of consent in the representative model, pointing out that the presence of expertise would not be enough to generate obedience on its own, whereas he equated the punishment-centered model with pure “imposition” or coercion. In this differentiation, it seems as though he was unable to see how the representative model might become coercive without the explicit withdrawal of consent by either lower functionaries or bureaucratic subjects.

The problems Gouldner identified with punishment-centered bureaucracy have to do with homogenization, discipline, and lack of regard for persons, which he saw as less present in the representative form, associated with expert knowledge. In his case study based on the workings of a Gypsum factory, he focuses on the miners within the firm as a group that had been able to resist bureaucratization by pushing back against these specific problems. For example, the miners demanded a certain amount of independence in their jobs and justified it on account of the physical danger involved in their work. The “physical dangers of the mine … allowed the miner to feel that he had a right to make his own decisions, and to resist encroachment on his autonomy that would be brought about by a centralized bureaucracy.” Gouldner concludes from these and other factors that “bureaucratic organization was more fully developed on the surface than in the mine” and that the miners had relatively succeeded in pushing back the onslaught of bureaucratization.

Interestingly, though, the lesser degree of bureaucratization corresponded to a more intense degree of motivation in the mine as opposed to on the surface. Supervisors saw miners as working both faster and better than their counterparts on the surface. The only sign of motivational

79 Gouldner, 236.
problems in the mine was frequent absenteeism, against which superiors attempted to establish strict rules. They eventually decided that these rules could not be enforced in the mine, however, because “they did not view strict rule enforcement as an expedient solution to the problem.”

In general, the miners seem to have resisted hierarchical administration more than the surface workers. “The miners’ behavior reflected informal norms of conduct which tended to resist almost any formal authority in the mine.” But this behavior was not the result of laziness. “On the contrary, it was not uncommon for miners to assert that the only thing they were concerned about was getting enough ‘empties’ (i.e., empty cars on which to load the gyp).” Ultimately, then, the miners were extremely disciplined, just not in a way that reflected the formal hierarchical bureaucracy as Gouldner expected to find it (according to the Weberian “punishment model” type). They were instead disciplined by their own confidence in their competence and by their motivation to produce. Greater independence was not something that was solely demanded by the miners, either. Supervisors saw the advantages of it in terms of their own abdication of responsibility for injuries or deaths that could result in this dangerous working environment.

According to Gouldner, peculiarities in the rhythm of work also explained the lesser degree of bureaucratization in the mine: “As Max Weber recognized, bureaucracy is a method for the administration of routine affairs, or at least for problems deemed routine. The mine, though, because of the imminence of dangers within it, was viewed as a place of everpresent ‘emergencies.’” This points to a need for a more flexible form of organization, which would also better suit the type of people who tended to work in the mine:

“In general, it would appear more difficult to force the highly spontaneous personalities, typical of miners, to follow a pattern of formal rules and rigid discipline. On the other hand, individuals accustomed to continual suppression of impulse, such as was customary among surfacemen and typified by the manner in which they handled their aggression, probably found conformance to rules and discipline comparatively easier.”

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80 Gouldner, 142.
81 Gouldner, 108.
82 Gouldner, 108.
83 Gouldner, 150.
84 Gouldner, 153.
Again, this suggests the need for a more flexible and individualized bureaucratic approach, which we now have, rather than the idea that bureaucracy could not exist in this environment at all.

Gouldner also explained that strict bureaucratic rules could actually promote worker apathy in that they “served as a specification of a minimum level of acceptable performance. It was therefore possible for the worker to remain apathetic, for he now knew just how little he could do and still remain secure.” Gouldner, 174-175. This clearly suggests that more flexible rules that could be applied in a looser manner could serve to increase discipline. He explained that “… bureaucratic rules … permit ‘activity’ without ‘participation;’ they enable an employee to work without being emotionally committed to it.” Gouldner, 176. This suggests that more effective discipline could be achieved if participation and emotional commitment could be somehow stimulated. Gouldner seems to have assumed that emotional commitment and self-motivation exist outside of the bureaucratic structure. By his own account, though, these factors work to increase discipline, in a real sense, rather than decrease it, which is paradoxical if he holds onto discipline as the defining characteristic of the “bad” form of bureaucracy.

Gouldner’s seemingly humanistic concerns came full circle in the 1990s. In their survey of management texts, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello explain that 1990s literature takes aim at hierarchy and discipline in the name of autonomy and individuality. Cadres and workers alike were to be liberated from domination and, instead, work out of their devotion to the “vision” to be realized in their various “projects.” The literature also emphasizes the importance of sovereign individual choice, both on the part of the autonomous—and responsible—employee and the customer who is the object of service. Flexibility in response to new challenges, more difficult to address with “rigid” hierarchy, is also prized, as it was in Gouldner’s mine. The “new spirit of capitalism” is meant to reinject soul into capitalism, which is still, however, organized within competitive firms that have not completely dissolved into egalitarian networks. Control is still taking place, but the structure of control has shifted inwards, towards the internal disposition of the

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85 Gouldner, 174-175.
86 Gouldner, 176.
87 See Boltanski and Chiapello, 70-80.
person. “Neo-management” is a response to demands for freedom and authenticity, and as such it aims to “facilitate a return to a ‘more human’ modus operandi, in which people can give full vent to their emotions, intuition and creativity.”

While Weber characterizes discipline as bureaucratic and anti-emotional, at times he also recognizes that discipline can make use of emotional forces, making them calculable. This can happen especially in a military context, in which morale is a key element for effectiveness. Soldiers must be inspired. Even religious discipline makes use of emotion, and Weber refers here to “the exercitia spiritualia of Ignatius of Loyola.” How can emotion and discipline be combined? For Weber, “The sociologically decisive points, however, are, first, that everything is rationally calculated, especially those seemingly imponderable and irrational emotional forces—in principle, at least, calculable in the same manner as the yields of coal and iron deposits. Secondly, devotion is normally impersonal, oriented toward a purpose, a common cause, a rationally intended goal, not a person as such, however personally tinged devotion may be in the case of a fascinating leader.”

The second point seems to bring this idea more in line with Weber's original institutional concept of bureaucracy, but the first one rings true for what I am calling new bureaucracy as well. Even the emotional, the seemingly irrational, can be brought into the system and accounted for. Although Weber emphasized the status-striving of bureaucrats in his time, he did not foresee the sublimation of a more personal, creative, individualized drive within a rationalized system. For him, the entrepreneur at the head of the bureaucratized firm had the possibility of remaining outside the system. He didn't understand that the bureaucrats could be made into mini entrepreneurs, themselves, and manipulated based on their predictable competitive behavior. Weber claims that discipline within capitalism is based on military discipline but diverges from this in that it takes on a completely rational form. He didn't see that it could take on a completely rational form but retain this emotional element, even still.

The extension of the entrepreneurial form to all aspects of life is a defining feature of what Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval call neoliberal society. Within the enterprise, itself, “neoliberal

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88 Boltanski and Chiapello, 98.
89 Economy and Society, 1149-1150.
90 Economy and Society, 1156.
Discipline” translates as “the individualization of objectives and rewards on the basis of repeated quantitative evaluation” so as to render “competition between wage-earners as the normal type of relations in the enterprise.”"91 Dardot and Laval claim that the “new management” represents a challenge to the bureaucratic model as defined by Weber, but in fact, it fits perfectly with a looser conception of Weberian bureaucracy based on rationalization. They later admit this:

“Neo-management is not ‘anti-bureaucratic’. It corresponds to a new, more sophisticated, more ‘individualized’, more ‘competitive’ phase of bureaucratic rationalization … We have not emerged from the ‘iron cage’ of the capitalist economy to which Weber referred. Rather, in some respects it would have to be said that everyone is enjoined to construct their own individual little ‘iron cage’.”"92

If Weber analyzed social phenomena in terms of a dialectic between rationalization and charisma, I argue that ‘new management’ represents a continuation of this pattern. Charisma, as individual virtuosity, cultivated through competition and hardship, which Weber posed as a counterforce to rationalization, has instead been subsumed within it. The sovereign individual is valorized but also produced and manipulated as such.

Charismatic Democracy?

If charisma as individual sovereignty over the self has easily been subsumed within new forms of bureaucratic rationalization, what can Weber offer us in terms of hope? The answer may lie with a democratized version of charisma. Embodied within the individual, charisma aliment the subjectivity of the self-as-entrepreneur in all aspects of life. Appropriated as a democratic mentality, however, it could represent the sovereign claiming of values, the questioning of existing frameworks and expert knowledge.

With plebiscitary democracy, Weber’s aim is to bring charisma and meaning back into political life by creating a favorable atmosphere that would foster it.93 Charismatic domination, the polar opposite of bureaucratic domination, should provide a counterforce. The party system and

92 Dardot and Laval, 262.
93 (222 One way to counter Weber here would be to criticize his notion of what is inevitable versus what it is possible to change with human intervention. Breiner critiques this. Weber claims democracy is impossible, but he then explains that we should develop institutions that foster plebiscitarian leaders, which implies that this development is not automatic. If plebiscitarianism is not automatic and must be fostered, why can’t we foster democracy? Breiner says this black-and-white choice between the impossible versus what we should strive for turns out to be arbitrary.)
parliament are meant to be the competitive grounds on which a charismatic leader might prove himself. ‘The people’ participates mostly, and perhaps solely, as a voting public that must arbitrate between titans. In some places, it seems that Weber thinks the interaction with the followers will actually mold and train the charismatic figure—he will be born of the struggle.

However, Weber himself gives us every reason to question the democratic character of plebiscitarian democracy. For example, he writes, “it has to be clearly realized that the plebiscitarian leadership of parties entails the ‘soullessness’ of the following, their intellectual proletarianization, one might say.”94 He accepts this, however, because he has framed the situation as a strict either / or determination:

“…there is only the choice between leadership democracy with a ‘machine’ and leaderless democracy, namely, the rule of professional politicians without a calling, without the inner charismatic qualities that make a leader, and this means what the party insurgents in the situation usually designate as ‘the rule of the clique.’”

This latter situation, according to Weber, was the one that could be found in Germany.

Jeff Green uses Weber’s model as a blueprint for his version of an “ocular” rather than “vocal” democracy. The people does not speak, but it sits in judgment. Green endorses this as properly democratic because citizens, he says, have real control through the exposure and scrutiny they force upon leaders. In the past, others have used Weber’s plebiscitary democracy as a starting point from which to purposefully design ways to restrain public participation and maintain it at a ‘safe’ level. This is the Schumpeterian model that became dominant within democratic theory after World War II and went on to be criticized by participatory and then deliberative democrats. Indeed, Weber is mostly viewed as a liberal antidemocratic theorist because of the very limited range of participation he favors.

Weberian democracy is not as voice-less as Jeff Green makes it out to be, however. In his essay on parliamentarism in Germany, for example, Weber argues for the expansion of suffrage with

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94 Gerth and Mills, 113.
the justification that it would be shameful to deny a voice to soldiers returning from war.95

Parliamentarism is to give a voice to the people. Of course, the main purpose of parliament for Weber is still to provide an environment for the cultivation of genuine political leaders who live for politics rather than solely from it. His criticisms of the political legacy left by Bismarck also contradict the standard characterization. Weber laments the nation’s lack of political education, political will, and capacity for independent thought. Far from celebrating the submissiveness of the nation, he often deplores passive submission to leaders.96 Weber additionally makes an important distinction between a functioning parliament and a powerless one, as well as the effects of these structures on the general political landscape. A parliament that has a mainly consultative role can engage only in “negative politics” and contributes nothing to the politicization and political education of the public. This can be an important point if we are thinking about parliaments in Europe, both the European Parliament and national parliaments. If MPs feel that they are powerless on certain issues, they will not discuss them in a serious way. Public discussion will fail to happen, as well. This is how the bureaucratic mentality pervades society.

If Weber is certainly not a participatory democrat, his ideas do capture something important about political democracy that is particularly important to consider when faced with the cooptation of participation or the bureaucratization of life masquerading as political participation. The question, then, is whether this idea of politics can be generalized in a way that makes it less elitist, or more democratic in the sense of equality. Peter Breiner answers in the negative. For Weber, collective agency can only result in more bureaucracy. Breiner also claims that Weber defines “politics” as a means that is separate from various possible ends, and that this facilitates his exclusion of the community as constitutive of politics. Weber rejects collective political action because he detaches the calculation of means in politics from the choice of ends, which could actually be internal to or constitutive of political practice. The end of democratic government is the means. Weber’s

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95 See Political Writings, 132. (problem—Weber uses the term “voice” but this is questionable when we are solely referring to the vote. This was precisely the critique of the participatory democrats—the vote is not enough. It doesn’t actually confer voice. So how else do I claim that Weber’s model is not voice-less?)

96 See Political Writings, 144-145.
detachment leads him to the conclusion that the only way to pursue values within the context of political struggle is through individual “gifted agents.” Politics is defined here solely in terms of purposive rationality, which causes “this disjuncture between political community and its ends.”

Breiner, however, is clearly working with a restrictive definition of Weber’s political category, which ignores the ends to which Weber claims purposively rational methods are only a means.

Andreas Kalyvas provides another argument against Breiner’s view by focusing on charisma as presented in Weber’s earlier sociology of religion rather than his work on plebiscitary democracy. Here, Weber refers to charisma as a collective category. Charisma is the source of political creativity within charismatic groups. It describes the ways that groups challenge the dominant paradigm and create a new symbolic universe. Kalyvas also interprets power and politics in Weber’s work as larger terms, encompassing more than the instrumental pursuit of interest. Of course, Weber did not elaborate upon the collective potential of charisma. Kalyvas conjectures that this might be a by-product of his assessment of modernity and the disenchantment of the world. Indeed, perhaps Weber believed that the bureaucratization of society, in the wide sense, had been so successful at stifling charismatic energy that charisma could only be expected to survive in small enclaves, within a small number of special individuals. It is also possible, though, Kalyvas suggests, that modernity could instead result in the intensification and expansion of charismatic activity because it involves the pluralization of gods and values, not just the loss of God. This is possible to imagine even though Weber did not go in this direction.

The collectivization of the charismatic category should go hand in hand with a renewed defense of procedural democracy, which differs, however, from that of Green. Participatory democrats seem to have fallen for the Schumpeterian ideological picture of electoral politics in which the procedure is an empty means towards the selection of an elite. The repoliticization of electoral contest and representation could serve to foster charisma in the way Weber intended, but not within individual leaders alone. In fact, formal democratic procedures already contain a collective

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97 Breiner, 126.
dimension in the sense that they embody political equality in a way that even “reformed” administrative bodies, regulatory authorities, or executive type committees never can. The point is that the very existence of a real decision making body, as opposed to a series of managerial committees, encourages people in general to think politically because it gives political thinking at least a potential outlet.
Weber sets up the problem—the conflict between bureaucracy and democracy—for generations of social theorists to come. His framing of the issue as bureaucracy both with and against democracy is significant given his own historical context. His narrative went against the conventional view of bureaucracy as a Prussian, monarchical political system, distinct from the parliamentary systems of Western Europe. Weber’s account is novel in that he shows bureaucracy to be a phenomenon that these democracies cannot avoid as a type of administrative organization. These governing forms—bureaucracy and democracy—had now to be understood as “competing dimensions of one and the same political order.”

I aim to address two related issues in connection with this problem. First, I argue that Weber’s conception of bureaucracy is much broader than the specific institutional ideal type of monocratic bureaucracy. It also encompasses his ideas on the rationalization of modern life in general, bureaucracy within capitalism, as well as the opposition he frames between the mentality of the politician and that of the official. I aim to link these different elements in order to develop a concept of bureaucracy as a mode of thought rather than a specific and limited institutional form. Bureaucratic thinking involves the application of technical knowledge and skills, with a claim to universality and objectivity, in order to produce results and promote consensus and social harmony. I argue that this conception allows us to better recognize the contemporary diffusion of a flexible, decentralized type of bureaucracy and situate it within the history of affinity and tension between bureaucratic and democratic principles.

His description of bureaucracy, both the institutional form and the mentality, also reveals significant connections between government administration and the capitalist firm regarding their joint attempts at calculation and control. Weber’s discussion of the co-development of capitalism and bureaucracy is important since ‘regulation’ is often presented as a capitalistic alternative to bureaucratic state control. By understanding their commonalities in terms of bureaucratic

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management, we can understand that attempts to replace government with private bureaucracy only beg the bureaucratic question.

Establishing continuity over time, linking present administrative forms to Hegel, Durkheim, and Weber, allows us to evaluate the significance of historical critiques of and proposed solutions to the challenge of bureaucratization for our current situation. Thus, my more central aim in this paper is to understand and mobilize Weber’s critique. He identifies three major types of challenges, the most basic of which involves a paradox internal to democracy.

Equality of status, a democratic goal, is manifested in the very form of bureaucracy, in which formal rules are impartially and equally applied. Democracy as a constitutional development sets limits to the arbitrary personal elements of feudal and patrimonial rule. Weber’s concept of democratization here is not about active mass participation. It is related to the extension of equal rights, regulated by abstract norms affecting all. Exclusion of rule by notables entails the abstract and formal regulation of the exercise of authority and equality before the law. Because of these conceptual and practical affinities, the pursuit of equality actually works to extend formal rationality. While democracy promotes selection based on merit rather than privilege as a means of realizing substantive concerns, democratic principles are opposed to the resulting creation of a privileged mandarinate. The pursuit of substantive rationality in the form of equality thus paradoxically results in the extension of formal rationality, as a form of domination, to virtually all areas of life. Weber did not see the transcendence of bureaucracy as a possibility. Rather, the best we could do was balance or counter it in a continuous way. He proposed his model of plebiscitary democracy, which should foster individual charismatic leaders, as a counterforce.

Weber also makes the case for an essential distinction between bureaucracy and politics, and this is the solution to a different problem. According to him, bureaucracy, like science, can never provide its own foundation. Values of some type always underpin social scientific research, just as values are always at the root of so-called technical decisions of policy. This calls attention to the necessity of political thinking in a democratic polity. Indeed, interest, conflict, and politics will exist
under the surface whether we like it or not; it is then a question of how we address it. Bureaucracy and politics must be kept separate precisely because this separation is impossible. The attempt at separation, though, forces us to recognize the politics and values that are always present.

Weber promotes political thinking as a counterforce to bureaucratization via his concept of charisma. As a general category, charisma provides a solution to yet a third problem posed by bureaucracy, involving its effects on autonomy and creativity. This is a fundamentally democratic problem if we depart from Weber's original equality-based definition and focus on political democracy as self-determination. While bureaucracy fulfills its tasks based on pre-determined value structures, charisma offers the possibility of revolutionizing these value structures. It ushers in a Nietzschean revaluing of values.\(^2\) This has to do with its self-determining nature.

> “Genuine charismatic justice does not refer to rules; in its pure type it is the most extreme contrast to formal and traditional prescription and maintains its autonomy toward the sacredness of tradition as much as toward the rationalist deductions from abstract norms.”\(^3\)

Instead, “in a revolutionary and sovereign manner, charismatic domination transforms all values and breaks all traditional and rational norms: ‘It has been written ... , but I say unto you....’” Charisma—and politics—bursts the bonds of the quantifiable and therefore controllable. It contains a passionate emotionalism that represents freedom for Weber in its uncontrollability and because it is the mark of a human being who is whole. The emotionalism contained within charisma appears to be a remedy for alienation or the emotionlessness dictated by bureaucracy. At the same time, emotional force must be harnessed to a genuine cause in the figure of the ideal politician with a calling. It must be channeled and made politically effective by a charismatic politician who also makes productive use of the techniques afforded him via the process of rationalization, itself.

Ultimately, I want to make a Weberian point about the necessary and productive tension between the principles of democracy and bureaucracy. In some ways, the relationship can be compared to a dynamic Weber identified in his sociology of music, in which rational and affective

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\(^2\) According to Lindholm, Nietzsche presented a challenge to 19th century utilitarian interest politics in that he highlighted a type of emotionalism or energy that could not be subsumed under calculations of preference. Weber took Nietzsche seriously and incorporated this challenge into his category of charisma.

\(^3\) Economy and Society, 1115.
motivations confront each other to produce a sort of dialectical progressive trajectory. Weber’s analysis of the development of western music offers a narrative that tracks a process of rationalization, using the work of Greek and Latin music theorists as a point of departure. The Greeks had discovered an arithmetical relationship between pitch intervals, allowing them to express musical ideas in mathematically “rational” terms. Anomalies, however, prevented them from establishing a completely harmonious pitch system, and they were forced to work around these inconveniences, to the eventual benefit of their music. Michael Fend explains:

“The arithmetical method of investigating the relations between sounds and subsequently elaborating these relations to a tuning system for compositional purposes revealed an irrational element. Crucially, the problem motivated the ancient music theorists to seek various solutions which resulted in different tunings, musical genera and modes all enriching musical culture. Despite the setback of not finding a coherent system of terms for the conceptualization of the musical material, musical culture thrived nonetheless, after a more complex manner in conceiving of sound systems was embraced.”

In Weber’s story, the search for harmony is equated with the drive to create order and rationalize, but the subsumption of all irrational elements, or impulses towards unfettered expressivity, is never quite possible. Weber sees this, for example, in the ongoing tension between harmonic and melodic principles. It is precisely this confrontation and the subsequent Aufhebung that results in the most dramatically compelling expressions of western music, according to him.

The dynamic interaction between bureaucracy and charisma in Weber’s political work functions in a similar way. Central to the concept and historical development of bureaucracy is the idea that it serves a dual function in human life. Our desire for absolute control works alongside our simultaneous wish to absolutely give up control, both of these out of fear of uncertainty, contingency, and yet ultimate responsibility under those unstable conditions. Bureaucracy, as an artifice of control, offers us both things at the same time. Weber makes this argument, but despite his fears about bureaucratic overreach, he refuses to believe that this kind of order will ever fully take over. It cannot triumph in the end simply because it cannot work. Bureaucracy is ultimately the

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4 This kind of dialectic is also present in his sociology of religion.
6 See Radkau, 371.
expression of a utopian view according to which human affairs can be objectively and harmoniously regulated. Instead, Weber asserts an essentially conflictual vision of politics in which society can never be completely reconciled to itself without internal divisions. In this situation, complete legitimation is never possible, and there is always space for contestation.

Charisma is the main counterforce Weber sets forth against bureaucracy. It is to be carried via the charismatic politician who should be cultivated through plebiscitary democracy. If we analyze the twentieth century in terms of Weber’s dialectic between charisma and rationalization/bureaucracy, however, we can see that a new synthesis seems to have been achieved. A sort of Weberian individualistic charismatic heroism has been instrumentalized in the service of a new form of bureaucracy.

Partially in response to this development, I want to shift the focus away from the individual and argue that Weber’s category of charisma captures something important in the democratic principle, namely the force of initiative to break through the status quo and create something new. Taking this view as a starting point, we can begin to understand how democracy and bureaucracy might work together in mutual opposition. Democracy needs bureaucracy in order to give the will of the people its practical and material form in the world, but it must also oppose it in order to avoid undermining itself and to allow for the emergence of the radically different and new.

“Political Science”: Value Neutrality and the Mentality of the Political Man

Two responses Weber mobilizes in the face of the bureaucratic challenge are the separation of bureaucracy from politics and, relatedly, the figure of the charismatic politician with a calling.

The persona of the politician is most extensively described in “Politics as a Vocation” with reference to the famous distinction between the “ethic of ultimate ends” and the “ethic of responsibility.” After describing the dismal state of German party and parliamentary politics, Weber asks nevertheless, “what inner enjoyments can this career offer and what personal conditions are
presupposed for one who enters this avenue?" In other words, what sort of person is the politician and what drives him or her? Politics can be enjoyable, first, because it gives a feeling of power, which “can elevate the professional politician above everyday routine.” Charisma and the political state of being are necessarily intertwined for Weber, and this comes out here. Both politics, as a pure category, and charisma are about transcending the everyday, which is associated with bureaucracy. Politics gets perverted when this element is watered down. At the same time, the politician who is “allowed to put his hand on the wheel of history” must “do justice to the responsibility that power imposes upon him,” and this requires three personal qualities: “passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion.”

Passion refers to devotion to a cause rather than passionate excitement for its own sake, and it must be tempered by or channeled through a psychological state of calmness and sense of proportion. Politics is, after all, an intellectual activity. It is “made with the head, not with other parts of the body or soul.” It requires intellectual distance. Weber is very clear about this.

This characterization of the political challenges Marcuse’s accusation according to which Weber has abandoned politics to the irrational and arbitrary.

Weber very clearly separates “reason” in the sense of “reasonableness” and political judgment from “rationalization.” The fact that Weber places politics and rationalization in opposition does not imply that politics is necessarily an irrational enterprise. At the same time, politics is not solely intellectual. In order to count as meaningful human action, it has to be driven by passion. Otherwise, it risks becoming abstract intellectualized emptiness. Later in the essay, he writes, “Surely, politics is made with the head, but it is certainly not made with the head alone.” The feelings and sense of meaning that come along with true political action derive not only from the devotion to a cause, but also from the sense of enormous weight and responsibility involved. This is what it means to say, “Here I stand; I can do no other.”

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7 Gerth and Mills, 114.
8 Gerth and Mills, 115.
10 Gerth and Mills, 127.
Weber calls this stand taken by a true politician “genuinely human and moving.” Genuineness is a norm for the political man in a way that it can never be for the official. The bureaucrat, motivated by orientation toward a goal, could, by definition, never be “genuine” if that means being moved by human passion. A politician must always act with passion toward a cause, otherwise “the curse of creaturely worthlessness overshadows even the externally strongest political successes.”

External, instrumental success can never be fully human. Or rather, the “creaturely” or mechanical / animal side of human beings is “worthless” without the passion that alone can bring meaning to our material existence and successes. The bureaucratic is meaningless material cause-and-effect action, even in success, while the political should be meaningful. Politics, associated with the ethic of responsibility in “Politics as a Vocation,” concerns values even though it is distinct from the Gesinnungsethik. If it were value-less, it would be fully Zweckrational and inhuman.

The opposition of mentalities corresponds to Weber’s insistence on a cognitive and functional separation between bureaucracy and politics, which, in turn, has its roots in Weber’s thinking on the necessity of value neutrality of science. In my view, Weber argues for a strict separation between politics and bureaucracy specifically because he sees that they can never be totally separate. In other words, because bureaucracy can never be purely practical or technical knowledge—politics always lies beneath it—we need a separate political domain in which value conflicts can be recognized in a transparent way rather than hidden behind a supposedly scientific discourse of the common good. This entails a critique of bureaucracy that is distinct from the identification of a means-ends inversion, according to which bureaucracy is simply a man-made cultural object, a means, which has come to dominate its original ends. Weber makes the additional point that bureaucracy is, in fact, partial, while it presents itself as impartial and objective. Indeed,

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11 Gerth and Mills, 117. They actually translate *kreatürlicher Nichtigkeit* as “the creature’s worthlessness,” but I find this to be confusing. “…immer muß irgendein Glaube d a sein. Sonst lastet in der Tat – das ist völlig richtig – der Fluch kreatürlicher Nichtigkeit auch auf den äußerlich stärksten politischen Erfolgen.” Pd p. 438
12 This argument brings Weber close to his contemporary, Georg Simmel. The “tragedy of culture,” exemplified in Simmel’s *Philosophy of Money*, involves the increasing autonomy of man-made cultural forms from the human beings who originally created them for their own purposes.
one of the key problems with the German bureaucracy that he identifies in his political writings is the partisan nature of it and the infiltration of the Junker mentality. The Bismarckian bureaucracy had succeeded in imposing Junker values upon all of society, against the national interest.

Max and Alfred Weber specifically made this argument against conservatives, typified by Gustav Schmoller, within the Verein für Sozialpolitik. The conservatives held a Hegelian view of the state administration, according to which the bureaucracy was a neutral force embodying the universal interest of society. Weber argued, instead, that bureaucracy reflects the class structure of society; it is not neutral. His judgments on the partiality of bureaucracy are undergirded by his basic view that conflict is eradicable in human society. Where we cease to see this, it is simply because the conflict is hidden:

“Conflict cannot be excluded from social life. Once can change its means, its object, even its fundamental direction and its bearers, but it cannot be eliminated. … It is always present and its influence is often greatest when it is least noticed … ‘Peace’ is nothing more than a change in the form of the conflict or in the antagonists or in the objects of the conflict, or finally in the chances of selection.”

The substantialist Hegelian view assumes, instead, that social peace is able to transcend conflict at some higher level. Weber mobilized his strictly technical definition of bureaucracy against this view. Focusing on his technical description of bureaucracy might lead readers to believe that Weber celebrated bureaucracy as the neutral apex of human technology or organization, but his political essays tell a different story. In the “bureaucracy” chapter in Economy and Society, the emphasis is on what bureaucracy can achieve, whereas Weber's political writings speak to its limitations. Even when he describes bureaucracy as a precision technical tool, his point is to argue that it is only a technical tool. It does not consist of a “universal class,” imbued with some sort of spiritual essence. The political and intellectual context of his arguments, highlighted especially by David Beetham, helps to underscore this point.

The idea that Weber held an ideal, mechanical, or closed vision of bureaucracy may stem from a misunderstanding of the “ideal-type” concept and its use in Economy and Society and/or Talcott

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13 “Ethical Neutrality,” 27.
14 See Beetham, 63–66.
Parsons’ skewed introduction of Weber’s work on bureaucracy in the United States. Parsons seemed to think that the ideal-type of bureaucracy was meant to be a normative prescription rather than an explanatory device. This would imply that Weber's goal was to explain to managers how they might best structure their organizations. This reading was prevalent in major works on bureaucracy around mid-century, including those by Parsons’ student Robert Merton and Merton’s students Alvin Gouldner and Peter Blau. However, this neglects Weber's concern with bureaucracy as a form of domination. These authors believed they were providing a corrective to Weber by showing that bureaucracy's inefficiencies could undermine its own stated goals, but this was already present in Weber's work. They did amend his account by describing additional ways in which bureaucratic structures could work as mechanisms of control, but these really provided updates or complements rather than a reformulation. Again, they had been assuming that Weber's bureaucracy was meant to be the most efficient and effective method for reaching organizational goals, but looking at his focus as domination, instead, we see that his account is consistent with their additions. For example, if bureaucracy was meant to promote equal treatment under the law during democratization, Weber shows that it has unintended undemocratic consequences. He also recognizes that politics are present within bureaucracy, and his goal regarding the regulative ideal of separating bureaucracy and politics is to unmask this.

The juxtaposition and separation of formal and substantive rationality, calculation and values, or bureaucracy and politics penetrates even Weber’s own methodology as he explicitly lays it out. Jürgen Kocka argues that he constructed his notion of politics precisely in opposition with bureaucracy, and his "demand for a clean conceptual as well as practical separation of politics and bureaucracy has its methodological counterpart in his insistence on a sharp distinction between normative and analytical statements, and in his position in the dispute on value-freedom." Just as politics always lies beneath bureaucracy, science always has an underpinning, which is outside of

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15 Citations! 222
16 footnotes, Weiss article
17 Kocka, 293.
Science cannot declare its own ends, according to Weber, which means there must be something outside of scientific technique. In making this point, Weber is differentiating between a sphere of technique and a sphere of values that is potentially political. By analogy, bureaucracy can be understood as a sphere of science while politics is the sphere of values and conflict. Science, and bureaucracy, should be value-neutral, but there are always values that underlie its exercise at the beginning. This also allows us to see that, while bureaucracy claims to be ruling in an interest-free and impartial way, values always lie behind it so this can never be true. Claims to impartiality can, thus, actually serve to mask interest by attempting to hide underlying value judgments.

For Weber, a science of human beings cannot exist without value presuppositions because scientific inquiry requires the making of choices about focus and scope. Since science aims at an understanding of reality, it cannot simply reproduce it in all its chaotic detail. Instead, the researcher forms concepts and abstractions in relation to the parts of reality that are of particular significance to her, depending on her own socio-historical context and personal value positions. We study things empirically, first of all, because we think this specific empirical knowledge is meaningful to us in some way. Scientific inquiry must be guided by our ideas about what constitutes the meaningful.

Weber’s sociology was meant to provide self knowledge vis-à-vis how we have become who we are, in our historical specificity. This necessarily involves questions of meaning. On this point, Tracy Strong refers to Weber’s claims at the beginning of the *Sociology of Religion*, in which he intimates that it is “impossible to do social science without acknowledging who and what one is in one’s own history … More accurately, doing social science must at the same time also be an acknowledgment of one’s place in the history one is investigating.”

Webber’s entire essay on objectivity in science revolves around this idea; thus, it is hard to follow critics like Herbert Marcuse...

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19 See “Ethical Neutrality,” 22.
20 See “Objectivity”, 110. "The objective validity of all empirical knowledge lies exclusively upon the ordering of the given reality according to categories which are subjective in a specific sense, namely, in that they present the presuppositions of our knowledge and are based on the presupposition of the value of those truths which empirical knowledge alone is able to give us."
21 Löwith, 52.
when they claim that Weber was entirely unaware of his own bourgeois context and presuppositions or that he was blind to the idea that the “reason” he dealt with was a product of the capitalist mode of production.23 Weber explicitly writes that belief in science is the product of particular values.24 Science is not meant to replace ultimate cultural values, and scientific truth is not trans-historical or universal, but is rather itself the product of history. After all, it is only a “hair-line which separates science from faith,” and “the belief in the value of scientific truth is the product of certain cultures and is not a product of man’s original nature.”25 If science always entails value presuppositions, value-neutrality is meant as a regulative ideal in order to force the researcher to recognize underlying value judgments.26 Weber has the same view regarding teaching because he “does not wish to see the ultimate and highest personal decisions which a person must make regarding his life, confounded with specialized training.” It is a matter of freedom and responsibility for the student.27

The role of science vis-à-vis value ideas should thus also be radical demystification.28 Weber aims to uncover what has been taken for granted. Towards this purpose, science can be used in order to “arrive at a rational understanding of these ‘ideas’ for which men either really or allegedly struggle.”29 Weber’s critique of Second International Marxism centers on the claim that Marxists collapse value judgments into science by displaying an uncritical faith in scientific progress.30 Referencing historical materialism, he explicitly denounces attempts at importing natural science methods and goals into the social or “cultural” sciences. The search for reliable repetition in human affairs in order to establish iron-clad “laws” can provide dubious results at worst and mere jumping-off points at best. When the researcher seeks to explain individual historical phenomena, these supposed laws will always be too general, and the more reliable the “law,” the more general and thus

23 Add footnote
25 "Objectivity" 110, See Jean Cohen, 67. Löwith
27 “Ethical Neutrality,” 3, 10. See also “Science as a Vocation,” page?
28 This is the purpose of Weber's critiques of Roscher and Knies, in which he contends that they do not recognize the non-scientific assumptions and underpinnings of their work.
29 “Objectivity,” 54. See also “Science as a Vocation” page? and Löwith, 56.
30 Löwith, 54. See also Mommsen, 49-55.
less useful it will be. The attempt to collapse politics into an economic or instrumental framework actually masks the value judgments that are inevitably there, both in the political situation under analysis and in the mind of the analyst. Attempting to separate the scientific from the value-laden presuppositions of the researcher should instead force him or her to recognize both the limits and the uses of his or her own methods.

Weber knew there were limits to scientific specialized knowledge, and he was happy they existed. Former student and friend Paul Honigsheim wrote, “…Weber breathed a sigh of relief as soon as someone once again demonstrated the limits of knowledge, the impossibility of making objective, valid value judgments. … He demanded instead that men strive for the goals given them by their god or demon.” These “god or demon”-given goals fall under the category of the charismatic or political. Yet Weber also placed a certain faith in science and its uses in service of charismatic politics: “Science was a means, a possibility, namely of controlling a technical apparatus for the realization of goals that arose from an extra-scientific establishment of purposes which a god or demon had given human beings.” Science, as a dictator of ends, could be destructive of freedom, but as a means, it could be an enabler.

Science cannot dictate its own ends, but its purpose is rather to act in the service of some external end by providing useful knowledge. Karl Löwith asserts that Weber seeks freedom within rationalization by trying to understand how the progression of rationalization can be put in the service of individual freedom. It is at the same time a constraint and a source of freedom for Weber, in the sense that it helps us to understand means-ends relationships and thus helps us to realize our intentions. This is freedom: having an intention and then realizing it or making it real. This requires rationalization, in order to be increasingly effective. “This link between rationality and freedom … can be perceived … in the inner impulse behind Weber’s practical attitude towards all rationalized institutions, organizations and forms of order in modern life: he fights against their claim to

metaphysical reality and uses them as a means to an end.” For example, bureaucracy is not the Hegelian universal class, but it can be extremely useful for the pursuit of certain power goals. In the same way, science must be value neutral and then placed in the service of ultimate goals, like nationalism, which was Weber’s argument in his “Inaugural Lecture” at Freiburg.

These methodological views are directly connected to Weber’s judgment of his own epoch as a “disenchanted” world. As we have seen, the science of sociology cannot avoid values, but simultaneously, science cannot create meaning on its own.

“The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the meaning of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to create this meaning itself. It must recognize that general views of life and the universe can never be the products of increasing empirical knowledge, and that the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us.”

Because man has eaten from the tree of knowledge, because of the disenchantment of the world, he must now create his own meaning and recognize the subjectivity and plurality of values. Science cannot generate meaning for him, and it cannot take questions of meaning for granted because there is no longer a singular collective subjectivity. Scientific research should proceed in a value-free manner once these initial concepts and questions have been set, but then values enter the picture again in order to bestow meaning upon the results.

The demand for value freedom in science is linked to Weber’s idealized vision of the politician with a calling, such that they are in some sense one combined response to the challenge of rationalization. “…What does science actually and positively contribute to practical and personal ‘life?’” This is the question posed by Weber’s imagined interlocutor in “Science as a Vocation.”

Among other things, he answers, it contributes to the technical control of life, and more importantly it can help one to “gain clarity” as to the practical stand one wishes to take and its relationship to an

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33 Löwith, 64.
34 See Mommsen, 108-109. “He worked hard to eliminate all value judgments, not so much in order to get rid of value judgments as such altogether, but rather to enable the individual or groups of individuals to bring them to bear all the more powerfully on a given social context and a given situation.”
35 "Science as a Vocation"
36 “Objectivity,” 57.
“ultimate *weltanschauliche* position.”37 This is political language, even if not exclusively so. Science must be scrubbed of values so that we can understand what the fight is really about, so that the values themselves are laid bare, and so that we face up to the truth of the “war between the gods” and rise to the occasion. At the same time, undiluted, un-deluded science and rationalized technique should be used as tools in the struggle. The demand for value neutrality comes from a desire to lay bare the necessary extra-scientific foundations of scientific propositions and to clarify our own value positions. The responsible political actor, as described especially in “Politics as a Vocation,” should then use the acquired technology in taking his own practical stand and fighting for his cause. In this way, discipline and rationalization can be made to serve charisma.

**Charisma**

In the same way that the bureaucrat and the politician represent opposing mentalities in Weber’s universe, the broader categories of bureaucracy and charisma are juxtaposed. The broader charisma/bureaucracy distinction within Weber’s thinking is interesting if we think about it operating as two different mentalities or ways of thinking about political questions. Charisma represents a radical form of freedom that rejects fixed rules, conventions, principles, and values. As such it is the very opposite of bureaucracy as a principle and a mentality. Charisma, in its individualized form within the figure of the politician, is also the only hope that Weber holds out against a rationalized future of all-encompassing discipline. If we read Weber against himself, charisma could serve as the potential basis of a political mentality on a collective and democratic level. This is all the more promising and necessary since the reading of Weber as individualist , I argue, has successfully been coopted within logics of “new management” and governance. His historical dialectic between rationalization and charisma seems to have swung in one direction. If we take the dialectic seriously, then a new charismatic moment is clearly required.

According to Weber, the problem of bureaucracy for politics is related to bureaucracy’s effects on autonomy. He claims that bureaucracy results in a complete loss of self-determining

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37 “Science as a Vocation,” 150-151.
power for both the bureaucrats and subjects. The autonomy-crushing outcomes of bureaucracy become the central feature that Weber attempts to counter with charisma. Weber’s plebiscitary democracy is ultimately built upon this. The charismatic political figure is completely self-determining. As a pure type, the charismatic politician can be seen as a symbolic figure that stands for self-determination, as opposed to the bureaucrat who is determined by external criteria.

"Charisma is self-determined and sets its own limits." Because of this, the charismatic is not bound to his followers. In order to exist, he must be recognized, but the followers then have a duty to follow him, on the basis of his mission, as long as his charisma is recognized. He is not dependent on their will; this would be external determination, as opposed to self-determination. Similarly, Weber writes that charisma is not a form of popular sovereignty. It is an individual quality, and "the mission and power of its bearer is qualitatively delimited from within, not by an external order." The individual character of charisma seems to be an aesthetic symbolic feature, in that it is meant to serve as the polar opposite of bureaucratic rationalization. If charisma represents the apotheosis of self-determination, it is because Weber conceives of this principally in individual terms.

The fact that individuality seems to play an especially symbolic role here is illustrated by Weber's self-contradictions. Not two pages later in Economy and Society, he claims that the charismatic ruler is "responsible" to the ruled because he must prove himself through his heroic deeds and also by bringing about their well being. He also tells a different story in his Ancient Judaism. In contrasting the solitary pre-exilic prophets to the early Christians, he writes that “the spirit” in the apostolic age came “upon the faithful assembly or upon one or several of its participants.” “Ecstatic crowds” characterized early Christianity, and “the prophet could experience holiness only in public under the

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38 “Moral autonomy, even in Weber's reduced understanding of it as choosing values and taking responsibility for the effects of acting on them, and bureaucratic claims to legitimacy are incompatible..." Breiner, 138.
39 Economy and Society, 1112.
40 Economy and Society, 1114.
influence of mass suggestion..."41 The community “engaged in mass ecstasy or mass-conditioned ecstasy or ecstatic revivals as a path to salvation.”42 Further,

“The 'spirit was poured out' to the community when the Gospel was preached. Speaking in tongues and other gifts of the spirit including, also, prophecy, emerged in the midst of the assembly and not in a solitary chamber. All these things obviously resulted from mass influence, or better, of mass gathering and were evidently bound up with such, at least, as normal precondition. The culture-historically so extremely important esteem for the religious community as depository of the spirit in early Christendom had, indeed, this basis. The very community, the gathering of the brethren was especially productive of these sacred psychic states.”43

The ecstasies of the prophetic salvation community "have always inclined men towards the flowing out into an objectless acosmism of love."44 This also fits with Weber's declaration that the paradigmatic moment of charisma is the orgy, obviously a collective enterprise.45 While the image of individual charisma is important for illustrating the self-determining nature of it, the collective dimension will be important for democratic theorists, like Andreas Kalyvas and Jeffrey Green, who want to salvage Weber's category of charisma from its potentially dictatorial trappings.

Ecstasy is the subjective condition that mediates or manifests charisma. Ecstasy, and so charisma, occurs in social form within the orgy, which is also "the primordial form of religious association."46 We may say, then, that charisma refers to the foundational symbolic condition of our living together, which constitutes “the political” in Claude Lefort's sense. Indeed, it is in the nature of the charismatic revelation to create a vision of "the world as a meaningful totality," including "both social and cosmic events."47 Weber's "objectless acosmism of love," into which the ecstatic religious community melds together, recalls Freud's "oceanic feeling" at the base of human religious inclination and sociability (Eros). In a secularized world, political legitimacy takes the place of religious justification as an explanation for people's place in a social structure.48 Charisma has the
power to define the foundational attitudes of "the ruled." It has a bearing on the "sacred" in that it "overturns all notions of sanctity."49

Weber's discussion of charisma pushes us towards a broader understanding of his conception of politics, beyond the dry description of the immediate rapport de forces between competing interests, taking place through an instrumentalist logic that is often attributed to him.50 Politics is about fighting for power, but it is also, at bottom, a fight for the power to define the cultural values at the base of a society. Politics, for Weber, is ultimately about values, in the same way that violence is ultimately always possible in politics, even if it is not directly engaged in every interaction.51 At times, Weber will define politics as the power struggle over the control of the state, which is, of course, "the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory."52 However, he will also describe the state, itself, as the "most important form of the normative regulation of cultural life."53 Culture, by definition for him, is what allows human beings to give meaning to the world.54 Meaning and the realization of values is crucial in politics; power is solely the inevitable means. Politics is a distinct value sphere, "the values of which can ... be realized only by one who takes ethical 'responsibility' upon himself."55 This is "political action." The power politician, driven by vanity and "power for power's sake without a substantive purpose," is in fact "irresponsible," according to Weber. "The mere 'power politician' may get strong effects, but actually...

49 Economy and Society, 1117.
50 For example, Peter Breiner claims that "value-rational motives have only a contingent relation to politics..." (128) because Weber separates the moment of value selection from the moment of strategic choice of means for the realization of these value. Breiner contends that this renders Weber blind to the idea that the means of politics might be the same as the ends, that both might be constitutive of "politics" as such, which would be Breiner's argument for the importance of collective--rather than individualistic--political action. Politics for Weber is then solely defined in terms of purposive rationality: “An association may claim legitimacy on the basis of some value-rational end; but for Weber it does not become a political association until it organizes an administrative staff and seeks to back up its orders by using force.” (127) Breiner ignores the fact that the strategic means would be rendered meaningless without the ends, which makes it nonsensical to restrict Weber's notion of politics to the purposively rational version alone. Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth have criticized Weber along similar lines.
51 Kalyvas suggests separating the power struggle element of Weberian politics from the value-based notion, associating them, respectively, with normal and extraordinary politics. I would argue, instead, that both are always present in Weber's discussions of politics because politics presupposes values even if they are not overtly discussed or challenged with every "normal" political action.
52 "Politics as a Vocation," in From Max weber, 78.
53 "Objectivity," 67-68.
54 "Objectivity," 81.
his work leads nowhere and is senseless. ... inner weakness and impotence hides behind this boastful but entirely empty gesture."\textsuperscript{56} To view politics as power alone is to mistake the means for the end, which must always involve the definition of values and culture.\textsuperscript{57} The definition of values and culture, conversely, requires power politics, otherwise more powerful neighbors are likely to impose their own culture upon you. And the modern polytheism of values means that "at all times [man] will find himself engaged in a fight against one or other of the gods of this world."\textsuperscript{58} Weber's essayistic reflections on World War I, from which these passages are drawn, thus neatly show the relationship between the "power pragma' that governs all political history" and the values that power exists in order to realize. Power, itself, according to Weber, "in the last analysis means the power to determine the character of culture in the future."\textsuperscript{59}

Thus, politics must also hold out the possibility of radically altering and fighting for fundamental values. While successful politics always takes into account "the possible," and likewise, the politician must take responsibility for the consequences of his actions, Weber writes that the possible can often only be reached by striving for the impossible. Mere adaptation to the possible is not politics, but rather, "the bureaucratic morality of Confucianism."\textsuperscript{60} Charisma, in its ideal and extreme form, refers to the symbolic institution of society and to radical symbolic creativity, whereas bureaucracy applies given frameworks, taking them as neutral.

Charisma is characteristic of the genuine political mentality in opposition to the bureaucratic, and Weber continuously contrasts the two in very general terms. Bureaucracy is about managing everyday economic needs. It is also dependent on economic circumstances in ways that charisma is not. "Charisma lives in, not off, this world," and this is again a matter of independence and self-determination. Weber declares that it is wholly consistent for modern artistic charismatic movements to require independent means as a condition for membership and, at the same time, for

\textsuperscript{56} "Politics as a Vocation," 116-117.
\textsuperscript{57} See "Science as a Vocation," 150, in which Weber discusses politics as a struggle over the influence of culture and Weltanschauung.
\textsuperscript{58} "Between Two Laws," in Political Writings, 78-79.
\textsuperscript{59} "Between Two Laws," 76.
\textsuperscript{60} "Meaning of Ethical neutrality," 24.
medieval monasteries to demand the opposite—the vow of poverty. Both are conditions of independence.

Charismatic domination constructs itself precisely in opposition to the everyday. It is the opposite of the administration of everyday needs, bureaucracy, and rational domination. The “official” deals with the “day-to-day management” of things. By contrast, “All extraordinary needs, i.e., those which transcend the sphere of everyday economic routines, have always been satisfied in an entirely heterogeneous manner: on a charismatic basis.” Charismatic figures are often the "natural" leaders in moments of distress," in other words, in extraordinary times. They are the "bearers of specific gifts of body and mind that were considered 'supernatural' (in the sense that not everybody could have access to them)..." Politics, as a pure concept, is also about transcending the everyday. The feeling of power enjoyed by the professional politician, according to Weber, "can elevate" him "above everyday routine." Again, charisma and politics are intimately and necessarily intertwined, and this comes out here. A true political leader must have "inner charismatic qualities." If charisma is meant to provide a limited escape route from all-encompassing rationalization, then Weber must devise a way of bringing charisma into the world. This is the role of the vocational politician with a calling, to be cultivated within plebiscitary democracy, as we will see. This connection again illustrates the intimate link between charisma and politics or the political mentality. Charisma is the political mentality in archetypical form.

Charisma and politics are opposed to the economic and the bureaucratic in that their values are not solely instrumental. Political struggles between parties often have material objectives, but they are also conflicts over substantive goals and worldviews. This is why Weber rejects what he deems to be the crass economism of both the liberal and Marxist analyses of politics. It is also why

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61 Political Writings, 145. “Parliament and Government in Germany”
62 ES, 1111.
63 ES, 1112.
64 "Politics as a Vocation," 115.
65 "Politics as a Vocation," 113.
he believes that the peaceful regulation of the world through the calculation of aggregate desires is a false hope:

“Only if one takes the semblance of peace for its reality can one believe that the future holds peace and a happy life for our descendants. As we know, the vulgar conception of political economy is that it consists in devising recipes for universal happiness; in this view, adding to the ‘balance of pleasure’ in human existence is the only comprehensible purpose our work has. Yet the somber gravity of the population problem alone is enough to prevent us from being eudaemonists, from imagining that peace and happiness lie waiting in the womb of the future, and from believing that anything other than the hard struggle of man with man can create any elbow-room in this earthly life.”

Weber was suspicious of the appearance of “peace” because power relations must lie beneath it, and thus, it could only ever be a cover or mask. The “balance of pleasure” is a reference to Bentham’s utilitarianism, but it could just as well refer to Saint-Simon and his desire to replace the rule of men over men with the technical rule of men over things. Because charisma is sovereign and unpredictable, there is no reason to believe that human motivations and actions could fit together like neat puzzle pieces, only waiting for the correct technique to complete the picture. Charisma and politics burst the bonds of the quantifiable and therefore controllable.

Predictability and impartiality are dependent on the rejection of subjective values as irrational emotional factors needing to be weeded out. The charismatic figure, as the opposite of the figure of the official, is characterized by a heightened emotional intensity and expressivity. Think of Weber’s examples of the berserk, the warrior unleashed, and the epileptic. Emotional intensity is enjoined to charisma and excluded from bureaucratic rationalization insofar as it is creative and extraordinary, which therefore means it is also unreliable for the purposes of calculation. Weber seems to validate emotional intensity as freedom enhancing (as opposed to heteronymous) by connecting it with both creativity and the meaning that human beings are capable of bestowing upon their existence within the world.

The exclusion of emotion and substantive values from the bureaucratic process, “dehumanization,” which approaches Marx’s concept of alienation, is a specific restriction of freedom caused by rationalization. Therefore, the raw emotion of charisma appears to be a remedy.

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Alienation involves separation. Both bureaucracy and mass democracy entail the separation of the public and private realms, which also means a separation of the personal from the political. This separation is what allows for the neglect of substantive democratic concerns and thus the protection of privilege under the guise of neutral impartiality. Subjectively, rationalization involves a similar process of separation within the person. Charisma, on an individual basis, is proposed as a response to this in that it affirms the person as a reunited whole. As Jean Cohen writes, Weber’s individual charismatic, responsible politician is presented as,

“the only possibility of salvaging human freedom... The point is to salvage the soul against the impersonal, calculating formal rationality of domination. Self-responsibility is determined by the individual who acts according to chosen values... The self-responsible individual, although a 'specialist' like everyone else, is engagé in every specialty and therefore remains human. He never conforms to the set role but brings his individuality to it, thus enriching his acts. Thus, Weber opposes the political leader to the bureaucratic official (who symbolizes impersonal selfless rule). The political leader takes a stand, he is passionate in his activity. His honor lies precisely in an exclusive personal responsibility for what he does... All that the self-responsible individual can do is place himself in moral opposition, abstractly negating this bondage through his subjective attitude.”

The "lost unity" of the person is thus to be recaptured through the self-determining acts of the charismatic individual who exhibits genuine emotion and judgment on a personal and not solely "rational" level. The term, "personal responsibility," might then be reinterpreted not solely as responsibility assumed by the individual, but responsibility assumed by the reintegrated person, unstripped of its wholeness by formal rationality.

On the other hand, though, Weber condemns a type of romantic emotionality that upholds emotional expression for its own sake. This is what he terms, with reference also to Simmel, "sterile excitation" or the "'romanticism of the intellectually interesting,' running into emptiness devoid of all feeling of objective responsibility." The passion of the vocational politician must instead be harnessed to a genuine cause, and it must be tempered by his "cool sense of proportion" and sense of personal responsibility. Thus, while charisma is made up of an emotionalism that is foreign to bureaucratic discipline, it is an emotionalism that must be channeled and mastered, at least in order to be politically effective. The discipline of Weber’s ideal politician is different from the discipline

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69 Jean Cohen "..." 82.
70 "Politics as a Vocation," 115.
necessary for rational administration, which is foreign to it, but discipline is still present in some sense.\textsuperscript{71} The charismatic politician with a calling is a “mastered self,” not unlike the protestant personality. There is an ambiguity in the way Weber evaluates the protestant ethic. He certainly admires the Puritan in that he still has “meaning” in his life. The Puritan is conscious of the discipline he places on himself, whereas bureaucratic discipline is for “specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart.”\textsuperscript{72}

Weber is critical of rationalization, but since he understands it as an inevitable development, the task he sets for himself is to conceive of human freedom from within its confines. He sees freedom as emerging from a dialectic between rationalization and its counterforces, constantly in tension with each other. Freedom involves creativity in positing values and goals, but it also entails the ability to responsibly realize these goals. He admits, then, that rationalization has actually served the cause of individual freedom in that it helps us to more effectively realize our intended purposes by better understanding relationships of cause and effect. The individual freedom that Weber advocates in the end is the heroic freedom of personal responsibility and self-reliance. The ideal heroic figure was made possible by the particular conditions of modernity: the disenchantment of the world has given individuals the freedom to create their own meaning, and advances in technical rationality allow us to better bring our values into being in the world. The problem is the potential for means-ends inversion or the fetishism of rationalization, itself. Charisma is about the continued ability to posit our own goals instead of taking our instruments to be the goals, themselves. I will argue later that Weber's insights into charisma as a particularly political mentality are still helpful in opposing the encroachment of bureaucratic management. However, the restrictive way in which he thought charisma might manifest itself individually may have actually played into the further development of bureaucracy. This is an especially Weberian twist. He did not see that the individualistic, heroic, personal-responsibility-focused mentality could and would be coopted by systems of management.

\textsuperscript{71} Economy and Society, page 2

\textsuperscript{72} PE, 182. Also: “The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so.” P. 181.
Rationalization of Charisma

Weber prophesied that democracy and socialism would only foster bureaucratization as an unintended consequence, even when democrats and socialists were strictly opposed to it. In order to avoid this development, he advocated the cultivation of competition and conflict—between capitalistic firms in economic society, between bureaucratically structured political parties and their leading politicians within parliament, between the firms and the state, and even between nation-states on the world stage.\(^{73}\) He did not foresee that the idea of cultivating charisma through competition could itself be instrumentalized for the purposes of rationalized bureaucracy.

To understand what I mean, it will be helpful to recall that bureaucracy for Weber functions similarly within the modern state and the capitalist firm. The modern state, for him, is a \textit{Betrieb} just like the factory. Both involve the separation of the worker from the means of production and the instrumental calculation of means in relation to ends. The mentality is the same, as well. He writes that “… it is quite ridiculous for our littérateurs to imagine that there is the slightest difference between the mental work done in the office of a private firm and that performed in an office of the state.”\(^{74}\) The way that competitiveness can be instrumentalized for purposes of control is most apparent in new management techniques intended for use within organizations generally, often importing techniques from private enterprise to “reform” supposedly inefficient public bureaucracies. Of course, in his time, Weber recognizes status concerns as a major source of motivation for bureaucratic officials, which is consistent with Taylorist advice to managers from the beginning of the twentieth century. What is different about management via charismatic-competitive drive is that it specifically draws on anti-bureaucratic concerns about individual freedom in order to construct its method. New theories of management within government, attempting to replace public bureaucracy with private-like management, purport to increase efficiency by introducing competition and thus incentive. I argue that this is also bureaucratic; it’s just that competition is now a technical tool for managing people. It still relies on an anti-political view of

\(^{73}\) Mommsen, \textit{Bureaucracy}, pages?

social relations, according to which everything can be technically regulated, and thus there is no need for deep political disagreement.

In critiques of Weberian bureaucracy as an actually existing entity in the mid-twentieth century, much emphasis has been placed on the impersonal nature of it, and thus attempts have been made to “personalize” or “humanize” the workplace. This critique originates in Weber’s use of formal rationality as the defining essence of bureaucracy. Formal rationality describes action that is oriented towards formal, abstract, impersonal norms, in other words, “to an impersonal order such that calculations can be made ‘without regard for persons’.” Weber explains how formal rationality is “extended” “to all areas of life as a form of domination.” This results in a means-end inversion, which is illustrated by the bureaucrat’s preoccupation with impersonal rules rather than substantive ends. Jean Cohen, writing in 1972, explains the problems Weber identifies regarding the dehumanizing tendencies of bureaucracy thusly:

“Formal calculation, ‘means’, becomes the ‘end’, of human activity while man becomes a by-product of ‘rationally’ functioning machines. The irrationality of rationalization lies in the creation of impersonal, meaningless forces which tend to function independently and despite man. It implies the impotence of subjectivity when confronted with these impersonal forces.”

Further:

“Substantive rationality, or action according to particular human needs, is precluded. The official is the perfect embodiment of formal rationality—he is a specialist whose activity depends not on his own personal subjectivity but on an objective impersonal order which denies and fragments subjectivity.”

As a response to these problems, participatory democrats and proponents of self-management attempted to humanize modern organizational forms. Alvin Gouldner, a student of Talcott Parsons, drew on Weber’s conception of bureaucracy in constructing his empirical studies detailed in Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy (1954). His goal was to empirically study the functioning of actual administrative structures, including the real people who made up these structures. He argued that social scientists, including Weber, had ignored the human element and had thus emerged with distorted representations of bureaucracy. A key problem with this, according to him, was that “this

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75 Cohen, 66.
76 Cohen, 66.
77 Cohen, 71.
has colored some analyses of bureaucracy with funereal overtones, lending dramatic persuasiveness to the pessimistic portrayal of administrative systems.\footnote{Gouldner, 16.} Gouldner, instead, refused to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead of accepting a bleak dichotomy between an unrealistic utopian democracy and the existing democracy which had been deeply undermined by bureaucracy, he hoped to find forms of bureaucracy that might work better from a democratic point of view.

To do this, he constructed a typology of different forms of bureaucracy, two of which he claims to find directly in Weber. The first model, “representative bureaucracy,” is based on expert knowledge and obedience through consent regarding the application of expert knowledge. “Punishment-centered bureaucracy,” by contrast, involves obedience seemingly for its own sake. Gouldner separated Weber’s pronouncements about expertise and discipline in order to create these two distinct ideal-types. He emphasized the importance of consent in the representative model, pointing out that the presence of expertise would not be enough to generate obedience on its own, whereas he equated the punishment-centered model with pure “imposition” or coercion. In this differentiation, it seems as though he was unable to see how the representative model might become coercive \textit{without} the explicit withdrawal of consent by either lower functionaries or bureaucratic subjects.

The problems Gouldner identified with punishment-centered bureaucracy have to do with homogenization, discipline, and lack of regard for persons, which he saw as less present in the representative form, associated with expert knowledge. In his case study based on the workings of a Gypsum factory, he focuses on the miners within the firm as a group that had been able to resist bureaucratization by pushing back against these specific problems. For example, the miners demanded a certain amount of independence in their jobs and justified it on account of the physical danger involved in their work. The “physical dangers of the mine … allowed the miner to feel that he had a right to make his own decisions, and to resist encroachment on his autonomy that would be
brought about by a centralized bureaucracy.”79 The division of labor was also more flexible compared to the organization of workers above ground, allowing miners to perform jobs as needed, often responding to ad hoc crises. The interactions between workers and between workers and bosses took on a less impersonal nature in the mine, as well. Gouldner concludes from these and other factors that “bureaucratic organization was more fully developed on the surface than in the mine” and that the miners had relatively succeeded in pushing back the onslaught of bureaucratization.

Interestingly, though, the lesser degree of bureaucratization corresponded to a more intense degree of motivation in the mine as opposed to on the surface. Supervisors saw miners as working both faster and better than their counterparts on the surface. The only sign of motivational problems in the mine was frequent absenteeism, against which superiors attempted to establish strict rules. They eventually decided that these rules could not be enforced in the mine, however, because “they did not view strict rule enforcement as an expedient solution to the problem.”80 In general, the miners seem to have resisted hierarchical administration more than the surface workers. “The miners’ behavior reflected informal norms of conduct which tended to resist almost any formal authority in the mine.”81 But this behavior was not the result of laziness. “On the contrary, it was not uncommon for miners to assert that the only thing they were concerned about was getting enough ‘empties’ (i.e., empty cars on which to load the gyp).”82 Ultimately, then, the miners were extremely disciplined, just not in a way that reflected the formal hierarchical bureaucracy as Gouldner expected to find it (according to the Weberian “punishment model” type). They were instead disciplined by their own confidence in their competence and by their motivation to produce. Greater independence was not something that was solely demanded by the miners, either. Supervisors saw the advantages of it in terms of their own abdication of responsibility for injuries or deaths that could result in this dangerous working environment.

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79 Gouldner, 236.
80 Gouldner, 142.
81 Gouldner, 108.
82 Gouldner, 108.
According to Gouldner, peculiarities in the rhythm of work also explained the lesser degree of bureaucratization in the mine: “As Max Weber recognized, bureaucracy is a method for the administration of routine affairs, or at least for problems deemed routine. The mine, though, because of the imminence of dangers within it, was viewed as a place of everpresent ‘emergencies.’”83 This points to a need for a more flexible form of organization, which would also better suit the type of people who tended to work in the mine:

“In general, it would appear more difficult to force the highly spontaneous personalities, typical of miners, to follow a pattern of formal rules and rigid discipline. On the other hand, individuals accustomed to continual suppression of impulse, such as was customary among surfacemen and typified by the manner in which they handled their aggression, probably found conformance to rules and discipline comparatively easier.”84 Again, this suggests the need for a more flexible and individualized bureaucratic approach, which we now have, rather than the idea that bureaucracy could not exist in this environment at all.

Gouldner also explained that strict bureaucratic rules could actually promote worker apathy in that they "served as a specification of a minimum level of acceptable performance. It was therefore possible for the worker to remain apathetic, for he now knew just how little he could do and still remain secure."85 This clearly suggests that more flexible rules that could be applied in a looser manner could serve to increase discipline. He explained that, “… bureaucratic rules … permit ‘activity’ without ‘participation,’ they enable an employee to work without being emotionally committed to it.”86 This suggests that more effective discipline could be achieved if participation and emotional commitment could be somehow stimulated. Gouldner seems to have assumed that emotional commitment and self-motivation exist outside of the bureaucratic structure. By his own account, though, these factors work to increase discipline, in a real sense, rather than decrease it, which is paradoxical if he holds onto discipline as the defining characteristic of the “bad” form of bureaucracy.

83 Gouldner, 150.
84 Gouldner, 153.
85 Gouldner, 174-175.
86 Gouldner, 176.
Gouldner’s seemingly humanistic concerns came full circle in the 1990s. In their survey of management texts, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello explain that 1990s literature takes aim at hierarchy and discipline in the name of autonomy and individuality. Cadres and workers alike were to be liberated from domination and, instead, work out of their devotion to the “vision” to be realized in their various “projects.” The literature also emphasizes the importance of sovereign individual choice, both on the part of the autonomous—and responsible—employee and the customer who is the object of service. Flexibility in response to new challenges, more difficult to address with “rigid” hierarchy, is also prized, as it was in Gouldner’s mine. The “new spirit of capitalism” is meant to re-inject soul into capitalism, which is still, however, organized within competitive firms that have not completely dissolved into egalitarian networks.87 Control is still taking place, but the structure of control has shifted inwards, towards the internal disposition of the person. “Neo-management” is a response to demands for freedom and authenticity, and as such it aims to “facilitate a return to a ‘more human’ modus operandi, in which people can give full vent to their emotions, intuition and creativity.”88

While Weber characterizes discipline as bureaucratic and anti-emotional, at times he also recognizes that discipline can make use of emotional forces, making them calculable. This can happen especially in a military context, in which morale is a key element for effectiveness.89 Soldiers must be inspired. Even religious discipline makes use of emotion, and Weber refers here to “the exercitia spiritualia of Ignatius of Loyola.” How can emotion and discipline be combined? For Weber,

“The sociologically decisive points, however, are, first, that everything is rationally calculated, especially those seemingly imponderable and irrational emotional forces—in principle, at least, calculable in the same manner as the yields of coal and iron deposits. Secondly, devotion is normally impersonal, oriented toward a purpose, a common cause, a rationally intended goal, not a person as such, however personally tinged devotion may be in the case of a fascinating leader.”

The second point seems to bring this idea more in line with Weber's original institutional concept of bureaucracy, but the first one rings true for what I am calling new bureaucracy as well. Even the

87 See Boltanski and Chiapello, 70-80.
88 Boltanski and Chiapello, 98.
89 Economy and Society, 1149-1150.
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emotional, the seemingly irrational, can be brought into the system and accounted for. Although Weber emphasized the status-striving of bureaucrats in his time, he did not foresee the sublimation of a more personal, creative, individualized drive within a rationalized system. For him, the entrepreneur at the head of the bureaucratized firm had the possibility of remaining outside the system. He didn't understand that the bureaucrats could be made into mini entrepreneurs, themselves, and manipulated based on their predictable competitive behavior. Weber claims that discipline within capitalism is based on military discipline but diverges from this in that it takes on a completely rational form.90 He didn't see that it could take on a completely rational form but retain this emotional element, even still.

The extension of the entrepreneurial form to all aspects of life is a defining feature of what Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval call neoliberal society. Within the enterprise, itself, “neoliberal discipline” translates as “the individualization of objectives and rewards on the basis of repeated quantitative evaluation” so as to render “competition between wage-earners as the normal type of relations in the enterprise.”91 Dardot and Laval claim that the “new management” represents a challenge to the bureaucratic model as defined by Weber, but in fact, it fits perfectly with a looser conception of Weberian bureaucracy based on rationalization. They later admit this:

“Neo-management is not ‘anti-bureaucratic’. It corresponds to a new, more sophisticated, more ‘individualized’, more ‘competitive’ phase of bureaucratic rationalization … We have not emerged from the ‘iron cage’ of the capitalist economy to which Weber referred. Rather, in some respects it would have to be said that everyone is enjoined to construct their own individual little ‘iron cage’.”92

If Weber analyzed social phenomena in terms of a dialectic between rationalization and charisma, I argue that ‘new management’ represents a continuation of this pattern. Charisma, as individual virtuosity, cultivated through competition and hardship, which Weber posed as a counterforce to rationalization, has instead been subsumed within it. The sovereign individual is valorized but also produced and manipulated as such.

Charismatic Democracy?

90 Economy and Society, 1156.
92 Dardot and Laval, 262.
If charisma as individual sovereignty over the self has easily been subsumed within new forms of bureaucratic rationalization, what can Weber offer us in terms of hope? The answer may lie with a democratized version of charisma. Embodied within the individual, charisma ameliorates the subjectivity of the self-as-entrepreneur in all aspects of life. Appropriated as a democratic mentality, however, it could represent the sovereign claiming of values, the questioning of existing frameworks and expert knowledge.

With plebiscitary democracy, Weber’s aim is to bring charisma and meaning back into political life by creating a favorable atmosphere that would foster it.\(^{93}\) Charismatic domination, the polar opposite of bureaucratic domination, should provide a counterforce. The party system and parliament are meant to be the competitive grounds on which a charismatic leader might prove himself. ‘The people’ participates mostly, and perhaps solely, as a voting public that must arbitrate between titans. In some places, it seems that Weber thinks the interaction with the followers will actually mold and train the charismatic figure—he will be born of the struggle.

However, Weber himself gives us every reason to question the democratic character of plebiscitarian democracy. For example, he writes, “it has to be clearly realized that the plebiscitarian leadership of parties entails the ‘soullessness’ of the following, their intellectual proletarianization, one might say.”\(^{94}\) He accepts this, however, because he has framed the situation as a strict either / or determination:

> “…there is only the choice between leadership democracy with a ‘machine’ and leaderless democracy, namely, the rule of professional politicians without a calling, without the inner charismatic qualities that make a leader, and this means what the party insurgents in the situation usually designate as ‘the rule of the clique.’”

This latter situation, according to Weber, was the one that could be found in Germany.

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\(^{93}\) One way to counter Weber here would be to criticize his notion of what is inevitable versus what it is possible to change with human intervention. Breiner critiques this. Weber claims democracy is impossible, but he then explains that we should develop institutions that foster plebiscitarian leaders, which implies that this development is not automatic. If plebiscitarianism is not automatic and must be fostered, why can’t we foster democracy? Breiner says this black-and-white choice between the impossible versus what we should strive for turns out to be arbitrary.

\(^{94}\) Gertth and Mills, 113.
Jeff Green uses Weber’s model as a blueprint for his version of an “ocular” rather than “vocal” democracy. The people does not speak, but it sits in judgment. Green endorses this as properly democratic because citizens, he says, have real control through the exposure and scrutiny they force upon leaders. In the past, others have used Weber’s plebiscitary democracy as a starting point from which to purposefully design ways to restrain public participation and maintain it at a ‘safe’ level. This is the Schumpeterian model that became dominant within democratic theory after World War II and went on to be criticized by participatory and then deliberative democrats. Indeed, Weber is mostly viewed as a liberal antidemocratic theorist because of the very limited range of participation he favors.

Weberian democracy is not as voice-less as Jeff Green makes it out to be, however. In his essay on parliamentarism in Germany, for example, Weber argues for the expansion of suffrage with the justification that it would be shameful to deny a voice to soldiers returning from war.\(^\text{95}\) Parliamentarism is to give a voice to the people. Of course, the main purpose of parliament for Weber is still to provide an environment for the cultivation of genuine political leaders who live for politics rather than solely from it. His criticisms of the political legacy left by Bismarck also contradict the standard characterization. Weber laments the nation’s lack of political education, political will, and capacity for independent thought. Far from celebrating the submissiveness of the nation, he often deplores passive submission to leaders.\(^\text{96}\) Weber additionally makes an important distinction between a functioning parliament and a powerless one, as well as the effects of these structures on the general political landscape. A parliament that has a mainly consultative role can engage only in “negative politics” and contributes nothing to the politicization and political education of the public. This can be an important point if we are thinking about parliaments in Europe, both the European Parliament and national parliaments. If MPs feel that they are powerless on certain issues, they will

\(^{95}\) See Political Writings, 132. (problem—Weber uses the term “voice” but this is questionable when we are solely referring to the vote. This was precisely the critique of the participatory democrats—the vote is not enough. It doesn’t actually confer voice. So how else do I claim that Weber’s model is not voice-less?)

\(^{96}\) See Political Writings, 144-145.
not discuss them in a serious way. Public discussion will fail to happen, as well. This is how the bureaucratic mentality pervades society.

If Weber is certainly not a participatory democrat, his ideas do capture something important about political democracy that is particularly important to consider when faced with the cooptation of participation or the bureaucratization of life masquerading as political participation. The question, then, is whether this idea of politics can be generalized in a way that makes it less elitist, or more democratic in the sense of equality. Peter Breiner answers in the negative. For Weber, collective agency can only result in more bureaucracy. Breiner also claims that Weber defines “politics” as a means that is separate from various possible ends, and that this facilitates his exclusion of the community as constitutive of politics. Weber rejects collective political action because he detaches the calculation of means in politics from the choice of ends, which could actually be internal to or constitutive of political practice. The end of democratic government is the means. Weber’s detachment leads him to the conclusion that the only way to pursue values within the context of political struggle is through individual “gifted agents.” Politics is defined here solely in terms of purposive rationality, which causes “this disjuncture between political community and its ends.”

Breiner, however, is clearly working with a restrictive definition of Weber’s political category, which ignores the ends to which Weber claims purposively rational methods are only a means.

Andreas Kalyvas provides another argument against Breiner’s view by focusing on charisma as presented in Weber’s earlier sociology of religion rather than his work on plebiscitary democracy. Here, Weber refers to charisma as a collective category. Charisma is the source of political creativity within charismatic groups. It describes the ways that groups challenge the dominant paradigm and create a new symbolic universe. Kalyvas also interprets power and politics in Weber’s work as larger terms, encompassing more than the instrumental pursuit of interest. Of course, Weber did not elaborate upon the collective potential of charisma. Kalyvas conjectures that this might be a by-product of his assessment of modernity and the disenchantment of the world. Indeed, perhaps

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97 Breiner, 126.
Weber believed that the bureaucratization of society, in the wide sense, had been so successful at stifling charismatic energy that charisma could only be expected to survive in small enclaves, within a small number of special individuals. It is also possible, though, Kalyvas suggests, that modernity could instead result in the intensification and expansion of charismatic activity because it involves the pluralization of gods and values, not just the loss of God. This is possible to imagine even though Weber did not go in this direction.

The collectivization of the charismatic category should go hand in hand with a renewed defense of procedural democracy, which differs, however, from that of Green. Participatory democrats seem to have fallen for the Schumpeterian ideological picture of electoral politics in which the procedure is an empty means towards the selection of an elite. The repoliticization of electoral contest and representation could serve to foster charisma in the way Weber intended, but not within individual leaders alone. In fact, formal democratic procedures already contain a collective dimension in the sense that they embody political equality in a way that even “reformed” administrative bodies, regulatory authorities, or executive type committees never can. The point is that the very existence of a real decision making body, as opposed to a series of managerial committees, encourages people in general to think politically because it gives political thinking at least a potential outlet.

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