



Recognize Max Weber's Social Action Theory in Individual Social Transformation

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Abstract

Every individual in his social reality always performs social actions, whether in a state of realization or not, these actions continue to run dynamically along with the dynamics of self-situation with the reality of his life. This paper uses narrative literature review to recognize Max Weber's Social Action Theory. It is found that Weber's social action theory originated from the formation of a cultural tradition of thought by his father and mother as well as the formal formation of his learning process and was certainly influenced by the German historian, philosopher, economist and political theorist Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) as well as influenced by Nietzsche (1844-1900). It is found that social action always has motives (Intention) and meaning (Meaning) directed to others and to oneself. Transformational social action can be rational which he calls instrumental rationality and value rationality. As well as being Non-Rational. He called it Affection-oriented social action and Traditional Orientation.

Keywords: Understanding, Max Weber, Theory of Social Action

Introduction

There is a simple rule that is always believed that we will never be able to understand the thoughts of a figure with all his intellectual masterpieces (De-Miguel-Sanchez et al., 2023) unless only if we understand how the environmental situation has shaped the system of thinking and even the orientation of affection and social action. It is from this situation that intellectual works are born. That is also the picture of how Max Weber finally gave birth to the best works and then made history until now. A classic sociological figure born in Erfurt, Thuringia Germany in 1864 came from a middle-class family.

As far as the author reads various references (Chaves, 2023). Weber's intellectual tradition was born mainly due to the different views, attitudes and life orientations of his beloved parents. His father was a bureaucrat who was politically in an important position and

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considered worldly oriented, in contrast to his mother who was a devout Calvinist. A woman who sought to live an ascetic life without the worldly orientation of her husband. Her mother's main concern was the afterlife. The profound difference between the lives of his father and mother had a profound effect on Max Weber. Initially Weber followed his father's life, but later followed his mother's life orientation. When he was 18 years old Weber left his parents' house and studied at the University of Heidelberg (Horton, 1993, Gidens, 2001, Sunarto, 2008, Hemslin, 2009, Johnson, 2010, Macionis, 2012, Ritzer, 2014) in (Santoso, 2020) (Yohanes Bahari, 2021).

At that time Weber had shown intellectual maturity but was still relatively backward and shy in socializing (Barbalet, 2023). His father's worldly genealogy later fueled his enthusiasm because he was used to drinking beer with his friends. Weber showed himself to be the same as his father's outlook on life, including in choosing the same legal career as his father. After studying for three semesters, Weber left Heildelberg University to join the military. In 1884 Weber returned to his parents' home in Berlin and studied at the University of Berlin. For 8 years Weber completed his studies to obtain a doctor's degree (Yohanes Bahari, 2021).

Weber became a lawyer and began teaching at the University of Berlin. While teaching at the university his interests shifted to economics, history and sociology. After completing his studies Weber then switched to his mother's life orientation (Kraevsky, 2023). Weber lived an ascetic life. Since then Weber's life has changed into discipline, frugality, diligence, high spirits (workaholic). That high work ethic led him to become a professor of economics at the University of Heildelber in 1896. After his father's death in 1897 Weber suffered a nervous breakdown and was often unable to sleep. His health began to recover in 1903 and it was only in 1904 that Weber had a career in America as a lecturer. In 1904 and 1905 Weber published one of his best works *The Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. In this book Weber explained the great influence of his mother's religion on academia (Mohanty, 2023).

In *The protestant ethic and The Spirit of Capitaslim* (Jakobs, 2023). Weber said that the special rigor, calculation and hard work of western business were driven by the development of the protestant ethic that emerged in the 16th century. And driven by the doctrine of Calvinism. That is the doctrine of predestination that God has decided about salvation and accident. In addition, the doctrine also emphasizes that no one can know whether he is one of the chosen ones. Under such conditions, according to Weber, Calvinists experience a "panic about salvation". The way to calm such panic is for people to think that one cannot succeed without being blessed by God. Therefore, success is a sign of election. To achieve success one must engage in life activities. This includes economic and political activities. Based on discipline and modesty. Avoiding a life of pleasure, which is driven by religious teachings.

Literature Review

According to Weber, the work ethic of Calvinism combined with the spirit of capitalism led western society to the development of modern capitalist society (Rabaka, 2023). Thus, the psychological impetus for rationalization and as a strong stimulus in enhancing the growth of the capitalist economic system in its formative stages. The relationship between the spirit of

capitalism and protestant ethics has a logical consistency and motivational influence that is mutually supportive. Such a relationship is referred to as elective affinity. Weber's thinking was influenced by German historian, philosopher, economist and political theorist Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) as well as by Nietzsche (1844-1900) on the need for individuals to defend against the influence of bureaucracy and the structure of modern society (Ritzer, 2010).

Other books are Methodological Essays (1902), The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1902-04), Economy and Society (1910-1914), Sociology of Religion (1916). Weber died on June 14, 1920 (Gidens, 2001, Johnson, 2010, Macionis, 2012, Ritzer 2014, Suyanto et al, 2017) in (Yohanes Bahari, 2021). Weber's works are categorized by Ritzer into a social definition paradigm that places individuals as the main actors that allow change to occur in society that society can change unless only if individuals in society have certain motives and meanings directed at others. On this basis, the study of thoughts towards understanding the theory of social action is important to study.

Research Method

The literature review method is carried out narratively by collecting study materials that have been published by scientists, researchers and reviewers to further analyze the main points of thought related to the main theme of the study.

Result and Discussion

Max Weber's Social Action

Weber considers the subject matter of Sociology to be meaningful social action. By studying the development of an institution specifically from the outside without paying attention to human action itself, according to Weber, means ignoring the principal aspects of social life. The development of social relations can also be explained through the goals of the human being who carries out the social relations when he takes advantage of the action itself in his actions; giving different meanings to the action itself in the course of time. In summary, this paradigm has the following three premises (Umanailo, 2019);

1. Humans are creative actors
2. Social facts have subjective meaning (motivation & purpose)
3. The way actors define social facts is the way they define the situation.

The social action referred to by Max Weber can be an action that is obviously directed at others (Fatah, 2023), it can also be an action that is internalized or subjective in nature which may occur due to the positive influence of certain situations. Or it is a deliberate act of repetition as a result of the influence of a similar situation. Or in the form of passive consent in certain situations. Starting from the basic concept of social action and social relations (Umanailo, 2019), as quoted by Wariner, that: "For Weber, action was behavior that was meaningful, social action was action, i.e., meaningful behavior that was oriented toward others". (Warriner in

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Truzzi, 1974) (That according to Weber's opinion, action is meaningful behavior, social action is action, namely meaningful behavior directed at others) (Supraja, 2015)

Max Weber suggests five main characteristics that are the target of Sociology research, (Umanailo, 2019);

1. Human actions that according to the actor contain subjective meaning. This includes a variety of real actions.
2. Real actions and those that are fully internalized and subjective.
3. Actions that include the positive influence of a situation, deliberately repeated actions and actions in the form of tacit consent.
4. The action is directed at an individual or at several individuals.
5. The action pays attention to the actions of others and is directed at others. Social action is an individual action that has subjective meaning or meaning for him and is directed at the actions of others. Conversely, individual actions directed at inanimate objects or physical objects alone without being connected to the actions of others are not social actions. According to Weber, studying the development of institutions must also look at human action. Because human action is the main part of social life

Max Weber as an exemplary leader of the social definition paradigm, definitively formulates Sociology as a science that seeks to interpret and understand (interpretative understanding) of social action and social relations to arrive at causal explanations. For Max Weber, the study of social action means looking for subjective understanding or motivation related to social actions (Umanailo, 2019)

Meaningful social action has the basic premise that [1] Humans are creative actors [2] social facts have subjective meaning (motivation and purpose) and [3] the way actors define social facts is the way they define situations. That is why Max Weber's theory of social action is oriented towards the motives and goals of actors. Indeed, Weber's views speak of motive, intention, meaning in his theory of social action. "Motivation is something that is separate from action and can only be understood in a broader situational context, while meaning is something that is inherent in the action itself, is a property of action rather than just a cause or purpose. Therefore, one can understand (accept) what another person is doing (in terms of his intentions) without knowing why he is doing it (Warriner in Truzzi, 1974).

Social action theory can be understood in the context of motives and meanings. That a social action carried out by an individual regardless of its form always has a motive and meaning (Kildyushov, 2023). In another section Weber also explains what motives are with arguments like this: '...a complex of meaning with seems to the actor himself or to the observer an adequate (or meaningful) ground for the conduct in question'. (...a complex of meaning that appears to the actor himself or to the observer as an adequate (or meaningful) ground for the conduct in question'. Meaning is a property of action, we can then say that one can observe or see an action performed by someone, but may not know the meaning contained in the action, because only the performer of the action knows best the meaning of the action he performs. Especially if the action is only seen as a fragment of an event within a whole, so one wonders if the same is true if the observation is done intensely or within the "whole" event. But it is very

likely true, that the meaning that becomes the property of the action is difficult to understand by others, especially if the actions in question are sporadic, have no connection with one another (Supraja, 2015)

As quoted by Wariner in that: "For Weber, action is behavior that is meaningful, social action is action, i.e., meaningful behavior that is oriented toward others". (Warriner in Truzzi, 1974) (In Weber's opinion, action is meaningful behavior, social action is action, i.e. meaningful behavior directed at others). (Supraja, 2015),

While social action according to Weber is: "by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), takes into account the behavior of others, and thereby is oriented in its course". "Action" includes all human behavior when and to the extent that the acting individual attaches subjective meaning to it. Action in this sense can be overt or purely inward or subjective; it can take the form of positive intervention in a situation, or deliberately refraining from such intervention, or passively accepting the situation" (Schutz, 1972) dalam (Supraja, 2015).

By using this theory we can understand the behavior of each individual or group that each has different motives and goals for an action taken. This theory can be used to understand the types of action behavior of each individual or group. By understanding the behavior of each individual or group, it is as if we have appreciated and understood their reasons for taking an action. As stated by Weber that the best way to understand various groups is to appreciate the typical forms of action that characterize them. So that we can understand the reasons why members of the community act (Jones, 2016)

The description of the four classifications of action types is as follows: First, Traditional Action, which is action determined by habits that have been rooted for generations. Second, Affective Action, is an action determined by the conditions and emotional orientations of the actor. Third, Instrumental Rationality, is an action aimed at achieving goals that are rationally calculated and pursued by the actor concerned. Fourth, Value Rationality, which is rational action based on values, which is carried out for reasons and goals that are related to personally believed values without taking into account the prospects associated with the success or failure of the action (Bryan S. Turner, 2012), (Muhlis & Norkholis, 2016).

Meanwhile, Pip Jones has elaborated the four types of action into a more operational form when used to understand the perpetrators, namely: Traditional action, "I do this because I have always done it" Affective action, "What can I do" Instrumental rationality, "This action is most efficient to achieve this goal, and this is the best way to achieve it" Value rationality, "All I know is to do this" (Jones, 2016) (Muhlis & Norkholis, 2016).

Social Transformation

In the process of social transformation, social action theory uses the Verstehen method, which is an interpretive understanding to understand an action's meaning/subjective meaning for himself and is associated with others. Therefore, to get an interpretive understanding of a meaning, it is necessary to do the following three things. Namely; First, Rational. That is something that is understood in a reasonable manner. For example, if water moistens while fire

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burns. Or $1 + 1 = 2$ not the other. Second, Empathy. That is the ability to put oneself in another person's frame of mind. Here the researcher involves himself emotionally externally. Often in our daily lives we use the following expression "if I were you, then I would do the same thing". Third, appreciative. It is a way of understanding the subjective meaning of other people's actions. This understanding is also often done by Indonesians, such as if our feet hurt, then so do other people feel pain if their feet hurt. Therefore, we must be careful not to step on other people's feet (Damsar, 2010)

Understanding can be divided into two, namely; [1] Observational understanding/actual verstehen (observational understanding or actual understanding), understanding through direct observation or symbolic expression without looking at the wider context. For example, a person who is deeply saddened can be seen from the frown of a sad and dark face, as well as someone who is angry, clearly seen on a red face, trying to hold back anger; and [2] explanatory understanding is an understanding by placing the action into a broader context of meaning. This understanding looks for the motive, i.e. what caused someone to do something like that in that situation. For example, a person buys a gas cylinder because the gas supply in his house has run out. At first, he had to light the gas stove button so that the flame would ignite so that he could heat the food. The words because and in order show a motive. If the context of the meaning of the event above is expanded, it can be understood that the word order above, contains explanatory understanding because it shows logical consistency, aesthetic harmony or compatibility between purpose and method (Damsar, 2010)

Any interpretation of the understanding certainly strives to achieve a high level of clarity and certainty, although it cannot be said to be "cassually valid" (actually valid), it is only seen as a "peculiarly plausible hypothesis". (as a hypothesis only). This is because;

1. Motives that are realized, even by the actors themselves. It is possible to mask other motives that are the main drivers of the action.
2. Two action processes that look exactly the same to the observer may be driven by two completely different motives
3. Actors in a situation are often driven by contradictory things, each of which can be understood. In such a situation, it is very difficult to predict with certainty which motive is the cause of the action. Because scientific studies require verification, to test whether the hypothesis is not wrong. The propability test is carried out, namely that certain actions are actually from certain meanings (motives). (Damsar, 2010)

Thus, social action is an individual action that has subjective meaning for him and is associated with other people. Weber found that social action does not always have a rational dimension but there are also non-rational actions taken by people, including actions in the political aspects of life. Weber then reveals 4 types of social action, where these types become the basis of motives and meanings for each individual in carrying out social transformation, namely;

1. Instrumental Rational Action (instrumentally rational action) is an action carried out based on conscious consideration and choice in relation to the purpose of an action and the tools used to achieve goals. For example, the "affair" between business and political power.
2. Value rational action is an action where the goal has to do with absolute value and the final value for the individual, which is considered consciously is a tool for achieving goals, such as giving infaq and sadaqah among Muslims
3. Affective action (affectual action), which is action dominated by feelings or emotions without intellectual reflection or conscious planning. Such as delays made out of love, anger, fear, joy. Usually not accompanied by rational, logical and ideological considerations
4. Traditional action (traditional action) is action due to habit or tradition. These activities are carried out without conscious reflection and without planning.

Conclusion

Social transformation can only be achieved if the collected individuals, hereafter called society, have certain motives and meanings in their lives. The motives and meanings that are born are also not necessarily present just like that but have been formed by an understanding of the situation of the environment, which is what Weber calls Verstehen. It is from this situation that the actions of each individual can be instrumental rational where rational attitudes are prioritized in their social transformation, or value rationality becomes the basis for social transformation or even affective and traditional actions become the basis of their transformational arguments and actions in society.

Recommendation

Max Weber's social action theory is a meta-theory and therefore can be used by researchers in multi-disciplines, especially the social humanities. Thus, this study can be developed as a theoretical basis in conducting studies, both of a scientific development nature and an applied nature.

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