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Max Weber, The Vocation Lectures, edited with an introduction and notes by David S. Owen and Tracy B. Strong, translated by Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004). [This edition also has the lecture Science as a Vocation along with a valuable Introcution by an important figure perhaps the most well known intellectual of the time at an important moment in German history: Germany had just been defeated in World War I. Two, it has what might be called an ethical dimension: what kind of person must one be in order to take up politics as a vocation? Three, there are issues that are of historical interest elements of which Weber draws from the distant and recent history and from Asia to (of course) Europe to America. Four, there are a number of conceptual elements. There are others besides. Anyway, as I have often done, it is the conceptual elements that I am mainly interested in. For the ethical part, I have often done, it is the conceptual elements that I am mainly interested in. For the ethical part, I have often done, it is the conceptual elements that I am mainly interested in. understanding the summary. It may be read at leisure. Two pieces of trivia: the famous definition of the state and the equally famous remark that Machiavellis The Prince is harmless when compared to Kautilyas Arthastra appear in this lecture. POLITICS AND THE STATE What is politics? The concept is extremely broad and includes every kind of independent leadership activity. Such leadership activity. Such leadership of a political organisation; more specifically, a state. But what is a state? The state cannot be defined in terms of its activities. This is because there is not only no task that has not been undertaken by some state but also because there is no task that is exclusively undertaken by the state can only be defined on the basis of the specific means peculiar to it: the use of violence. The logic is simple here. If there were certain number of activities this could very well be a large number so long as it is limited that all states undertook to fulfil, then we could be able to define state as that organisation which does those things. Better, if there were certain things that only the state did, we could say that the state is that organisation, the only one in fact, which does them. But this is not the case, Weber says. The state takes upon itself an imponderable number of activities which are not exactly unique to it i.e. which can be and are often taken up by other organisations. Therefore the uniqueness of the state cannot be defined on the basis of its activities. But what is peculiar and unique to the state hinges on this claim. The qualifications are important. Other organisations might, and do use, violence to take just one example among many which were articulated after Webers death). But so does other organisations: notably, the society and the family in the case of structural violence. Nowadays we must say that the state is the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory and this idea of territory is an essential defining feature. For what is specific to the present is that all other organizations or individuals can assert the right to use physical violence only insofar as the state permits them to do so. The state is regarded as the sole source of the right to use violence, what politics means for us is to strive for a share of power or to influence the distribution of power, whether between the groups of people contained within a state. Weber is not saying that the monopolisation of legitimate physical violence is the only thing that it is what only the state does. To say that it involves the distribution or preservation of power, or a shift in power [And] whoever is active in politics strives for power, either power as a means in the service of other goals, whether idealistic or selfish, or power for its own sake, in other words, so as to enjoy the feeling of prestige that it confers. THREE KINDS OF LEGITIMACY Now, if this state is to exist this organisation which embodies the rule of some over others based on the legitimate use of violence then those who rule must be obeyed by those who are ruled. When do they do so and why? What are the internal justifications of such rule? And what are its external supports (see end of next section for this)? There are three basic internal justifications. First, the authority of the eternal past, of custom, sanctified by a validity that extends back into the mists of time and is perpetuated by habit. This is traditional rule, as exercised by patriarchs and patrimonial rulers of the old style. Second, there is the authority of the extraordinary, personal devotion to, and a personal trust in, the revelations, heroism, or other leadership qualities of an individual. This is charismatic rule of the kind practiced by prophets or in the political sphere the elected warlord or the ruler chosen by popular vote, the great demagogue, and the leaders of political parties. When Weber refers to charisma, he is transliterating the Greek word. And while the word was not unknown in English, it is Webers use of the word led to its widespread adoption and use. Lastly, there is rule by virtue of legality, by virtue of the belief in the validity of legal statutes and practical competence based on rational rules. This type of rule is based on a persons willingness to carry out statutory duties obediently. Rule of this kind is to be found in the modern servant of the state and all those agents of power who resemble him in this respect. These three legitimations traditional, charismatic, and legal are pure types. They do not occur in their pure form in reality but in complex variants, transitions and combinations. CHARISMATIC LEADERS What interests us here above all is the second of these types: rule based on the acquiescence of those who submit to the purely personal charisma of the leader. For this is where we discover the root of the idea of vocation, which can also be translated as profession in the root of the idea of vocation, which can also be translated as profession, is Beruf. It derives from the root of the idea of vocation, which can also be translated as profession, is Beruf. It derives from the root of the idea of vocation, which can also be translated as profession in the root of the idea of vocation. English as well). But Weber refers to the idea of a Beruf in its highest form and laters talks about Beruf in the deepest meaning of the word. What is he getting at?Well, first, Beruf conveys a religious notion: that of being called to eternal salvation through or by God. This is not news. We find this in Pauls Letters. Pauls word for calling in this sense is [klsis]. To take just one example: I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling [, klses] to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in the long run the economic basis of his existence. This is the modern secular sense conveyed by equivalents like vocation and profession. This idea, he claims, is the innovation of the Greek Septuagint Bible [completed by 1534], specifically in the Book of Sirach, also known as Ecclesiasticus. (The Book of Sirach was originally composed in Hebrew but manuscript portions of the Hebrew but manuscript portions of the Hebrew text were discovered only in the late 19th century.) Weber: Luther translates the words in Jesus Sirach with beharre in deinem Beruf and bliebe in deinem Beruf, instead of bliebe bei deiner Arbeit. Luthers translates the words in Jesus Sirach with beharre in deinem Beruf and bliebe in deinem Beruf and bliebe bei deinem Beruf and bliebe in deinem Beruf and bliebe bei deinem Beruf and bl of the passage in the Book of Sirach is, so far as I know, the first case in which the German word Beruf appears in its present purely secular sense. (The Protestant Ethic, Chapter 3, note 3) The relevant passage is Book of Sirach 11:202. I present Brentons English and Luthers German translation, both from the Septuagint Greek. Brenton: wax old in thy work [, erg]. trust in the Lord, and abide in thy labour [, pon]. Luther: Beharre in deinem Beruf. The full passage, should the reader be interested, is: Stand by your agreement and attend to it, and grow old in your work. Do not wonder at the works of a sinner, but trust in the Lord and keep at your job (NRSV)Weber is saying that instead of translating ergon with Arbeit, Luther chose Beruf, and that in doing so gave expression to the notion of of a life-task, a definite field in which to work, i.e. a calling in the secular sense, which did not exist before. (Ergon is deed, task, or work, in Greek; Arbeit means work in German [recall the infamous phrase Arbeit Macht Frei which, loosely rendered, is Work makes you Free emblazoned on the gate at the entrance of Auschwitz].) Anyway, by Beruf, Weber means calling in both its religious and secular senses. The charismatic leader is one held to be the inwardly chosen leaders of humankind. People do not submit to them because of any customs or statutes, but because they believe in them. Such a leader does indeed live for his cause and strives to create his work [trachtet nach seinem Werk]. But the devotion of his followers, that is, his disciples and liegemen, or his entirely personal band of supporters, is directed toward his person and his qualities. Weber is quoting Friedrich Nietzsche here.Oh Zarathustra, they said. Are you perhaps on the lookout for your happiness? What does happiness matter! he answered. I havent strived for happiness for a long time, I strive for my work [ich trachte nach meinem Werke]. Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part IV, The Honey Offering. All sorts of charismatic leaders have emerged in the past. Two of the most important in types today are the free demagogue and the parliamentary party leaders, these professional (or vocational) politicians in other words, are not the most decisive ones in the struggle for power. The material resources necessary to make use of physical force where required are also important. These are the external supports. They include the administrative personnel obeys the rulers because of their charisma. But not just this. There are two other factors which appeal to the personnel interest of these personnels. material rewards (e.g. salaries) and social honor (e.g. prestige enjoyed by civil servants). By these, their obedience is secured. TWO FORMS OF THE STATE All forms of state can be classified into two types based on whether the administrative personnel own the means of administration or is separated from it. The means of administration could consist of money, buildings, the materials of war, vehicle pools, horses, or whatever. To own the means of administration is to use them as one would use things that one owns, and not as directed by somebody else who actually owns them. We may call those political organisations in which the lord does not autonomously control the means of administration an organization subdivided into estates. These are the organisations in which administration of his fief. The vassals also pay for the equipment and provisioning needed for a war; his subvassals did likewise This had important consequences for the lord because the dependent upon him. He pays from his own pocket for the administration, he creates an army which is dependent upon him personally by equipping and provisioning it out of his granaries, magazines, and armories. In this second case he relies either on members of his household or else on plebeians, men from strata of society without either property or honor of their own, men who are dependent upon him entirely for their material well-being, since they have no power at their disposal to compete with his. The development of this form of political organisation begins when the monarch [Frst, as in first, and also translatable as prince] expropriates (enteignet) the autonomous, private agents of administrative power who exist in parallel to him, that is to say, all the independent owners of the modern state is the modern state is the modern state is the modern state is the modern state, control of the entire political means of production is concentrated in a single culminating point so that not a single culminating point so that not a single equipment that are under his control. In the modern state and this is an essential element of its definition the separation of the administrative staff, that is, of officials and employees, from the material resources of administration, has been completed. It is at this point that the very latest development emerges, for we now see before our very eyes the attempt to bring about the expropriation of this expropriation dieses Expropriateurs] of the resources of politics and hence of political power. Weber means the expropriation by the modern state of the (original) expropriates him in turn. Weber uses the Expropriation instead of the German Enteignung (which he does use earlier) because he is adopting a famous passage from Karl Marxs Das Kapital (Chap 32, The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation): The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production which has flourished alongside and under it. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labour reach a point at which they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriateurs werden expropriateurs werden expropriateurs that the modern state is an institutional form of rule that has successfully fought to create a monopoly of legitimate physical force as a means of government within a particular territory. For this purpose it has concentrated all the autonomous officials of the estates who previously controlled such things as of right and has put itself in the shape of its highest representative in their place. PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS In this process of politicans in another sense. This consisted of people who, unlike the charismatic leaders, did not wish to become masters themselves, but to enter into the service of political masters. In these conflicts they put themselves at the disposal of the monarch and treated the implementation of his policies as a way of earning their own material living, on the one hand, and of acquiring a lifes ideal on the other. But before discussing them, it is important to be clear about the implications of the existence of such politicians. One might pursue politicians. One might pursue politicians politicians when we vote, protest, applaud a politicial speech, etc. So are those local agents and committee members of political party associations who, as a rule, pursue such activities only as occasion demands and who do not make it the primary task of their lives, either materially or as an ideal. So also are those members of parliament whose engagement with politics is often only when the parliament is in session. Such occasional politicians were found in the past among the estates who owned the means of admnistration. A major portion of them were far from willing to pass their lives wholly or chiefly, or even more than occasionally, in the service of politics. Instead, they used their seigneurial power to maximize their own rents or profits and became politically active in the service of their political associations only when their overlord or their persession expressly called for it. But these were not sufficient for the monarch who needed to assemble a staff of assistants consisting of people who were entirely and exclusively devoted to serving him as their principal profession What did the full-time politicians look like in all these cases? There are two ways of engaging in politics as a vocation. You can either live for politics or from politics are not by any means mutually exclusive. On the contrary, as a rule people do both, mentally at least, but for the most part materially, as well. Whoever lives for politics are not by any means mutually exclusive. makes this his life in an inward sense. Either he enjoys the naked exercise of the power he possesses or he feeds his inner equilibrium and his self-esteem with the consciousness that by serving a cause he gives his own life a meaning. In this inner sense, probably every serious person who lives for a cause also lives from it. Given this, the distinction has really to do with the economic aspect of the vocation. The distinction in other words lies in this; that those who live for politics are those who live fo economically independent. A person who wishes to live for politics must be wealthy. But not just this, such a person must also be in a position to make himself available for politics. This means that his sources of income must not require him constantly to devote all or most of his thoughts and energy personally to the task of earning his living. If the leaders are men who live exclusively for politics, their recruitment is plutocratic. Thats to say, those who live for politics are the wealthy. This doesnt mean that these leaders will not try to life from politics. It means only that professional politicians are not directly compelled to seek remuneration for their politics, their recruitment is plutocratic. That to say, those who live for politics are the wealthy. is forced to do. But by the same token, this is not to suggest that politicians with no independent means entered politics solely or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds, or even principally with an eye to providing for their cause was not uppermost in their minds. riches or wealth. Kratos means rule, also strength/power. Pluto is also a Greek god, equivalent to Hades, who rules Tartarus, the under- or nether-world. It is after this god that the ex-planet is named! The philosopher Plato has an explanation, the first such explanation, connecting the all three, i.e. ploutos, Pluto, and Hades, which he gives in Cratylus (403b). As for Pluto, he was given that name because it accords with his being the source of wealth, since wealth (, ploutos) comes up from below the ground. It seems to me that most people call him by the name Pluto, because they are afraid of what they cant see (, aeides), and they assume that his other name, Hades, associates him with that. And in order to recruit politically interested people, both leaders and their followers, non-plutocratically, i.e. those who do not own property or have wealth, those leaders and their followers will have to extract a regular and reliable income from the practice of politicians could be pure benificiaries or draw salaries. In the former case, they derive income from fees and other payments for services (including tips and bribes). In the latter case, they receive fixed benefits in cas or kind regularly. TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS In his struggles with the estates, the ruler sought the assistance of politically exploitable strata who did not form part of the estates. These included, first and foremost, the clergy. The aim everywhere was to acquire literate administrators who could be deployed by the emperor or princes or the khan in their struggle with the aristocracy. Members of the clergy, especially if they were celibate, stood outside the hustle and bustle of ordinary political and economic interests and, unlike the rulers vassals, were not exposed to the temptation to compete with him for political power of their own to pass on to their heirs. The cleric was separated from the machinery of the rulers administration by the characteristics of his own status group. A second stratum of this kind consisted of men of letters with a humanist education. There was a time when men learned to make speeches in Latin and write verses in Greek in order to qualify as political advisers and above all to compose political memoranda on behalf of a ruler. The third social stratum was the court nobility. Once the rulers had succeeded in depriving the aristocracy of its political power as an estate, they attracted the nobility to the court and enrolled them in their political and diplomatic service. The fourth category was a specifically British phenomenon: this was a patrician class comprising the minor nobility and the urban inhabitants of independent means, known technically as the gentry. This was a stratum that the monarch had originally attracted in his conflict with the barons and the late Roman bureaucratic state, it continued to exert a powerful influence over a long period of time. Nowhere was this more evident than in the circumstance that, in its advance toward the rational state, the revolution of the machinery of politics was undertaken everywhere by trained lawyers. Since the founding of the constitutional state, and even more markedly since the establishment of democracy, the demagogue has been the typical political leader in the West. The political publicist, and above all, the journalist is the most important representative of the species today. Yet another figure is that of the party official. This figure has emerged in recent decades. The party officials are those called political civil servants [such as ministers belonging to the party that has formed the government], officially at least, as long as there is no threat to raison detat, that is, the vital interests of the dominant order. Sine ira et studio that should be the officials motto in the performance of his duties. He should therefore abstain from doing what [Ragione di Stato] is the knowledge of the appropriate means for founding, preserving, and expanding such a domination. The terms means something quite different now.-Sine ira et studio is Latin meaning without anger and partiality. It is a quotation of the Roman historian Tacitus who declares right at the beginning of his Annals: Hence my design, to treat a small part (the concluding one) of Augustus reign, then the principate of Tiberius and its sequel, without anger and without partiality [sine ira et studio], from the motives of which Istand sufficiently removed. For taking sides, struggle, passion ira et Studium are the politicians element, especially the political leaders. His activity is subject to an entirely different principle of responsibility, in fact, the very opposite principle to that of the official. When an official receives an order, his honor lies in his ability to carry it out, on his superiors responsibility, conscientiously and exactly as if it corresponded to his own convictions. This remains the case even if the order seems wrong to him and if despite his protests, his superior insists on his compliance. Without this discipline and self-denial, which is ethical in the highest degree, the entire apparatus would collapse. In contrast, the point of honor of the political leader, that is, the leading statesman, is that he acts exclusively on his own responsibility, a responsibility that he may not and cannot refuse or shuffle off onto someone else. It is precisely civil servants of high moral stature who make bad politicians, in other words, who act irresponsibly from a politicians of the kind we in Germany have unfortunately had time and again in leading positions. That is what we call government by civil servants [Beamtenherrschaft]. Weber has a very long section discussing in some detail the role and the development of the last two figures: the journalist and the party official (for this latter figure, he goes into even more depth about the development of party organisation). Much of this is of historical interest and deals with the development of party organisations in the US, England, and Germany in what was then the recent few decades. The point of all that seems to be the following conclusion: It is not possible to see today, therefore, how the business of politics can take the outward shape of a profession, and even less what prospects of a worthwhile political challenge might open up for people who are politically talented. The man who is compelled by his financial situation to live from politics will always find that the typical direct paths will involve choosing between journalism or a post as party official. Or else he could consider a post with one of the representative bodies: trade union, chamber of commerce, farmers association, craft workers chamber, industrial chamber, employers associations, and so on, or the appropriate positions in local government. Nothing further can be said about the outward shape of the profession except that the party official shares with the journalist the odium of being dclass. He will, unfortunately, always have the actual or unspoken rebuke of hired hack ringing in his ears, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist, or hired speaker, in the case of the journalist accusations of this kind and is unable to find the proper retort to them. may find that it turns out to be full of disappointments. POLITICS AND ETHICS This is the ethical part of the essay. Extracts. We may inquire what inner pleasures may be expected from a political career and what are the personal qualifications called for in those who choose it? Well, to start with, it provides a sense of power. Even in what may be quite a modest post formally, the professional politician may feel he has been raised above the commonplace by his discovery that he has influence on people, that he has influence on people of the has influence on people of the head of the has influence on people of the head of qualities does he need to do justice to this power (however narrowly circumscribed it may be) and hence to the responsibility that it imposes on him? We can say that three qualities, above all, are of decisive importance for a politician: passion, a sense of proportion. Passion in the sense of a commitment to the matter in hand [Sachlichkeit], that is, the passionate dedication to a cause [Sache], to the God or demon that presides over it. [But] mere passion, however sincerely felt, is not enough in itself. It cannot make a politician of anyone, unless service to a cause also means that a sense of responsibility toward that cause is made the decisive guiding light of action And for that (and this is the crucial psychological characteristic of the politician) a sense of proportion is required, the ability to allow realities to impinge on you while maintaining an inner calm and composure. What is needed, in short, is a distance from people and things. The absence of distance, pure and simple, is one of the deadly sins of every politician and one of those qualities which, if instilled into our intellectuals, will condemn them to politics is made with the mind, not with other parts of the body or the soul. And yet if politics is to be an authentic human activity and not just a frivolous intellectual game, commitment to it must be born of passion and be nourished by it. Even so, the ability to keep the soul in check is what characterizes the passionate politician and distinguishes his attitude from the sterile excitement of the amateur. This can be achieved only by acquiring the habit of distance, in every sense of the word. The strength of a politics? We need to be clear that all ethically oriented action can be guided by either of two fundamentally different, irredeemably incompatible maxims: it can be guided by an ethics of conviction or an ethics of responsibility with a lack of conviction. Needless to say, there can be no question of that. But there is a profound abyss between acting in accordance with the maxim governing an ethics of conviction and acting in tune with an ethics of responsibility. In the former case this means, to put it in religious terms: A Christian does what is right and leaves the outcome to God, while in the latter you must answer for the (foreseeable) consequences of your actions. But even this does not exhaust the problem. No ethic in the world can ignore the fact that in many cases the achievement of good ends is inseparable from the use of morally dubious or at least dangerous means and that we cannot escape the possibility or even probability of evil side effects. And no ethic in the world can say when, and to what extent, the ethically good end can justify the ethically dangerous means and its side effects. [With the] problem of justifying the means by the ends, we see the inevitable failure of an ethics of conviction in general. And in fact, it logically has only one possibility. That is to repudiate every action that makes use of morally suspect means, logically has only one possibility. That is not possible to reconcile an ethics of conviction with an ethics of conviction with an ethics of responsibility or to decree which end can justify which means, if indeed you wish to make any concessions to this principle at all. My colleague F. W. Foerster expresses the belief in his book that we can get around the difficulty with the aid of the simple thesis that nothing but good can come from good and nothing but evil from evil. [But] as far as a persons actions are concerned, it is not true that nothing but good comes from good and nothing but evil from evil, but rather quite frequently the opposite is the case. Anyone who does not realize this is in fact a mere child in political matters. It is in this connection, i.e., the propriety of the ethics of resposibility for politics, that Weber makes that famous comparison between Kautilya and Machiavelli. The general thesis, of which the connection I just mentioned is just a specific instancem is that there need not be one ethics for every area of life. This specialized approach to ethics made it possible for Indian philosophy to develop an internally consistent treatment of the royal art of politics, focusing entirely on its own particular laws and indeed intensifying them radically. A genuinely radical Machiavellianism, in the popular sense of the word, received its classic formulation in Indian literature as early as Kautilyas Arthashastra (long before the Christian era, allegedly from the time of Chandragupta). Machiavellianism, in the popular sense of the word, received its classic formulation in Indian literature as early as Kautilyas Arthashastra (long before the Christian era, allegedly from the time of Chandragupta). imperatives of the Sermon on the Mount, which are in complete harmony with an ethics of conviction, and the absolute demands made by the religious natural law based on it retained their revolutionary power. Whoever makes a pact with the use of force, for whatever ends (and every politician does so), is at the mercy of its particular consequences The man who fights for his faith, whether religious or revolutionary, is particularly exposed to this risk. We need not look beyond the present to find examples. Anyone who desires to use force to establish absolute justice on earth needs followers, a human apparatus. He must be able to hold out the prospect of the necessary internal and external prizes (heavenly and earthly rewards), or else this apparatus will not function. The leader is entirely dependent on being able to keep providing the followers he relies on with these rewards in perpetuity. Since his activities must be carried out under these conditions, it is evident that what he in fact achieves is not in his own hands but is laid down for him by the predominantly base motives governing the actions of his followers. For they can only be kept under control as long as at least some of them, though probably never a majority, are inspired by a genuine belief in him personally and his cause. But this belief, even when it is subjectively sincere, is in very many cases really no more than the ethical legitimation of the desire for revenge, power, booty, and the rewards of office. And we must not let ourselves be persuaded otherwise about this, since the materialist interpretation of history is not a hansom of his own responsibility for what may become of him under the pressure they exert. For, I repeat, he is entering into relations with the satanic powers that lurk in every act of violence. In truth, politics is an activity of the head but by no means only of the head but by no means only of the head. In this respect the adherents of an ethics of conviction are in the right. But whether we should act in accordance with an ethics of conviction or an ethics of responsibility, and when we should choose one rather than the other, is not a matter on which we can lay down the law to anyone else. [In our age] conviction politicians may well spring up in large numbers all of a sudden and run riot, declaring, The world is stupid and nasty, not large numbers all of a sudden and run riot, declaring, The world is stupid and nasty, not large numbers all of a sudden and run riot, declaring, and when we should choose one rather than the other, is not a matter on which we can lay down the law to anyone else. The responsibility for the consequences cannot be laid at my door but must rest with those who employ me and whose stupidity or nastiness I shall do away with. And if this happens, I shall say openly that I would begin by asking how much inner gravity lies behind this ethics of conviction, and I suspect I should come to the conclusion that in nine cases out of ten I was dealing with windbags who do not genuinely feel what they are taking on themselves but who are making themselves drunk on romantic sensations. By the same token, I find it immeasurably moving when a mature human being whether young or old in actual years is immaterial who feels the responsibility he bears for the consequences of his own actions with his entire soul and who acts in harmony with an ethics of responsibility reaches the point where he says, Here I stand, I can do no other. That is authentically human and cannot fail to move us. For this is a situation that may befall any of us at some point, if we are not inwardly dead. In this sense an ethics of conviction and an ethics of responsibility are not absolute antitheses but are mutually complementary, and only when taken together do they constitute the authentic human being who is capable of having a vocation for politics. Three references here: to Immanuel Kant, Aristotle, and Martin Luther. Kant had declared at the beginning of his essay What is Enlightenment? that Enlightenments mans emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. [Kants term for immaturity is Unmndigkeit. Webers term for mature is reifer.] As for Aristotle, he had stipulated in his Nicomachean Ethics (1095a5) that the young are not fit to be students of politics; the term is usually, but problematically, translated as political science]. And the words Here I stand [hier stehe ich], I can do no other [ich kann nicht anders] are attributed to Martin Luther who is said to have uttered them at the Diet of Worms in 1521. The only man who has a vocation for politics is one who is certain that his spirit will not be broken if the world, when looked at from his point of view, proves too stupid or base to accept what he wishes to offer it, and who, when faced with all that obduracy, can still say Nevertheless! despite everything. Jump to ratings and reviewsThis work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available. to the public. To ensure a quality reading experience, this work has been proofread and republished using a format that seamlessly blends the original graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant. (Arabic: )Maximilian Carl Emil Weber was a German lawyer, politician, historian, sociologist and political economist, who profoundly influenced social theory and the remit of sociology itself. His major works dealt with the rationalization, bureaucratization and 'disenchantment' associated with the rise of capitalism. Weber was, along with his associate Georg Simmel, a central figure in the establishment of methodological antipositivism; presenting sociology as a non-empirical field which must study social action through resolutely subjective means. Get help and learn more about the design. This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. To ensure a quality reading experience, this work has been proofread and republished using a format that seamlessly blends the original graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant. German sociologist Max Webers 1919 lecture Politics as a Vocation is widely regarded as a masterful interpretative skills to power his discussion of modern politics. Interpretation involves understanding both the meaning of evidence and the meaning of terms questioning definitions, clarifying terms and processes, and supplying good, clear definitions of the authors own. As a sociologist accustomed to working with historical evidence, Weber based his own work on precisely these skills, solidly backed up by analytical acuity. Politics as a Vocation, written in a Germany shocked by its crippling defeat in World War I, saw Weber turn his eye to an examination of how the modern nation state emerged, and the different ways in which it can be run interpretative skills that Politics is famous above all in sociological circles for its clear definition of a state as an institution that claims the monopoly of legitimate physical violence in a given territory. Politics is fundamentally about power, but what distinguishes legitimate physical violence in a given territory. Politics is fundamentally about power, but what distinguishes legitimate physical violence in a given territory. 1919 lecture Politics as a Vocation. Webers analysis goes beyond simplistic definitions of politics to examine the unique relationship between the state, violence, and legitimacy that forms the backbone of modern political systems. Table of Contents as a Vocation. Webers analysis goes beyond simplistic definitions of politics to examine the unique relationship between the state, violence, and legitimacy that forms the backbone of modern political systems. Table of Contents as a Vocation. human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. This definition highlights three crucial elements: Monopoly of force must be considered rightful by the population Territoriality The states authority is bounded by geographical limitsWebers definition reveals why politics is not simply about power in general, but specifically about power in general pow power or influencing its distribution. Beyond force: The necessity of legitimacy While Weber emphasizes that no state can survive through coercion alone. For political rule to be stable and effective, citizens must view the states authority as legitimate. Weber famously noted that people obey not merely out of fear or habit, but because they believe in the legitimacy of the orders they receive. This introduces Webers crucial concept of authority differs from raw power precisely because it has secured acceptance among those it governs. Weber identified three pure types of legitimate authority, each resting on different grounds of justification: Traditional authority is based on established beliefs in the sanctity of long-standing traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them. Think of monarchies where rule passes through bloodlines or societies where elders govern by custom. Charismatic authority rests on devotion to an individuals exceptional character, heroism, or exemplary qualities. Revolutionary leaders, religious prophets, and transformative political figures like Gandhi or Martin Luther King Jr. embody this form of authority is grounded in belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands. Modern bureaucratic states primarily function on this basis, where office-holders derive their authority from their positions rather than personal qualities or tradition. These ideal types rarely exist in pure form. Most political systems combine elements of multiple types of legitimacy, though one typically predominates. Modern democratic states primarily rely on legal-rational authority while sometimes drawing on charismatic elements during elections or times of crisis. The politicians vocation Webers lecture wasnt just about defining politics abstractly examined what it means to have politics as ones vocation or calling (Beruf). For Weber, the true politics make it their source of income and material sustenance. While necessary for professional politics make it their source of income and material sustenance. While necessary for professional politics make it their source of income and material sustenance. and the pursuit of self-interest over public good. In contrast, living for politics means being driven by cause and conviction. The true political vocation. The true political vocation requires passionate commitment to values and purposes beyond oneself. However, passion alone is insufficient for the political vocation. The true political vocation requires passionate commitment to values and purposes beyond oneself. qualities needed for the genuine politician: Passion: Devotion to a cause and the ability to act on deep conviction rather than sterile excitement Responsibility: Making the cause rather than personal vanity the guiding star of action and maintaining ones distance and allowing realities to work upon oneselfWeber claimed these qualities are rarely found together. The passion needed for transformative politics. The ethics of political conduct Perhaps Webers most enduring contribution to political theory is his distinction between two ethical orientations that can guide political action: the ethic of ultimate ends and the ethic of conviction, this approach judges actions solely by their alignment with absolute moral principles, regardless of consequences. The person guided by this ethic might say, I must do what is right, though the world should perish (fiat justitia, pereat mundus). This ethical orientation has inspired many social movements and religious reformers. However, Weber cautioned that pure adherence to an ethic of ultimate ends in politics could lead to catastrophic consequences, as it may disregard the practical effects of principled actions. The ethic of responsibility By contrast, the ethic of responsibility demands that we account for the foreseeable consequences of our actions. The responsibility demands that we account for the foreseeable consequences of our actions. The responsibility demands that we account for the foreseeable consequences of our actions. The responsibility demands that we account for the foreseeable consequences of our actions. The responsibility demands that we account for the foreseeable consequences of our actions. The responsibility demands that we account for the foreseeable consequences of our actions. mature politician balances passionate commitment to values with a clear-eyed assessment of consequences. He famously wrote that politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards that requires both passion and perspective the ability to maintain ones ideals while recognizing the imperfect means often necessary to advance them. The bureaucratization of politics Writing in the early 20th century, Weber observed the increasing bureaucratization of modern political life. As states grew more complex and took on additional responsibilities, administration became increasingly technical and specialized. This trend toward bureaucratic organization concerned Weber for several reasons: Tension with democracy: While bureaucracies operate on principles of expertise and hierarchy, democracy values equality and popular controlThreat to freedom: The expanding administrative state could become an iron cage limiting individual libertyRoutinization of charisma: Revolutionary political movements inevitably become century after Weber delivered his lecture, his insights remain remarkably relevant to contemporary political challenges: The crisis of legitimacy Many established democracies face declining trust in institutions and traditional sources of authority. Webers framework helps us understand this as a crisis of legitimacy when citizens no longer accept the grounds on which political authority rests. The rise of populist movements worldwide can be analyzed as attempts to establish new bases of legitimate authority, often through charismatic appeals that challenge legal-rational institutions. Bureaucracy and expertise in democratic governance The tension between expert administration and democratic accountability has only intensified in complex modern societies. From central banking to public health emergencies, contemporary governance relies on specialized knowledge that may be inaccessible to ordinary citizens. Webers analysis helps us understand why this creates persistent democratic dilemmas. The vocational crisis in politics Webers analysis helps us understand why this creates persistent democratic dilemmas. The vocational crisis in politics webers analysis helps us understand why this creates persistent democratic dilemmas. concern about the quality of political leadership resonates strongly today. In an era of professional politicians, media consultants, and permanent campaigns, his distinction between living from versus for politics helps diagnose why citizens often feel disconnected from their representatives. Beyond Weber: Contemporary extensions While Webers insights remain valuable, contemporary political theorists have expanded on his framework in important ways:Legitimacy beyond the nation-state actors challenge the territoriality central to Webers definitionSoft power and non-violent authority: Modern states rely increasingly persuasion, surveillance, and incentives rather than explicit forceIntersectional critiques: Webers analysis largely overlooked how race, gender, and other factors shape political authority and who has access to political analysis. The personal and the political Weber concluded his lecture with a powerful call for those considering the political vocation. Politics, he insisted, demands a unique combination of passionate commitment and clear-eyed realism. It requires strength to bear the destruction of all hopes while still saying nevertheless! and continuing to strive. This tension between idealism and pragmatism makes politics a uniquely challenging vocation. Unlike the scholar who can revise a manuscript or the artist who can abandon a flawed canvas, the politicians decisions affect real lives and communities. For Weber, this awesome responsibility demands both moral seriousness and practical judgment. In our polarized political landscape, Webers balanced perspective offers a valuable corrective to both cynical realpolitik and naive moralism. His vision of politics as a vocation challenges us to maintain ethical commitment while acknowledging the complex realities of power and legitimacy in human societies. What do you think? Does Webers century-old analysis still capture the essence of political life in the 21st century? And how can we balance the ethics of conviction with the ethics of responsibility in responding to contemporary political challenges like climate change or economic inequality? by Brad RatheIn the late teens of the twentieth century, Max Weber, a sociologist and highly respected intellectual, gave a series of two lectures by invitation at the University of Munich.[1] These lectures cover the topics of, first Science as a Vocation (in November 1917) and then Politics as a Vocation (in January 1919).[2] Given the recent event of Germanys loss of the First World War and the resulting political turmoil at the founding of the Weimar Republic, there was almost an expectation, acknowledged by Weber himself at the beginning of the lecture, that he would give his opinions on topical questions.[3] This expectation was especially strong given Webers status as the most respected intellectual in Germany at the time.[4] What Weber covers instead, however, are the broader philosophical questions of what politics is and the general characteristics of people who have politics as their vocation or calling. Politics and PowerWeber begins, very broadly, by stating the type of politics as meaning the leadership of (or influence of leadership upon) a state. This broad definition, of course, leads him to another central question: What is a state? Weber defines the state as the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory (33). Politics, then, can be defined as striving to share power or influence the distribution of power between different states, or people within a state. A politician, therefore, is fundamentally concerned with power, eitheras a means in the service of other goalsor for its own sake (33-4). Weber then moves on to the ways in which power can be legitimated. A leader can legitimate his or her power as a result of custom, gift of grace, or by virtue of statutes (34). The leader that is legitimated through charisma, he says, is most exemplary of one with politics as a vocation, because the qualities of leadership manifest most directly in him. Centralization of Power in the Modern StateAnother that Weber examines is the transition of society from a system in which administrators own their own means of administration to one where this class is separate from that which they administer (36-7). The means of government become concentrated in one person or body, rather than existing parallel to a leader. Weber uses as an example the old system of vassals owning fiefs for the older kind of governance, and the modern bureaucratic state as an example of the newer form where those under the leader are separate from (i.e. do not own) their means of governance. With the transition to a more centralized government, more executive decisions are made nearer to the top of the system, with most low-level administrators simply carrying out these decisions, as they have no personal ownership in the matter. Weber then moves into very specific examples of the way various societies work, especially in the cases of Britain, the United States, and Germany. Characteristics of a PoliticianThe final topic Weber covers concerns the ethics that a politician, especially a leader, must possess to govern effectively. The three qualities a politician must have are passion, a sense of responsibility, and a sense of proportion (76). Weber explains passion as a commitment to the matter in hand or the passionate dedication to a cause (76). He clarifies, however, that only passion is not enough. To be a politician, one needs that sense of responsibility to be the quiding force of action; a politician must feel a sense of proportion in the crucial trait, however, that Weber points to is the ability to allow realities to impinge on you while maintaining an inner calm and composure (77). In other words, a politician needs some distance from the people and things he governs. He cannot become too passionate about a goal and lose all sense of scope or what really matters. Weber calls for a balance between that passion and proportion. Without passion, politics is merely a frivolous intellectual game, but without proportion, the politician is condemned to politician is condemned to politician concerns the two different concepts of ethics: the ethics of conviction and the good or evil of an act, without thought to consequences. The latter takes into account the consequences of any action. Reaching a balance between the two is ideal for Weber. Weber and BureaucracyOne key aspect of Politics as a Vocation is the increasing bureaucratization of society. Karl Loewenstein, in his book, Max Webers speech about bureaucracy during his lecture reflects some of Lowensteins claims for example, that the untrammeled rule of a bureaucracy was Political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was Political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was Political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 1 for Weber. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 2 for Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [5] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [6] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [6] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [6] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers. [6] Webers works in general spoke of bureaucracy was political Enemy Number 3 for Webers was political Enemy Number 3 for Webe how bureaucrats, conscious of and obsessed with power exploited the system for their own ends.[7] This idea comes through very strongly in Webers text when he makes statements such as: There has never been a social stratum that has failed to exploit its position in one way or another (42). That disillusionment with politicians makes sense in view of his general views raised by Loewenstein. Weber on the Bureaucrat as LeaderWebers distaste for the bureaucrat as LeaderWebers distance a antithesis of the true leader, using Politics as a Vocation as a large body of evidence. He brings up Webers point that the proper vocation of the bureaucrat is impartial administration. [8] He mentions that this renders that bureaucrat is impartial administration. Kronman links Webers statements in Politics as a Vocation to Weber found the modern state dissatisfying in that, in the modern state dissatisfying in that, in the modern state as a Vocation to Weber found the will to power and responsibility] one finds bureaucratic office-holders.[11] Kronman points out that Weber found these bureaucrats to be the opposite of real leaders with political ambition and the will to power and responsibility. [12] Calling in the Context of ModernityAnother idea significant to Politics as a Vocation (Science as a Vocation too, for that matter) is the idea of the calling. Weber uses the German term Beruf, which is now commonly translated as occupation. Weber, however, uses the term in a way that would more appropriately be translated as occupation. Harvey Goldman links Weber with author Thomas Mann on this basis. Both Mann and Weber used the idea of calling to analyze phenomena they took to be crucial for the development of the modern world. [13] According to Goldman, both examined the problem of identity in their modern world. social ideals, cultural disorientation, and despair. [14] Politics as a Vocation is a prime example of this tendency to address the problems of modern life through the concept of calling. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, Introduction, Max Weber: The Vocation Lectures, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), pp. xii-xiii. Dirk Ksler, Max Weber: An Introduction to His Life and Work (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 22. Max Weber, The Vocation Lectures, d. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, trans. Rodney Livingstone. (Indianapolis: Hackett Company, 2004), p. 32. All subsequent parenthetical citations refer to this edition. Owen, p. xi. Lowenstein, Max Webers Political Ideas in the Perspective of Our Time, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 30. Ibid., p. 31. Ibid. Kronman, Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self (Los Angeles: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 30. Ibid., p. 31. Ibid. Kronman, Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self (Los Angeles: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 30. Ibid., p. 31. Ibid. Kronman, Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self (Los Angeles: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 30. Ibid., p. 31. Ibid. Kronman, Max Weber and Thomas Mann: Calling and the Shaping of the Self (Los Angeles: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 30. Ibid., p. 31. Ibid. Ibid., p. 31 California Press, 1988), p. 2. Ibid.