EST

Interpreted Modernity
Weber and Taylor on Values and Modernity

Falk Reckling

UNIVERSITY OF POTSDAM, GERMANY

Abstract

The writings of Weber and Taylor have some strong affinities. Both start from the anthropological idea that man evaluates his position in the world and constitutes the social world by values. Their analyses of values aim at an understanding of those intersubjective meanings that have constituted western modernity. But, at the same time, their anthropological starting point leads to different interpretations of modernity. Historically, both argue that rationalization (as instrumental rationality) is one of the most influential *Kulturbedeutung* of modernity. Weber's thesis of rationalization is, however, entangled in a paradox. Overemphasizing the rationalized elements of modernity, he fails scientifically to grasp certain counter-movements in modernity, such as individuation, subjectivity and new life forms. Taylor, investigating the moral sources of expressivism, shows that these life forms are an inherent part of modernity. Yet his method of articulating the sources of modernity is insufficient to transform it towards a causal explanation of behaviour in everyday life.

Key words

■ anthropology ■ expressivism ■ modernity ■ rationalization ■ values

Among other things, Karl Löwith mentioned in his brilliant essay 'Max Weber and Karl Marx' two important conditions for a useful comparison: the key objects should be 'identical in certain respects' and 'their respective goals [of the authors] of research should be distinguished with regard to their idea of man' (Löwith, 1993/1932: 43). Regarding these conditions, there is no doubt that Weber and Taylor are interested in the conditions of modern man and that they derive their interpretation from the very anthropological idea that values have formed these conditions. Since social meanings are constituted by values, modernity is penetrated by certain values and their consequences for action. Hence, it is their common goal to investigate the moral framework of modernity because only through a genealogy of the framework of modern values can one understand *how*

we are today as we have become (Löwith).[1] Exploring the moral sources of modernity also means disclosing the historical conditions and the resulting qualities of man (Hennis, 1987: 59–114; Taylor, 1989: 520).

The first part thus focuses on their conceptualization of values and their idea of man. I then discuss the derivation of their interpretations of modernity. Finally, confronting their positions, I analyse critically some crucial affinities as well as why they come to different interpretations on the focal points of modernity.[2]

The Concept of Values and the Idea of Men

The Weberian Kulturmensch

Leo Strauss objected: 'Weber never explained what he understood by values' (Strauss, 1953: 39). This is certainly right but, on the other hand, his whole work is focused on the question of the influence of values on human actions. Weber developed the most systematic concept of values in his methodological writings. The concepts in the *Wissenschaftslehre*, in particular the concept of *Wertfreiheit*, are still among his most controversial discussed writings (see Wagner and Zipprian, 1994). While the methodological discussions of his *Wissenschaftslehre* seem to be never-ending, the implicit anthropological background expressed as the general importance of values for human life and its history is surprisingly marginal in the discussion (except Hennis, 1996; Tenbruck, 1975).

Weber never considered methodology as an end in itself; rather, it was a means to identify some crucial values and their influence on human actions, so that his methodology is based on the very idea of man. The most famous mention of values is expressed in his dictum of *Wertfreiheit* (value freedom). For cultural sciences it means that all knowledge and the selection of scientific topics are inevitably value-oriented (Weber, 1949a/1917: 14) but within the value-oriented framework all research has to be *wertfrei* (value-free). This claim premises the distinction of *Werturteil (*value judgement) and *Wertbeziehung* (value relevance). Acknowledging the infinite qualitative and quantitative multiplicity of the world, value relevance includes phenomena which are 'important' (qualitative) for human life and 'regular' (quantitative) in a certain historical period (Weber, 1949b/1904: 72–82), so that value relevance has to understand the significant values and has to show their effects on actions (Weber, 1949c/1906: 150). Since the truth of values can never be decided scientifically, (Weber, 1949a/1917: 12–22), the cultural sciences have to abstain from value judgements. In other words, value freedom implies being aware of the crucial values of a certain culture in order to abstain from them. Value freedom presents a 'scientific righteousness' of a 'discursive tilt-yard' in cultural sciences 'so that the epochal genius can be established as lodestar of all cultural significance in an unbridgeable struggle of the last values' (Peukert, 1989: 25, my translation; see also Weber, 1980a/1895: 12–17).

Weber derives four general tasks for cultural sciences from the complex meaning of values: (1) causal explanations (*Erklären*); (2) understanding

(*Verstehen*) of significant configurations; (3) historical understanding and explanation of these significant configurations; and (4) 'prediction of possible future constellations' (Weber, 1949b/1904: 75–6). While points (1) and (4) correspond to the claims of nomological approaches, (2) and (3) are obviously related to the methods of interpretative streams in social science:

> The *significance* of a configuration of cultural phenomena and the basis of this significance cannot however be derived and rendered intelligible by a system of analytical laws . . ., however perfect it may be, *since the significance of cultural events presupposes a value-orientation towards these events*. The concept of culture is a *value-concept*. Empirical reality becomes 'culture' to us because and insofar as we relate it to value ideas . . . We cannot discover, however, what is meaningful to us by means of a 'presuppositionless' investigation of empirical data. Rather perception of its meaningfulness to us is the presupposition of its becoming an object of investigation. (Weber, 1949b/1904: 75–6, emphasis added)

Wertideen (value ideas) are the starting point which constitute life and thus scientific research. Weber's claim of value orientation of cultural sciences makes sense only if values have such a far-reaching meaning to man.

Weber has given some clues to his value-oriented anthropology in his methodological writings. Why do cultural sciences analyse values and their consequences for actions? Because human beings are *Kulturmenschen* (cultural beings); this means they are:

> . . . endowed with the capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend *significance*. Whatever this significance may be, it will lead us to judge certain phenomena of human existence in its light and to respond to them as being (positively or negatively) meaningful. Whatever may be the content of this attitude – these phenomena have a cultural significance for us and on this significance alone rests its scientific interest. (Weber, 1949b/1904: 81)

Man is an interpreting and judging being, giving the social world and himself a meaning; he is characterized by the 'desire of meaning' (Chowers, 1995: 124). This also concerns scientists; they are interested in certain topics because they are cultural beings; they are interested in topics affecting their culture.

This anthropological determination of man becomes even clearer in 'The social psychology of the world religions' (Weber, 1991a/1913). There, Weber emphasizes his pragmatic interest in human values and his interest in the 'practical impulses of action' having emerged out of religious values (1991a/1913: 267). Still, the pragmatic aspects of values and ideas are connected and only intelligible to the anthropological background of the cultural being, since the significance of values consists of the meaningful creation of the world. Actions get intelligible and can be grasped scientifically from the background of an actively created culture:

> Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest . . . Behind them always lies a stand towards something in the actual world which is

> experienced as specifically 'senseless'. Thus, the demand has been implied: that world order in its totality is, could, and should somehow be a meaningful 'cosmos'. (Weber, 1991a/1913: 280–81; see also Hall, 1993: 48–52)

Weber's determination of man as a sense-creating (*sinnstiftendes*) being, and its anthropological connotations,[3] lead to a social philosophy *cum* empirical research. The main task of this remains the demonstration of the consistency and the consequences of ideas, but its primary objective is to illuminate and understand the basic ideas and values 'for which men either really or allegedly struggle', and that is the task of social philosophy (Weber, 1949b/1904: 54).

If one wants to identify a meta-project of Weber which holds all the different parts together, in particular his empirical research, what could it be but the attempt to understand and to articulate the crucial values of a certain period and their influences on man? Weber's entire work is the ecumenical attempt to link together the dimension of understanding with the causal consequences for human actions underpinned by empirical historical research.

The Taylorian Self-Interpreting Animal

While Weber's anthropological concept of values is to a great extent implicit, Taylor's value approach is an explicit part of his anthropological hermeneutics of what, in particular, it means to be a modern human being (Taylor, 1985b: 1).

First of all, Taylor refuses all biological determinations (e.g. his critique of behaviourism, [Taylor, 1964]). To be a human being is irreducibly characterized as being able to transcend the biological limits. Taylor (1993a), following the Heideggerian dictum of *being-in-the-world*, argues that human beings are already situated in a certain context of cultural meanings; they are embedded in a web of pre-existing and preinterpreting cultural significance. Such *intersubjective meanings* (Taylor, 1971), which are the result of historically formed self-interpretations, are an inevitable precondition that human beings have as a common basis of all understanding. Moreover, intersubjective meanings constitute and express things which are important and valuable for a certain community. These self-interpretations are embedded in actions and institutions (*common meanings*: see Rosa, 1998: 260–71; Taylor, 1971). It does not mean that human beings are over-socialized; but it claims that they never simply choose their values out of the infinity of possibilities (Taylor, 1985c/1979). All interactions already presuppose a pre-existing reference point for actions, so that:

> . . . the analysis of the collective–social self-interpretation, which is the essential condition of the genuine understanding of historical and cultural processes of transformation and of the cultural–historical conditionality of a given social reality, has to begin on the level of social meanings which are embodied within the social life of the community. (Rosa, 1998: 263, my translation)

Epistemologically speaking, Taylor's scientific access to human actions maintains a holistic approach.

Taylor specifies his understanding on a phenomenological background: while

human beings are always embedded in certain intersubjective meanings, it is still human beings who reinterpret and change meanings. His analysis of human feelings and expressions stresses that we are always in an eternal process of self-understanding:

> . . . our feelings always incorporate certain articulations; while just because they do so they open us on to a domain of imports which call for further articulations. The attempt to articulate further is potentially a life-time process. At each stage, what we feel is a function of what we have already articulated and evokes the puzzlement and perplexities which further understanding may unravel. But whether we want to take the challenge or not, whether we seek the truth or take refuge in illusion, our self-(mis)understanding shapes what we feel. This is the sense in which man is a self-interpreting animal. (Taylor, 1985d/1977: 65)

At this point, the meaning of values becomes very important for Taylor's anthropology. First, values are constitutive of human life because human life is basically teleological, meaning that it is always orientated towards basic goods. Secondly, human beings assess their life by qualitative language distinctions (good vs. bad, etc.); our whole language is almost always penetrated and constituted by moral judgements (Rosa, 1996; Taylor, 1985e/1980). Human beings are undoubtedly restricted by biological and unreflected desires (*first-order volitions*), but to be a human being is characterized by the ability to comment and to order desires, to choose what is really important (*second-order volitions*: Taylor, 1985c/1979; 1989: 25–52). Moral comments as strong evaluations determine goods (values) which motivate our personal and collective life. Strong evaluations create a 'meaningful cosmos' (Weber, 1991a/1913: 28) by forming highly regarded goods to which personal and collective identities are orientated; they are 'exaltations' on a 'moral landscape' (Taylor, 1989: 30; see also Anderson, 1994, 1996; Joas, 1997: 200–208; Rosa, 1998: 112–16).

Importantly, as they interpret their world by active evaluations, human beings create and change meanings and values. Thus, the intention of Taylor's historical analysis of the modern western world becomes clear. On the one hand, he tries to show which basic goods western societies are based on,[4] and on the other, he analyses how human beings reinterpret their common goods in relation to the pre-existing moral frame. Taylor asks for 'an interpretation of the identity (or of any cultural phenomenon which interests us) which will show why people found (or find) it convincing/inspiring/moving, which will identify what can be called the, "idées-forces" it contains' (Taylor, 1989: 203).

Taylor does not argue for a simplistic version of idealism. His hermeneutic holism even maintains that ideas are already situated in unreflected/unarticulated social practices. The reflecting and evaluating process of the constitution of personal and social identities articulates these unexpressed ideas. These ideas, again, motivate action and, finally, reinterpret basic practices:

> The basic relation is that ideas articulate practices as patterns of dos and don'ts. That is, the ideas frequently arise from attempts to formulate and bring to some conscious expression the underlying rationale of the patterns . . . A pattern can exist just in the

dos and don'ts that people accept and mutually enforce, without there being (yet) an explicit rationale . . . If we articulate any rationale at all, it *must* involve an interpretation of current practice; it *may* also be projecting something new and untried. (Taylor, 1989: 204–5; see also Taylor, 1983).

Taylor confines his historical analysis within this dialectical process between ideas and practices, because what he wants is only to *articulate* 'people's self-interpretation and their vision of the good' (Taylor, 1989: 205). He does not refuse causal explanations between ideas and practices but he investigates some crucial ideas such as those that have become constitutive and significant for modern identities and have gained *Kulturbedeutung* for modern man.

Taylor's holism and his analysis of the moral sources imply a special understanding of scientific inquiry. Since human beings as self-interpreting animals articulate and interpret the world in an evaluating language, every analysis in the science of man has to be aware of this; it has to take seriously the evaluating self-interpretations. An analysis which leaves the frame of meanings given by evaluating self-interpretations neglects the context of cultural significances which are important for a certain culture – that means the B(est)-A(ccount) principle of Taylor (Taylor, 1989: 58). Reducing human agents to universal naturalistic qualities and neglecting the certain moral framework of action 'would be tantamount to stepping outside what we would recognize as integral, that is, undamaged human personhood' (Taylor, 1989: 27). Every scientific framework necessarily refers to certain human desires and goods. Every framework therefore represents a part of possible human goods: 'establishing a given framework restricts the range of value positions which can be defensibly adopted' (Taylor, 1967: 56–7). And finally, 'the framework . . . distribute[s] the onus of argument in a certain way. It is thus not neutral' (pp. 56–7).

Confronting Weber and Taylor

Both Weber and Taylor turn against a positivistic and naturalistic determination of man. While Taylor maintains the active dimension of interpretation against a reductionist view of man and rationality, Weber was highly sceptical about the possibilities of naturalism and biologism in social science as well as about a reductionist concept of rationality (Weber, 1924a/1910: 456–62; 1949b/1904: 87–9; see also Hennis, 1987: 203–205). Taylor and Weber, rather, claim that every concept of man has to consider that human beings are characterized by the ability of sense giving, of creating common *cultural significance*. Actors not only reflect their cultural backgrounds, but also comment upon, reinterpret and extend them.

The world-interpreting importance of values becomes a main part of both Weber's and Taylor's historical analyses, since evaluating judgements of the common world arrange the possibly infinite experiences. This theme is particularly reflected in Weber's idea of the 'theodicy of suffering' as a quasi-universal leitmotif of world religions (Weber, 1991a/1913: 273–7; see also Chowers, 1995: 131–6) and in Taylor's (1989) investigation into the fundamental value change

of modern selfhood. Thus Taylor's self-interpreting animal carries on from Weber's anthropology of the cultural being 'with capacity and the will to take a deliberate attitude towards the world and to lend with significance' (Weber, 1949b/1904: 81).

Both Taylor's and Weber's thoughts go beyond a simple application of idealism. Whereas Taylor emphasizes the dialectical relationship between practices and ideas, Weber 'aims at those intermediate levels in which collective mentalities become relevant for everyday behaviour and life conduct, in which the material interests and the ideal world-views become arranged' (Peukert, 1989: 32, my translation).

In spite of the strong affinities, the differences are obvious as well. The first difference concerns the area of responsibility of cultural sciences. While Weber formulates four tasks for cultural sciences, Taylor pursues only two of them: understanding of significant *Kulturbedeutungen*; and their historical genealogies. But he does not misjudge the importance of causal explanations because 'any insight we might have into the diachronic–causal genesis of an idea will help us to identify its spiritual centre of gravity' (Taylor, 1989: 203).[5] Here, their approaches do not contradict each other. Taylor, rather, fulfils the dimensions of (historical) *Verstehen* and thus follows Weber's demands on social philosophy (Weber, 1949b/1904: 53–4). Taylor's project is therefore benevolently described as:

> . . . bringing up to the threshold of explanatory theories . . . [by] a hermeneutical intermediate stage in which the sense of values can be grasped, helping the explanation to an adequacy of the subject . . . [and] integrating the explanation as a whole in the valuing framework of a comprehensive interpretation of the history and the present again. (Joas, 1997: 214, my translation)

Yet the articulation of the *idées forces* or cultural meanings also implies the problematical assumption that these ideas have had a crucial influence on human actions. At this point, Taylor himself gives no indication of how one can transform the level of articulation towards the sociologically useful dimension of explanation. Articulation is a necessary preliminary stage but not a sufficient condition for every social science analysis.

The second difference can be reduced to the contrast between moral realism and value polytheism/decisionism. Taylor as an avowed moral realist emphasizes the moral embedding of human beings. Since every human being is situated in a certain context of meanings, nobody can simply 'choose' his/her own values; rather, that there is always already 'something so basic and inescapable to us as a sense of identity depends on taking some goods seriously' (Taylor, 1994a: 206). This kind of moral realism means neither a metaphysical value realism of eternally fixed values nor a scientific provability of values. Rather, *inescapability* is most important, as it expresses the fact that our personal and collective identities are inevitably aligned with certain (but changeable) goods. In other words, human life is only conceivable within a contextual horizon of motivational values (see also Simmel, 1957/1918).

Weber's concept is highly ambiguous. On the one hand, his concept of *cultural significance* indicates the importance of intersubjective meanings as an unavoidable value horizon. On the other hand, Weber also suggests that human beings finally have to choose within the infinity of values (Weber, 1949a/1917: 18). This does not only imply that values are subjected to an individual self-decision within the 'polytheism of values' (decisionism); it also leads, consequently, to the Nietzschean idea that values become a matter of individual self-creation and self-cultivation. A Taylorian perspective could not accept even this, because it suggests that values can be chosen at will.

Does Weber contradict himself here? On the one hand, he seems fully aware that individual actions can only be described meaningfully in consideration of a frame of cultural significance; on the other, he is willing, following Nietzsche, to proclaim that choices of modern individuals can only be based on subjectively created values. One is confronted here with two different questions: (1) the meaning of Weber's anthropological starting point; and (2) the results of his historical analysis.

First, can Weber's concept of cultural significance unproblematically be subordinated to value decisionism and methodological individualism? Although Weber sometimes suggested it, his individualism is not a methodological individualism by scientific practice. Following Taylor, there is a crucial difference, namely between ontological issues and advocacy issues: 'The ontological questions concern what you recognize as the factors you will invoke to account for social life . . . they concern the terms you accept as ultimate in order of explanation . . . Advocacy issues concern the moral stand of policy one adopts' (Taylor, 1995a/1989: 181–2; see also Pettit, 1993: 172–93). In application to Weber it means that he indeed considers individual actions but always in the context of certain cultural significance. Cultural sciences have to identify what is 'significant for us'; they have to understand institutions in their cultural conditionality and not deduce the 'institutions from psychological laws or explain them by elementary psychological phenomena' (Weber, 1949b/1904: 88–9). Such an argument cannot simply be reduced to pure methodological individualism which 'believe[s] that, in the order of explanation, you can and ought to account for social actions, structures, and conditions in terms of properties of the constituent individuals' (Taylor, 1995a/1989: 181). The Weberian understanding of individual actions obviously presupposes grasping the basic intersubjective meanings because Weber 'believes – despite him conceding the possibility of the individualistic method for the analysis of natural phenomena – that the reference to the society (that means the relations between human beings) is essential for the demarcation of the historical and social sciences' (Rossi, 1994: 212, my translation). Although Weber demands the causal attribution of action in his 'individualistic method', he always already presupposes the investigation into the embedded 'meaning-complex of action' (Weber, 1978b/1921: 13). It follows that his social ontology is undoubtedly penetrated by holistic elements, since his interests in cultural significance aim for the socio-historical context of individual actions and its relation to the intersubjective *Wertbezogenheit*: 'it is only this analysis itself which can achieve

the sociological understanding of the actions of the typically differentiated human individuals, and which hence constitutes the specific function of sociology'; in other words it is 'placing the act in an intelligible and more inclusive context of meaning' (Weber, 1978b/1921: 18, 8). Weber's concept of instrumental rationality, for example, which has often been interpreted as the individualistic source of his thought, is embedded in a holistic horizon of intersubjective meanings; it is supported by a set of meaningful institutions, such as Roman law, the Protestant ethic, utilitarianism, individualism and capitalism.[6]

Weber's individualism is, nevertheless, indisputable, but it belongs to Taylor's second category: the advocacy issue. If this consideration is right, Weber's individualism would belong to Taylor's interpretation of Wilhelm von Humboldt and John Stuart Mill: 'They represent a trend of thought that is fully aware of the (ontological) social embedding of human agents, but at the same time, prizes liberty and individual differences very highly' (Taylor, 1995a/1989: 185). That would also confirm Hennis's thesis of Weber's 'peculiar individualism', which is much more concerned with normative and educational than with methodological questions (Hennis, 1986: 211–12; 1996: 93–113).

Secondly, the question of value polytheism/decisionism needs addressing. The basic difference in this is not a methodological but a historical one. For Weber the decay of a common cultural continuum is a historical fact and, at the same time, a focal point for his thought (Peukert, 1989: 22). Weber has even diagnosed historically that cultural meanings in modernity such as Protestantism have disintegrated and disenchanted a common moral framework and have left behind a polytheism of values. Following Nietzsche, he was convinced that modernity is characterized by irreconcilably conflicting value spheres. The individual is not only called to choose between values himself; the cultivation of values is also devolved upon his individual responsibility.

Taylor, by contrast, answers existentially: being embedded in a moral framework means that certain limits of existing values cannot simply be overstepped; they are constitutive for us. Overstepping would mean moving in an unintelligible sphere. There is no question for him that modernity brought out conflicting values and demands, but these conflicts are nevertheless still embedded within an 'inevitable framework'. Taylor criticizes along these lines the liberal and postmodern thought which has picked up Weberian ideas of the deconstruction of common goods, of unbridgeable value spheres and of the individual self-creation of values, and transformed them into 'language games' (see Turner, 1990). He argues that these streams are a self-deception because they suppress the fact that their thought is still orientated towards a certain 'horizon of significance': highly regarded goods such as autonomous individuality, individual creativity and rights, pluralism, separation, privacy and individual choice. Taylor claims that this thought remains within an inevitable moral framework, and he vehemently insists on such a 'common cultural continuum' (Taylor, 1989: 487–90, 504; 1991: 67–9).

A different understanding of science follows from this point. For Weber, the decay of a cultural continuum of values is the inevitable precondition that allows

one to desist from value judgements and to create 'ideal types' at all. Value-free and 'ideal typical' science becomes a privileged realm to bridge, grasp and over-look the dissolved continuum, and recreate a rational, regulated 'discursive tilt-yard' (Peukert, 1989: 25). The Weberian science is an existential choice of values (value freedom), methodologically cultivated for a special ethic and life conduct (Weber, 1949b/1904: 111–12; 1991b/1919; see also Peukert, 1989: 16–26). For Taylor, on the contrary, there is no existential difference between science and life (see also Simmel, 1957/1918: 59–60). He, rather, claims that both scientific knowledge and life are always situated in a certain moral framework, so that every approach in the human sciences necessarily prefers and supports certain values.[7]

This difference between Weber and Taylor cannot be overcome by methodo-logical considerations. Here are two conflicting interpretations of modernity: Weber highlights the fragmentation of a common horizon of values, starting with the assumption of a framework of values through his concept of 'cultural signifi-cance', from where individual action has to be understood. Taylor's existential position is quite close to Gadamer's concept of prejudice, because 'long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live' (Gadamer, 1975/1960: 245).

The methodological consequences of this, which furthermore keeps social thought in suspense, must be in abeyance. Rather, the crucial point, as will be shown now, lies in the different analyses of modernity.

The *Kulturbedeutungen* and Hypergoods of Modern Man

The analyses of modernity of both Weber and Taylor have indeed been sufficiently discussed. The focus of this comparison, however, is to discuss some points of agreement and conflict, the more so as they share a similar starting point. This becomes particularly clear in Weber's ambiguous attitude towards the cultural significance of *rationalization* and its consequences. Discussing it, one can argue that Taylor continues Weber's ambiguous interpretation of modernity but supplements it.

Weber: Rationalization contra Ethical Authenticity

For Weber, the most important cultural significance in western modernity culmi-nates in the rationalization of all spheres of living. But 'rationalism may mean very different things'; it can mean scientific rationality as 'an increasing theoreti-cal mastery of reality by means of increasingly precise and abstract concepts' or economic–instrumental rationality as a 'methodical attainment of a definitely given and practical end by means of an increasingly precise calculation of adequate means' (Weber, 1991a/1913: 293). These and other variants of ration-ality have their forerunners in the rationalization of religion in Ancient Judaism or the rationalization of legality in Roman law (Weber, 1952/1920; 1978b/1921:

1464). So there is not a single source of modern rationality. The rationalization of the conduct of everyday life, however, the 'systematic arrangement . . . to a civic and methodological way of life', really is modern. And 'this was all-important' (Weber, 1920/1915–19: 524) because only by penetrating everyday life did it gain such cultural significance.

The prototype of this development is the Protestant ethic. It cultivated and established rationalization as methodologically penetrating conduct in everyday life: through the affirmation of ordinary life within production and reproduction; through the conception of the calling; by awarding the 'religious sanction of organized worldly labour'; through 'a pharisaically good conscience in the acquisition of money'; and through worldly asceticism (Weber, 1920/1915–19: 512–36; 1958/1905: 83, 155–83). The Protestant ethic was certainly not the founder but was, unintentionally, a significant promoter of modern capitalism and its instrumental rationality. Even more than that, modern science, individualism, liberalism and modern democratic elements were also promoted by the Protestant ethic and its connection to Cartesian philosophy and utilitarianism, its individual freedom for God (inner-world individualism) and its foundation of free associations (believers' churches: see Weber, 1958/1905: 105, 118, 224, 249, 265–6; 1978a/1906: 282; 1991c/1915).

The religious and individualist sources of rationalization paradoxically already contained irrational moments, so the further developments of rationalization turned into the 'paradox of effect towards the will' (Weber, 1920/1915–19: 524). The consequences became independent of their religious motivations. Separated from the religious motivations, individualism as the freedom for God after the death of God or capitalism as the freedom of economic associations after the standardization of production change into uniformity; that is, 'standardization, stricture and orientation of consciousness, action and destiny of actors: schematisation of leading a life' (Weber, 1978b/1921: 956). The irrationality of rationalization thus consists of the religious origin of the 'disenchantment of the world' (1958/1905: 221) and in the turn from the extension of individual freedom into the 'iron cage' of rationalization: politics and science tend to bureaucracy and specialization ruled by 'specialists without spirit', aesthetics and ethics are dominated by 'sensualists without heart'; and free economic associations are replaced by standardization and centralization; or, in Weber's apocalyptic words, 'Everywhere, the casing of the new serfdom is ready' and 'make[s] the masses docile' (Weber, 1978a/1906: 281; Scaff, 1989: 228–32).

But Weber's attitude to this development is very ambivalent and paradoxical. On the one hand, he vehemently affirms rationalization and its consequences as scientific insight. From this point of view, for example, charisma, Weber's eternal source of individualistic and creative action and his counterweight against rational legal authority, loses its motivational inspiration because of the totally penetrating power of rationalization:

Every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material

interests: every hour of its existence brings it nearer to this end . . . Thus, discipline inexorably takes over ever larger areas as the satisfaction of political and economic needs is increasingly rationalized. This universal phenomenon more and more restricts the importance of charisma and individual differentiated conduct. (Weber, 1978b/1921: 1120, 1156; see also Mommsen, 1974/1965).

There seems no serious power able to resist it. Consequently, Weber criticized all those romantic streams in his time (from *Lebensphilosophie*, socialism and anarchism to alternative life forms: Weber, 1964/1907: 644–8; 1978c/1918) which tried to escape the 'impersonal forces' of rationalization, which did not 'set to work and meet the demands of the day' and which were 'not to be able to countenance the stern seriousness' (Weber, 1991b/1919: 156, 149).

On the other hand, Weber looked again and again for individualist possibilities of escape.[8] Evidence of this can be seen in his scattered residual concepts and ethical confessions, from value freedom, the admiration for the Jewish prophets, charismatic leaders and inventors in politics and the economy, to esteem for individual responsibility, authenticity, autonomy and democracy. This becomes impressively clear in two powerful notes from his political writings:

In the view of this [casing of the new serfdom] those who live in constant anxiety lest there might in the future be *too much* 'democracy' and 'individualism' in the world, and too little 'authority', 'aristocracy' and 'respect' of office or the like, may take heart: all too much care has been taken to make sure that the trees of democratic individualism do not grow to the skies . . . the only question to be asked is: how are all these things, in general and in the long term, *possible* where it prevails? (Weber, 1978a/1921: 282)

The central question . . . is not how to support and accelerate this trend [rationalization] ever further, but rather what we have to put up resistance to this machinery in order to preserve a remnant of humankind from this fragmentation of the soul, from this absolute control of bureaucratic ideals of life. (Weber, 1924b/1910: 414, my translation)

Weber obviously wanted to keep free a sphere of individual self-responsibility. However, how this could have been possible in view of his scientific insight of increasing rationalization? There is not only a paradox in the process of rationalization, but also, as Löwith, Stauth and Turner, and Haferkamp have suggested, there is a paradox in Weber's work. While Löwith emphasized that the 'contradiction . . . between the recognition of a rationalized world and the countertendency towards freedom for self-responsibility was the motive force in Weber's whole behavior' (Löwith, 1993/1932: 77, translation altered), Stauth and Turner demonstrate the contradiction between Weber's admiration of professional ethics and intellectualism towards the 'disenchantment of world' and *Zweckrationalität* and his 'unfractured disgust for the *Fachmensch* and *Ressortpartrioten* . . . and the general disillusionment of reality' (Stauth and Turner, 1986: 84, 92, my translation). Haferkamp, finally, makes clear that Weber's theory of action, based on the creative sense-giving by active individuals, is undone by his prognosis of uniformity (Haferkamp, 1989: 472–4). It is not only the case that Weber's thesis

of uniformity and the decrease of individuality in modernity can be doubted empirically, his concept is also oddly incoherent.

First of all, Weber's scientific concept of rationalization banishes his anthropological concept of the creative sense-giving subject, his original starting point, into an ethical attitude (Reckling, 1998: 6–9). Claiming the all-penetrating impersonal power of rationalization and its uniform consequences, charisma, subjectivism, authenticity and alternative life forms must necessarily appear either as romantic idealism or as ethical and normative demands. Koch's argument is right: 'Weber's conclusions were more pessimistic about the fate of the human being in a rationalizing culture. On this point Weber was clearly closer to the perspective of the "Sturm and Drang" ' (Koch, 1993: 136). And it is also right that his anthropology and his dimension of *Verstehen* are deeply penetrated by the humanistic ideas of romanticism. But it becomes more unintelligible exactly for the reason why Weber could not integrate it into his scientific analysis of modernity. Koch's further remark that Weber 'sought a synthesis that would explain both the rational process of human understanding and the emotional commitments that he defined as essential components of human personality' (Koch, 1993: 125) is certainly reasonable in view of his anthropological starting point and his ethical attitudes, but it becomes contradictory in view of his scientific thesis of rationalization. If Weber had merely undermined his anthropological starting point by his assumption of the uniform consequences of rationalization, it would indeed only mean empirical evidence against the durability of his anthropology. But already there were numerous opposing developments, from Romanticism, *Lebensphilosophie*, Socialism and Expressionism to erotic and alternative life forms (see Bendix, 1971; Whimster, 1987), not forgetting the illuminating works of his colleague, Simmel. Weber, however, had no scientific concept that could include and grasp all these forms of charisma, creativity, authenticity and individualism, which had already become important in his lifetime. Personally and ethically, he could admire these signs of individuality and hope for charismatic and responsible people who could break through the 'iron cage', go beyond the 'last man' and expect a new re-enchantment in the future (Weber, 1978a/1906: 278–82; 1980b/1918: 351–69; 1980c/1919: 498–501). Scientifically, he had no alternative but to confront all these forms of escape with their naive demands and their inherent anti-modernism, and to diagnose the decline of charisma in view of the most dominant cultural significance of modernity: rationalization (Löwith, 1993: 123–4; Weiß, 1987).

Were and are these forms of escaping unreal and anti-modern as they turn against the inevitability of rationalization? Did Weber overemphasize the domination of rationalization and did he neglect the inherent contrariness and plurality of modernity? At this stage, these questions become an explicit part of Taylor's thought.

Taylor: The Naturalist and Expressivist Dimension of Modernity

Despite Taylor's confusing and overlapping use of motivating goods (life goods, constitutive goods and hypergoods: see Rosa, 1998: 110–26), he identifies two major moral sources (in the sense of Weberian 'ideal types': Taylor, 1994b: 215) which are very significant and motivating for modern man: naturalism and expressivism (1989: 495–6).[9] Applying Taylor's moral sources to Weber's paradox, (1) it can be understood why Weber's concept of rationalization tends to such an inevitability and undermines his anthropological starting point, and (2) it can be shown that Taylor's concept is able to mitigate the Weberian paradox.

Taylor's term, 'naturalism', has two kinds of meaning. On the one hand, it is an epistemological system of ideas in human science, orientated to the methods of natural science, which all share the objectivation of human affairs through neutral observation (scientism). Neglecting the moral self-interpretations, human agencies become described by objectified properties (reductionism). On the other hand, naturalism is much more important as a conglomeration of different highly regarded goods describing crucial moral aspirations and motivations of modern man. It consists of such self-interpretations as 'disengaged reason and subject' and the 'affirmation of ordinary life',[10] arising especially from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, which have shaped a modern moral landscape with certain practices, institutions and life forms.

Taylor's use of the term 'ordinary life' corresponds to some crucial insights of Weber's Protestant ethic because 'ordinary life . . . designate[s] those aspects of human life concerned with production and reproduction, that is, labour, the making of the things needed for life, and our life as sexual beings, including marriage and the family' (Taylor, 1989: 211; see also Weber, 1991c/1915: 331–3, 343–50). A highly regarded ordinary life gets close to the 'disengaged reason' which describes an instrumental attitude to the world. Such an individual is therefore attributed as a 'disengaged subject'. It is the ideal of the atomistic self as promoted by philosophers from Hobbes to those of the Enlightenment. This individual should be liberated from all pre-existing and traditional social bounds and ought to be a self-responsible, self-interested, rational and autonomic subject by nature but not by social relations (Taylor, 1985g/1979; 1989: 191–8, 305–67; 1991; 1995b/1987: 7–8).[11] All these evaluating self-interpretations as inspirational moral goods together formed part of a modern 'horizon of significance' reflected in the constitution of social practices and institutions. They originated from a number of highly regarded goods which slowly changed the western intersubjective perception of the world. Consequently, the naturalist paradigm generated and supported a certain understanding of the individual, social relations and society. They are explicitly expressed in numerous modern political theories of liberalism and utilitarianism (Taylor has summarized it heuristically as the L(ocke)-stream of modern civil society: see Taylor, 1993b). They are, furthermore, embodied implicitly in many dominant everyday life practices and institutions: in the demands of individual rights, justice and the pursuit of happiness;

in the selfish and self-satisfied individual; in the market and consumption society; in the contract-based social relations; and in the division between the public and private spheres.

For Taylor, the major problem of the naturalistic paradigm is the persistent repression of moral dependencies because 'disengagement brings about an objectification of self and world, which presents them as neutral domains open to control. But the more they appear in this light, the more we occlude the constitutive goods that provide our moral sources' (Taylor, 1989: 553). Taylor illustrates that the epistemological foundations of naturalism must necessarily deny their moral motivations. All phenomena, from market society, individual rights, freedom and autonomy to economic laws, are no longer grasped as self-interpretations but appear as natural and objectified discoveries (Taylor, 1991: 93–108). A performative self-contradiction of naturalism follows from this because:

> [these] theories implicitly presuppose what they explicitly deny, namely the validity or valence of substantial goods . . . the naturalistic practices and institutions are not perceived as expression of a certain self-interpretation and a concept of good but as neutral institutions which are governed by outer inherent necessities. And where the consequences of modernity become perceived as negative, they [practices and institutions] tend to become an 'iron cage'. (Rosa, 1998: 346–7, my translation)

The problem of naturalism is not that there is no intersubjective framework in practice; rather, the framework has become debased, distorted and suppressed by thought (Taylor, 1989: 10). Where social phenomena are separated from their motivational moral sources, the consequences do appear not as a suggestible result of human self-interpretations and actions but as impersonal social constraints. While naturalistic streams are inevitably based on certain moral motivations, they cannot renew or stimulate these sources. But if human life, on the one hand, is constituted and motivated by evaluating judgements (Taylor, 1989: 516), and if social phenomena, on the other, are conceptualized as brute facts, naturalism that neglects its moral sources becomes a self-destructive process because then human beings tend to experience their social environment as alienated (Taylor, 1985h/1982).

The naturalist stream is only one side of the Taylorian modernity. He conceptualizes a second, counter- or conflicting paradigm using the term 'expressivism'. This moral source was originally rooted in Romanticism and arose in particular as an intellectual criticism of the Cartesian disengagement, and of Kantian universal reason and ethics. Taylor's key figure (among forerunners such as Augustinus, Shaftesbury and Rousseau and successors such as Hamann, Goethe, Schiller and Humboldt) is Herder (Taylor, 1995c/1991).

Expressivism argues against the one-sided view of man as a rational and atomistic being because, for the expressivist view, the crucial moral source lies in the deep inwardness of human feelings and emotions, which become 'expressed' through language, gestures or art, and thereby fulfil the individual and common nature. Here, the moral source is an inner voice, a creative imagination of the individual or of the community which has to be articulated (Taylor, 1989: 368–90).

Expressivism, in contrast to naturalism, describes the individual as embedded and situated in a greater, morally inspiring unity (God, nature, cosmos, community). This unity is not given and stable as it was in premodern societies; rather, the individual is called to establish such a unity through his creative imagination.

Taylor's most important point is, however, that the expressivist movement and its ideal of authenticity are not even an anti-modern attitude; on the contrary, they are a very influential cultural significance of modernity in its idea 'that each one of us has an original path which we ought to tread; they lay the obligation on each of us to live up to our originality' (Taylor, 1989: 375).

Referring to the paraphrase of expressivist authenticity as 'creation and construction as well as discovery [and] originality' and as 'openness to horizons of significance and a self-definition in dialogue' (Taylor, 1991: 66), Taylor finally investigates the practical influences and effects of expressivism. Expressivist forms of life, of course, have their origins in the intellectual and bourgeois sphere, in different streams of art, literature and philosophy, from *Lebensphilosophie*, futurism and expressionism to critical theory, deconstruction, postmodernity and communitarianism;[12] but also have, to a certain degree, penetrated everyday life in the twentieth century. These forms of life have in common the refusal of the instrumentalization of all spheres of life. Leading an authentic life, searching for original expressions and living in harmony with higher sources (nature, family, community) are the common landmarks of expressivism. All these forms, including their destructive sides, from the erotic, the aesthetic and the political to environmental movements, are penetrated by these ideas. The idea of an expressive and authentic fulfilment of personal and collective life is nowadays a common landmark in western societies. It concerns the culture of adventures in leisure time, sports, sex, fashion or local and regional political movements, etc. (for empirical research based on Taylor's concept, see Gibbins and Reimer, 1995: 317–32).

Weber, Taylor and the Conflicts of Modernity

Discussing the conflict between naturalism and expressivism, Taylor writes suggestively that 'His [Weber's theory of modernity] is one of the most profound and insightful, in my view, not less because it has lively sense of the conflict among goods. But even Weber, under the influence of a subjectivist interpretation of Nietzsche, has no place for this exploration' (Taylor, 1989: 512). This notion hints exactly at my point. Weber was fully aware of these kinds of conflict, which Taylor describes as expressivism vs. naturalism. Although he could grasp scientifically and systematically the naturalist moral roots, in particular through the Protestant ethic and its paradoxical consequences, he could not adequately describe the other, the expressivist side of modernity. In the view of the totality of rationalization his scientific approach rather obstructs any expressivist understanding. As his anthropology of the cultural being derives the concept of rationalization from the evaluating self-interpretations of man, Weber relies on

an open concept of action emphasizing the motivational status of values. Here, Weber is far from the context-less and disengaged epistemology of naturalism. Yet, in the one-sided overemphasis on the naturalistic paradigm (affirmation of ordinary life, disengaged reason and subject) as collective self-interpretation and on the cultural significance of modernity, Weber comes near to abolishing his concept of the *Kulturmensch*.

First, within the coercion of the outer impersonal constraints of rationalization and the inner polytheism of values, the motivational power of values becomes nearly powerless, since 'if the world of the cultural being is irreconcilably fissured by the absolute polytheism of values, the value relevances also decay, which are those by which we meaningfully constitute what is 'worthy of being known', because it is culturally meaningful' (Peukert, 1989: 19, my translation).

Secondly, he obstructs the possibility of a scientific integration of these expressivist goods, which he admired normatively. There is indeed a deep sense of the expressivist background of modernity in Weber, and there is a strong will to reject all the irremediable necessities of developments in modernity which, nowadays, numerous modernization and globalization theories suggest. Yet he did not translate his normative hope into a social analysis; rather, he merely superseded it in the ethical realm of individual choice and cultivation.

Empirically, Weber's apocalyptic prophecies of uniformity were refuted long ago. On the contrary, expressivist life forms have gained an important cultural significance in our western societies (see, for example, Beck, 1986; Haferkamp, 1989: 471–89; Leinberger and Tucker, 1991). According to Boltanski and Chiapello (1999: 283–90), one can even interpret the *nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, emphasizing individuality, autonomy and creativity, as an adaptation of some expressivist motives. Taylor's expressivist dimension offers an enlarged interpretation of modernity because his concept allows the integration of all these 'Romantic' streams, which were often attributed as irrational and anti-modern in the naturalist view. Taylor hereby delivers an interpretative access to some empirical and normative tensions, such as increasing individualization and the formation of new lifestyle communities, the contradictions between the instrumentalist demands of professional politics and the ideals of authenticity and identification in local, regional and nationalist political movements, and the conflicting demands of professional and personal life, etc.[13]

On the other hand, Taylor's concept of articulation, giving an interpretative access to struggling goods, and to understand the hidden morals behind them, is not able to transfer it into a causal description of action. The articulation of the moral sources is a necessary precondition; however, only a demonstration of how the moral sources really penetrate everyday life, such as Weber carried out, is sufficient for an adequate social science analysis. In other words, Taylor is confronted with the very problem of interpretative thought, namely 'to conceptualize the dialectic between the crystallization of such directive patterns of meaning and the concrete course of social life' (Geertz, 1973: 250). Here lies the enormous attraction of Weber's work: the connection in grasping and ordering

the cultural significances of modern man and showing their influence on actions, and their intentional as well as unintentional consequences.

In conclusion, both Weber and Taylor try to establish a discursive level to analyse and discuss the consequences of values in modernity, to 'lay bare the meaning of evaluations, i.e. their ultimate meaningful structure and their meaningful consequences . . . their place within the totality of all the possible ultimate evaluations and delimit their spheres of meaningful validity' (Weber, 1949a/1917: 18). This includes a warning against overemphasis on a single paradigm (Taylor, 1991: 55–69, 93–108). But, normatively speaking, their thoughts also differ significantly: Taylor, who struggles with the domination of the naturalistic paradigm, finally hopes for higher inspirational sources such as theism to revitalize the moral sources (Taylor, 1985i: 519–20, 1991: 122–35); and Weber, who saw modern society in the inevitable grip of the iron cage, and who hoped for a revitalization of charisma, of responsible individuals and of sources of meaning in particular.

Since one can nowadays notice how the rhetoric of the 'inevitabilities' is penetrating scientific discourse as well as the public sphere, one becomes aware of how up-to-date the concepts of the *Kulturmensch* and the self-interpreting animal are: 'It is utterly ridiculous to suppose that it is an "inevitable" feature of economic development under present-day advanced capitalism . . . that it should have an elective affinity with "democracy" or indeed with "freedom" ' (Weber, 1978a/1906: 282).

Notes

1 References to Weber are very sparse and fragmented in the works of Taylor, mainly because of the dominance of the Parsonian interpretation of Weber in Anglo-Saxon social sciences (e.g. Taylor, 1985a/1973: 122; 1988: 220; 1989: 520).

2 This article does not necessarily aim at adding a new view to the countless interpretations; rather, it considers Weber and his questions from Taylor's point of view, and vice versa.

3 Tenbruck claims charisma (Tenbruck, 1975: 686), Hennis the 'quality of humankind' (Hennis, 1987: 59–117; 1996: 38–42) and Henrich the 'rational being' (Henrich, 1952: 103) as being the anthropological core in Weber's work; but Chowers's notion of the 'homo-hermeneut' (Chowers, 1995: 127) comes very close to my interpretation.

4 Taylor distinguishes between *life goods*, *constitutive goods* and *hypergoods* (Taylor, 1989: 63–73, 91–107). Life goods are certain (instrumental) aims; constitutive goods mean 'to be strongly motivated . . . [non-instrumentally] *loving* something and not just *doing* something' (Taylor, 1989: 534); hypergoods are meta-moral landmarks 'which are not incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighed, judged, decided about' (Taylor, 1989: 63). One could

say that hypergoods present the most significant *Kulturbedeutungen* of a certain culture (see Descombes, 1994; Rosa, 1998: 127).

5   Taylor explicitly refuses any law-like explanations in the sense of the cowering-law model as well as long-term predictions in social science because of the indefinability of human nature and the surprising changes in self-interpretations (Taylor, 1971: 50). At the same time, he does not exclude the possibility of retrospective causal explanations of action, but does not practise them (Taylor, 1989: 209). Weber neglected any general laws and eschewed predictions in his scientific writings (predictions are either in the political writings or are explicit value judgements: see Weber, 1924b/1909: 414; 1958: 182; 1978a/1906: 282). The Weberian 'causality' is better described as a weak causality of 'elective affinities', 'tensions' and not-linear trajectories (Weber, 1968/1910; see also Hall, 1993: 44–8) or as fine-grained retrospective causal explanations of intended as well as unintended consequences of action. Something similar is expressed in Taylor's critique of structuralist and functionalist explanations: 'It is certainly not the case that all patterns issue from conscious action, but all patterns have to be made intelligible in relation to conscious action' (Taylor, 1985f/1984: 171).

6   This is now a crucial problem for rational choice theories because their assumptions are based on an already existing mutual understanding (expectations) of the actors in question, but their individualistic method of self-interest cannot explain where such intersubjective and common understanding comes from (see Yee, 1997). The current enthusiasm of rational choice theorists for the insights of Gary S. Becker or Douglas North that institutions, ideas, values, morality and other ideational factors matter is at the same time an oddity in itself. Nussbaum hits the nail on the head by saying: 'We should not congratulate people for rediscovering something whose predicative importance has already been discovered and convincingly defended by others, if the arguments of those others were publicly available' (Nussbaum, 1997: 1198).

7   Oakes, arguing that value relevance and value judgement could not have been convincingly distinguished by either Rickert or Weber, claims that the concept of value relevance necessarily prefers certain values since value relevance is constituted by value judgements again (Oakes, 1990, 1994).

8   It is quite interesting that Weber had a lot of emotional sympathy for exactly those forms of escape – authenticity, subjectivism and autonomy – which he criticized scientifically: the 'Cosmic Circle'; the romanticism of Gundolf and George; the anarchistic socialism of Toller; the aestheticism of Lucács; the Christian humanism of Tolstoi; and alternative and erotic life forms, including his trips to the anarchistic communities of Ancona (see Green, 1974; Scaff, 1989; Weber, 1975/1926).

9   Taylor also identifies theism as a major moral source, but he concedes that the theistic sources (the Judaeo-Christian horizon and its idea of a monotheistic God) '[have] been scattered, and the sources can now be found on diverse frontiers, including our own powers and nature' (Taylor, 1989: 496). Moreover, by marking out a provisional framework, Taylor does not exclude an extension of his concept of moral sources.

10   While Taylor refuses naturalism as a scientific approach in the science of man, he acknowledges naturalism as a significant moral source of modern identity (Taylor, 1989: 514).

11   Weber himself has already indicated the relationship between Cartesian philosophy, utilitarianism and the Protestant ethic (Weber, 1920/1915–19: 533; 1958/1905: 118, 265–6; 1991c/1915: 347).

12   Note that Taylor's attitude to postmodern streams is highly critical when he argues that this 'negative expressivism' (Rosa, 1998: 362), cultivating a footloose subjectivity

and neglecting its own moral sources, is self-contradictory, like naturalism (Taylor, 1989: 504, 520).

13 Habermas's concept of communicative rationality goes in a similar direction, namely as an explicit critique on both Weber, and Adorno and Horkheimer, and their 'realistic' or 'resigned' interpretations of modernity as irremediably dominated by instrumental rationality.

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■ **Falk Reckling** studied politics and sociology at the universities of Potsdam and Warwick, and was recently visiting researcher at the European University Institute, Florence. At the moment, he is writing a PhD thesis on interpretative and rational choice social theories. He is also working on articles on problems of rational choice theories. *Address*: Universität Potsdam, Lehrstuhl für Politische Theorie, August-Bebel-Str. 89, 14482 Potsdam, Germany. [email: fjreckling@freenet.de]