

Marxist versus Weberian Theories of Class

MARX	WEBER
1. primacy of class over other bases of inequality and political association	1. multidimensional model of stratification: class, status and party all important
2. transhistorical primacy of class as motive force of epochal social change	2. importance of class historically variable; not significant in pre-capitalist societies
3. society an objective structure of social positions; history governed by lawlike tendencies	3. society a product of the motivated behavior of human actors; history contingent and unpredictable
4. capitalism defined by private ownership of means of production and expropriation of laborers	4. capitalism defined by spread of rational technique to all spheres of social life
5. classes defined by their place in the social relations of production	5. classes defined by common life chances based on market returns to their assets
6. relations between classes conceived as exploitation	6. relations between classes conceived as domination and exclusion
7. tendency toward polarization of classes under capitalism	7. no tendency toward class polarization; persistence of middle classes
8. classes tend toward organized political action	8. classes rarely engage in communal action
9. classless society possible with social ownership of means of production (socialism)	9. socialist bureaucracy likely to become a new privileged status group