# The Work of Politics

## Making a Democratic Welfare State

Steven Klein

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*The Work of Politics* advances a new understanding of how democratic social movements work with welfare institutions to challenge structures of domination. Steven Klein develops a novel theory that depicts welfare institutions as "worldly mediators," or sites of democratic world-making, fostering political empowerment and participation within the context of capitalist economic forces. Drawing on the writings of Weber, Arendt, and Habermas, and historical episodes that range from the workers' movement in Bismarck's Germany to postwar Swedish feminism, this book challenges us to rethink the distribution of power in society, as well as the fundamental concerns of democratic theory. Ranging across political theory and intellectual history, *The Work of Politics* provides a vital contribution to contemporary thinking about the future of the welfare state.

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# Preface

I wrote this book in the decade after the 2008 financial crisis – a decade of economic stagnation, rising inequality, and, for many, brutal austerity. It was also a period of burgeoning social movements, many reclaiming the banner of socialism, beginning with the Occupy Wall Street movement and then gaining mainstream political prominence with the surprise success of Jeremy Corbyn in the UK Labour Party leadership election and the strong showing of Bernie Sanders in the US Democratic Party primary. These movements have been pushing social welfare concerns back to the center of democratic politics. Bernie Sanders ran on a platform of expanding Medicare to include all Americans, and "Medicare for All" has since become a major policy issue within the Democratic Party. Corbyn's leadership, while marred by indecision over the UK referendum to leave the European Union, has nonetheless incubated a remarkable range of ideas for the democratization of the welfare state and the economy. Both Sanders and Corbyn have also pioneered "insider–outsider" strategies, where grassroots social movements seek to pressure political institutions and political parties from the outside, while also taking them over from within.

While this book is a work of political theory, often of "high" political theory, it is oriented to these new political currents. It is an effort to think about such insider–outsider strategies and about how democratic social movements can use welfare institutions to advance their claims. One of its overarching goals is to show how social welfare concerns – the mundane concerns of ordinary people's day-to-day existence – can become the crucial occasion for broader forms of democratic action that can have genuinely transformative outcomes. Today, social movements face genuine opportunities to create a new vision of the welfare state – one that would be inclusive, democratic, diverse, and sensitive to the democratic sensibilities of such movements.

The history of democratic struggles in the welfare state is a potential source of inspiration for such contemporary movements. It is simply not the case that, in the past, welfare politics was a matter of "reformism," dissipating the radical energies of democratic social movements. We should also reject the idea that such politics exclusively relied on trade unionism focused on the male breadwinner such that the decline of the industrial working class marks the end of ambitious welfare politics. Rather, as my historical investigations show, the politics of the welfare state has provided opportunities for democratic social movements to advance their claims and has always required diverse forms of bottom-up democratic mobilization that go beyond formal organizations like labor unions. No doubt, those concerned with democracy should look for ways to rebuild labor organizations in the face of changing economic forces. Yet the success of labor unions in advancing the welfare state depends on extra-union forms of democratic mobilization.

My field of academic research, political theory, has had a tortured relationship with the welfare state. This book has also been born out of the feeling that too much democratic theory, especially so-called radical democratic theory, has dismissed the importance of welfare institutions to democratic politics. As a result, most defenses of the welfare state in political theory are framed in terms of liberal rights and entitlements. Political theory thus provides few resources for the sort of social-movement-based, democratic political action with which I am concerned. It also provides few resources for thinking about democracy in the context of political economy and capitalism. Political theorists "black box" the economy, preferring to think about how to protect fragile spheres of political activity from the encroachment of economic forces and imperatives. But this has been a mistake, one that has left political theory unable to grasp, let alone respond to, the resurgence of interest in democratic socialism and similar projects.

The financial crisis and its reverberations strained, even if it did not displace, the political consensus, formed in response to the crises of the early 1970s and fully ascendant with the end of the Cold War, that the welfare state model forged after World War II was too "rigid" and that the state must become "smarter." For advocates of that framework, the welfare state was a historical curiosity whose time had come and gone. But struggles for democracy are never smooth, straight lines. The crisis and transformation of the welfare state since the 1970s is just one moment in these struggles. Today, as the long aftermath of the financial crisis continues to work its way through politics, there are new openings for transformative democratic politics, and at the center of such politics could be an ambitious, radical vision of the possibilities created by democratic mobilization for and within the welfare state.

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# Introduction

The report was alarming. With the 1884 election approaching, the Prussian Interior Minister, Robert von Puttkamer, received word from the Berlin Chief of Police that activists from the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD) were poised to speak at more than one thousand public meetings throughout Germany.[1] Was this, the Berlin Chief of Police worried, the beginning of a revolutionary situation? Despite the anti-socialist laws, which ostensibly hampered such public meetings, the socialists were more active than ever. What was the occasion for this furtive mobilization of German workers? In this case, to discuss the details of Germany's intricate new health insurance system, recently passed by the Reichstag. There was no small irony in this fact, as the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had passed the laws precisely to wean workers away from the socialists. Bismarck was always convinced that, once he de-legitimated the democratic agitators and dispelled the perception that the state sided with their capitalist oppressors, the working masses would become stalwart monarchists. The social insurance laws were his visionary effort to put that conviction into practice. Yet, under the cover of the laws, the SPD was able to mobilize to both reshape public discourse and, eventually, use the social welfare institutions themselves as institutional sites for their broader organizing.

The advent of Bismarck's state socialism presented the socialists with a dilemma. The recognition of their political claims was expressly enacted so as to destroy them. They had to acknowledge the victory that was contained in Bismarck's embrace of social reform without compromising their broader democratic demands. Bismarck's efforts faltered. In the 1884 election, the

[1] Gerhard A. Ritter, *Social Welfare in Germany and Britain: Origins and Development*, trans. Kim Traynor (New York: Learnington Spa, 1986), 77 79.

SPD increased their Reichstag presence from twelve to twenty-four seats. More broadly, as I explore in Chapter 4, the socialists responded to Bismarck's entreaties by using the social insurance laws as mechanisms for popular mobilization. In his essay, "The Socialist Conception of Democracy," the great theoretician of reformist socialism Eduard Bernstein recognized the significance of these institutions. He argued that "half-statist" structures like "the great branches of worker's insurance" were arenas in which workers were creating a new vision of democracy, one based on an "organic association" between different levels of political power.[2] Because the corporate boards that administered the laws ensured worker representation, the new social insurance institutions provided the socialists with a foothold within the state and new resources for supporting their most active members. As socialist leader Paul Singer observed in 1902, the new social insurance laws provided an essential gathering-point for recruiting and training "goal-and-class conscious workers."[3] Bismarck himself was also aware of the limits of state repression. Even as many of his political allies called for restricting the role of the SPD in the insurance system, Bismarck refused. "The insurance system," he remarked, "must be lubricated with a drop of democratic oil if it is to run properly."[4]

This book is about the dilemmas and possibilities that the social welfare state presents to political movements aspiring to enact democratic transformations. By democratic transformations, I mean a mode of politics that brings critical scrutiny upon previously unchallenged and rigid forms of domination and that thereby seeks to change not just the distribution of material goods or the electoral fortunes of a particular party but the basic structure of social relationships. As a confrontation between the first modern, nation-wide social welfare institutions and a movement seeking such democratic transformations, the clash between Bismarck and the SPD distills the questions I address: Can democratic political movements use social welfare institutions to achieve lasting change in society? Or will participation in hierarchical state structures inevitably dissipate the transformative aspirations of such movements?

In response to these questions, I advance a theory of democracy and the welfare state that rests on two fundamental pillars. The first is a reconceptualization of the means of social democracy: the democratic welfare state. I develop a theory of welfare institutions that shows how they can function, not as bureaucratic, passive-client-creating entitlements, but as mechanisms for collective democratic empowerment and participation. The second is a

[2] Eduard Bernstein, "The Socialist Concept of Democracy," in *Eduard Bernstein on Social Dem ocracy and International Politics: Essays and Other Writings*, ed. Marius S. Ostrowski (Basing stoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 50.

[3] Quoted in Florian Tennstedt, *Vom Proleten Zum Industriearbeiter: Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialpolitik in Deutschland 1800 bis 1914* (Cologne: Bund Verlag, 1983), 429.

[4] Quoted in E. P. Hennock, *The Origin of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850 1914: Social Policies Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 127.

reconceptualization of the goal of social democracy. Against the idea that the purpose of welfare institutions is material equality, redistribution, or social rights, I argue that social democratic movements have and should aspire to transform entrenched structures of social domination through participatory welfare politics. Together, these two threads provide a reconceptualization of social democracy as a political theory and historical political project, one that emphasizes the democratic rather than merely protective dimensions of welfare politics.

This is a work of historically grounded political theory. I develop its central arguments by moving between concrete historical examples and reflection on the conceptual categories through which political theorists interpret democratic politics in the welfare state. As a result, my method is dialogic and diagnostic rather than deductive: I search, not for higher-level normative principles that could justify welfare institutions but for the theoretical concepts that can illuminate the traces of past transformative and utopian movements embedded in our current political practices and institutions. I examine three of the most influential twentieth-century theorists of democracy and the welfare state – Max Weber, Hannah Arendt, and Jürgen Habermas – to diagnose the theoretical deadlocks behind current approaches to the welfare state and to develop my own positive vision of transformative politics in the welfare state. In each case, I unearth the basic philosophical and socio-theoretic concepts animating their respective thoughts. However, I view these concepts not as self-contained, philosophical edifices, but as always-partial efforts to make sense of our common world and the political events contained within it. Connecting this analysis up with the history of political mobilizations in Bismarck's welfare institutions and the postwar Swedish welfare state, I show that they can illuminate concrete political dynamics of democratic world-making in the welfare state.

Most briefly, my argument is that democratic theorists are unable to articulate the participatory aspects of welfare politics because they inherit the horizon of political possibility generated by Max Weber's thought. To be sure, Weber is an important starting point because he so clearly captures the specific nature of political action in a world of large-scale bureaucratic institutions, such as those of the welfare state. Nonetheless, I argue that Weber responds to the emergence of popular democratic movements focused on welfare institutions by reformulating the critique of political economy as a critique of technical rationality. The image of the welfare state as a hierarchical, bureaucratic machine arises from the abiding influence of Max Weber's thought in democratic theory. By accepting Weber's assumptions, democratic theorists reduce welfare institutions to state mechanisms of mastery and calculation, thereby foreclosing possibilities for popular democratic participation in those institutions.

I turn to Arendt's thought for an analysis of the relationship between democracy and the welfare state that overcomes Weber's socio-theoretic

categories. Against the widespread view that Arendt was irredeemably hostile to "the social question" – that is, to using democratic state power to address economic or social injustices – I recover unappreciated elements of her thought that prove vital for thinking about democratic politics in the welfare state. Developing her implicit dialogue with Weber, I use elements of Arendt's thought to develop a view of the welfare institutions as what I call *worldly mediators* between calculable material needs and non-calculative, political judgments. I show that once political theorists understand welfare institutions to be the result of democratic world-making – the lasting, worldly objects produced in the course of political struggle – they can better see opportunities for democratic participation and engagement that welfare institutions create. The historical experience of the German labor movement's engagement with Bismarck's welfare regime embodies these possibilities, even as that experience is obscured by the influence of Weber's thought on the historiography of the German state.

Finally, I reconstruct Habermas's complex view of capitalist society to develop a critical account of struggles against domination in the welfare state. I challenge the prevalent view that Habermas inherits Weber's critique of instrumental rationality. Instead, drawing on the experience of Swedish feminists challenging gender domination, I deploy Habermas's theory of domination to analyze how welfare institutions at once reflect implicit structures of domination in society and expose those hidden forms of domination to critical challenge and transformative political action. Together, the theoretical categories I draw from Arendt and Habermas help reveal the historical traces of a democratic, participatory welfare state – one that has yet to be fully realized.

## DEMOCRACY, DOMINATION, AND THE WELFARE STATE

These arguments point to questions and concerns in three areas: first, the nature of democratic agency; second, the critique of social domination; and third, the politics of welfare institutions. Most generally, my argument is concerned with the following question: How can democratic social movements engage with and use welfare institutions to challenge broader structures of social domination in society? Answering this question requires, first, some account of the nature of democratic agency: What makes a social movement a *democratic* social movement, and how should we understand the form of action that enables such movements of people to achieve their political ends? Second, it entails some account of the nature of social domination: What features of the world are we picking out when we use the concept of domination? What makes a political or social hierarchy a relationship or structure of domination? How do those features persist over time and how can they be changed? How we conceptualize democratic agency

will interact with our account of social domination. Insofar as domination refers to some condition of exclusion, powerlessness, and inferiority, our view of democratic agency will capture the processes through which those subject to domination come to view themselves as agents, capable of determining the structure of society as equals and so act together to alter those structures of domination.

Third, my argument requires an analysis of the nature of welfare institutions. I approach welfare institutions from the perspective of democratic actors – not merely as redistribution mechanisms that try to live up to some standard of justice but as sites of political activity and relationships mediated by institutions. More than almost any other set of political structures, welfare institutions form the basis of individuals' social and political visibility. For many individuals, their first official interaction with the state occurs when they are assigned a number by the state that will track their contributions to social insurance programs. Welfare institutions form a distinctive nexus of the intimate and the general. They provide individuals with a specific identity vis-à-vis the state, one based in the minute details of an individual's working and social life, while also one that produces new relationships that extend beyond the closed, kinship networks characteristic of earlier forms of community relief and welfare.

As a result, welfare institutions form something like a connective tissue, drawing together the manifold particular decisions and activities of individuals with institutions of state governance and the structural imperatives of the economy. There is nothing intrinsically democratic about this aspect of welfare institutions – that they materially create new relationships that cut across the private, the state, and the economy. But this fact makes them a crucial site of democratic politics. Indeed, many of the most significant democratic social movements of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have mobilized around welfare institutions. The workers' movement, the feminist movement, the Civil Rights movement – each, at some point, fixed their attention on welfare institutions, either seeking to transform preexisting institutions or calling for the creation of new institutions that would reshape the material basis of future democratic action. In each case, actors in the movements recognized that the formation or recreation of welfare institutions – health insurance, unemployment support, family or childcare allowances, job guarantees, minimum incomes – could alter the balance of power in other social domains, mobilize their supporters, and become new sites of democratic participation and action in their own right. Even as they translate the experiences of individuals into more abstract, quantitative languages that enable state administrations to govern them as populations, welfare institutions are crucial means and objects of democratic struggle. Because of their combined generality and intimacy, welfare institutions tend to disclose, in stark form, the structure of the underlying social relations that they are regulating. This makes them

important sites of attention for democratic movements that want to transform entrenched forms of domination.

While I avail myself of existing empirical research on welfare state politics, I also draw attention to the oft-neglected interplay between democratic social movements and welfare institutions – not just at the moment of creation but in the ongoing functioning of such institutions. For example, in Sweden, the turn toward a deliberate gender equality policy was, in part, the product of concerted social movement activity that operated both within and outside formal welfare institutions. To illuminate this, I approach welfare institutions as part of a larger field of political and economic institutions, with no clear center or necessary coherence. For this reason, I tend to think the phrase "the welfare state" can be misleading and I will mostly use the term "welfare institutions" when referring to the various structures with which I am concerned, such as public insurance schemes, poor relief, housing policies, family policies, and employment institutions. All these institutions have evolved to socialize risk, ensure a certain minimum of material well-being, and embody societal expectations around reciprocity and mutual support. While useful as shorthand, to be sure, the term "welfare state" evokes the image of a unitary state with an integrated and coherent set of political institutions, all of which rest on a unified, underlying ideology or a set of normative commitments. It tends to lead us away from the fragmentary, conflicted, overlapping, and simply messy nature of welfare institutions as they operate and interact with each other in the real world.

Welfare institutions are significant for another reason: They are key institutional mechanisms that link up deliberate political action with broader economic processes in capitalist societies. In developing a political theory of the welfare state, I also hope to reopen a set of questions that have been left off the agenda of political theory and democratic theory: How should we theorize the relationship between democratic world-making and the broad structural forces of political economy?[5] Much of the development of democratic

[5] Indeed, my argument harkens back to the once vibrant theoretical debate about the implications of the political economy for the possibility of democratic action and social transformation. Key interventions in this earlier debate include Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1975); Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984). In the wake of the 2008 financial crash and the subsequent crisis of the post 1970s accumulation regime, there has been some important recent interest in reviving the critique of political economy. Nancy Fraser, for instance, has drawn on a variety of left thinkers, such as the early Habermas and Karl Polanyi, to rethink the politics of economic crisis. Similarly, Wolfgang Streeck has recently argued that the earlier strains of critical theory were too quick to think the problem of democratic capitalism had been solved through Keynesian state interven tion. And theorists such as Margaret Kohn have looked to earlier modes of critical thinking about the relationship between democracy and capitalism in her case, solidarist thought based on the idea of the commonwealth to critically understand processes of privatization and commodifica tion. Finally, Albena Azmanova provides most extensive recent discussion of these themes in critical theory. Like Azmanova, I want to shift the frame away from inequality and towards

theory has insisted on what thinkers call "the autonomy of the political." Reacting to the tendency of liberals to reduce politics to interest group bargaining and Marxists' disdain of "formal" democracy as a mere cover for class warfare, a variety of thinkers – including the three under consideration in the following – insisted that democracy rests on modes of action irreducible to economic, means–ends reasoning. Whether it is Weber's notion of charismatic leadership that appeals to nonmaterial needs, Arendt's analysis of political action as disclosure amongst human plurality, or Habermas's idea of meaning-generating communicative action, in each case the distinctive nature of "the political" is set against the domain of material, calculable, economic needs. Democratic theorists look to the mass protest, the town-hall meeting, and more generally the "extraordinary" as moments when genuine democratic agency can break through the torpid routines of economic and bureaucratic institutions.

Behind this view resides a whole background of imagery, rhetoric, affect, and orientation that made the autonomy of the political vocabulary attractive. The post–World War II critique of the welfare state, a critique that inspired the move toward the autonomy of the political, conjures images of brutally gray offices, corporate men with no distinctive personalities, the mundane and the technical, within which inheres no space for agency and individuality. "Politics" breaks through like a ray of sunshine. The critiques of technocracy, administration, bureaucracy, and instrumental rationality captured important aspects of that historical moment. Yet they also distorted crucial facets of it, and we are now, with the relative decline of welfare politics, more painfully attuned to what was left out. My argument challenges this broad fixation on the political as a distinctive domain of activity that needs to be protected from economic forces and mentalities. I show that the thinkers, such as Arendt, most closely associated with the desire to "rescue" the political from economic reductionism, were, in fact, deeply concerned with how to theorize the relationship between democratic action and the dynamics of political economy. At the same time, I do not want to return to economic determinism. Here I develop a properly *political* account of the welfare state. Like Weber, Arendt, and (at times) Habermas, my argument seeks to capture the distinctive experiences of actors engaged in politics, and especially the fragility, contingency, and

domination. My argument is indebted to this work, and I contend that such arguments need to be supplemented with an understanding of the underlying social theoretic assumptions that have made the analysis of political economy fall out of democratic theory. Albena Azmanova, *Capitalism on Edge: How Fighting Precarity Can Achieve Radical Change without Crisis or Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020); Nancy Fraser, "A Triple Movement? Parsing the Politics of Crisis after Polanyi," *New Left Review* 81, May June (2013): 119 132; "Legitimation Crisis? On the Political Contradictions of Financialized Capitalism," *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015): 157 189; Margaret Kohn, *The Death and Life of the Urban Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Wolfgang Streeck, *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 2014).

unpredictability inherent in political action. Rather than search for an "Archimedean point" above politics from which to develop a normative defense of the welfare state or an even more ambitious economic project that all reasonable agents should accept, I approach the welfare state from the perspective of the vagaries of political action.[6] But I depart from the way that the "autonomy of the political" has been mobilized to present administrative, bureaucratic structures like welfare institutions as inherently predictable, routine, and unpolitical.

I argue that welfare institutions are important sites of democratic worldmaking precisely because of how they interface with the structuring forces of capitalism. They are the structures through which people's material needs, the potential objects of means–ends calculation become, instead, the occasion for collective forms of political judgment and action. On a conceptual level, then, my argument examines how we should think about the relationship between democratic forms of collective action and the broader imperatives of economic forces and structures. Rather than the autonomy of the political, I am interested in how we can theorize the interaction between democratic agency and political economy without, on the one hand, reducing one to the other, or, on the other, divorcing our thinking about democracy from a theory of capitalism.

## DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND DEMOCRATIC AGENCY

While my goal in the following is to develop a political theory of the welfare state, I am interested in the politics of welfare institutions in large part because of how they illuminate broader problems in democratic theory. I articulate an account of democratic agency that highlights the centrality of welfare institutions as sites of political struggle and action. In turn, I argue that we can learn something about democratic agency by examining it in the context of the welfare state. First, though, we need some working definition of democratic agency. I can by no means settle the disagreement about the concept of democracy, an inherently contested concept that tracks a set of controversial normative commitments. Nonetheless, my argument is guided by an understanding of democracy in terms of democratic agency. By democratic agency, I mean the ability of groups of individuals to deliberately and collectively determine the rules governing their social cooperation such as to realize an egalitarian set of relationships.

In this view, democracy refers, first, to a form of collective action. And it refers, second, to broad societal processes of collective mobilization that focus

[6] For example, John Rawls enjoins his reader to view society "*sub specie aeternatiatis* . . . to regard the human situation not only from all social but also from all temporal points of view." John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice: Revised Edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 514, emphasis in original. Rawls developed this methodology in a climate of skepticism about more ambitious projects to democratize the economy. For an insightful discussion of this context, see Katrina Forrester, *In the Shadow of Justice: Postwar Liberalism and the Remaking of Political Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 18 24.

on social transformations that extend beyond formal political institutions. My perspective, then, focuses on democratic theory in relation to the politics of social movements and civil society. These broad forms of political mobilization in society interact with the formalization of specific decision-making rules and procedures within institutions.[7] Second, democracy, as I use it, is not purely procedural but has substantive normative content based on an ideal of equality.[8] Democratic action seeks to realize a certain ideal of mutual recognition as moral equals who are authors of legitimate political claims. There are still leaders and followers in social movements – this is not an ideal of strict, distributive equality. Nonetheless, democratic social movements try to realize a relationally egalitarian culture and institutional structure.

Third, democratic agency refers to both structure of social movements and the tactics they use to pursue their goals as well as the substantive goals they seek to realize. Democratic social movements strive to be both internally democratic and to help realize institutions that are more democratic. In each case, though, there are inevitable compromises between expediency and ideals, compromises that do not admit of theoretical resolution and must rather be negotiated in the course of politics. A perfectly egalitarian or democratic group that makes no effort to reorganize broader social relationships in a more egalitarian direction is not an instance of democratic agency. Rather, democratic movements collectively organize to challenge and transform unjustified arbitrary inegalitarian structures in society, such as class, gender, or racial structures. They seek to reorganize political and social

[7] This way of thinking about democracy distinguishes my view from theorists like Sheldon Wolin who identify democracy only with moments of noninstitutional collective agency and so view institutions as inherently undemocratic. See, for example, Sheldon Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Recently, John Medearis has advanced a theory of democracy that, like mine, emphasizes the interplay between institutional decision making and the broader societal processes through which groups challenge the alienation of their activity in institutions. My argument very much builds on his perspective. However, I emphasize, more than Medearis, the need to develop a critique of the view of institutions that makes them seem inimical to democratic participation, which I do through my analysis of Weber. I then use that to develop a perspective that can help reveal the possibilities for democracy to go beyond opposition and build new, participatory institutions that can then empower struggles against domination. John Medearis, *Why Democracy Is Oppos itional* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015). A complete account of democracy would integrate both aspects the procedural and the societal to show, for example, how majoritarian decision rules in institutions like elections relate to democratic social movements. For my purposes, I focus on the broader, societal dimension.

[8] A complete account of the nature of egalitarianism and its relationship to democratic theory is beyond my focus. For exemplary efforts to develop these connections, see Elizabeth Anderson, "What Is the Point of Equality?," *Ethics* 109, no. 2 (1999): 287 337; Niko Kolodny, "Rule over None II: Social Equality and the Justification of Democracy," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 42, no. 4 (2014): 287 336. James Lindley Wilson, *Democratic Equality* (Princeton: Princeton Uni versity Press, 2019).

institutions and cultural patterns of normative respect to eradicate undemocratic relationships of domination.[9]

How do welfare institutions act as institutional infrastructures that are sites of both technical administration and democratic agency? How do they reinforce and expand state power and the structural imperatives of capitalism? How, in response, can they enable democratic movements to advance their transformative goals? These questions all speak to larger problems in democratic theory. First, many democratic thinkers note the tension between democratic agency and the routines and structures of ordinary political institutions. On the one hand, without institutional form, democratic agency seems impotent; on the other hand, institutions threaten to absorb the transformative energies of democratic movements into the status quo.[10] My argument draws attention to the underlying assumptions that produce this apparent dilemma. These debates rest on a view of political, and especially welfare, institutions as sites of technical calculation and administrative rationality that inevitably suppress authentic democratic agency.[11] Against this view, my argument tries

[9] Such aspirations are compatible with the creation and recognition of justified forms of hierarchy, so long as those do not, over time, erode the bases of egalitarian social relationships. For example, the ancient Athenians, while extremely worried about inegalitarian political structures, nonetheless accepted elections rather than lot for the appointment of magistrates that required specific expertise, such as generals. But they were then careful to hem in such inegalitarian structures with a variety of mechanisms, ranging from short terms, post term accountability, and ostracism, so as to ensure that legitimate forms of hierarchical political institutions did not corrupt the broader egalitarian institutions and culture of Athens.

[10] The two poles of this dilemma map onto the opposition between the so called deliberative and radical democrats. Heralding the possibility of institutionalizing democratic forms of communi cation, deliberative democrats argue that a more expansive vision of democratic possibilities arises from the idea that all coercion must be rationally justified through discourse. Radical democrats challenge this focus on institutional reason giving by emphasizing the disruptive, unruly, and ephemeral nature of democratic agency vis à vis the routines of established insti tutions and dominant norms. The fullest expression of the deliberative democratic vision remains Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. William Rehg (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998). For develop ments of the radical democratic thought, see Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displace ment of Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Andreas Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Aletta J. Norval, *Aversive Democracy: Inheritance and Originality in the Democratic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Shel don Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference*, ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Linda M. G. Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). For a defense of the welfare state in terms of deliberative democracy, see Kevin Olson, *Reflexive Democracy: Political Equality and the Welfare State* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

[11] These aspects of welfare institutions have been most insightfully analyzed by Michel Foucault and scholars who are indebted to him. There is also considerable overlap between Foucaultian analyses and radical democratic views, although scholars like Barbara Cruikshank have

to understand how seemingly technical institutional sites of politics can sustain the broader, transformative aspirations of democratic movements, challenging the diverse forms of domination characteristic of capitalist societies.

Second, my argument challenges how democratic theorists think about problems of bureaucracy, administrative reason, and the state in contemporary societies. I am interested in how the conceptual vocabulary brought to bear by democratic theory reinforces an image of bureaucratic institutions as being inherently anti-democratic, such that democratic theorists turn to extra-institutional political forces as the only instances of democratic agency. I examine how democratic movements, on the contrary, have successfully turned seemingly cold, bureaucratic institutions into sites of political action and democratic agency. At a conceptual level, I examine the relationship between the forms of technical calculation characteristic of bureaucratic institutions and the nontechnical judgments that inaugurate democratic action. In this respect, my analysis moves between normative theory – questions of the value of democracy – to social theory, which examines the underlying understanding of social practices and institutions that always implicitly inform normative democratic theory. Social theory reflects on questions such as: What is the nature of agency and action? How does agency relate to institutional structures? What makes action meaningful or significant? How should we understand the nature of collective action and emergent social collectivities? In this light, I analyze a set of socio-theoretical terms that animate the thought of Weber, Heidegger, and Arendt – and most centrally, value, worldliness, and the everyday/extraordinary distinction. Weber's pessimism about democratic politics in the welfare state arises from his underlying social theory, based as it is on the opposition between noninstrumental, meaning-giving values and the everyday world of technical calculation. Arendt, picking up themes from Heidegger's thought, challenges the philosophy of value that informs Weber's thought and instead argues we should think in terms of worldliness. A complex and elusive concept in Arendt's work, in my reconstruction the concept of world points primarily to how collective judgment and action is made possible and sustained by a world of material objects – a stable environment. Crucially, for Arendt, those objects, even as they may be technical tools or instruments, also gather together people and invite them to give nontechnical judgments. Her example is that we always

critiqued radical democrats for still assuming a political subject outside of relations of power. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Govern mentality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Jacques Donzelot, "The Promotion of the Social," *Economy and Society* 17, no. 3 (1988): 395 427; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977); Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

judge a table, not just on how well it *functions* as a table, but also on its appearance, on how it "fits" in the world and relates to other objects.

Based on this concept of worldliness, Arendt develops a theory of what I call worldly mediators – institutions and structures that draw people together and combine technical and nontechnical modes of judgment. I argue that, seen as worldly mediators, bureaucracies like welfare institutions always deploy technical calculation even as they gather together groups of individuals and invite them to make various nontechnical judgments about the shape of the world.[12] They are simultaneously mechanisms for technical calculation and for control, and what Bonnie Honig calls "public things," objects of collective life that draw people into new relationships and form part of the "infrastructure of democratic life."[13] While much of democratic theory reduces bureaucratic institutions to means–ends calculations, this perspective shows how such institutions are sites of important, often unseen, forms of democratic judgment and agency. If from the perspective of worldliness, that welfare institutions are both more and less than "politics against markets," then the crucial question is this: What sort of political horizons do welfare institutions, given their design and context, create? Do they present social problems as objects of technical control or do they rather invite political action and participation? So, while these theoretical terms help us, as democratic actors, to figure out how to relate to already existing bureaucratic institutions, they also point to the possibility of reorganizing such institutions such that they include more expansive forms of democratic participation.

Third, my emphasis on the relationship between bureaucratic institutions and nontechnical forms of judgment also speaks to the sort of subjects people have to be to achieve democratic agency and overturn structures of domination. This is a particularly pressing question in the context of welfare institutions, as a frequent criticism of the welfare state is how they turn agents into passive clients and erase collective solidarity in favor of highly individual notions of responsibility. More radically still, democratic theorists, influenced by thinkers like Foucault, argue that welfare institutions constitute individuals as subjects such that their very agency is always conditioned by systems of power that largely operate behind their backs. In contrast to these views, I am interested in how, even in the formation of welfare institutions, there are opportunities for

[12] Another way to think about this is that, while radical democrats seek to escape or wholly oppose modern technical rationality as embodied in bureaucratic institutions, theorists like Heidegger and Arendt want to figure out how to relate to modern technology. The goal is not to escape technical calculation but relate to it such that it does not obliterate other ways of viewing the world and acting. In this respect, my argument overlaps with other attempts to think about the relationship between calculation and politics, such as Shalini Satkunanandan's effort to rethink political responsibility. Shalini Satkunanandan, *Extraordinary Responsibility: Politics Beyond the Moral Calculus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[13] Bonnie Honig, *Public Things: Democracy in Disrepair* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 17.

forms of judgment and action that enable people to recognize themselves as agents with the capacity to transform social relationships. Insofar as welfare institutions help constitute spaces of shared, nontechnical judgment and thereby enable democratic agency, they can also be institutions that, under certain conditions, help individuals see themselves as agents rather than passive objects of bureaucratic management.

## CRITICAL THEORY AND THE CRITIQUE OF DOMINATION

Welfare institutions promise freedom: freedom from fear, from insecurity, from subservience to your boss or your husband. But we know that promise often came along with new forms of unfreedom: moral supervision and disciplinary control, continued subjection to the broader imperatives of both capital accumulation and national anxieties about the social reproduction of the workforce. This interplay between freedom and unfreedom is a central theme of the tradition of critical social theory, as it was developed by thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School; more broadly, critical theory begins with the idea of emancipation and the utopian hope for a society free of domination.[14] Yet what distinguishes *critical* theory from other theories of freedom is its attention to the ambivalent, always-partial process of emancipation, as embodied, for example, in the contradictions of welfare institutions noted above.[15] Using the relationship between democratic social movements and welfare institutions as my material, my argument in the following develops a broader account of both the nature of domination as well as the dynamics through democratic movements challenge and transform relations and structures of domination. The idea of worldly mediation helps identify the nontechnical aspects of welfare institutions and so how they enable different forms of political action; the critique of domination helps specify just what type of action democratic social movements should pursue in engaging with welfare institutions. More generally, my argument contributes to debates about the normative foundations of critique, the relationship between critique and practice, and the relationship between critical theory and the social sciences.

Anxious about imposing an ideal endpoint on real political struggles, critical theory takes as its starting point the negative experiences of harm and disrespect that animate critical consciousness – that is, that enable people to see

[14] For a general overview of this emancipatory core of the Frankfurt School tradition, see Seyla Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923 1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

[15] In this respect, I try to follow Amy Allen's recent argument that critical theory must abandon linear, teleological accounts of historical development. Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decol onizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

themselves as agents and to see social structures as potential objects of deliberate, collective action.[16] These experiences of harm, of moral disrespect, arise from the existence of structures of domination in society. Much of my argument in the following is devoted to analyzing and unpacking the concept of domination and so clarifying the normative basis of critical theory.[17] As I analyze it, domination refers to a relationship between agents, groups, or structures that are politically uncontrolled and morally arbitrary. But the critique of domination should also capture the deeper practices through which people are constructed as rational, accountable agents in the first place – what critical theorists often call "domination of inner and outer nature."[18] While uncontrolled and arbitrary power can be unmasked through rational critique, critical theory is also concerned with the subtle ways in which the human capacity for reasoning and morality can itself be marked by domination – by a desire for control, to be a self-contained subject that can master nature and the world. While a capacity for rational insight is the basis for struggles against domination, moralization – the mechanisms through which some group is identified as irrational and in need of moral improvement – is also a powerful support to domination in its own right.

There are currently several competing notions of domination in political theory, some of which trace their lineage back to critical theory. Thinkers associated with the so-called republican revival develop a view of domination that highlights uncontrolled power. Neo-Kantian descendants of critical theory, such as the later Habermas and Rainer Forst, argue that domination is ultimately about unjustified or unjustifiable power. And theorists indebted to

[16] For the idea that critical theory should begin from "negative" experiences of disrespect rather than a positive vision of justice, see Axel Honneth, "The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: On the Location of Critical Theory Today," in *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); Robyn Marasco, *The Highway of Despair: Critical Theory after Hegel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

[17] I discuss contemporary theories of domination at greater length in Chapter 1. Recently, there has been a particular interest in theorizing the distinctive forms of domination characteristic of modern capitalism, which is particularly pertinent for my argument. Yet, as I will argue at more length, these efforts tend to restrict themselves to one level of the analysis of domination (i.e., direct or structural). See, for example, Alex Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Commonwealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); K. Sabeel Rahman, *Democracy against Domination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). In contrast to these approaches, my account of domination also articulates the intersections between the abstract domination of capitalist imperatives and the structural domination characteristic of, for instance, gender domination. In this regard, I am interested in developing, not the neo republican ideal of freedom as non domination, but a broader critical theory of domination. For an important recent development of the idea of domination in critical theory, see Amy Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[18] For the classic version of this idea, see Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002 [1947]).

post-structuralism, as well as some aspects of mid-career Habermas and the early Frankfurt School, emphasize the abstract forms of domination that constitute individuals as rational, moral agents. Here, I develop a single framework that integrates these different pictures of domination. While their advocates often present them as competing theories, I show that, rather, they all capture distinctive facets of domination. To this end, I adapt Habermas's theory that our linguistic claims can be redeemed along three distinct dimensions of validity, which refer to three different "worlds" – the objective world, the intersubjective world, and the subjective world. I show that the three views of domination correspond to manifestations of power in those three different worlds. Neo-republican theories focus on domination with regards to coercive power in the objective world, neo-Kantian theories emphasize on domination in relation to the power to determine the structure of intersubjective norms, and post-structuralist theories analyze power in terms of the ability to constitute the terms of the subjective or interior world of rational agency.

I further argue that the critique of domination should connect up with an analysis of the practices through which structures of domination are challenged and transformed.[19] By this, I mean that the theory of domination should do more than just identify what is wrong with relations of domination. It should also tell us something about, first, what sustains those structures of domination – how they are reproduced over time, why people remain attached to them. And second, the theory of domination should help us analyze the practices through which individuals and groups come to recognize and challenge a structure of domination. I develop an account of both of these in my reconstruction of the early Habermas's theory of domination. I examine his account of what he calls the causality of fate, which captures how structures of domination reproduce themselves over time, and the dialectic of moral life, which describes the dynamic process through which groups challenge structures of domination. Together, these two ideas provide a way of relating the normative, theoretical analysis of domination to the practical processes through which people relate to and alter different relationships and structures of domination. I then build on Habermas's analysis to show how these two concepts – the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality – relate to my theory of the three levels of domination. While Habermas's theory presents a historical sequence – a move from direct, to structural, to abstract forms of domination – I argue that all three forms will persist and overlap in time. I show that practical struggles against domination must contend with domination as it manifests at all three

[19] I concur with views of critique that contend that it must begin with everyday, pre theoretical practices of critique and resist the temptation to impose an external standard with which to judge lay actors. For this argument, see Luc Boltanksi, *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011). At the same time, a critical theory of domination cannot avoid being somewhat partisan and making claims about the actions of some actors that they would not apply to themselves.

levels. Further, I argue that political movements challenging domination at one level can sometimes reproduce it at another, and so critical theorists should approach struggles against domination as always partial, incomplete, and provisional.

This approach to connecting normative theory with practice also allows critical theory to draw more substantially on the social sciences. In response to anxieties about how to ground the standpoint of critique, critical theorists have increasingly turned away from the empirical social sciences and toward pure philosophical reflection.[20] Insofar as contemporary critical theorists, such as Axel Honneth, draw on social scientific research, they do so in order to discern the already existing and widely shared background norms that can authorize critiques of "social pathologies" in which people systematically relate to these shared norms in a self-defeating or one-sided manner.[21] In contrast, my argument draws on social scientific analyses of the welfare state to capture the crises and conflicts that reveal the implicit structures for domination interwoven with welfare institutions. For example, in Chapter 4, I show how the fiscal crisis of the Swedish welfare state resulted, to an extent, from the only partial challenge to structures of domination launched by the feminist movement. In that crisis, then, we can see the traces of a displaced political struggle. More broadly, I look to historical and empirical analyses of the welfare state to discern the fragments of utopian alternatives embodied in existing welfare institutions. Yet I also challenge the underlying terms of many social scientific analyses of the welfare state for accepting the Weberian image of welfare institutions as technical mechanisms that integrate subordinate populations into the routines of the state. Social scientific views of the welfare state that focus on causal analysis presuppose the historical development of institutional structures that quantify and rationalize human behavior. Critical theory situates the results of social scientific analyses in a broader framework, one that steps outside the normative horizon implicit in the methodological commitments of social scientific research. The goal of critical theory is to ground its utopian aspirations in the real world without succumbing to the underlying, often unacknowledged political perspective of the social sciences.

## THE POLITICS OF THE WELFARE STATE

Finally, my argument in the following both draws on and intervenes in empirical debates about the politics of the welfare state. Comparative scholars of the welfare state continuously work to bring a conception of collective democratic action back into the study of economic systems. Empirical theories that situate

[20] Rainer Forst, *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[21] Axel Honneth, *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*, trans. Joseph Ganahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

welfare institutions within a broader account of capitalist political economy reveal the importance of democratic contestation and negotiation for the formation and ongoing administration of welfare institutions. From the other direction, comparative political economy scholarship often points to the deep historical and functional interrelationships between welfare institutions and the imperatives of capital accumulation. While these research traditions provide useful resources for democratic and critical theory, they also rest on a denuded understanding of democratic agency. Despite the important disagreements amongst scholars in this literature, they generally agree in presenting welfare institutions as mechanisms for either economic redistribution or mitigating social risks. As a result, they view democratic action within welfare institutions primarily in terms of instrumental, calculative action – economic competition pursued through other means. Just as the following discussion attempts to rethink the economic in democratic theory, so too does it point to the need to rethink the political in political economy.

The empirical literature on the welfare state is vast, having evolved out of the theoretical work I examine in the following. Much of the early research on the welfare state was indebted to Weberian modernization theory, examining rising social expenditures in terms of a linear process of industrialization and modernization.[22] Subsequent scholarship has focused on explaining variation amongst welfare regimes. Notably, for my purposes, this effort to distinguish various welfare regimes also evolved as a critical reaction to democratic critiques of the integrative, corporatist structure of expansive welfare institutions. In many respects, empirical controversies about welfare regime diversity are interrelated, even if not explicitly, with the normative and political question of how to evaluate the relationship between democratic aspirations and welfare institutions.[23]

Central here is the debate between theories that explain variation based on the extent of working-class power and those that focus on the different needs of underlying "production regimes" or forms of capitalism, some of which encourage welfare institutions so as to enable people to invest in specific forms of "human capital" or skills. Scholars associated with the first view (the so-called "power resources approach") argue that the class power is the main cause of variation among welfare regimes.[24] The assumption is that workers

[22] For the industrialization view, see Harold L. Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality: Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

[23] For the classic expression of the corporatist theory, see Philippe C. Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?," *The Review of Politics* 36, no. 01 (1974): 85 131. Schmitter's thinking about corporatism was heavily indebted to Sheldon Wolin's political thought (personal conversation).

[24] Gøsta Esping Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). Following Esping Andersen, these arguments have been further refined in Evelyne Huber and John D. Stephens, *Development and Crisis of the Welfare State: Parties and Policies in Global Markets* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Walter Korpi, "Power Resources

could use the more egalitarian distribution of political power, through the universal franchise, to counter the greater power inequalities of wage labor. In particular, the welfare state enables workers to pursue a strategy of decommodifying their labor and thus reducing their dependency upon the market nexus. Most important historically is the ability of the industrial working class to form alliances with agrarian parties and then social democrats' capacity, once in power, to construct policies that can secure broad middle-class support.[25]

In contrast, scholars who argue that welfare institutions arise from a specific organized form of capitalism – the "varieties of capitalism" school – contend that the central problem that the welfare state solves is investment in skills. Firms need workers to invest in skills, but as skills become more and more specialized, such investment becomes riskier for workers. It is riskier because if employees need to change jobs, their new wages will not be commensurate with their skill investment.[26] The great accomplishment of varieties of capitalism scholars is to show, in formal terms, how large welfare states, wage bargaining, and labor market rigidities can all contribute to economic growth, given that a regime has specialized in industry- and firm-specific skills. Politically, the varieties of capitalism school marks a universalization of the category of capital. Workers are mini-firms, investing in their fixed assets – skills – and hoping to maximize the return on their investments. Indebted to neoclassical economics and theories of public choice, varieties of capitalism scholars thus take to a reductive, instrumental understanding of the stakes of political struggles over social welfare institutions.

My purpose here is not to intervene directly in the empirical debate between these two views.[27] Rather, I am interested in what democratic theory can learn

and Employer Centered Approaches in Explanations of Welfare States and Varieties of Capital ism: Protagonists, Consenters, and Antagonists," *World Politics* 58, no. 2 (2006): 167 206.

[25] Peter Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875 1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Walter Korpi and Joakim Palme, "The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries," *American Sociological Review* 63, no. 5 (1998): 661 687.

[26] Peter A. Hall and David Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Com parative Advantage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). This leads varieties of capitalism advocates to draw a broad distinction between general, industry specific, and firm specific skills. General skills are highly transferable, while industry and firm specific skills generate the risks that make it hard to encourage workers to invest in them. From this formal micro foundation, we can understand the formation of two distinct regime clusters liberal market economies and coordin ated market economies and see how they can both generate economic growth.

[27] While some historical work, most notably Peter Swenson's, has sought to show that business organizations initiated important welfare measures, the majority of the historical evidence from several crucial cases (the United States, Sweden, Germany) reveals labor as the initiator, with business often acquiescing. More generally, the varieties of capitalism approach has not been able to identify what institutional vehicles translated the alliance of skilled workers and employ ers into social policies. And, as Monica Prasad argues, we could just as well expect employer preferences to be the opposite of what is observed: that high skill employers would want government subsidies for private pensions and healthcare, and general skill employers would

from their research and, in turn, in how these empirical analyses of the welfare state rest on implicit assumptions about the relationship between democratic agency and economic structures. With power resources scholars, I view welfare institutions as potential vehicles for advancing broader democratic aims and for challenging entrenched, unequal distributions of social power. Furthermore, comparative social politics scholars in the power resources school have emphasized the important work welfare institutions do in constituting, rather than just reflecting, organized groups around shared interests – how welfare institutions themselves become the objects of political mobilizations.[28] Nonetheless, the varieties of capitalism literature contains one important lesson. These scholars point to the functional interweaving of welfare institutions with the structuring imperatives of capital accumulation – providing a more specific account of the limits working class and other social movements have faced when advancing their claims in the welfare state.[29] Power resource scholars have no intellectual resources for thinking about the structural benefits capital receives from welfare state policies. And that could be a crucial part of explaining the persistence of those policies once they are enacted, even if they are created against the resistance of business.

More fundamentally, my argument calls attention to the narrow understanding of democratic agency implicit in both the power resources and varieties of capitalism approach, both of which see agency in the welfare institutions in terms of instrumental, means–ends calculation.[30] The logic of the power

want public programs to support labor mobility. Monica Prasad, *The Land of Too Much: American Abundance and the Paradox of Poverty* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 32; Peter A. Swenson, "Varieties of Capitalist Interests: Power, Institutions, and the Regulatory Welfare State in the United States and Sweden," *Studies in American Political Development* 18, no. 01 (2004): 1 29. For more recent developments of this debate, see Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Varieties of Capitalist Interests and Capitalist Power: A Response to Swenson," *Studies in American Political Development* 18, no. 02 (2004): 186 195; Torben Iversen and David Soskice, "Distribution and Redistribution: The Shadow of the Nineteenth Century," *World Politics* 61, no. 03 (2009): 438 486; Korpi, "Power Resources and Employer Centered Approaches in Explanations of Welfare States and Varieties of Capitalism: Protagon ists, Consenters, and Antagonists"; Thomas Paster, "Business and Welfare State Development: Why Did Employers Accept Social Reforms?," *World Politics* 65, no. 03 (2013): 416 451.

[28] For an overview of these arguments, see Andrea Louise Campbell, "Policy Makes Mass Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 333 351.

[29] For the classic account of the economic limits of revolutionary strategy, see Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Here, the varieties of capitalism approach also intersects with scholars who emphasize how welfare insti tutions compensate for, and so make possible, global trade openness (although not necessarily capital mobility). For this view, see Peter J. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Indus trial Policy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Elmar Rieger and Stephan Leibfried, *Limits to Globalization: Welfare States and the World Economy*, trans. Benjamin W. Veghte (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).

[30] Thus, in his classic formulation, Korpi argued we should analyze welfare institutions by viewing power from "a resource perspective and by considering alternative strategies of prudential

resources account tends to reduce the political demand for collective self-organization to a reductive economic claim, analyzing it in terms of instrumental, material needs. In short, at times, the general picture of the welfare state in the comparative politics literature reinforces Weber's pessimistic image of instituted politics, and political economy more broadly, as nothing more than instrumental calculation. My basic reconsideration of the relationship between instrumentality and democratic agency can cast the power resources approach of the welfare state in a new light. The perspective I develop points to the central role that welfare institutions play in organizing such spaces of political appearance and judgment. The political struggles, such as for decommodification, that the resource scholars view as economic competition pursued by other means are actually, so I will argue, at once advancing economic interests and struggles to constitute spaces of political participation around such interests. Indeed, more recent expansions of the power resources view have begun to theorize these processes and point out the intrinsic importance of democratic participation in the politics of the welfare state. Recent work, especially focusing on the emergence of welfare states in the Global South, has emphasized that labor union success depends to a large extent on their embeddedness in larger participatory networks.[31] My argument builds on these views and, more generally, scholarship that emphasizes how welfare institutions become sites of political struggle for democratic social movements.[32] The following draws on this research to further develop a democratic theory of welfare institutions as potential sites of democratic participation and objects of nontechnical political judgments.

Finally, both approaches to thinking about the welfare state, in their original formulations, take as given the gendered division of labor, privileging the male

holders of power resources to improve their net outcomes." Similarly, while Esping Andersen says the power resources approach is distinct from structural functionalist accounts in its focus "political actors," Korpi makes clear that these class agents and the actions they will take can be read off of structural exposures to risk. If in earlier industrialization theory, differences between regimes were "over determined" by capitalist modernization, in the power resources school the identity and power of actors is basically over determined by their structural position with regards to life course risks and industrial class relations. Walter Korpi, "Contentious Institu tions: An Augmented Rational Action Analysis of the Origins and Path Dependency of Welfare State Institutions in the Western Countries," *Rationality and Society* 13, no. 2 (2001): 244; Gøsta Esping Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 14; Korpi, "Power Resources and Employer Centered Approaches in Explanations of Welfare States and Varieties of Capitalism: Protagonists, Consenters, and Antagonists," 174. Esping Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, 14.

[31] Cheol Sung Lee, *When Solidarity Works: Labor Civic Networks and Welfare States in the Market Reform Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[32] Edwin Amenta, *Bold Relief: Institutional Politics and the Origins of Modern American Social Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Chad Alan Goldberg, *Citizens and Paupers: Relief, Rights, and Race, from the Freedmen's Bureau to Workfare* (University of Chicago Press, 2007).

industrial working-class and the domain of formal, paid employment. The view of the relationship between democratic action and welfare institutions that I develop follows feminist critics of these approaches in emphasizing the interaction between social welfare institutions and broader structures of social domination, such as gender domination. In her classic essay, Ann Orloff criticizes power resource theorists for, among other things, neglecting the importance of women's unpaid caregiving within households, a double shift which is often exacerbated with women's access to paid employment.[33] Social policy can often have ambiguous, if not contradictory, effects on the multiple burdens women are compelled to carry.[34] Yet, insofar as welfare scholars have made gender a central part of their analysis, their focus has tended to be on the employment patterns and benefit structures for relatively well-off female members of the workforce.[35] My approach, in contrast, develops insights from critical feminist theory to examine the processes through which welfare institutions both reproduce dominant social norms and structures and expose those structures to political challenge. Family policy measures, as I shall argue in Chapter 4, are at once a vital component of an emancipatory family strategy and a displacement of more zero-sum, normative conflicts onto the economic sphere. As I analyze them, welfare institutions form part of the material embodiment of structures of domination – whether of gender, race, or ability – as well as the potential objects of emancipatory political mobilization.

## OVERVIEW

I begin with how political theorists currently approach the relationship between domination, democracy, and the welfare state. Chapter 1 provides

[33] Ann Shola Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 3 (1993): 303 328. And, as Orloff more recently notes, gender has still not been fully incorporated as central to the study of comparative political economy. "Gendering the Comparative Analysis of Welfare States: An Unfinished Agenda," *Sociological Theory* 27, no. 3 (2009): 317 343.

[34] Jennifer Hook, "Gender Inequality in the Welfare State: Sex Segregation in Housework, 1965 2003," *American Journal of Sociology* 115, no. 5 (2010): 1480 1523.

[35] For efforts to incorporate gender into the preexisting scholarly perspectives, see the special edition of *Social Politics* (2009), 16, no. 2 on "How Gender and Class Challenges Varieties of Capitalism"; Gøsta Esping Andersen, *The Incomplete Revolution: Adapting to Women's New Roles* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Margarita Estévez Abe, "Gender Bias in Skills and Social Policies: The Varieties of Capitalism Perspective on Sex Segregation," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12, no. 2 (2005): 180 215; Walter Korpi, Tommy Ferrarini, and Stefan Englund, "Women's Opportunities under Different Family Policy Constellations: Gender, Class, and Inequality Tradeoffs in Western Countries Re Examined," *Social Politics* 20, no. 1 (2013): 1 40; Hadas Mandel and Moshe Semyonov, "A Welfare State Paradox: State Interventions and Women's Employment Opportunities in 22 Countries," *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 6 (2006): 1910 1949; Diane Sainsbury, ed. *Gender and Welfare State Regimes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

a systematic analysis of the concept of domination in relation to the welfare state. I reconstruct the development of the theory of domination, beginning with the most basic theory of direct domination, to theories of structural domination, and then finally examining accounts of abstract domination in terms of subjectification. I argue that each account is a coherent view of one level of domination and a full analysis should incorporate all three levels. I then show how these different views lead to three different pictures of the relationship between democracy and the welfare state: an exit-based, insurance model (direct domination), a voice-based, social rights model (structural domination), and a subjectification-based, disciplinary model (abstraction domination). While each of these perspectives illuminates aspects of the welfare state, they fail to articulate the relationship between democratic agency and the reproduction of domination. And this is because they all accept an understanding of the welfare state as a structure of instrumental rationality – a view inherited from Weber's social theory, to which I turn next.

Chapter 2 examines the broad structure of Max Weber's social theory in the context of the social liberal vision of the welfare state in nineteenth-century Germany. I reconstruct the deeper, underlying structure of contemporary theories of domination and the welfare state, tracing their origins in Weber's social theory. I argue that Weber responds to the emergence of popular democratic movements focused on welfare institutions by reformulating the critique of political economy as a critique of instrumental rationality and technical calculation. Even as Weber's thought captures important features of politics in late modernity, his understanding of welfare institutions as mechanisms of technical calculation mirrors the broader effort, characteristic of European social liberalism, to look to the welfare state as a bulwark against democratization. By accepting Weber's assumptions, democratic theorists reduce welfare institutions to state mechanisms of mastery and calculation, thereby foreclosing possibilities for popular democratic engagement with and participation in those institutions

In Chapter 3, I then turn to develop the first pillar of my view of the welfare state: A conception of welfare institutions as worldly mediators between instrumental calculation and nontechnical, collective judgments about the world. Chapter 3 forms the theoretical core of my response to Weber's social theory. Engaging with Heidegger and Arendt, the chapter challenges Weber's reduction of everyday institutions, such as welfare institutions, to mechanisms for technical calculation. I develop a new interpretation of the significance of Arendt's thought for theorizing the welfare state by juxtaposing her analysis of worldliness with Weber's focus on extraordinary values and meaning. To situate this argument, I begin with Heidegger's phenomenology of worldliness and show how it arises out of a critique of Weber's philosophy of value. Yet Heidegger does not pursue his insight in a political direction. I then turn to Arendt's use of Heidegger's analysis to articulate how technical calculation

in social institutions potentially forms spaces of judgment and appearance. The chapter then examines the participation of German workers in the administration of Bismarck's welfare institutions to show how Arendt's theoretical account illuminates the possibilities for popular political engagement with welfare institutions. Indeed, Arendt's account of worldliness opens up a view of welfare institutions as worldly mediators between instrumental calculations and collective, nontechnical judgments about the social. And this concept, in turn, calls for a much broader scope for mass-based participation in the administration of welfare institutions than what the Weberian view allows.

If Chapter 3 responds to Weber's reduction of ordinary institutions to technical calculation, Chapter 4 forms the second pillar of my theory: an account of how social movements can use welfare institutions to transform structures of domination in society. Weber's theory of the everyday in terms of technical calculation buttresses his pessimistic view of the inevitable reproduction of domination in the welfare state. Through my reading of Habermas, I develop an account of domination that focuses on how implicit structures of domination in society crystalize in material, worldly form, thus opening those structures to critical scrutiny and political challenge. I argue that this perspective can encompass the insights of the neo-republican, neo-Kantian, and post-structuralist views while escaping the theoretical and political dead end I diagnosed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 4 provides the core of my account of domination, which I develop through a critical reconstruction of the development of Habermas's social theory. I argue that the model for the critique of domination Habermas develops in *Knowledge and Human Interests* remains a viable resource for theorizing democratic movements in the welfare state. There, Habermas articulates a theory of domination in terms of the twin concepts of the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality. Together, these two ideas articulate the processes through which the reproduction of social domination through political institutions simultaneously opens those structures of domination up to critical scrutiny. I then show that my account of domination can fruitfully illuminate the normative dynamics of democratic politics in the welfare state. The chapter details the evolution of family policy in Sweden, beginning in the 1930s and moving through to the present.[36] The development of Swedish

[36] I turn to the historical examples of Germany and Sweden for two reasons: first, they are the basis for much of the theoretical reflection in the authors I consider, and second, they pose counter intuitive, hard cases to my argument. Weber's theory rests, in part, on an analysis of the formation of the German welfare state, and I use that history to help challenge the assumptions of his thought, drawing attention to the political phenomena his concepts distort. Similarly, Habermas's reflections on the welfare state emerged in dialogue with the feminist critiques of the welfare state evinced in the Swedish case. My overall argument seeks to call attention to the possibilities for democratic agency and world making even in contexts that democratic theorists typically view as hostile to such politics. Many radical democrats use the example of Bismarck to

family policy embodied the twin logics of the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality. I first examine the early formation of both the feminist movement and family policy regimes in Sweden. I focus, in particular, on the dilemmas facing feminist actors as they negotiated pressures to reframe their critiques of domination in terms of politically neutral, "family policy" interventions. The challenge to gender domination was constrained insofar as Sweden's gender equality strategy assumed economic growth that would avert a direct expropriation of male privilege. As this job growth did not materialize, gender domination was displaced onto sectoral conflicts between public-sector and private-sector workers, a conflict which eventually contributed to the crisis and breakdown of the social-democratic political project. While this crisis reflects the causality of fate – the fruit of displaced conflicts over domination – it can also, I contend, spark a renewed dialectic of morality – further challenges to gender inequality that moves beyond the terms set by earlier gender equality projects.

I conclude by discussing the broader implications of my argument for debates about the relationship between critique, democracy, and political economy. I then turn to two questions: first, are there analogous interactions between democratic social movements and welfare institutions in contexts marked by deep racial hierarchies, such as the United States? And second, to what extent is my political theory of the welfare state too late, a nostalgic defense of an order that has been destroyed by the forces of retrenchment and the transition away from the industrial economies that made it possible? On the first question, I show that the American case has a rich history of the sort of democratic struggles I am interested in, cases were multiracial social movements sought to use welfare institutions to draw attention to and transform the structures of racial domination that mark the American polity. On the second, I examine the ongoing changes in the politics of the welfare state after the golden age ended in the 1970s and the 2008 financial crisis. I argue that we should understand these developments, not as marking the irrevocable decline of the welfare state, but as part of the dynamics of the reproduction and potential transformation of domination within the welfare state. In conclusion, I consider political cleavages and issues that could today form the potential germs for broader social movements that, taking up state welfare institutions as sites of democratic participation, could enact new democratic transformations in the welfare state.

point to the complicity of welfare institutions in the self aggrandizement of the modern state. In contrast, I point to the unexpected avenues for democratic world making created by the Bismarckian welfare state. Conversely, many scholars hold up the Swedish welfare state as model of gender equality. Against these views, I emphasize the partial and contradictory nature of emancipation even in the context of a universalistic welfare state.

1

# Domination and the Welfare State

## *Direct, Structural, and Abstract*

All modern societies are marked by profound disparities of power, wealth, opportunities, and political influence among their members. The concept of domination points to how such inequalities provide certain groups and individuals with the systematic ability to assert their interests at the expense of the interests of the less powerful. Democratic social movements participate in and challenge the existing structures of welfare institutions as part of their broader efforts to transform domination in society. Yet the term "domination" – as a politically freighted concept – involves inherently contestable political and theoretical judgments. As an element of political critique and challenge, the claim that an individual or group exercises domination can only be fully redeemed in the course of open-ended debate and struggle. Nonetheless, political theory can reconstruct the claims arising in the course of such struggles so as to provide images of domination that draw out the harms produced by relations of domination. Such differing pictures of domination will foreground certain social phenomena and let others recede into the background, providing a horizon for critical reflection on existing social and political practices.

This chapter examines the concept of domination in relation to the welfare state, setting the stage for the following discussion. It reconstructs a theoretical itinerary of the idea of domination, from minimal to increasingly maximal interpretations of how relations and structures of domination are reproduced through the individual actions of the members of a society. As I will discuss below, different views of domination have implications for how we interpret and evaluate the relationship between democratic social movements and welfare institutions – for whether and how such institutions can enable the transformation of structures of domination. To illustrate this, the chapter examines three prominent approaches to domination. First, the neo-republican view, defended by scholars such as Philip Pettit and Frank Lovett, that conceives of

domination in terms of the uncontrolled power of one agent over another. I call this a theory of direct domination. Next, a neo-Kantian image of domination that focuses, not on external power, but on how certain groups are excluded from or devalued in the "space of reasons." I call this a theory of structural domination. Third, post-structuralist theories of domination that approach domination in terms of the constitution of responsible subjects who can enter into the space of reasons in the first place. I call this a theory of abstract domination. In each case, I show that the distinctive understanding of domination produces a different picture of the welfare state – both in terms of how we should understand the functioning of welfare institutions as well as how such institutions can overcome or reinforce structures of domination.[1]

My reconstruction of theories of domination accomplishes three things. First, it clarifies the relationship between these three theories of domination. I show that domination exists in three worlds – the objective, the intersubjective, and the subjective – each corresponding to a different "face" of power. This argument is indebted to Habermas's reconstruction of validity claims in terms of three spheres of validity, corresponding to claims about the objective world, the social world, and the subjective world.[2] That is, the neo-republican theory of domination focuses on direct domination redeemable through statements about the objective world; the neo-Kantian view focuses on structural domination that can be analyzed through statements about the social world; and the post-structuralist account focuses on forms of abstract domination that are graspable through statements about the subjective world. Advocates of these three perspectives fail to recognize these distinctive levels of analysis or worlds and so overgeneralize from one level of analysis.

Second, my argument points to the need for a theory of domination to account not only for each level but also for the social processes through which they interact and the political dilemmas such interactions present. And third, I unearth the underlying assumptions, not about what is wrong with domination, but about how domination functions – that is, about the underlying social theory that informs each view. The last two concerns are related. Each theory of domination shares an underlying, Weberian view of the relationship

[1] Albena Azmanova develops a similar three part typology of relational, structural, and systematic domination. My view differs insofar as I think the first form of domination is direct and that structural domination encompasses aspects of both relational and structural domination (in her terminology). Strictly speaking, in my view, Azmanova's analysis of relational domination (unequal access to resources) is a subcomponent of both direct and structural domination and not a distinctive form of domination. I also show how these different theories of domination relate to different levels of analysis of social reality and different faces of power, viewing domination in relationship to power in the external world, the intersubjective world, and the subjective world. Azmanova, *Capitalism on Edge: How Fighting Precarity Can Achieve Radical Change without Crisis or Utopia*.

[2] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 100.

between political agency and domination, a view that reduces political institutions to structures of instrumental calculation and control. As a result, these theories present a denuded image of political struggles against domination, an image that neglects the political and strategic field of action that social movements must navigate. These views are unable to consider how political institutions mediate between different levels of domination, and so such accounts fail to illuminate the challenges that confront democratic movements. Instead, they accept a social theory of political institutions, such as welfare institutions, according to which they are only the inert, material embodiment of values or else the mechanisms through which discipline and control operate.

Both of these arguments require reconstructing the socio-theoretic assumptions behind theories of domination. The concept of domination marks a connective point between two modes of theorizing – one that analyzes how social institutions and structures function and the other that provides a normative account of the distinctive harms or normative wrongs those institutions cause or reproduce. All the theories we examine combine assertions about *why domination is bad* with a theoretical account of *how domination works*. Theories of domination are distinctive from, for example, theories of justice in that they provide a view of the social institutions and practices that the concept of domination picks out, while theories of justice can suffice to develop a view of moral and political obligation and then, as a second step, apply it to social institutions and structures.

With this in mind, I argue that the theories of domination I examine below all share a set of assumptions about the operation of society that they inherit from Weber's theory to their detriment. Weber's approach, as I explain in the next chapter, is founded on a divide between the ordinary and the extraordinary – only extraordinary ruptures with everyday institutions and experiences can produce the values that give individual life meaning and substance. In this view, meaning-giving values exist over and above the ordinary social world, which Weber reduces to routine and technically calculable institutions. Each of these theories of domination inherits an implicit social theory from Weber, accepting a Weberian picture of power and society. Ordinary institutions, such as welfare institutions, are then instrumental, technical mechanisms that function to control our external environment (neo-republicans), to reflect higher normative values (neo-Kantian), or to reduce individuals to the calculable objects of discipline and subjectification (post-structuralists).

The subsequent chapters will suggest that this can be overcome through a fundamental shift in socio-theoretic perspective: from Weber's dualistic theory to an account of the mediation of meaning by worldly structures that are irreducible to technical calculation. Heidegger and Arendt show how Weber's theory is secondary to this more fundamental level of worldliness. This shift in perspective alters our image of the welfare state – welfare institutions are no longer reducible to technical mechanisms but become sites of the mediation of instrumental calculation and shared judgments about the world. My theory of

welfare institutions as worldly mediators challenges the Weberian view of such institutions as sites of technical calculation and hierarchical control, pointing instead to their role in fostering political judgment and democratic action.

This perspective also helps conceptualize how welfare institutions mediate between the different levels of domination. In contrast to current views of domination, a theory of mediation opens up an analysis of the political interplay between the three different levels or worlds of domination. The formation of welfare institutions renders explicit submerged relations and structures of domination, exposing them to political challenge and critique. Yet such struggles are not simply the progressive reduction in domination, one driven by the logical unfolding of a normative ideal of inclusion or rights. Rather, they involve the simultaneous overcoming and translation of domination between the three different levels – direct, structural, and abstract. Even as welfare institutions may help to reduce domination along one dimension – say, by enabling individuals to exit work relationships and so limit the direct domination of their employers – they may reproduce domination on another level – such as by enshrining gender domination in the labor market into state institutions. The neo-republican, neo-Kantian, and post-structuralist views, then, offer important insights into the nature of domination – but they are only the building blocks of a theory of democracy, domination, and the welfare state, which I will develop in the subsequent chapters.

## THREE WORLDS, FOUR FACES OF POWER

Before I turn to the three theories of domination, I want to explain the comparison with Habermas's theory of three spheres of validity.[3] Habermas argues that all our meaningful statements are relative to three different spheres of validity – statements about the objective world of empirical facts, statements about the social world of norms, and statements about the subjective world of inner states. For Habermas, all speech acts that produce communicative action in the lifeworld weave together those three spheres of validity, and modernity is characterized by a gradual disentangling of those three spheres such that everyday action is increasingly subject to rational evaluation. Without getting into all the details of Habermas's theory, the core point is that we can approach domination as articulating statements about phenomena in one of those three worlds – as evident in the following views of domination.

Each of these three worlds corresponds to a different type of power: for direct domination, empirically observable power in the external world; for structural domination, reflexive power in the world of social norms; and for abstract

[3] I leave aside the full details of Habermas's account, especially his claim that aesthetic statements corresponding to the third world are validity claims redeemable in the same way as statements about the other two worlds. My use of this idea to examine theories of domination does not depend on all of Habermas's broader epistemological commitments.

domination, constitutive power that forms subjectivity. My approach thus provides a more systematic basis for what scholars often discuss as the "four faces of power."[4] The first two dimensions of power, the basis for theories of direct domination, operate in the objective world. The first dimension of power is "power over" – the capacity of one individual to make another individual do something they otherwise would not have. The second dimension complements the first by pointing to how powerful agents achieve their goals not just by directly affecting the actions of others but also by controlling the agenda and determining what issues or choices become options in the first place. Both of these dimensions of power refer to one agent's capacity to control the external or objective environment of another agent – to induce them to do something through threats and incentives or to alter their set of options. In contrast, the third dimension of power, the aspect captured by theories of structural domination, operates in the social world of shared norms. It refers to the ability of groups to shape the structure of reasons that make certain claims look legitimate and others illegitimate. Statements about the third face of power are thus relative to the world of social facts and norms. Finally, the fourth dimension of power, most closely associated with the work of Michel Foucault and the basis for critiques of abstract domination, refers to the form of power that constitutes individuals as subjects. This fourth dimension of power operates within and corresponds to the subjective world of statements. The subjective world is the world against which we redeem statements about our authentic interior self and subjective states. Theorists focused on the fourth dimension of power examine how power operates by constructing the "authentic subjectivity" of certain individuals or groups – such as, for example, the idea that certain people are "authentically" criminals in need of internal reform through prisons. It is power that operates through making people intelligible to themselves and others as subjects in a particular way. So the functioning of power in this way will be revealed by showing how what seems to be an authentic statement about yourself – that you are a man, that you are a criminal – are produced through power.

## DIRECT DOMINATION: UNCONTROLLED POWER

The view of domination in terms of the objective world and the first two faces of power is what I call the theory of direct domination, and it has been developed most extensively by the so-called neo-republican view of freedom as non-domination. For neo-republican theorists such as Philip Pettit and Frank Lovett, the essence of domination is the uncontrolled capacity of the powerful

[4] Mark Haugaard, "Rethinking the Four Dimensions of Power: Domination and Empowerment," *Journal of Political Power* 5, no. 1 (2012): 33 54. For the seminal systematization of the faces of power view, see Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

to intervene in the choices of the less powerful.[5] To motivate this view, neo-republicans leverage the image of the benevolent master. The distinctive wrong of slavery, from this perspective, is the common knowledge between both the master and the slave that the master has the power to intervene in the activities of the slave, at whim. The master exercises a capricious power over the slave. Even if the dominators never actually intervene in the choices of the dominated, the dominated still suffer because of the knowledge that the dominators could intervene at will. Such potential power to intervene can mean both the power to prevent them from pursuing an available option (first dimension of power) as well as the power to shape the choices of the less powerful so that certain options that would otherwise be available are closed (second dimension of power). Neo-republican theorists then extrapolate from this picture of slavery to a general theory of domination. Individuals are dominated to the extent that they are vulnerable to the uncontrolled intervention of others in their set of choices.

The neo-republican view spells out the nature and distinctive harms of domination without entering into a series of controversial judgments about the social world. As a negative theory, it is meant to avoid the potential for paternalism inherent in positive theories of autonomy. As it makes no judgment about the real or true interests of individuals, it leaves no room for a potentially interfering power to justify itself in terms of the best long-term interests of the dominated. Second, and conversely, a negative theory leaves no room for ideas like false consciousness and similar judgments about how hegemonic discourses obscure structures of domination. By making claims relative to the external world – the realm of the observable facets of domination, of choices and actions – the neo-republican theory of domination purports to develop a theory that enables judgments about the existence and scope of domination in a society that avoids taking up the perspective of participants. Rather, it examines only the external institutional structures that control the power of certain actors and ensures people have a guaranteed space of unimpeded choice.

Focused on the direct domination of one individual over another, the neo-republican view hinges on the concept of arbitrary power. Yet ambiguity around the meaning of "arbitrary power" pulls the theory of direct domination in two directions such that it cannot, in the end, provide the comprehensive account of domination to which it aspires. As the most straightforward interpretation, arbitrary power is the uncontrolled capacity to interfere. That is, one is in a condition of domination just insofar as there is some power that could interfere with your choices, and you are free of domination insofar as you individually have the capacity to control all potentially invading wills. Arbitrariness, then, need not mean random, unpredictable, or actually capricious. The mere capacity of a will to invade your choices marks it as an arbitrary, and

[5] Philip Pettit, *On the People's Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Frank Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

therefore a dominating, power. This straightforward interpretation, even as it spells out the most manifest harms of direct domination, immediately gets the republican stance into trouble. The critique of arbitrary power works well with regards to private power and private domination. Neo-republicans argue that the reliable, empowered capacity to exit relationships functions as an effective control over private domination.[6]

The problem in the neo-republican view of arbitrary power can be seen by turning to public, rather than private, forms of power. The notion of arbitrary power as uncontrolled power makes it difficult to understand public or collective power – the state – as anything other than a source of domination. Neo-republicans often contend that their view of freedom supersedes liberal, interference-based views insofar as they do not view the state and organized political power as inevitably a restriction of freedom. Yet this relies on some questionable empirical premises – namely, that the rule of law, electoral contestation, and the separation of powers will enable individuals to reliably control public power's capacity to interfere. As critics have successfully argued, this neglects that law requires interpretation and implementation by individual wills, that the effective power of an individual vote is so small that it cannot be a reliable check on majority power, and that separate powers can still collude unless there is a higher power to prevent it, a higher power that will then be a source of domination.[7] The state will always be an unchecked power and so, on the unchecked power interpretation of arbitrary power, a source of domination.

The problem comes from the negative manner in which neo-republicans construe domination. By interpreting domination as the *absence* of a power to interfere and as resting on freedom understood as an absence of domineering interpersonal relationships, they have a difficulty seeing sustained social relations, expressed, for example, through organized public power, as anything other than dominating. Neo-republicans all acknowledge that social relations are inevitable, that dependence is not in itself a negative thing, and that a political community is necessary for realizing freedom as non-domination. Yet the internal logic of their view pushes them toward a vision of society and of the state that aspires to transform such sustained, interpersonal interactions into something like a quasi-natural environment for individual action.[8] They resort to devices, such as the rule of law and the self-regulating market, the practical horizon of which is a world where individuals can view each other not as sources of normative claims but as objects to be negotiated like walls and hedges.

[6] For this aspect of republican thought, see Robert S. Taylor, *Exit Left: Markets and Mobility in Republican Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[7] Niko Kolodny, "Being under the Powers of Others," in *Republicanism and the Future of Democracy*, ed. Geneviève Rousselière and Yiftah Elizar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Assaf Sharon, "Domination and the Rule of Law," *Oxford Studies in Political Philosophy* 2 (2016): 128 155.

[8] I expand this argument in Steven Klein, "Fictitious Freedom: A Polanyian Critique of the Republican Revival," *American Journal of Political Science* 61, no. 4 (2017): 852 863.

Lovett's theory of domination helps reveal this tension in the neo-republican project. Lovett attempts to defend the strict view of domination in terms of external, objective control. He argues that an adequate account of domination must provide a description of what counts as domination that is distinct from a normative evaluation of domination.[9] Domination must be "an objectively definable situation or state of affairs ... that can be adequately described from the perspective of an external observer."[10] If domination is viewed from the internal perspective, such as in terms of the acceptability of the reasons provided for an exercise of power, then describing a situation as one of domination will entail already taking a (controversial) normative stance about the extent to which the power of certain agents rests on justified reasons. Lovett worries that this would short-circuit the argument by defining domination in terms of illegitimacy, rather than explaining the connection between them. Without an independent description of what counts as domination, a normative critique of domination will be practically impotent, as it will not be able to pick out a certain feature of the world as requiring amelioration. This desideratum leads Lovett to define domination in terms of the "uncontrolled capacity to interfere" interpretation of arbitrariness, for then one can identify individuals or groups who wield arbitrary power without passing the normative judgment on the justifications procured in defense of their power.

Lovett's efforts to create a neutral concept of domination, one that does not enter into the space of reasons, leads him to worry about the implications of his view, and he restricts it only by resorting to implicit normative premises that bring his view closer to the neo-Kantian interpretation of arbitrary power in terms of a lack of mutual recognition. Even as he tries to endorse domination in terms of uncontrolled power, he argues that a strict interpretation of arbitrariness would lead to a strong, "rule of law" liberalism in the vein of a thinker like F. A. Hayek. Such a stance would have to view the discretionary powers inherent in, for example, differential taxation and social welfare policies as structures of domination.[11] Lovett argues this reduces the usefulness of the concept of domination by making it "effectively unavoidable."[12] Hayek and many other thinkers would disagree – for them, it may be difficult to eliminate the discretionary powers of the state in an era of mass democracy, but that is a question of political feasibility and strategy rather than conceptual analysis.[13] Lovett rather appears to think such forms of discretionary power are democratically legitimate, even if, according to his view, actors within these

[9] Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, 15 22. [10] Ibid., 14.

[11] Ibid., 99; see also Sean Irving, "Hayek's Neo Roman Liberalism," *European Journal of Political Theory*, online first.

[12] Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, 99.

[13] Taylor is more forthcoming about these implications. Taylor, *Exit Left: Markets and Mobility in Republican Thought*.

institutions retain an effectively uncontrolled capacity to interfere.[14] Here, Lovett rejects his own definition of domination and relies on a notion of normative justification to restrict the concept of non-domination and avoid the political implications of his own theory. His theory of domination in terms of the uncontrolled capacity to interfere resorts to a competing, normative interpretation of "arbitrariness" at crucial moments, in order to preserve space for democratically legitimate forms of discretionary power.

"Uncontrolled capacity to interfere" is not the only possible interpretation of arbitrary power. The alternative is to understand arbitrariness in terms of (non)-recognition of individuals as normatively authoritative claimants. From this perspective, what matters is not whether one can effectively control power but whether one's claims are taken as potentially normatively binding on others. Instead, domineering power is arbitrary because it is unjustified. The harm of domination is constituted, then, not (just) by the power of the dominators to interfere at will in the choices of the dominated, but by the social fact that the dominators feel they do not owe the dominated an explanation or justification.[15] Non-domination requires mutual recognition of individuals as moral agents with equal standing, even in a situation where public agents may still, in possible worlds, retain a capacity to interfere in the choices of individuals. Non-domination arises through processes that expose how existing power formations rest on non-generalizable interests – and therefore are forms of arbitrary power.[16] As Pettit puts it, the free individual must have both the "ratiocinative capacity to take part in discourse, and the relational capacity that goes with enjoying relationships that are discourse friendly."[17] Thus, to be free, it is not sufficient to have reliable external control of the power of others; one

[14] The alternative is to say that, even though discretionary, such powers are nonarbitrary because bureaucratic agents are reliably hemmed in by various social norms that enable recipients to predict their actions. For the difficulties with this view, see Samuel Arnold and John R. Harris, "What Is Arbitrary Power?," *Journal of Political Power* 10, no. 1 (2017): 55 70. Again, it is hard to distinguish this view from the benevolent master, who, presumably, will also be constrained by various social norms of what constitutes a good master (or husband or parent).

[15] This aspect of Pettit's argument comes out most clearly in his notion of commonly avowable interests. Here, what is doing the work is not effective control but the "filtering" of individual interests through norms of reciprocity. And what is objectionable about domination is not that some power has the capacity to interfere but that the power pursues partial rather than commonly avowable interests. Philip Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychology to the Politics of Agency* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 125 151. This ties into the concern that Pettit's theory of freedom is "moralized," smuggling in strong normative assumptions into the definition of freedom. On this, see Christian List and Laura Valentini, "Freedom As Independence," *Ethics* 126, no. 4 (2016): 1043 1074. This is less of a problem for me, as I am interested in the theory of domination. Unlike Pettit, I do not think domination has to be keyed to a theory of freedom.

[16] Rainer Forst, "A Kantian Republican Conception of Justice As Nondomination," in *Republican Democracy: Liberty, Law, and Democracy*, ed. Andreas Niederberger and Philipp Schink (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

[17] Pettit, *A Theory of Freedom: From the Psychology to the Politics of Agency*, 70.

must also stand in relationships where others recognize you as a participant in discourse, as discourse-responsive, and respond to your normative claims as potentially binding.

This interpretation of arbitrariness rescues the critique of domination from hostility toward public power and welfare institutions. Public power is not a source of domination insofar as its laws and decisions rest on mutual reasons and insofar as citizens recognize each other as sources of authoritative claims – even if there is still a lingering potential capacity for that power to intervene. Yet this rescue comes at a theoretical cost in terms of the original goals of the neo-republican approach. If arbitrary power is construed in terms of nonrecognition, structures of domination can no longer be identified through statements that are strictly relative to the objective world. To identify an exercise of power as domination, one must enter into the intersubjective world of reasons and norms – a world that cannot be observed and verified but rather reconstructed out of practical knowledge. And this insight drives the move from the neo-republican to the neo-Kantian analysis of domination.

Before turning to explore the alternative perspective – the neo-Kantian theory of structural domination – that this view of arbitrary power opens up, I want to examine the distinctive picture of the welfare state that follows from direct domination as uncontrolled power. The neo-republican approach to the welfare state is, broadly speaking, a market-failure view of social policies.[18] The neo-republican view begins from the observation that direct domination thrives off of dependency – of lacking either the right or the capacity to enter and exit a social relationship at will. In most situations, the best way to reduce the uncontrolled power of one individual over another is to provide the dominated individual with other options – with the capacity to exit.[19] Thus, there is a deep affinity between the neo-republican view and the ideal of free markets, especially in labor. Fully functioning markets are premised on the capacity to exit and enter employment relationships at will. For example, neo-republicans interpret socialism in terms of wage slavery and emphasize how capitalists used various tools to impede workers' ability to enter and exit employment relationships.[20] Similarly, neo-republicans emphasize how no-fault divorce and the ending of labor market discrimination against women can ameliorate gender domination by empowering women to exit dependent relationships.

[18] For the market failure model, see Joseph Heath, "Three Normative Models of the Welfare State," *Public Reason* 3, no. 2 (2011): 13 44.

[19] Taylor, *Exit Left: Markets and Mobility in Republican Thought*.

[20] Frank Lovett and Philip Pettit, "Neorepublicanism: A Normative and Institutional Research Program," *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2009): 11 29. For an alternative interpretation of the idea of wage slavery such that the wage relationship as constitutively dominating, see Lillian Cicerchia, "Structural Domination in the Labor Market," *European Journal of Political Theory*, online first; Gourevitch, *From Slavery to the Cooperative Common wealth: Labor and Republican Liberty in the Nineteenth Century*.

At the same time, though, neo-republicans recognize that markets are imperfect institutions. Inequalities of information, the high cost of changing careers, the risks of illness or disability, and the relatively vulnerable position of workers vis-à-vis employers undermine the capacity to exit. Modern social welfare institutions provide hedges against these various risks and ensure a high reserve wage such that no worker or spouse is in a dependent relationship. More ambitiously, neo-republicans call for new institutions like a guaranteed minimum income or a capital grant to truly ensure no worker is constrained to remain in a position and so depend for their livelihood on their employer. From the normative perspective of preventing direct domination, social welfare institutions are thus mechanisms to prevent the private dominion of the relatively wealthy over the less well-off. The neo-republican critique of direct domination, then, leads to a picture of the welfare state as primarily a form of collective insurance, one that is not only compatible with but that ensures the functioning of the market.

The neo-republican view of domination envisions the welfare state as an interlocking market exchange-social insurance system, which by enabling individuals to smoothly enter and exit relationships, allows them to be indifferent to the attitudes, beliefs, and views of others in society. Much like their approach to domination, the neo-republican analysis of the welfare state remains at an external perspective, viewing welfare institutions as mechanisms that change the objective environment for individual choices rather than structures of mutual recognition and intelligibility. Indeed, just as the neo-republican view of domination, by focusing on uncontrolled power as such, attempts to avoid entering into a participant perspective, so too does their view of welfare politics look to institutions that enable an objectivizing stance toward the social world. The effort to define non-domination from a strictly external perspective makes sense only in the context of social and economic institutions that already encourage people to view each other as objects to be maneuvered.

In a fully marketized society, one need not care about the reasons behind other peoples' individual decisions. Their actions become like a natural, objective background for your own individual choices. Similarly, insurance as a social institution transforms one's individual experiences into a numerical, actuarial category that can then produce a social collectivity, but one that is not grounded in any sort of mutual meaning or reasons. Both markets and exit-enabling insurance schemes, taken to their limit, are meant to enable individuals to react to their social environment as a set of predictable and therefore controllable objective events, none of which will spark distinctively normative emotions like resentment.

Their analysis of the welfare state helps reveal the underlying Weberian socio-theoretic assumptions that structure the neo-republican view of domination. The neo-republicans associate power with control and so see non-domination as possible insofar as political and economic institutions

become calculable structures. Indeed, taken to its logical conclusion, the goal of the neo-republican theory is to ensure that the world is organized such that people can maximally view each other as a controlled, predictable environment for their choices. They take the Weberian image of the welfare state and of modern bureaucracies and markets more broadly – as mechanisms that rationalize human action so as to make it calculable – and use that as the basis for the possible institutional realization of non-domination. Indeed, in terms of Weber's theory, the entire neo-republican view is predicated on the critique of patrimonial forms of domination – where individuals are subject to the arbitrary will of the household master – and the acceptance of modern, bureaucratic forms of domination. This neglects Weber's disquiet about those modern forms of domination – disquiet that will be more pronounced in both the neo-Kantian and post-structuralist theories of domination.

As an empirical matter, much of the welfare state cannot be easily fit into this idea of an interlocking market exchange-social insurance system. In particular, the neo-republican view misses how welfare institutions embody much thicker forms of mutual recognition. The neo-republican approach fails to bring into focus the internal connection between welfare institutions, normative entitlements, and citizenship. Even a minimal public insurance scheme, unless it has fully individualized pricing, will require some redistribution of risk and so some sense of normative entitlement to such redistribution.[21] As a result, the neo-republican theory of direct domination fails to account for the ways in which forms of disrespect and thus structural domination can be built into institutions that nonetheless alleviate direct domination.

## STRUCTURAL DOMINATION: UNJUSTIFIED POWER

The neo-republican view, in the end, proves unstable. Lovett is forced to reject the institutional implications of defining domination strictly in terms of uncontrolled power. Pettit's theory ambiguously rides the edge between the two different meanings of arbitrary power. As a result, the neo-republican theory cannot view domination just in terms of uncontrolled power and introduces a view of arbitrary power in terms of unjustified power. This means that the critique of domination must capture more than the existence of domination in the external world and also address its manifestations in the intersubjective world of norms. This perspective on domination, which I call the theory of structural domination, has been most carefully explored following Habermas's

[21] Turo Kimmo Lehtonen and Jyri Liukko, "Producing Solidarity, Inequality, and Exclusion through Insurance," *Res Publica* 21, no. 2 (2015): 155 169.

neo-Kantian turn toward grounding critical theory in an account of the pragmatic presuppositions of communication. Habermas's analysis opposes "heteronomy, that is, dependence on existing norms" to "the demand that the agent make the validity rather than the social currency of a norm the determining ground of his action."[22] For Habermas, the core of domination resides in the ability to insulate social norms from critical discursive scrutiny. We will return to Habermas's view in Chapter 4. Here, I focus on views that, inspired by Habermas's thought, isolate this neo-Kantian theory of domination from other aspects of Habermas, such as his concern with the abstract domination that follows from the separation out of autonomous economic and administrative sub-systems.

Drawing on elements of Habermas and Rawls, Rainer Forst has advanced this strictly neo-Kantian perspective through an interpretation of structural domination in terms of "noumenal power."[23] Moving away from Habermas's effort to integrate normative and sociological approaches to power, Forst helps distill the neo-Kantian view of domination.[24] Forst's theory distinguishes the concept of power, the analysis of which requires a participant perspective, from force and violence, which can be viewed from an external perspective. One cannot identify an exercise of power without being able to interpret the reasons power rests on (even if one views them as illegitimate) – thus the idea that power is noumenal, existing in the space of intersubjective reasons. From there, Forst argues that the concept of domination refers to unjustified power. While the neo-republican view focuses on the harms of subjugation, the neo-Kantian approach emphasizes the harms of disrespect. The neo-republican rhetoric often leverages the dehumanizing consequences of living under the power of others, yet their theoretical apparatus cannot account for and explain this intersubjective manifestation of domination. This is what the neo-Kantian perspective emphasizes: That domination entails not just a loss of a certain sort

[22] Jürgen Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 116–194. This turn also enabled a rapprochement between Habermas's theory and Rawls's liberalism, which, as Maria Victoria Costa has noted, implicitly rests on a critique of domination. M. Victoria Costa, "Rawls on Liberty and Domination," *Res Publica* 15, no. 4 (2009): 397.

[23] Rainer Forst, "Noumenal Power," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 23, no. 2 (2015): 111–127.

[24] Forst also rejects Habermas's effort to ground normativity in the pragmatic presuppositions of communication, as he thinks those presuppositions rest on a more fundamental transhistorical right to justification. While Forst claims this is a constructivist rather than moral realist position, it is certainly less focused on fallibility and "transcendence from within" than is Habermas's. Cf. Forst, *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice*, 18–60. I largely set aside these meta-ethical concerns and focus on Forst's more applied analysis of domination in terms of noumenal power, which does not necessarily rest on strong foundationalism. For an incisive discussion of these issues, see Kevin Olson, "Complexities of Political Discourse: Class, Power, and the Linguistic Turn," in *Justice, Democracy, and the Right to Justification: Rainer Forst in Dialogue*, ed. Rainer Forst (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

of freedom, but more basically the harms of disrespect and degradation. One could say, glossing Rousseau, that what is truly objectionable about domination comes from the desire of the dominators to have their superiority recognized by the dominated.

As a result, the neo-Kantian theory focuses on structural domination, beginning from the observation that direct forms of domination presuppose and rest on certain *structural* patterns that legitimate a skewed distribution of noumenal power in society. Here, the reasons procured in defense of the deployment of power are crucial – even if that exercise is perfectly predictable and so nonarbitrary in the strict neo-republican sense, it could still be grounded in disrespectful, partial reasons and so be arbitrary in the neo-Kantian sense. As Forst puts it, "a discourse-theoretic notion of (non-)domination ... does not focus on the robustness of the protection of secured spheres of individual freedom of choice" but rather on "the normative standing of persons as justificatory equals and normative authorities."[25] From this perspective, the issue is not whether power is effectively checked or controlled, such that its exercise is predictable by those subject to it, but whether structures of power recognize those under them as authoritative claim-makers and so rest on institutional procedures through which the exercise of power can be normatively redeemed. This lack of recognition will be evident in the content of the reasons that ground a structure of power. And it will be reflected in the extent to which a structure of power institutionally recognizes discursive arenas through which those subject to power can shape and contest its exercise.

The shift to the level of structural domination entails moving from the world of empirically verifiable, objective facts to the world of intersubjective norms. These norms are available through reconstruction rather than observation. "If we want to explain whether [someone] has power over others or not," Forst writes, "we need to understand what goes on in the heads of those who are subjected to its power or who have freed themselves from it – and that is where the noumenal realm of power lies."[26] The neo-Kantian concept of noumenal power means narrowing power to something that operates within the world of norms and beliefs. To achieve their strict interpretation of domination as an uncontrolled capacity to interfere, the neo-republican view expands the definition of power to include any means used to influence the choice-set of an individual – whether it be violence, threats, the manipulation of prices and incentives, as well as reasons and persuasion. In contrast, Forst argues that the concept of power points to the effort to influence someone's actions through reasons, whether good or bad, explicit or implicit, or else by closing off the space of reasons, making one reason or chain of reasons (what Forst calls a narrative of justification) seemingly the only option. Once you try to get

[25] Forst, "Noumenal Power," 125.
[26] Ibid., 114; Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, 14.

someone to do what you want through external means – violence or the manipulation of their external environment – you no longer view them as an agent over which you can exercise power but as a natural object, no different from the material world around you. While Lovett and other neo-republicans are right to argue that systems of domination will rarely rest on noumenal power alone but also threats, resources, and violence, the converse is not the case: A hierarchical relationship that *only* resorts to violence and threats and not also to reasons is not, properly speaking, a relationship of domination.[27] Disrespect expressed through reasons, which, for Forst, means advancing only partial reasons, is constitutive of domination. Such reasons may have or require certain empirical effects to ensure the causal reproduction of a structure of domination (the fact captured by theories of hegemony and ideology), but those causal effects are only possible because of the more fundamental distortion of relations of mutual reason-giving. Hegemony and ideology get their binding force only insofar as our practices (counterfactually) presume that people will respond to authentic justifications. Their false claim to be legitimate is effective only under the assumption that there is the possibility of a fully legitimate basis for power.

While Forst bases his theory on a general view of power as noumenal power, I believe it is better to think of the neo-Kantian theory as picking on one dimension of power, which I call reflexive power. Structural domination points to a reflexive form of power, one that corresponds to the third dimension of power as the capacity to determine the underlying norms of social interaction. By reflexivity, I mean the human capacity to (re)determine the structures of their ongoing interactions. In situations of structural domination, power is reflexive because it is located, not at the level of individual interactions and direct relationships, but in the determination of the norms governing those individual interactions. Reflexive power is a narrower concept than noumenal power. Indeed, the idea of noumenal power, I think, is an effort to overextend Forst's conceptual viewpoint so it can also cover various cases of direct power, as theorized by neo-republicans. Reflexive power more precisely identifies the level of social reality relative to which Forst's arguments make sense.

Unlike direct domination, which is exercised by one individual over another, reflexive power and structural domination involve group membership and group domination. With direct domination, the power in question is the empirical capacity of some specific agent to interfere in the choices of another specific agent. That power may be enabled or reinforced by certain background conditions – by the membership of the individual agent in a dominating group – but their power is not their power *qua* a member of that group but their actual, individualized power. In contrast, structural domination points to domination

[27] This is the flaw in Lovett's argument against what he calls a "form restricted" conception of domination: noumenal power is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for domination in a way other forms of power are not. Lovett, *A General Theory of Domination and Justice*, 85 93.

by some social groups over others. Social groups dominate by virtue of their ability to disproportionally shape, in a counterfactual deliberative situation, the norms that determine their collective interactions.[28] Structural domination is also not a matter of individual domination that is reinforced or enabled by membership in a powerful group. Rather, individuals dominate *qua* their group membership even if they as an individual may not have any arbitrary, individualized power. They benefit from their hypothetical power in the reflexive determination of the norms and structures of social interaction. Their domination only comes into focus insofar as we go beyond analyzing discrete relationships of direct power (neo-republicans) and enter this normative level of social analysis that focuses on the distribution of reflexive power.

The failure to shift to this reflexive level of analysis is behind the reluctance of many theorists to address structural domination, as the talk of structural domination has led critics to argue that the idea conflates structures with individual actors, giving structures some mysterious agency.[29] The issue is not that the structures themselves dominate. Rather, structures reflect the ability of groups, as groups dominate in their disproportionate ability to hypothetically redetermine those structures – such that, at the level of direct domination, it may appear that there is no individualized domination. These background structures of normative disrespect enable the uncontrolled capacity of one individual to intervene in another individual's choices. The normative, structural patterns of differential respect are themselves expressive of the domineering power relationship that occurs at the level of reflexive power. The crucial thing, though, is that this capacity does not have to be consciously enacted by any agent or group of agents – it can be reproduced simply through people's constrained individual decisions and patterned mutual dependence – and nor does it have to mean that any individual has a distinct uncontrolled capacity to interfere over any other agent.

[28] Mara Marin makes a similar point, arguing that Pettit's theory cannot account for gender oppression which is intrinsically about the relationship between an oppressor and oppressed group. However, Marin argues that this means we should abandon the concept of domination, while my perspective allows us to show that it follows from a certain understanding of the meaning of arbitrary power. Marin's argument also does not identify the specific, reflexive nature of the power involved in group domination and so the distinctive level of social reality in which that power operates. Mara Marin, "What Domination Can and Cannot Do: Gender Oppression and the Limits of the Notion of Domination," 2018.

[29] Pettit has attempted to revise his view to account for structural forms of domination, but he then restricts the concept to focus only on background conditions that enable direct, individual forms of domination. See Pettit, *On the People's Terms*, 63 64. Mara Marin provides an elegant analysis of the relationship between domination (she uses the broader concept of oppression, but it can apply to my analysis as well) and social structures like gender. She shows that such structures are not deterministic and agent like but rather produced by our open ended mutual interdependence. Mara Marin, *Connected by Commitment: Oppression and Our Responsibility to Undermine It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

The neo-Kantian analysis of domination focuses on whether the reasons through which power is exercised can be reciprocally justified. It shifts from the objective world of empirical facts to the intersubjective world of norms. And it moves from the level of direct, interagent power to the level of structural, reflexive power that exists in terms of the ability of groups to determine the norms of social interaction. Lastly, the neo-Kantian analysis produces a very different picture of the welfare state. Rather than a set of object-like mechanisms that respond to market failures, welfare institutions now appear as the result of repeated struggles for normative recognition. Social welfare institutions embody the mutual recognition of individuals as co-authors of collective life. They provide the material support for individuals to participate in collective deliberation as equals. This view picks up on T. H. Marshall's seminal account of citizenship and social rights.[30] Marshall presents the welfare state as the culmination of a logic of rights, one in which the granting of formal rights, such as the economic liberty to choose one's profession or the right to vote, produces political pressure to equalize individuals' substantive, material well-being. As Marshall understands it, the welfare state reflects this expansion of formal political rights, which generated "an urge towards a fuller measure of equality, an enrichment of the stuff on which the status is made and an increase in the number of those on whom the status is bestowed."[31]

Marshall's account of social rights is primarily historical and sociological and so does not systematically link the idea of social rights to a concept of structural domination. Neo-Kantians seek to further develop Marshall's insights and situate them within a broader view of the nature of democratic participation. Yet they retain the same basic theoretical intuition: rights to equal political influence, to be effective, presuppose the material equalization of people's means to participate in politics. Kevin Olson has developed this line of reasoning to argue that welfare rights are implicit in the idea of democratic self-determination – that the very notion of the democratically legitimate rule of law already presupposes broad guarantees of individual's material security so that they can participate in the formation of the terms of their political cooperation.[32] So interpreted, Olson argues, welfare institutions need not just be about passively receiving material goods or equalizing various misfortunes. Rather, they enable reflexivity – the ability of people to participate in setting the terms of social cooperation.

This idea of reflexive social rights is where the welfare state interlinks with the neo-Kantian conceptions of reflexive power and structural domination. In contrast to the neo-republican focus on direct domination and exit, the neo-Kantian view emphasizes how welfare institutions exist within a space of mutual reasons. Even if they empower (in conjunction with markets) a certain

[30] T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992). [31] Ibid.
[32] Olson, *Reflexive Democracy: Political Equality and the Welfare State*.

space of free choice in which one does not have to provide reasons for your decisions and so can exit relationships of direct domination, the entitlement to some form of social protection – whether to participate in an insurance scheme or receive direct state benefits – is grounded in a set of justifications. Part of what distinguishes welfare institutions is the fact that they rely on reflexive power in a peculiar way: as forms of social entitlement, they can never operate according to the same objectivizing logic as the market or a pure insurance scheme. As a result, welfare institutions will be nonarbitrary to the extent that these justifications can be redeemed as general and reciprocal, even if, in their day-to-day operation, welfare institutions provide individuals, such as bureaucrats within those institutions, with a certain degree of discretionary power over others (that is, they may be dominating in the neo-republican sense).

*Contra* the neo-republican image of welfare institutions as anonymous forms of collective social insurance, welfare institutions inevitably constitute distinct categories of individuals that enable this sort of reflexive analysis of structures of domination *qua* group membership, as opposed to individual wielders of uncontrolled power. A certain distribution of reflexive power is "baked into" welfare institutions. For instance, many feminist critics have pointed out how the mid-century welfare state presupposed the single-male breadwinner family and the family wage. Social entitlements, such as pensions, were keyed to lifetime participation in the workforce and presumed the normative standard of a gendered division of labor between paid and private carework. From the neo-Kantian perspective, this embodies structural domination, not insofar as all individual men have an uncontrolled capacity to interfere in women's choices, but insofar as men as a group have the reflexive power to systematically tilt the structure of these institutions to exploit the unpaid domestic labor of women.

However, in the neo-Kantian view, these disparities are eventually ironed out in the linear, progressive unfolding of the logic of the welfare state.[33] Welfare institutions reflect progress along two dimensions: the deepening of the substance of rights and the expansion of the scope of who is recognized as an equal bearer of rights. First, welfare institutions reflect the move from a formal to a substantive, materialized understanding of rights – not just as protections from interference but as positive entitlements to the minimal material support required to participate as an equal in society. And second, the welfare state reflects a gradual expansion of who counts as a fully equal member of society – first workers, excluded when citizenship was tied to capital ownership, then women and other subjected minority groups. The unfolding of the welfare state is the adjustment of these institutions to previous blindspots and exclusion. Social rights gradually come to embody a more generalizable

[33] See, for example, Olson's discussion of the linear progress of gender equality in Sweden. Ibid., 55 88.

and reciprocal constellation of justifications, progressively moving closer to the ideal of a society in which "citizens can be active subjects ... who effectively codetermine its infrastructure and the way in which social goods, benefits, and burdens are produced, distributed and imparted."[34] As with Forst's more general notion of the space of reasons, these processes of incorporation involve unfolding the universal core of formerly exclusionary or partial structures of entitlement to full moral recognition and equalizing material support.

As it provides a resolutely intersubjective analysis of domination, the neo-Kantian view avoids many of the consequences of the neo-republicans objectivist notion of domination. The neo-Kantian analysis avoids the conclusion that to fully eliminate domination, we must find institutions that transform society into an agglomeration of discrete, atomized monads who can view each other as mere natural objects and forces to be reliably incorporate into our individual plans. Rather, non-domination simply means robust, mutual recognition of all participants in discourse as reason-responsive and as equally authoritative reason-providers. However, even more than the neo-republican view, the neo-Kantian image of domination and the welfare state is indebted to the terms of Weber's social theory. Weber's divide between the extraordinary and the ordinary, between the ultimate values which are the basis of meaningful action and the inert world of calculable needs and objects, reappears in the neo-Kantian divide between the noumenal world of norms and the material world of the institutions that embody them. Welfare institutions are instruments that embody, and so are subordinated to, the realm of intersubjective discourse and rational deliberation.

But here is where the neo-Kantian view becomes vulnerable to a new concern: that the very demand to be reason-responsive can be a mechanism through which forms of domination reproduce themselves. Such a concern is particularly pertinent in the context of the welfare state. Welfare institutions may reproduce a demand that individuals be responsible subjects even as those institutions apparently embody the ideal of mutual justification. Power, here, operates at a different level than structural domination. I now want to turn to this critique and the third image of domination it grounds, one that focuses on how relations of domination reproduce themselves by constituting subjects as reason-givers and -takers.

## ABSTRACT DOMINATION: SUBJECTIFYING POWER

What sort of power is involved in constituting individuals as responsible subjects? Theorists of this face of power, from the early Frankfurt School to Michel Foucault, all examine how domination operates in part by constructing individuals as separate, responsible subjects. For Horkheimer and Adorno, the

[34] Forst, *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice*, 200.

"identical, enduring self" in capitalist societies is "the product of a hard, petrified sacrificial ritual," one through which the identical self dominates their internal and external nature.[35] I contend that, rather than a competing theory of domination, such thinkers are calling attention to a distinctive, subjectifying form of power, one that operates relative to the interior world of subjective states, as opposed to either the external or the intersubjective world. The disquieting effect of critiques of such subjectifying power resides in how they unmask the effects of power relative to what we take to be an authentic, interior self, revealing our subjectivity as itself a product of power. Critics of subjectifying power emphasize the constitution of responsible subjects by modern social systems. I call this abstract domination, as the domination is exercised, not by an individual or by a group, but by the functional imperatives of self-regulating systems like the modern capitalist economy – imperatives that appear as abstract forces from the perspective of concrete individuals. Such theories of abstract domination stand in a different relationship to the welfare state. While both neo-republican and neo-Kantian approaches produced distinct defenses of welfare institutions, subjectification theorists seek to show how welfare institutions instantiate new forms of domination by reproducing the demand that individuals be responsible, self-controlled subjects.

To see why we need to move to this new level of analysis, it is worth exploring Forst's explanation of where domination comes from and why people accept orders of domination, as opposed to what is wrong with such orders. Here, a theory of domination can take two paths. It can either maintain the "purity" of reason by locating the source of domination in a set of contingent, historical facts that occur outside and before "the space of reasons," to use Forst's terminology. Or it can inquire into how structures of domination *constitute* reason-responsive subjects rather than just acting upon them, such that the demand to be a moral, reason-responsive subject can be a mechanism through which structures of domination come into existence and produce compliance.[36] Forst takes the first path. Despite his insistence that society is a noumenal power all the way down, Forst tends to identify the source of domination as pre-given, inherited privileges that exist outside the space of reasons – bare inequalities of power and resources that enable some to assert their interests at the expense of others. Noumenal power becomes a neutral vehicle for these pre-given differences. Forst's theory presumes domination always rests on partial and so false reasons. As a result, his theory rests on an overly idealistic analysis of society, one that fails to explain the persistence and reproduction of domination. Partial interests and inherited privileges are the

[35] Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, 42.

[36] The idea of that reason must be viewed as "impure" has become a staple of critical theory see the discussion of Forst in Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*; Thomas McCarthy, "The Critique of Impure Reason: Foucault and the Frankfurt School," *Political Theory* 18, no. 3 (1990): 437 469.

sedimented material substratum that, distorting the reciprocal relationship between reason and power, transform power into domination.

Forst then turns to a theory of ideology to explain why people accept orders of domination. For Forst, people's acceptance of these inherited privileges is a matter of false beliefs. While Forst distances himself from classic ideology-critique in terms of objective interests – the sort of interests that can be represented by a political or intellectual vanguard – his theory nonetheless rests on a strong notion of false self-understanding. People accept inherited narratives that manifestly would fail the test of justification if people participated as equals in the reflexive determination of norms of social cooperation. For Forst, domination can only operate through reason insofar as people take false reasons as true reasons – only insofar as they believe (even if habitually or largely implicitly) that the narratives of justification underlying their domination are fully justified and legitimate.

Another way to look at it is that Forst's analysis of domination (and of society) is pre-structured to fit his notion of justification, presenting hierarchical structures as waiting to be unmasked through the partiality of their grounding reasons.[37] Domination exists because of overtly arbitrary inequalities of power inherited from the past. These are the sorts of inequalities that would clearly and cleanly be refuted in an ideal exchange of justifications. And people only accept these unjustifiable structures because of false beliefs about what could be justified. This is a moralized image of domination and of society: The dominators, with their false universality, are manifestly on the side of immorality and the dominated, with their universalizable claims, are on the side of morality. Domination becomes primarily about the false normative rationalization of the inherited privilege of powerful groups in society, rationalizations which are then institutionalized through discursive procedures that deny less powerful groups the full capacity to participate in the formation of norms. This account raises questions about how people could be so shortsighted or blind as to uncritically adapt their own subjugation. And it presupposes a certain degree of insincerity or self-deception on the part of the dominators – cynically advancing their interests under the guise of universal reasons and, in the process, distorting the space of reasons.

As we saw earlier, neo-republican theorists worried about this "moralization" of the concept of domination. Their concern was that such moralization would overburden the idea of domination, turning it into a normative and so contestable concept. But now the concern is the opposite – not that the neo-Kantian view fails to sufficiently distinguish moral justification from the identification of domination, but that it automatically presupposes that processes of moral justification will unmask structures of unjustified power. This

[37] For an excellent expression of this concern, see Lois McNay, "The Limits of Justification: Critique, Disclosure and Reflexivity," *European Journal of Political Theory* 19, no. 1 (2020): 24 46.

moralization is symptomatic of a theoretical tension in Forst's argument. Forst both presupposes and suppresses the subject-constitutive aspects of domination and so the ambivalent relationship between reason and domination. Forst's view presupposes it insofar as he assumes the incorporation of all individuals, whether dominant or dominated, into a space of shared reasons – and so a space of noumenal power. Yet this incorporation is a historical accomplishment, one tied to, although not reducible to, the functional demands of the modern state-economy system.[38] The construction of the state apparatus entailed rendering the dense, complex world of everyday social relationships accessible to state action and therefore intelligible and calculable from the perspective of state institutions. These processes brought subjects into a common space of mutual justification. In pursuit of these imperatives, rationalizing state institutions subjected their populations to practices that, while justified in terms that were general and universal, nonetheless systematically subordinated the agency of those groups to the imperatives of the state.[39]

Forst resorts to the theory of ideology as false belief because he fails to contend with how individuals become reason-responsive such that the justifications for an order of domination can take hold.[40] Morality and domination are intertwined, although not reducible to each other, insofar as the demand to be reason-responsive presupposes the prior constitution of an individual as an accountable subject. The dilemma is that the constitution of the subject as reason-responsive cannot itself operate through pure rational justification – the paradox at the core of the arguments of subject-formation theorists. There must be some process of both individual ego-formation and interpersonal differentiation in order for reason to have a hold as an internally motivating force. As emphasized by the various thinkers who reflect on these processes of subject formation, structures of domination can only make use of reason insofar as the constitution of moral subjects involves some degree of self-violence and self-denial, self-violence which then must be denied by the subject in order for that subject to be reason-responsive.[41] This does not have to mean

[38] This mirrors Olson's concern that Forst neglects inequalities based on the willingness and capacity to participate in discourse, although my argument is that Forst also neglects how domination could be behind the creation of discursive space. Olson, "Complexities of Political Discourse: Class, Power, and the Linguistic Turn."

[39] For the connection between domination, recognition, and state sovereignty, see Patchen Markell, *Bound by Recognition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[40] Here, my argument is indebted to Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*.

[41] See, for example, Judith Butler's argument that subject formation is based "an unspeakability that organizes the field of the speakable," an unspeakability which inscribes "prevailing norms of social recognition" and "forms of social power" and which works by mobilizing "aggression in the service of refusing to acknowledge a loss that has already taken place." Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 171,

that reason is simply a guise for domination, or that morality is simply internalized social conventions. However, it does mean that all normative claims to justification will bear the traces of that subject-constitutive process, traces reflected in the possibility of mobilizing moral norms and the demand for justification on behalf of domination, rather than the dominated.

For critics of abstract domination, the historical processes of incorporation I sketched above are grounded in the more fundamental dynamics of subject formation. According to this line of thinking, subjects only become intelligible to themselves and others as stable objects of recognition through the internalization of existing norms of social recognition. The formation of the subject – of a self that stands in distinction to the social world – requires a self-violence that denies our constitutive attachments to others. These suppressed attachments are then constructed as an object which threatens to disrupt both the social order and our stable subjectivity, becoming a target of moralized rage.[42] Subjectification theorists identify both social intelligibility and moral hierarchy as products of domination, of forms of power that produce a social field of calculable, knowable social identities. The rationalizing demands of the modern state and economy, both of which benefit from a "civilizing process" that creates self-governing subjects, reinforces this ideal of the autonomous subject. Insofar as claims to moral recognition presuppose that our identities as agents

83, 86. In this respect, Forst also seems to mischaracterize Foucault's argument so as to domesti cate it for his purposes. For Forst, Foucault's insight is that power can be productive *as well* as disciplining. Power is productive, in this view, insofar as it endows individuals with positive capacities a point Foucault emphasizes most in his later work. But Foucault also makes the argument that discipline itself can be productive. Discipline does not just repress. It also is positive insofar as it *constitutes* individuals as subjects with interiority and who are supposed to respond to the demands of morality. Forst tends to emphasize the more idealistic elements of Foucault's thought his historicization of the Kantian a priori by inquiring into the historical formation of discursive structures. He downplays how Foucault also historicizes Althusser's analysis of subjectification examining the historical constitution of practices through which individuals become reason responsive subjects. Forst, "Noumenal Power."

[42] By moralized rage, here, I mean the positioning of certain subjects, especially those in historically subordinate social positions, as an irrational, immoral, and impure threat to the stability of the existing moral order. This is the more critical sense of the term moralization as I used it above to characterize Forst's theory of society. As a critical category, moralization points to how ordinary moral systems function as a mechanism for shoring up the sense of belonging and stability for other subjects. For this view of the relationship between subject formation and (lost) attachment, see Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachley (London: Vintage, 2001). More over, such moralization requires an understanding of morality as discrete, dischargeable duties some can become fully moral while others fail to live up to the demands of morality. For an expanded development of this view, see Satkunanandan, *Extraordinary Responsibility: Politics Beyond the Moral Calculus*. Subjectivization theorists argue that the construction of a stable, sovereign subject requires this calculable view of morality and so simultaneously constructs and suppresses the non calculable/nonidentical in terms of moral pollution.

can be known and reckoned, those claims will reproduce existing, subject-constituting structures of domination.

The move from the neo-republican to the neo-Kantian theories required a shift in socio-theoretic perspective: from the objective world of facts to the intersubjective world of norms. The turn to subject formation requires another shift in socio-theoretic perspective: from analyzing a world of intersubjective norms to the (more nebulous) world of subjective interiority. The neo-Kantian view cannot explain people's attachments to structures of domination, and this requires a shift to the perspective of the processes that constitute subjects as participants in the space of reasons. Statements about structural domination are redeemed with reference to the world of intersubjective norms, while statements about abstract, subject-constituting forms of domination refer to the subjective world of interior experiences. The production of the moral, responsible subject, for subjectification critics, occurs only insofar as the self is constituted through a self-subordination to preexisting norms of moral calculation, norms which function to suppress the qualitative, individualizing aspects of human experience. In essence, what subjection theories say is: "what you take to be a statement about your authentic, interior self is actually the result of the operation of power." In more historical ways of deploying this perspective, such as Foucault's analysis of the relationship between knowledge, discipline, and the subject, these dynamics of moral subjectification interact with the rationalization of both disciplinary state power and economic production.

These processes are, in various ways, forms of *abstraction*, available from the perspective of a functionalist analysis.[43] To grasp them, we have to move from the level of social structures to that of social abstractions, corresponding to the fourth dimension of power. The idea of abstraction as I use it here originates in readings of Marx's critical theory that emphasize domination by the abstract nature of the commodity-form rather than the structural, class domination of the bourgeois class.[44] This idea reappears in Habermas's critique of one-sided rationalization and the internal colonization of the lifeworld in which people are dominated, not by any specific group in society, but by the abstracting functional demands of the economic and administrative systems themselves, both of which operate by transforming lived, qualitative experience into the abstract, quantitative media of money and power, respectively.[45] Finally, critics of subject formation, inspired by Freud, also observe the

[43] On Foucault's functionalism, see Neil Brenner, "Foucault's New Functionalism," *Theory and Society* 23, no. 5 (1994): 679 709.

[44] Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For an effort to integrate these two aspects of Marx's thought, see William Clare Roberts, *Marx's Inferno: The Political Theory of Capital* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[45] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, vol. 2 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 301 405.

"abstract" nature of the rituals through which all individuals are constituted as subjects. Louis Althusser notes, "Freud shows that individuals are always 'abstract' with respect to the subjects they always-already are, simply by noting the ideological ritual that surrounds the expectation of a 'birth', that 'happy event' … Before its birth, the child is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived."[46]

The move from the neo-republican to the neo-Kantian critique shifted the focus from the harm of subjection to the harm of disrespect. And this move to abstract domination shifts the normative focus again: from the harm of disrespect to the problem of reification, where individuals relate to their activities and practices as if they were a spectral, alien force.[47] Here, power is *constitutive*, rather than *reflexive*. It's the power that operates through the constitution of individuals as certain sorts of subjects. A classic example of a critique of abstract domination is Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism. While commodity fetishism involves a sort of constitutive misrecognition of our own activities, Marx's point is not that such fetishism is a false belief that masks the true nature of production.[48] Rather, for Marx, capitalism is an order of abstract domination insofar as capitalist production requires that we all act as if capital was a real agent that determines our actions, and so as though commodities were independent objects that have an inherent value. This misrecognition is compulsive insofar as capitalism requires that concrete objects become abstractly interchangeable through the category of value.[49] So there is an abstraction from the concrete use-value of commodities, which constitutes a collective reification of our individual action into the spectral agent that is capital, which becomes the imagined agent that dominates everyone who is subject to the abstract order. Here, the peculiarity is that individuals are dominated by their own collective practices, which are structured so as to presuppose the existence of an external entity that then acts upon individuals like a dominating agent. Like a religious fetish object, we project our human capacities onto an external power that we then collectively misrecognize as the cause of our actions.

Subjectification theorists apply a similar logic to the constitution of individuals as rational, reason-responsive subjects. They contend that the creation of the subject requires forms of constitutive misrecognition involving abstraction.

[46] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 119.

[47] For a recent exploration, see Axel Honneth, *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[48] *Contra* to Forst's reading. Forst, "Noumenal Power," 121 122. For abstract domination in Marx, see Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*.

[49] For an analysis of constitutive misrecognition as an essential part of practices, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). For a further development of Bourdieu's views in the context of debates about domination and recognition, see Lois McNay, *Against Recognition* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008).

We only become intelligible and accountable to each other as agents insofar as we render our actions calculable and knowable through the prevailing terms of what it means to be an agent. Foucault's mobilization of the panopticon example is instructive here: the point is that the center (the observatory) is empty.[50] In order for us all to become individualized, responsible subjects, we all act as though a judging authority occupied the center.[51] Conventional morality thus becomes a form of self-abstraction, insofar as the moral system only comes into being by collectively imagining a shared, society-wide authority-figure that is then internalized through the process of socialization. Again, here there is no individual agent or even group of agents that exercises domination. Rather, we are dominated by our own practices, where we collectively presuppose the existence of a dominating agent (the individual in the observatory) even as that agent only exists through and in the practice. Foucault's critical analysis gets its bite from showing that morality, which from the first- and second-person, participant perspective seems like norms of mutual moral accountability, is also accessible from a functionalist perspective, which reveals how the demand to be responsible is bound up with the broader imperatives of disciplinary systems, the formation of the administrative state, and the demands of capital accumulation.

The critique of abstract domination as I have reconstructed it is closely tied to a critical interrogation of the significance of the welfare state. Indeed, while in the other two cases theorists tend to apply their views to the welfare state as a second step, here the "dark side" of the formation of the modern welfare state, as described by theorists like Foucault, was central to the development of the critique of abstract domination. The move to the level of abstract domination challenges a progressive, linear analysis of the relationship between rights, inclusion, and the state. Rather, the dynamics through which welfare institutions construct responsible subjects and render populations governable reveal the role of the very practices of reason and justification in the reproduction of domination.[52] From this perspective, welfare institutions are part of the

[50] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 195 228.

[51] Similarly, Althusser's idea of interpellation denotes the processes through which individuals become subjects by automatically responding to the call of an authority figure. In both cases, the operation works through the idea that our practices presuppose that there is a dominating agent at the center, although it is really an empty place indeed, just the presupposition of our own practices. Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)."

[52] The constitutive power/abstract domination approach to theorizing the welfare state proceeds at two levels: first, the micro level of discipline and the mechanisms through which welfare institutions constitute responsible subjects; and second, the macro level of "governmentality," which focuses on the historical development of state rationalities that establish the population and the social as statistically calculable regularities amenable to state management. The classic account of the first is Foucault. Of the second, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977 1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2007); Burchell et al., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. For insightful further developments and historical

broader field of institutions that produce responsible subjects as social agents and so embody certain forms of abstract domination. This is not to say that this view accepts other parts of society, such as economic markets, as domains of power-free, voluntary exchange. Foucault's theory of power has proven productive for also analyzing the formation of modern markets and market-oriented institutions as sites of governance and control. Indeed, from this perspective, the rationalizing and disciplinary aspects of the welfare state and the demand, within markets, for people to be rational, responsible agents constitute each other. The welfare state is not the necessary site of governance and markets and society are not free of power.[53]

Nonetheless, the subjectification theories reveal the subtle operations of power even within something – the welfare state – that other theoretical perspectives positioned as an unambiguous historical victory. The picture of the welfare state, rather is of faceless bureaucratic operatives cruelly imposing standards of responsible behavior in exchange for material benefits, producing docile, compliant, disciplined subjects. Welfare institutions ranging from direct welfare benefits and poor relief to unemployment insurance to family supports have all been deeply intertwined with institutions and logics that presented their recipients as potentially responsible and so in need of state governance and moral reform.[54] Yet even this picture is inadequate insofar as it implies a dyadic structure of domination – rather, both the bureaucrat and the client are abstractly dominated by the broader, functional imperatives of the economic and political systems in which welfare institutions operate. In certain respects, these views echo earlier Marxist critiques of the welfare state for deradicalizing and integrating workers into the dominant social order. Yet this analysis goes beyond such critiques by expanding the purview of power beyond class domination so as to grasp the more general regulation of the social world as

applications of the idea of the social, see George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Patricia Owens, *Economics of Force: Counterinsurgency and the Historical Rise of the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[53] See, for example, Nikoas Rose's analysis of "advanced liberalism" and Wendy Brown's Foucault inspired critique of neoliberalism. Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015); Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*.

[54] This form of analysis works best for the poor relief side of the welfare state. See, for example, Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects*. Anna Marie Smith, examining the trajectory of welfare reform in the United States, argues that welfare institutions have been bound up with the capitalist state's functional imperative to produce "a docile, stratified, and productive work force" as well as with the dominant social norms and structures of power by regulating female sexuality. Anna Marie Smith, *Welfare Reform and Sexual Regulation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 36. For these theorists, welfare functions, not to expand preexisting norms of citizenship, but to produce a certain image of responsible, empowered citizenship that is itself inimical to more expansive democratic possibilities.

a field of objects for state control and the constitution of individuals as responsible, governable subjects. Thus, from this perspective, welfare institutions, bound up with the broader rationalizing imperatives of the state and modern political power, function to eliminate the "contingency and variability" of political phenomena by rendering them "calculable."[55]

What is the normative status of this critique of the welfare state? Foucault and those inspired by his work have been criticized for their ambiguous answers to this question. Foucault's own stance shifted from a strict abstention from normative judgments to the view that his critical genealogies of the present could enable a critical self-questioning of inherited limits of the thinkable. Foucault links this to his understanding of freedom as a continuous practice of self-creation. In more recent debates, genealogy is seen as a non-authoritarian alternative to moralized neo-Kantian modes of the critique of domination, insofar as it focuses on "problematizing" our current modes of self-understanding by emphasizing the exclusions and silences that were part of its historical evolution.[56] This debate misfires because of the conflation of structural and abstract levels of analysis. What Foucaultian genealogy enables, in my view, is access to the dynamics of abstract domination. By emphasizing "agentless" rationalities or processes, this perspective must entail a shift to the level of functional, abstract rather than social, structural analysis. Foucault and his followers are criticized for neglecting the collective agents that pursue various political projects within the welfare state. Yet this critique applies only to the extent that we understand such research as a complete account of social developments rather than an effort to get "behind the backs" of agents to analyze the formation of abstract discursive and practical systems that structure the limits of what is thinkable and doable at a particular historical moment. In this respect, Foucault's analysis is complementary with Habermas's critique of functional reason, adding to Habermas's interlocking economic and political systems an analysis of the "morality system" that constitutes subjects as moral individuals. In all three cases, as I have argued, individuals in the welfare state are dominated by an abstract, reified dimension of their own human practices, which constitute them as an (abstract) economic actor, state client, and moral subject, respectively. And these processes are not accessible from the level of structural domination, which focuses on the interactions and conflicts between collective agents that have already been partially constituted through processes of abstraction.

[55] Sheldon Wolin, "Democracy and the Welfare State: The Political and Theoretical Connections between *Staaträson* and *Wohlfartsstaaträson*," in *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 172.

[56] Such as in Martin Saar, "Genealogy and Subjectivity," *European Journal of Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002): 231 245.

TABLE 1 *Summary of theories of domination and the welfare state*

| Domination | Power | World | Welfare state model |
|---|---|---|---|
| Direct | External | Objective | Insurance/exit |
| Structural | Reflexive | Intersubjective | Social rights |
| Abstract | Constitutive | Subjective | Discipline |

## DOMINATION AND THE WELFARE STATE BEYOND THE WEBERIAN HORIZON

My reconstruction has emphasized the shift in socio-theoretic perspective implied in each of the theories – from the level of the objective, to the intersubjective, then to the subjective worlds. The upshot of this analysis, then, is in part deflationary: these are not rival theories of domination but rather analyses relative to different levels of reality. Nonetheless, there is a set of core socio-theoretical assumptions all three share. This is a view of social institutions as inert, object-like instruments – as mechanisms that help render the social world calculable and controllable. While this is most explicit for the neo-republican view, this view of society is also in the background for both the neo-Kantian approach, which views institutions as mechanisms guided by norms of mutual recognition, as well as the subjectification theorists, for whom that normativity is itself a product of these instrumental mechanisms for controlling the social world. Chapters 2 and 3 will focus on criticizing these socio-theoretic assumptions and their constraining effects in how we think about the relationship between democracy, domination, and the welfare state.

I argue that these socio-theoretic categories are inherited from the theory of Max Weber, who deployed them to critique the democratizing aspirations of the German workers' movement. As I argue in the next chapter, while his theory provides a particularly clarifying version of these assumptions, they undergird the longer tradition of German social reform liberalism, which positions welfare institutions as potential answers to the threat of democratic social movements. Insofar as contemporary political theories of the welfare state deploy these Weberian categories, they risk acceding to Weber's narrowing of the democratic horizon. The point is not that Weber's concepts infect other theories, as if "terms and concepts were agents of transhistorical contamination." Rather, as Patchen Markell puts it,

> what remains most problematic in such languages is not that they were once used to support hierarchy; it is that they were useful in this respect because they tendentiously misrepresented the nature and operation of the hierarchical institutions they supported; correspondingly, the danger in trying to use such language to other ends is not that, in

doing so, we will somehow be drawn back toward an endorsement of subordination, but that we will misunderstand the very phenomena we wish to criticize.[57]

Such is my contention with Weber's socio-theoretic categories in relation to current theories of domination. The problem is that they produce an image of the social world that supports Weber's efforts to present more radical socialist visions of the welfare state as dangerously utopian, shaping our perception of the political possibilities and strategic avenues available for democratic actors. This is perhaps most clear in the strict neo-republican view as represented by Lovett, with its difficulty in accommodating any welfare institutions beyond market-enabling policies like a universal basic income. Such a stance follows from the neo-republican position that the purpose of political institutions is to secure, as much as possible, a space of guaranteed action for individuals. Similarly, insofar as neo-Kantian theorists like Kevin Olson develop their approach "with a nod to Max Weber," they risk reproducing Weber's basic, underlying image of the welfare state, presenting welfare institutions as material, inert instruments that embody or realize higher norms or values. For Olson, Weber provides a framework for developing a defense of welfare institutions that starts from "the formal character of law."[58] Olson argues that welfare institutions are presupposed by the rule of law, as welfare institutions ensure people have the material capacity to participate in the formation of legal norms. As we saw, the idea, then, is that welfare institutions come to gradually embody norms of mutual recognition. As a result, Olson implicitly views welfare institutions as the instrumental, material instantiation of higher normative principles.

Weber's categories also structure the radical critiques of the welfare state in terms of the theory of abstract domination. Scholars have observed the affinities between Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power and Weber's account of rationalization. As Axel Honneth argues "like Weber, Foucault traced the origin of modern disciplinary society back to a process of the historical convergence of techniques of rationalization that were suited to one another."[59] Similarly, radical-democratic critics of the welfare state such as Sheldon Wolin, who share the view that welfare institutions reduce democratic agency to calculable routines, take Weber's diagnosis of the "peculiar exaggeration of

[57] Patchen Markell, "The Insufficiency of Non domination," *Political Theory* 36, no. 1 (2008): 33, no. 20.

[58] Olson, *Reflexive Democracy: Political Equality and the Welfare State*, 179, 15.

[59] Axel Honneth, *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*, trans. Kenneth Baynes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993), xxvii. Cf. Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 280. Critical commentators have also pointed out the deep similarities between Foucault and Weber's conception of social action, as well as between Foucault and post Weberian functionalism as represented by theorists like Parsons. Brenner, "Foucault's New Functionalism"; Honneth, *The Critique of Power: Reflective Stages in a Critical Social Theory*, 174 175.

power" to be characteristic of the "Weberian" modern state.[60] Wolin's debt to Weber extends to his understanding of democratic agency. Like Foucault's idea of continuous testing of historically given boundaries, Wolin's theory of democracy focuses on forms of agency that can disrupt the calculable routines of political institutions, approaching such agency as a "a moment rather than a form."[61] And this means that he tends to view large-scale political institutions as hierarchical structures of instrumental calculation: as insurgent political movements are institutionalized, "leaders begin to appear, hierarchies develop, experts of one kind or another cluster around centers of decision; order, procedure, and precedent displace a more spontaneous politics" – a fact that is as true for ancient Athens as it is for modern states born out of radical revolutions.[62]

My next task, then, will be to analyze the structure of Weber's broader socio-theoretic categories and show how they operate as a critique of democracy, inheriting the earlier social liberal view of the welfare state as an antidote to democratic movements. But the goal of that theoretical and historical analysis will be to reveal the subtle ways in which Weber's categories inflect contemporary theories of domination and democratic agency. The implications of that influence will become fully evident once I have constructed my alternative socio-theoretic and normative framework – the task of Chapters 3 and 4. As I argue in Chapter 3, Weber's social theory divides the world into the instrumental routines of everyday institutions and the ideal, noninstrumental values that stand apart from and provide those institutions with meaning. His theory obscures the structure of our everyday, meaningful involvement in the world.[63] In contrast, the concept of worldliness calls attention to how our actions and sense of meaning is always mediated by a world of material objects and things that reify our thoughts, desires, needs, and actions. These worldly things are simultaneously tools of instrumental calculation and objects of

[60] Wolin, "Democracy and the Welfare State: The Political and Theoretical Connections between *Staaträson* and *Wohlfartsstaaträson*," 175, 57; cf. Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*; George Kateb, "Wolin As a Critic of Democracy," in *Democracy and Vision: Sheldon Wolin and the Vicissitudes of the Political*, ed. Aryeh Botwinick and William E. Connolly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Terry Maley, *Democracy and the Political in Max Weber's Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 190 194.

[61] Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 37. For this view in Foucault, see Foucault's reflections on Kant's "What Is Enlightenment?" and the other essays collected in Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1997).

[62] Wolin, "Fugitive Democracy," 39.

[63] More precisely, Weber's theory is parasitic on these more basic experiences. That is, he presup poses these forms of meaningful, pre theoretical involvement with the world but then distorts the nature of them in order to fit them into his broader conceptual apparatus. The goal of the argument advanced by Heidegger and Arendt, as I reconstruct it, is not to propose a freestanding alternative social theory but to show, through an internal critique, how the philosophy of value informing Weber's theory should actually lead to an analysis of worldliness.

collective, nontechnical, and noninstrumental judgment. Assuming meaningful action comes from the subjective imposition of value, Weber's social theory neglects this aspect of worldliness. As a result, Weber's thought reinforces a view of the social world as a domain of calculable objects to be managed through hierarchical institutions. Theorists of democracy and domination either accept this image (neo-republicans), challenge Weber's reduction of values to subjective choice but still presuppose the idea that institutions are mechanisms to be guided by such values (neo-Kantians) or turn to moments of disruption and anti-institutional movements as the only sites of democratic agency, thereby presenting institutions as sites of instrumental calculation (subjectification theorists).

The rest of my argument will show what this shift in socio-theoretic perspective – from value to world – enables. First, I contend that a social theory that begins from worldliness rather than value better captures the interaction between democratic social movements and welfare institutions. Weber presents such movements as bearers of disruptive values that are absorbed by the routines of bureaucratic, hierarchical institutions. But he advances this argument only by distorting the activities and demands of the democratic movements he faced. I show, on the contrary, that the working-class, socialist vision of a participatory, movement-based welfare state, developed during the course of practical political struggle, embodies a view of welfare institutions as worldly mediators that form spaces of political appearance and judgment. The agency of such movements resides not in their disruption of existing routines or structures of calculation and control. Rather, in their engagement in collective world-making, these movements produce contexts for shared judgment and action within structures that appear, from the Weberian perspective, as sites of bureaucratic calculation and control.

My analysis of welfare institutions as worldly mediators also resituates the relationship between welfare institutions, democratic agency, and domination. The conceptual vocabulary of worldliness helps to theorize how political institutions, including welfare institutions, mediate between the abstract, functional imperatives of economic forces and the world of shared judgment. Since worldly institutions are always relative to a shared space in the world, they will also tend to embody, in more overt, material form, the way that previously implicit structures of domination shape who can appear and be heard. Worldly institutions are the sediments of these past distributions of agency, both preserving them but also exposing them to critical questioning. Thus, even as political institutions to some extent separate and shield us from each other – the facet that neo-republicans emphasize – insofar as they become part of our common world, they also form a shared context for our political judgments. In so doing, they can become anchors for efforts to challenge domination.

Drawing this social theory of worldliness together with Habermas's normative theory of domination, I will show how welfare institutions function – not to alter the objective choice situation of actors (neo-republican), gradually

progress toward mutual recognition (neo-Kantian), or reproduce abstract, functional forms of power (subjectification) – but as nodal points in political struggles that challenge structures of domination even as they translate domination between the three levels or worlds of domination. The idea of worldliness provides the key to this analysis. Once welfare institutions are viewed as worldly mediators, we can analyze how they become objects for democratic social movements challenging structures of domination. To see this, though, we have to first develop a theory of welfare institutions as worldly things – as collections of objects, paperwork, buildings, material infrastructures – that render our material and biological needs amenable to shared judgment and action. As worldly mediators, welfare institutions construct a set of terms through which people can become intelligible to each other such that they form the context for our shared action. Yet because they form a material in-between space, these objects mediate between the level of the society as a whole and the individual in a way that is not accounted for by subjectification theorists, providing a stable but not fully fixed system of social intelligibility.

World-making movements treat such material institutions as potential sites of shared democratic judgment and action, arenas in which to question and challenge the manifestations of domination. But given how institutions are also bound up with broader functional imperatives – that is, given how worldly things are simultaneously instrumental tools tied to broader chains of means–ends functioning and shared objects of judgment – such activities will simultaneously challenge domination in an emancipatory direction and translate domination from one level to another – direct to structural, structural to abstract, or vice versa. Thus, while the initial construction of welfare institutions will often overcome forms of direct domination, enabling the right to exit domineering relationships as worldly objects, those same institutions will materialize the underlying distribution of agency characteristic of structural domination. But as they are the objects of collective judgment, they will also potentially be the objects of disavowed attachment and loss, characteristic of melancholic subject formation, such as in the tendency to interpret the decline of the welfare institutions as the loss of a masculine identity tied to industrial work. Nonetheless, as worldly objects, such institutions can then become the sites of democratic action to challenge domination, direct, structural, and abstract, creating spaces for shared political judgment and new forms of collective freedom.

2

# From Calculation to Domination

## *Max Weber on Democracy and the Welfare State*

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Germany witnessed a proliferation of efforts at social reform. At the peak stood Bismarck's social insurance laws, creating the first nation-wide public insurance system: sickness insurance (1883), industrial accident insurance (1884), and invalidity and old age insurance (1889).[1] These laws were the national complement to a diverse field of reform projects focused on the social. Ranging from responses to juvenile delinquency to public health campaigns to attempts to improve workers' safety and living conditions, these efforts all sought to regulate and control the threatening impacts of Germany's rapid industrialization and urbanization.[2] Most centrally, the reforms were in response to the rise of an organized and militant workers' movement radically calling into question the existing social order. Liberal social scientists debated the causes and best responses to the twin threats of "the social question" and "the workers' question." Meanwhile, armies of middle-class volunteers and civil servants implemented a variety of local projects aimed at mitigating the worst forms of poverty, morally improving workers and the poor, and protecting public hygiene. Both Bismarck and these crusading reformers hoped that, through a combination of top-down state reforms, municipal health and welfare campaigns, and volunteer associations focused on moral and cultural education, the workers' movement would be de-radicalized, social disturbances averted, and discontented workers integrated into an imagined moral and national order.

[1] For a comprehensive treatment of Bismarck's reforms, see E. P. Hennock, *The Origins of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850 1914: Social Policies Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[2] For an overview of recent research about German reform movements, see Edward Ross Dickinson, "Not So Scary after All? Reform in Imperial and Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 43, no. 01 (2010): 409.

Subsequent historical and theoretical research has tended to confirm this integrative view of the purpose and effects of German social reform. As both the first European country to introduce general social insurance laws and with the largest and most active radical workers' movement of the nineteenth century, Germany's history has become emblematic for later thinking about the relationship between democracy and the welfare state. For some scholars, Germany marks the failure of an authoritarian state to fully recognize the working class, in contrast to the successful efforts of England that forms the basis of Marshall's social rights model. For others, German welfare reveals in high relief the inherently disciplinary and rationalizing effects of any attempt to integrate subordinate groups such as workers through state reforms. Radical critics contend that the eventual embrace of social reform by the German labor movement meant that workers "were helping to run the undemocratic German state rather than attacking it."[3] For theorists like Sheldon Wolin, the social rights view of the welfare state fails to deal precisely with the legacy of Bismarck, who perceived the usefulness of social reform for "scotching discontent and increasing state power."[4]

Both of these perspectives echo Max Weber, the greatest theoretical observer of the Bismarckian welfare state and his contemporary German democracy.[5] Weber had a notably ambivalent relationship to Bismarck as well as the Bismarckian welfare state. He viewed the influence of Bismarck's authoritarianism as baneful, preventing the German bourgeois from taking their appropriate role as the politically leading class. He hoped that a politically ascendant bourgeois could follow the British model and use social reforms, combined with an imperialist and colonialist *Weltpolitik*, to tame the radical elements

[3] Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, 127.

[4] Wolin, "Democracy and the Welfare State: The Political and Theoretical Connections between *Staaträson* and *Wohlfartsstaaträson*," 177.

[5] Inspired by Weber, Roth argues that Germany's authoritarian, quasi feudal social system pre vented it from following England in forging a moderate labor liberal alliance. Guenther Roth, *The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany: A Study in Working Class Isolation and National Integration* (Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press, 1963). Roth co edited the English edition of *Econ omy and Society*. More broadly, Roth's view fits into the Weberian *Sonderweg* view that Germany's failure to modernize precluded the emergence of a stable parliamentary political system. For the canonical expression, see Hans Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871 1918*, trans. Kim Traynor (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1985). Conversely, Detlev Peukert, drawing on Weberian notions of rationalization, argues that reform embodied a utopian modernism that divided the social into more and less valuable subjects, a vision that culminates in the genocidal practices of the Third Reich. Detlev J. K. Peukert, "The Genesis of the 'Final Solution' from the Spirit of Science," in *Reevaluating the Third Reich*, ed. Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1993). For helpful discussions of Peukert's thesis and his influence on German historical research, see David F. Crew, "The Pathologies of Modernity: Detlev Peukert on Germany's Twentieth Century," *Social History* 17, no. 2 (1992): 319 328; Edward Ross Dickinson, "Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse About 'Mod ernity,'" *Central European History* 37, no. 01 (2004): 1 48.

within the workers' movement. In this respect, he saw Bismarck's social reform as a partially successful effort to de-radicalize the socialists. By absorbing them into the bureaucratic routines of the state and providing immediate material benefits, Bismarck's welfare reforms would encourage the moderate elements within the workers' movement. In this respect, Weber's thought echoed a longer tradition of social liberalism within Germany. By social liberalism, I mean a tradition of self-identified liberal thinkers who accepted the institutions of the welfare state and state intervention into the economy in order to ward off political challenges from the lower orders. For thinkers such as Lorenz von Stein, Gustav Schmoller, and Max Weber, welfare reforms could function to ward off radical, democratic challenges to the German state – which at that time combined universal suffrage with starkly undemocratic mechanisms like Prussia's three-tiered voting system.

This chapter turns to Weber's thought, situating him within the larger tradition of German social liberalism, to unearth the implicit assumptions that structure current theories of the relationship between democracy, domination, and the welfare state. In the first place, I take Weber to provide one of the most acute diagnoses of the nature of politics in the modern state. In this respect, he provides a vital starting point for thinking about the relationship between democratic agency and the institutional infrastructure of the welfare state. Weber's thought forces democratic thinkers and actors to confront the inevitability of complex, bureaucratic organizations in the modern state and the distinctive challenges they pose to transformative politics. At the same time, Weber himself had an ambivalent relationship to such democratic politics. He shares with the social liberals the idea that welfare institutions can turn the democratic demands of the German socialists into the objects of instrumental state administration. Welfare politics could, so he hoped, transform political conflicts over the organization of power within society – and the challenge to entrenched structures of domination that those entailed – into conflicts over material needs that could be rendered calculable by state institutions. Weber's thought represents, at once, a necessary point of departure for thinking about democratic action in the welfare state as well as a particularly vivid distillation of the underlying assumptions that narrow the political horizon of current democratic theories.

Weber's thought is also notable for how it integrates philosophical, normative, and socio-theoretic levels of analysis. This feature enables my excavation of the deeper theoretical commitments that inform prevalent thinking about the welfare state. I argue, in particular, that Weber's view of democracy is generated by his understanding of the relationship among "the everyday," "personality," and "value" – a relationship that in turn rests on his distinction between ordinary and extraordinary needs.[6] Personality

[6] For previous efforts to relate Weber's democratic theory to his understanding of personality, see Tamsin Shaw, "Max Weber on Democracy: Can the People Have Political Power in Modern

constitutes the normative horizon for Weber's thought. In his view, one becomes a personality by orienting oneself toward ultimate values, and these values arise in response to the extraordinary need for meaning in the face of suffering. These extraordinary needs are met by what Weber calls "charismatic" movements and forms of leadership that challenge existing institutional orders. Weber's understanding of personality buttresses his pessimistic account of domination, insofar as personality and value are both sustained in constant tension with the demands of everyday needs and the structures of domination that those needs generate. Armed with this theoretical perspective, Weber determines that democratic ideals and egalitarian claims are incompatible with the instrumental imperatives of the everyday and the hierarchical relationships demanded for the ongoing satisfaction of everyday needs. He views the emerging Bismarckian welfare state as another mechanism for integrating a charismatic movement into the existing order.

Weber's thought thus provides the basis for the view of welfare institutions as instrumental mechanisms we confronted in the preceding discussion. Both neo-republican and neo-Kantian theorists accept this image of the bureaucratic state, either as the basis for securing a space of robust freedom or as the medium through which mutual recognition gets translated into law. Similarly, radical-democratic critics of the welfare state assume Weber's picture of rationalizing, bureaucratic institutions and so abandon them, looking instead to political forces outside the state as a source of democratic agency. My analysis helps clarify the assumptions that animate Weber's thought such that democratic theorists and actors can discern a mode of relating to bureaucratic institutions such as welfare institutions that helps reveal the democratic possibilities they offer.[7]

This requires a shift in perspective: from a philosophy of value that focuses on the subjective imposition of meaning on the world in pursuit of becoming a personality, to a philosophy of world that captures how meaningful human agency presupposes a stable world of objects and things sustained by nontechnical forms of judgment. This is the perspective I will pursue in my analysis of Heidegger and Arendt. Heidegger and Arendt's account of worldliness proceeds through a critique of the philosophy of value and subjectivity presupposed by Weber's theory. Instead of beginning from the normative value of personality, where meaning comes from the subjective imposition of value on the world, they show that our sense of agency arises from our preexisting, nontechnical involvement with worldly things, things that form the context for shared judgments about the world. Weber's thought reproduces the social and political conditions that Arendt captures with the concept of world

States?," *Constellations* 15, no. 1 (2008): 33–45; Mark Warren, "Max Weber's Liberalism for a Nietzschean World," *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 1 (1988): 31–50.

[7] Shalini Satkunanandan, "Bureaucratic Passions," *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 15, no. 1 (2019): 14–29.

alienation – the tendency to view the everyday world as a domain of objects that can be mastered through instrumental calculations. Arendt's analysis of worldliness, I will show, opens up a new and different view of welfare institutions: not as a set of mechanisms to meet our calculable everyday needs, but as worldly mediators between technical calculations and the nontechnical, collective judgments that enable democratic movements against domination.

## ROOTS OF REFORM: THE ORIGINS OF THE GERMAN SCIENCES OF STATE

German liberalism followed a tortuous path after the abortive 1848 revolutions. The revolutionary movement failed both to unify German-speaking principalities into a single nation-state and to impose the norms of constitutional parliamentarianism in the German lands, most importantly Prussia. Instead, Germany was unified in 1871 under the auspices of Bismarck and military victory, immediately giving the new Reich an authoritarian, quasi-plebiscitary political character. Compelled to choose between their commitment to parliamentary democracy and their commitment to German unification, many liberals, already splintered by Bismarck, elected for the latter. At the same time, the social tensions born of Germany's rapid industrialization confronted liberalism with an organized working class who were self-consciously advancing the banner of democratization.

Social liberalism, as I use the term, denotes the specific strain of liberal ideology that emerged in Germany in response to these tensions. For influential theorists of social reform such as Lorenz von Stein, Gustav Schmoller, and Max Weber, the central problem was to address the social grievances produced by industrialization while rejecting – or strictly curtailing – the demands for self-organization, equal participation, and democratic government emerging from the workers' movement.[8] Rather, deliberate social reform could respond to these concerns while preserving a certain degree of autonomous rule by responsible elites. Moreover, social reformers hoped to use social reform, not to transform the state, but to empower it, making Germany into a global, imperial power that could rival England. Here, I examine the genesis of social-liberal theories of the state in Germany, unearthing the assumptions that structured thinking about the relationship between democracy and social reform. What were the conceptions of social reform, society, and the state that proved most effective for the social liberal project? How could the transformations wrought by industrialization – and especially the formation of a conscious, politically

[8] In Christoph Sachße's words, these movements "strove for social reform *without* political democratization." Christoph Sachße, "Social Mothers: The Bourgeois Women's Movement and German Welfare State Formation, 1890 1929," in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare State*, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York: Routledge, 1993), 139.

active proletariat – be conceptualized such that they did not threaten the authority of the German state?

To provide their answers to these questions, social liberal theorists could draw on a longer German tradition of thinking about state-initiated social reform. While Germany's late and rapid industrialization, as well as fragile political unification, pushed the problem of social conflict to the forefront of academic and public debate in the late nineteenth century, the distinctively German integrative understanding of social and economic reform – and especially of the state's role in overcoming social conflict – has roots in earlier traditions of cameralism and the related discourses of *Oeconomie-* and *Polizei-Wissenschaft*. These views emerged directly out of the administrative needs of the early modern state. Encouraged as part of the state-building and rationalizing ambitions of eighteenth-century Central European monarchs, cameralist writers sought to impart the proper principles and techniques of state management to university-trained administrators and advisors.[9]

Tasked with training new administrators, cameralist professors sought to transcend the monarchist exhortations of earlier writers and produce a theoretical science for the practical tasks of administration. In the hands of the most influential cameralist writer, Heinrich Gottlob von Justi, this systematization marks the transition from *Cameralwissenschaften* to *Staatwissenschaften*. In his textbooks on the sciences of state (*Staatwissenschaften*), Justi constrains *Cameralwissenschaft* to the study of the proper acquisition and use of government revenue (fiscal and tax policy), and he places alongside it the broader domains of *oeconomische Wissenschaft* and *Polizeiwissenschaft*. The former is the study of the economic activities of individual citizens and the latter the study of all public regulations and institutions that promote public order and the collective good (*Polizei*). Cameralism is typically viewed in terms of the early emergence of the German sciences of state, which both propelled and legitimated the statist and rationalizing aspirations of enlightened absolutist leaders. More broadly, though, cameralist writers established a powerful post-theological rationale for benevolent administration and regulation. Advancing the monarchical principle based on a fundamental harmony of interests between rulers and subjects, cameralists laid the groundwork for what Hans-Ulrich Wehler aptly dubs "the Utopia of a society free of conflict," an ideal which strongly influenced the self-understanding of post-unification German social liberals and reformers.[10]

Nevertheless, the cameralist writers moved within a conceptually static universe. For cameralists, civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) is interchangeable

[9] The term "cameralism" comes from the "Kammer," which was the traditional name for the royal administrative palace. For the context for the development of cameralism, see Marc Raeff, "The Well Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach," *The American Historical Review* 80, no. 5 (1975): 1221 1243.

[10] Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871 1918*, 130.

with the state: Both refer to a condition of peaceful interaction established through good governance and laws, a condition conducive to security and stability.[11] As a result, cameralists discourse focuses on exhaustively categorizing the fixed tasks of political and economic rule. The breakdown and transformation of the static intellectual universe of the cameralists was a long and multifaceted process, but two factors were particularly important: first, the impact of Scottish political economy and Adam Smith, filtered into Germany through Kant and Hegel and second, the revolutionary upheavals that shook Europe after the French Revolution, but especially the failed 1848 revolutions in Germany and the emergence of a revolutionary labor movement challenging both the power of the state and the emancipatory credentials of German liberalism. Both these events compelled German state theorists to reckon with society as a domain with its own intrinsic, often dangerous, dynamics.[12]

Lorenz von Stein stands as the most theoretically incisive representative of this new effort. Philosophically indebted to Hegel, but also a keen observer of political events, Stein sought to develop a vision of stabilizing, state-led social reform adequate to the epochal transformations of the European social order. Most notably for our purposes, Stein sought to grasp, in their own terms, the historical dynamics behind the emergence of the social as a field of state governance while divorcing social reform as much as possible from the question of political form and democratization. Stein's thought thus provies crucial insight into how the social liberal vision imagines conflict such as to turn it into the potential object of reformist state pacification and stabilization. The illegitimate son of a Danish nobleman, Stein initially pursued a military career but was able to follow an academic path when he revealed his true heritage to the King of Denmark, who then supported Stein's university studies.[13] When he was twenty-six, he travelled to Paris to continue his research, where he was reportedly also a Prussian secret agent sent to monitor exiled German socialists.[14] Yet Stein became supportive to the burgeoning working-class movement, writing for radical newspapers such as Marx's *Rheinische Zeitung* and eventually producing his first work, *Der Socialismus und Communismus des heutigen*

[11] Keith Tribe, *Governing Economy: The Reformation of German Economic Discourse, 1750 1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 28.

[12] As David Lindenfeld puts it, the "recognition of society was a reformulation . . . of something the scientists of state had long since known: the limits of state control over the autonomous activities of individuals and groups. Now, however, the groups were more than merely autonomous they were menacing. Given the hopes and fears that were associated with the term *society*, a scientific approach was all the more necessary." David F. Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination: The German Sciences of State in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 181.

[13] Kaethe Mengelberg, "Lorenz Von Stein, His Life and Work," in *The History of the Social Movement in France, 1789 1850* (Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press, 1964), 3.

[14] Lindenfeld, *The Practical Imagination: The German Sciences of State in the Nineteenth Century*, 148 149.

*Frankreich* (1842), a sympathetic study of French radical thought. His views became more conservative following the failed 1848 revolutions, and by the time he republished his work in a three-volume expanded edition, now titled *Die Geschichte der sozialen Bewegungen in Frankreich von 1789 bis auf unsere Tage* (1850), Stein evinced deep skepticism about the possible realization of the working class' democratic demands.[15] Instead, he embraced a program of state-led social reform as the solution to the social question.[16]

The starting point of Stein's thought, like Weber's, is the concept of personality (*Persönlichkeit*) and the tension between the idea of the state and the idea of society that arises from the practical realization of individual personality. Personality is Stein's general concept for the development of the individual's intrinsic moral and cultural potential, and he posits the full realization of personality as the purpose of human society. However, since the realization of personality requires "control of the external circumstances of existence" ("History," 44), it cannot be achieved in isolation, and so the concept of personality presupposes that of community. State and society then represent the two sides – one ideal, extraordinary, and value-laden, the other material, everyday, and calculable – of communal life. The state embodies the ideal, self-determining aspect of community: namely, the fact that a human community is not just an arbitrary multitude but also a self-determining entity with a general will of its own ("History," 44–45, 52–54). Society, in contrast, represents the fact that the development of the individual personality is dependent on the liberation from material necessity through labor ("History," 45–46, 55).

Stein argues that, while through the state diverse individual wills can be brought into harmony, society is inherently and inevitably an order of domination founded on unequal forms of property ownership: "The existence of a ruling and a dependent class is the most general and unalterable fact in any society" ("History," 57).[17] The principle of collective freedom embodied in the

[15] Quotations are from Lorenz von Stein, *The History of the Social Movement in France, 1789 1850*, trans. Kaethe Mengelberg (Totowa, NJ: Bedminster Press, 1964), hereafter cited in text as "History."

[16] Only later, when intensifying class conflict and the economic depression of the 1870s discredited the laissez faire doctrine in Germany, did the sort of views Stein developed gain widespread acceptance and practical import. As David Blackbourn notes, "By the end of the [nineteenth] century bourgeois aspirations were more defensive on the whole. As the belief in self regulating harmony in society declined, so the willingness to turn to the neutralizing role of the state above society grew accordingly." David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 249.

[17] Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who find Stein a useful theorist of the welfare state downplay this aspect of his thought, if they address it at all. For instance, see Ernst Wolfgang Böckenförde, "Lorenz Von Stein As Theorist of the Movement of State and Society towards the Welfare State," in *State, Society and Liberty: Studies in Political Theory and Constitutional Law* (New York: Berg, 1991); Franz Xaver Kaufmann, *Thinking About Social Policy: The German Trad ition* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2013), 33 36; Eckart Pankoke, "'Personality' As a Principle of

state is inherently abstract; only the hierarchical relationships characteristic of society give political community concrete order. Periods of revolutionary change, when it seems that the republican ideal of political equality can be realized, are actually only periods of flux when an old social order of domination is dying and a new one emerging. Stein terms such transitions between political orders driven by changes in the structure of domination in society as "social movements."

Analyzing the revolutions of 1789 and 1848, Stein argues that European society was undergoing precisely such a transition from a feudal to an acquisitive and finally an industrial social order. While in feudal society, property ownership, and so class domination, is determined by inherited privileges, the acquisitive society grounds property ownership in free labor, a principle expressed through the notion of equality before the law. Yet the acquisitive society is, in Stein's view, largely a negative reaction against the status hierarchies of feudal society. These abstract rights are given concrete content when property ownership itself, now in the form of capital rather than inherited privilege, "establishes an element of bondage" through the formation of a class of property owners and a "a class without capital and without a chance to ever acquire it": the working class ("History," 256). While the acquisitive society grounds abstract equality in the formal possibility that anyone could acquire property, in industrial society, where competition among capitalists pushes wages to a subsistence level, there is no real possibility of workers accumulating capital, no matter how diligent and thrifty. Stein thinks this founds the social hierarchy of industrial society and so gives it its distinctive political form – parliamentary government with a restricted property franchise.

The tension between the concept of the state, which holds out the promise of political equality, and the social domination of capital over workers, which provides society with substance, gives rise to a new social movement, now defined as the conflict between restricted bourgeois democracy and the working-class demand for the abolition of private capital ownership. The working-class political movement attacks the political foundation of the domination of capital – property restrictions on the franchise – in the hopes that universal suffrage will lead to a material realization of equality through the redistribution and eventually complete socialization of capital. Property owners, recognizing the threat, quite willingly abandon democracy and turn to dictatorship to defend their interests, as in the French July monarchy. Stein presents both the bourgeois turn to dictatorship and the working class' demand for universal suffrage on equal footing: Both are, strictly speaking, incidental to the pursuit of their underlying social interest in property ownership. Under such

Individual and Institutional Development: Lorenz Von Stein's Institutional Theory of a 'Labour Society,'" in *The Theory of the Ethical Economy in the Historical School: Wilhelm Roscher, Lorenz Von Stein, Gustav Schmoller, Wilhelm Dilthey and Contemporary Theory*, ed. Peter Koslowski (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1995).

circumstances, "popular sovereignty becomes only an empty phrase for whichever class is excluded from power" ("History," 361). The true meaning of popular sovereignty can only be restored through a restoration of the "idea of the state" as "personified by an institution which stands above all interests": "the monarchy of social reform" ("History," 254, 320).

Stein's vision of state-initiated social reform rests on two pillars: first, that the concept of the state can achieve reality through the figure of a monarchy that protects social domination even as it has an interest in a limited alliance with the dependent classes and, second, that capital and labor share a common interest in social reform. In the struggle between the monarchy and the ruling classes, the monarchy's best hope is to ally itself with the lower classes. "It is the purpose of monarchy to oppose the will and the natural tendencies of the ruling class, in order to support the lower class, which has so far been socially and politically subjugated, and that it use the supreme power of the state to this effect," Stein writes ("History," 320).

Stein sees the monarchy as best suited to carry out a program of social reform that would address the economic grievances of the dominated classes – most importantly, efforts to provide workers with a small share of capital and with education. As social reform is a response to societal demands, the question of political reform is largely irrelevant: Social reform is "equally possible under a monarchy, a dictatorship, an aristocracy, and a democracy" ("History," 366–367). This is because the social basis of social reform is the "solidarity of interests" between workers and capitalists ("History," 365). While competing, individual capitalists must seek to keep wages as low as possible, "the general interest of capital" resides in educating the working class and providing them with the opportunity to acquire small amounts of capital.[18] Similarly, workers only see capital as a class adversary because of the competition among capitalists: if the state advances the general interests of capital that capitalists cannot, workers, now recognizing that their well-being depends on investment and the future profitability of capital, would be reconciled with their employers and the state. With the "natural social harmony" restored through such reform, "a new social order," one with no intrinsic connection to democracy, can be created ("History," 365).

Stein's ideas had a limited direct impact during his life. He was forced to leave the University of Kiel because of his support for Schleswig-Holstein's bid for independence from Denmark but blacklisted in Prussia because of his criticism of their actions during the crisis. He eventually took up a position at the University of Vienna, where he exerted a modest influence on Austrian politics. Yet his theoretical orientation would prove decisive in Prussia, where

[18] "Since capital earnings are dependent on the quality of labor, it is in the highest interest of capital to contribute to a higher quality of labor" ("History," 363). Stein here articulates the basic assumption of varieties of capitalism scholarship on the welfare state: that welfare institutions function to bridge capitalists' need for skilled labor and workers' incentives to invest in skills.

they were filtered into both elite and popular discourse through the efforts of Gustav Schmoller, the most influential member of the German historical school of economics, as well as through the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, which Schmoller was instrumental in founding and which provided Weber with his initial intellectual foothold. Although Schmoller's direct influence on Bismarck was small as compared to that of arch conservative political thinkers like Hermann Wagener, Schmoller was well connected with more liberal Protestant members of the German government, most notably Interior Minister Theodor Lohmann, who strongly influenced the course of German social policy under Bismarck.

Schmoller advances a more historically- and empirically-inflected version of the social reform ideals of Stein. While Schmoller praises Stein as "one of the most meritorious German state-theorists of the present" and the "father of contemporary social politics," he nonetheless cautions against what he sees as Stein's overreliance on a theoretical and abstract teleological method, which examines concrete phenomena only "in connection to the harmony of the whole or the historical development of its function."[19] In Schmoller's view, Stein's emphatically normative approach must be supplemented by comprehensive research into the historical formation of economic institutions, research that would also consider the normative ideals embodied in such institutions, especially the wider societal customs and legal regimes that determine the structure of those institutions.[20] "Every period has prevailing conventional standards of valuation for human qualities and deeds, virtues and vices ... These conventional standards of valuation are more or less the starting-point of every judgment of justice," writes Schmoller.[21] And insofar as every organized economic undertaking also constitutes a "moral community," Schmoller calls for the harmonization of "the complexes of rules of morals and rights which govern groups of men who live and work together ... with those ideal conceptions of justice which on the basis of our moral and religious conceptions are prevalent to-day."[22]

Schmoller's historicist reformulation of the basis of reform opens up a broader vision of social politics. In contrast to Stein's narrow focus on providing workers with education and small amounts of property so as to reconcile them with the interests of capital, Schmoller believes that "the life and the customs, the education and the pleasures, the child-rearing and the morality of

[19] Gustav Schmoller, "Lorenz Stein," *Preußische Jahrbücher* XIX (1867): 246, 61, 60.

[20] For an overview of Schmoller's research program, see Heino Heinrich Nau, "Gustav Schmoller's Historico Ethical Political Economy: Ethics, Politics and Economics in the Younger German Historical School, 1860 1917," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 7, no. 4 (2000): 507 531.

[21] Gustav Schmoller, Ernst L. von Halle, and Carl L. Schutz, "The Idea of Justice in Political Economy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 4 (1894): 13, 35.

[22] Ibid., 731.

the lower classes all stand badly, very badly, in need of reform."[23] Yet this broader vision also brings with it a more pronounced focus on integrating dependent classes into both the shared values of a historical community and into the global power struggle on which the survival of those values supposedly depends. For Schmoller, one of the key impediments to social reform is "the fact that up to the present time Social Democracy completely neglected the specifically national demands which were proposed in the interest of the power of the state and of the nation."[24] Similarly, even as Schmoller shares Stein's strong faith in a monarchical state standing above society, he develops this thought into a more broad-ranging belief in the political necessity of hierarchical relations in all social domains. A key task of social reform is to encourage the "political and occupational organization of laborers" so as "to give them a chance to have leaders of their own organization, whom they learn to obey."[25] In Schmoller's estimation, the revolutionary "demagogues" of the working class, advancing "extreme democratic demands" such as universal suffrage, merely feed off of the material deprivation and spiritual exclusion of workers from Germany's cultural heritage.[26] The goal of social reform, then, is as much to ensure the loyalty of workers to the German Reich – their active participation in its global self-assertion – as it is to reflect in Germany's economic institutions the ideals of justice embodied in its legal and religious traditions.

Even more explicitly than Stein, Schmoller's vision of social reform rests on a hierarchical and elite-oriented view of social institutions as they relate to the collective culture of a political community. Schmoller's idea that social reforms express the implicit ethical understanding of a particular community authorizes elites to articulate and act on behalf of that ethical vision, even if it means limiting their direct accountability.[27] At times, this elitism took on biological overtones, as when Schmoller worries that a fully socialist political program

[23] Gustav Schmoller, "Die Sociale Frage und der Preußische Staat," *Preußische Jahrbücher* XXXIII (1874): 336.

[24] "Schmoller on Class Conflicts in General," *American Journal of Sociology* 20, no. 4 (1915): 530. Translation modified.

[25] Ibid., 525.

[26] Ibid., 518, 29. Elsewhere, Schmoller's attitude towards democratization is less polemical yet still fundamentally hostile: While he admits that the idea that political reform is a necessary precon dition for social reform is "not entirely wrong," he then advances a litany of complaints against universal suffrage: that it would also lead to enfranchisement of women and youth, encourage political careerism, and ultimately make class domination worse, rather than better. "Die Sociale Frage und der Preußische Staat," 341 342.

[27] I am indebted to Bob Gooding Williams for emphasizing this point to me. Gooding Williams shows how this focus on the notion of exclusion, rather than questions of domination, contrib utes to the idea that the political integration of subordinated groups should occur through respectable elite leadership. Indeed, Schmoller's understanding traveled quite widely, as it influ enced conceptions of African American politics via the thought of W. E. B. Du Bois, who studied with Schmoller in Germany. Robert Gooding Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro Modern Political Thought in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 19 65.

would bring "a future breeding system which will produce wholly like human beings of a mediocre type."[28] Historical economics was to bring to light these implicit moral ideals and their empirical effects in the economy such that state institutions could be reformed to reflect them. Welfare institutions were objects for this sort of intellectual and political leadership, mechanisms for managing the needs and social worlds of lower classes so that they would be less susceptible to demagogic entireties. These reforms promised to bring excluded groups, such as workers, into the sphere of the national community, ensuring that they could achieve the same cultural standards as others. At the very least, for Schmoller, social reform could ensure that Germany's national elites would retain the loyalty of the masses as they advanced their country's economic and political interests.

As influential theorists of reformist social liberalism, both Stein and Schmoller contributed to a general public acceptance of active state intervention into economic relationships on behalf of workers and other dependent groups. Yet their advocacy of what we would call today the welfare state is not complemented by – indeed, is meant to forestall – a commitment to the creation of new and more democratic public institutions. What conceptual ingredients hold these two aspects of their thought together? To an extent, both Stein and Schmoller are simply following in the footsteps of the earlier cameralist discourse of a strong and benevolent state responsible for public happiness. However, they both faced new historical realities: the democratic revolutions of 1789 and 1848 and the emergence of an organized working-class movement. In response to these developments, Stein and Schmoller seek to conceptualize those revolutionary political conflicts as *social* conflicts, driven primarily by basically *calculable* conflicts of material interests and distribution, such that they are amenable to state-initiated administrative resolution. For Stein, the social movement – the transition from a feudal to an industrial hierarchical order – drives the democratic demands of the working-class: if workers' dependency on capital can be reduced through the provision of education and small amounts of property, they will have no reason to pursue a democratic political form. In Schmoller's hands, this line of reasoning is expanded into the broader hope that social reform efforts responding to the material deprivation and spiritual exclusion of workers from the national community will secure their loyalty to the self-assertive German Reich.

## PERSONALITY AND VALUE IN MAX WEBER'S SOCIAL THEORY

These debates about democracy and German social reform were the background for Max Weber's initial intellectual formation. Thinkers like Stein and Schmoller consistently positioned such reforms as antidotes to democratic

[28] Schmoller, "Schmoller on Class Conflicts in General," 519.

demands. And they further thought that social reforms could function so precisely because of how state institutions could turn the normative demand for democratization into a conflict among calculable needs that could be mediated by the state. Weber picks up on both these threads and combines them in a new way. And he does so by situating the underlying aspirations of German social liberalism within a philosophy of value, which decisively rejects the lingering assumption that the state embodies a higher perspective that can mediate and overcome social conflicts. Instead, Weber transforms the social liberal perspective by grounding it in his view of the relationship between value, personality, and the ordinary world of instrumental calculation. For Weber, political institutions like welfare institutions are part of the ordinary domain of calculable needs against which the possibility of becoming a personality must be secured.

Weber was initially allied with Schmoller's project of national economics – albeit with a more distinctively muscular and militaristic focus on "the economic and political power-interests of our nation."[29] Yet over time, Weber would break decisively with Schmoller, repudiating Schmoller's belief in the political value of a neutral civil service standing above political conflict.[30] These conflicts played out in the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, the liberal research and policy advocacy organization that was firmly aligned with the project of liberal social reform, and of which Schmoller was president from 1890 to 1917. The debate eventually culminated in a split in 1909 and the founding, with Weber's support, of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie*. The *Verein* was created as a forum for liberal academics to confront the "social question" prompted by new working-class mobilization, and yet Weber thought this project was stifled by the paternalistic tendencies of the earlier generation. Schmoller, Weber averred, was blind to the values that guided his own research, ascribing them rather to the collective ethos of the German people. Schmoller and his generation's inability to adequately grasp the values that guided their economic research *as values* led them, Weber thought, to an unreflective faith in the benign moral power of the Prussian state to overcome emerging social conflicts. Moreover, their failure to adequately recognize the constitutive role of values in their research led members of the *Verein* to turn authentically political questions into technical matters. Thus, for example, Weber argued at the 1909 Vienna conference of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* that the concept of "productivity" transformed problems of "world-shaking importance" into "a technical and economic question" to be solved by specialized disciplines.[31]

[29] Max Weber, "The Nation State and Economic Policy," in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[30] Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber: A Biography* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

[31] Max Weber, "Intervention in the Discussion on 'the Productivity of the National Economy,'" in *Collected Methodological Writings*, ed. Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster (New York: Routledge, 2012), 359.

This controversy forms the backdrop for some of Weber's most notable writings. After Weber became an editor of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, he quickly wrote a series of methodological articles that implicitly attacked Schmoller's approach and called for a vision of social science grounded in the ideal of individual personality. And these themes reappear strongly in Weber's seminal *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, even as they have been obscured by the debate over the empirical veracity of Weber's argument. In both the methodological writings and the *Protestant Ethic*, Weber develops a theory of personality as the normative horizon for his thought and connects that concept to the notion of values. One becomes a personality by consciously affirming values as ends-in-themselves, over and against the instrumental routines of the world. Yet Weber's thought was still oriented toward the same goal as the earlier social reform discourse: How state social reform policies could absorb demands for democracy, ensuring the stability of the German state and the selection of a political elite with a sense of responsibility. Central to this is his understanding of the relationship between personality and value. The individual who can affirm values is always threatened by the routines of the everyday, which, for Weber, inevitably ground orders of hierarchy and domination. As we will see in the next section, Weber's sociology of domination is fundamentally organized around this distinction between extraordinary, non-instrumental values and the instrumental routines of the everyday.

First, though, I reconstruct the role that the concepts of personality and value play in orienting Weber's thought. I examine these in depth because they form the hinge between Weber's thought and the concept of worldliness I develop in the next chapter. Heidegger and Arendt's analysis of worldliness is a reaction to the internal tensions within the neo-Kantian philosophy of value, which they both view as a reflection of the modern alienation from the world. While this discussion may appear remote from the political concerns that motivate my argument, it forms the crucial theoretical point from which I will pry apart the assumptions that constrain current theories of democratic agency and welfare institutions. In all, Weber's understanding of personality and of value represents a remarkable fusion of Kant, filtered through German neo-Kantianism, and Nietzsche. On the Kantian front, Weber argues that all knowledge is constituted through an act of subjective affirmation of certain values, including the value of objectivity, which then form the potential objects of scientific knowledge. He imbibed these ideas from his colleague the neo-Kantian philosopher Heinrich Rickert, who argued that the cultural sciences rested on a constitutively different basis than the natural sciences. This was so, for Rickert, because the natural sciences are concerned with abstract generalization while the cultural sciences are focused on historical specificity.[32] Our interest in

[32] For a fuller discussion, which this brief summary draws on, see Jay A. Ciaffa, *Max Weber and the Problems of Value Free Social Science: A Critical Examination of the "Werturteilsstreit"* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1998). Rickert was the leading representative of

these historical specificities is based on a certain set of values that tell us why it is significant or meaningful for us.

Yet Weber departs from Rickert in arguing that these values are produced through subjective valuation and ultimately have a psychological basis in response to the fundamental need for meaning. So on the Nietzschean front, Weber presents a theory of the *origins* of values in the need for meaning in the face of the permanent existence of undeserved suffering.[33] Central to this is Weber's distinction between ideal and material needs. Weber's sociological theory is grounded in the assumption that humans seek to fulfill material or everyday needs focused on biological survival as well as ideal needs focused on the need for meaning. And ultimately, for Weber, all ideal needs resolve into the need for an answer to the problem of theodicy – for an explanation of why there is suffering in the world.[34]

Like the German social liberals before him, Weber assumes that our everyday or material needs are the objects of technical or instrumental calculation. We can know, with certainty, how to fulfill them. In contrast, our ideal need for meaning is in a fundamental sense incalculable and inexhaustible, even as he thinks there is a finite set of the sorts of answers (or what Weber calls "salvation ethics") that ideological and religious systems can provide for the problem of suffering. Nonetheless, our ideal needs cannot be met through instrumentally calculable forms of action insofar as the satisfaction of the underlying need – for meaning in the face of the existence of suffering – cannot, for Weber, ever be fully and knowingly satisfied. Even as worldviews arise which channel our ideal needs and prescribe pathways for salvation, the forms of action those worldviews prescribe can never fully and unambiguously resolve the underlying need for an answer to the question of suffering. For Weber, the ultimate values to which humans must orient themselves in order to become personalities arise from our ideal needs. And so this means for him that the values constituting social scientific research are always a matter of commitment, chosen by individuals who decide to become a personality in this way. While Rickert argued that the values that guided social scientific research into particularities ultimately had an objective, transcendental foundation, Weber emphasized the subjective, and so selective, nature of all value stances.[35] He therefore calls attention, in a way Rickert's analysis does

"Southwestern neo Kantianism," which focused on the relationship between Kantian ideas and the cultural and historical sciences. In contrast, the "Marburg School" of neo Kantianism focused on the relationship between Kant and the natural sciences.

[33] On this, see Tamsin Shaw, "The 'Last Man' Problem: Nietzsche and Weber on Political Attitudes towards Suffering," in *Nietzsche As Political Philosopher*, ed. Barry Stocker and Manuel Knoll (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

[34] Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).

[35] Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster, "Introduction," in *Max Weber: Collected Methodo logical Writings*, ed. Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster (New York: Routledge, 2012),

not, to the constitutive relationship between social scientific research and a particular vision of autonomous personality. These two sides come together in Weber's analysis of personality, especially in relationship to the category of charisma: the true personality both subordinates themselves to the demands of their values while also, potentially, becoming a prophetic creator of new values, who channels the passion of their followers into political innovation.

This section and the next will try to unearth the underlying logic of Weber's theory of personality, value, and domination. We will move, in some respects, away from the concrete focus on social reform and democracy evinced by Stein and Schmoller. But these concerns are never far from Weber's theory. Weber still reduces the institutional matrix of the welfare state to a mechanism for instrumental control and domination by the modern state: "in spite of all 'social welfare policies,' the whole course of the state's inner function, of justice and administration, is repeatedly and unavoidably regulated by the objective pragmatism of 'reason of state.'"[36] Weber repudiates the lingering enchantment of the state evident in both Stein and Schmoller, but only to further their image of welfare institutions as mechanisms that transform the democratic claims of social movements into objects of technical administration. And he advances this perspective by embedding it in a much broader theory of the inevitable tension between moments of extraordinary rupture – moments that produce the values which enable individuals to become personalities – and the calculable routines of ordinary social, economic, and political institutions.

My task, then, will be to unearth this broader socio-theoretic basis for Weber's analysis of the relationship between democracy and the welfare state. Weber's brilliant reformulation of the social liberal tradition, one which is much less sanguine about the nature of the modern administrative state, still structures contemporary accounts of the relationship between democracy and domination in the welfare state. Insofar as Weber is in the shadow of Bismarck, then so too is our analysis of the welfare state. All the views of domination I canvassed in the previous chapter accept, in their own way, Weber's division between noninstrumental values and the calculable routines of ordinary institutions like welfare institutions. Insofar as they depart from or challenge Weber, it is on his view of the nature of values and the normative horizon of personality. Neo-republican theorists and neo-Kantians both contend that Weber's subjective, decisionistic values should be translated into norms that

xviii xxiii. In the so called "Nervi Fragment," Weber directly repudiates as metaphysics Rick ert's attempt to find objective norms for the selection of the values that guide social scientific research. Max Weber, "Handwritten Note from an Envelope with the Imprint 'Schickert's Parc Hôtel, Nervi,' Marked 'Rickerts 'Werthe" (Rickert's 'Values')." In *Collected Methodological Writings*, edited by Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster 413. New York: Routledge, 2012.

[36] Max Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 334.

admit of rational redemption.[37] Radical theorists emphasize Weber's portrait of ordinary institutions of mechanisms of rationalization and calculation and so valorize moments of rupture or excess that exceed or escape such routines – the way in which political movements can "posit an object outside the instrumental use economy" of established institutions and structures.[38] But both these perspectives implicitly accept, or at the least fail to question, Weber's founding distinction between the ordinary and the extraordinary, value and instrumentality. But to begin challenging that distinction, we need to see how it plays out in Weber's theoretical perspective.

As with Stein, the central normative ideal that animates Weber's thought is the concept of personality. Read together, Weber's methodological writings and his account of the structure of *The Protestant Ethic* emerge as fundamentally concerned with the relationship between personality and value – and, most centrally, with confronting his reader with the burden of forming a personality without metaphysical certainties.[39] Weber construes personality as arising through the pursuit of a given calling as an end-in-itself, without searching for a guarantee of meaning in the structure of the world. And it is this idea of personality that grounds the possible validity of research in the social sciences. To make this case, Weber's methodological writings seek to derive, through a quasi-transcendental argument, the possibility of a social science from the notion of personality. Personality, for Weber, exists only in relationship to values. "[T]he dignity of a personality," he writes, "is that it espouses certain values to which it relates its life."[40] By values and value systems, Weber is thinking of the ultimate, orienting ends, the consistent pursuit of which gives an individual's life consistency and meaning. Weber worries that if those values are taken as objectively given features of the world rather than as subjective commitments, individuals will see no need to consciously reflect on and affirm them and so will not live a life of "meaning and significance" (O 103). While these values are object-like in the sense that they are historically inherited as part of our cultural world, they are only binding insofar as individuals

[37] For an account of the similarities between the discourse of values and norms, see Frederick C. Beiser, "Normativity in Neo Kantianism: Its Rise and Fall," *International Journal of Philo sophical Studies* 17, no. 1 (2009): 9 27.

[38] Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, 62.

[39] While previous commentators have called attention to both the political subtext of Weber's methodological writings and the importance Weber's concept of personality holds for them, my reading, by focusing on the role played by ultimate values in constituting personality, discloses the intimate connections between Weber's understanding of personality and his view of domination. Sheldon Wolin, "Max Weber: Legitimation, Method, and the Politics of Theory," *Political Theory* 9, no. 3 (1981): 401 424; David Owen and Tracy B. Strong, "Max Weber's Calling to Knowledge and Action," in *Max Weber: The Vocation Lectures*, ed. David Owen and Tracy B. Strong (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2004).

[40] Weber, "The 'Objectivity' of Knowledge in Social Science and Social Policy," 103, hereafter cited in text as "O".

subjectively take them up by making them the basis of their activities. Humans, Weber writes, "*are* cultural *beings*, endowed with the capacity and the will to adopt a deliberate position towards the world, and to bestow *meaning* upon it," and this is "the transcendental presupposition of every *cultural science*" (O 119, emphasis in original). Values reflect our ability to take a stance toward external reality and relate brute facts to complexes of meaning.

Weber further accentuates the subjective basis of all knowledge of cultural reality through a critique of attempts to exceed the transcendental limits of such knowledge. Against the view that the ultimate goal of the social sciences is simply an accurate description of external reality, Weber argues that, in itself, social reality is just a manifold of discrete appearances: "... as soon as we seek to reflect upon the way in which we encounter life in its immediate aspect, [we see that] it presents an absolute infinite multiplicity of events 'within' and 'outside' ourselves, [events that] emerge and fade away successively and concurrently" (O 114). Without the constitutive role of human subjectivity via cultural values, cultural reality is infinitely unknowable. Consequently, Weber emphasizes that individuals only form the infinite manifold of sense perception into an object of study by selecting those aspects that "have significance and importance [for us] today" (O 116, emphasis in original). He writes, "the concept of culture is a value-concept. Empirical reality becomes 'culture' to us because and insofar as we relate it to value ideas. It includes those segments of reality which have become significant to us because of this value-relevance" (O 76, emphasis in original). Crucially, this means that values *constitute* the object of social scientific study rather than just leading the social scientists in the selection of objects of study.

In drawing out these points, Weber wants to compel social scientific researchers to acknowledge that they have chosen a certain value position in pursuing their research. The overarching goal of the methodological writings is to critically establish the boundaries of social scientific knowledge so that such knowledge can further, rather than efface, this human capacity to autonomously determine the ultimate ends of social action. For Weber, the pursuit of a neutral description of the social world rests on an evasion of the individual responsibility to form a personality by affirming and sustaining values. In this respect, Weber's argument for the transcendental role of subjective values in giving form to concrete experience further accentuates the importance of personality for social scientific research: even if they are not fully aware of it, social scientific researchers ultimately deploy their capacity to affirm values in constituting their objects of study.[41]

Toward the end of "Objectivity," Weber remarks that, while most social scientists are either fact-obsessed specialists or else grandiose interpreters who

[41] Cf. Harvey Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 73; Owen and Strong, "Max Weber's Calling to Knowledge and Action," xxvii.

disdain facts, the "genuine artistry" of great social science "precisely consists in relating *known* facts to *known* viewpoints but nevertheless creating something new" (O 138, emphasis in original). I now want to turn to examine Weber's seminal work of social science, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, to show how it continues the project Weber announces in "Objectivity": to reformulate the "historically given value-judgments and ideas" that animate capitalism so as to disclose what it would entail to embrace or renounce them as ultimate values. Such a formulation will enable individuals to become aware "of the ultimate standards of value" which we do not "make explicit" to ourselves (O 103). This effort, then, introduces a historical dimension into Weber's critical aspirations. It is not sufficient to delineate the transcendental limits of social scientific knowledge. Weber also seeks to disclose the historical conditions of possibility of the value orientations currently available to individuals who may seek to become a personality. At the same time, *The Protesant Ethic* further reveals the opposition, for Weber, between the routines of the everyday and the task of forming a personality.

Weber takes it for granted that Protestantism had a consequential influence on the development of capitalism – the real debate, for him, is over the cultural structure of this influence and so of its cultural relevance for those who, unlike the Puritans, are forced to live in a world structured around "the calling" as an absolute end.[42] Weber's imagined interlocutor, then, is not someone who would deny that Protestantism was decisive for the emergence of capitalism but rather someone who thinks that the crucial link between Protestantism and capitalism is to be found in "allegedly more or less materialistic or at least antiascetic 'worldly happiness'" (PSC 7). And he is concerned to provide an alternative account of this relationship – one that focuses on the "purely *religious* features" of Protestantism (PSC 7, emphasis in original) – because he thinks that the notion of a transition from an idealistic to a materialistic set of motivations obscures the ultimate values embedded in a capitalist form of life, instead presenting it as just a structure of material needs. His notion of the "spirit" of capitalism is "a complex of configuration in historical reality which we consolidate together conceptually from the point of view of their *cultural significance* to form a single whole" (PSC 8, emphasis in original). To trace the spirit of capitalism back to Protestant asceticism is to call attention to one aspect of the intentional, subjective orientations toward value that is the historical condition of possibility of capitalist social relationships.

More centrally for my purposes, *The Protestant Ethic* is itself a story about the nature of personality, with the ascetic discipline of the Puritans dramatizing

[42] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and Other Writings*, trans. Peter R. Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (New York: Penguin, 2002), 120, hereafter cited in text as "PSC."

the sort of practical orientation toward personality formation that follows from the complete refusal either of transcendental fixtures or unreflective immersion in the everyday. In this regard, *The Protestant Ethic* is organized around a contrast between a traditional ethos and the spirit of capitalism. In Weber's description, capitalism is constituted by an ethic, "so familiar to us today and yet in reality far from self-evident," that says "that *one's duty consists in pursuing one's calling*, and that the individual should have a commitment to his 'profession' activity, whatever it may consist of" (PSC 13, emphasis in original). The spirit of capitalism, Weber declares, is "irrational from the point of view of pure eudaemonistic self-interest" (PSC 28); it marks a "reversal . . . of what we may call the 'natural' state of affairs" of traditionalism (PSC 12). Put differently, ordinary or material needs alone cannot generate self-perpetuating accumulation. The initial accumulation of capital requires precisely that entrepreneurs produce beyond their immediate needs and reinvest their profits.

In short, capitalism simply cannot be about the satisfaction of material needs, which, because of their repetitive and fixed character, Weber ties to a traditionalist ethos that he takes pains to present as rational. The origins of capitalism must reside in some mode of satisfaction of ideal needs.[43] This is brought out in Weber's account of the relationship between the rationalization of conduct, secular everyday labor (*weltlichen Alltagsarbeit*), and the "extremely effective *psychological premiums* (*not* economic in character)" that the Puritans received (PSC 349, emphasis in original). It was the fact that they went about satisfying their extraordinary needs in a way that refused all magic, and thus direct guarantees from the divine, that led the Puritans to channel their needs (asceticism) into everyday activities (innerworldly). Weber's narrative is that the progressive removal of transcendental guarantees of salvation, driven by Protestant prophetic attacks on the confusion of the sacred and the profane, forced the satisfaction of extraordinary needs into "secular everyday life" (PSC 105). The further the transcendent receded, the more important the everyday became for activities that were nonetheless "neither *of* this world nor *for* it" (PSC 105, emphasis in original).

Here Weber's analysis of the spirit of capitalism connects to his model of personality. Luther's rejection of monastic asceticism as a transcendental justification before God led him to bestow a "*religious* significance of secular everyday labor (*weltlichen Alltagsarbeit*)" (PSC 29, emphasis in original). The pursuit of a calling could provide the transcendental assurance that was previously supplied through contact with the sanctity of the monastic orders. Yet, in Weber's account, Luther still relied on a transcendental promise that one's station was "a special *command* of God" (PSC 31, emphasis in original). In other words, the Lutherans were not thrown back entirely upon their own

[43] For a useful discussion of the concept of ideal needs, see Omar Lizardo and Dustin S. Stoltz, "Max Weber's Ideal versus Material Interest Distinction Revisited," *European Journal of Social Theory* 21, no. 1 (2018): 3–21.

subjectivity: There was still an "*objective* historical order" that could secure their salvation and leave most ordinary activity oriented toward the routine fulfillment of their ordinary needs (PSC 31, emphasis in original). The Lutherans were not forced to rely entirely on their own ability to lend meaning and value to their existence – it could be guaranteed by their place in the community. They could still find, within their ordinary activities (i.e., the given station of life into which they were born), objective guarantees that satisfied their extraordinary needs and so left their everyday, economic conduct relatively untouched.

It was only with the pure, rational refusal of any contact with the transcendental that the Puritans turned the pursuit of a calling into "an end-in-itself," something "wholly transcendent ... beyond the 'happiness' or the 'benefit' of singular individuals" (PSC 12). For the Puritans, there were no objective sources of intelligibility or order within the world. They had to create, alone, their own justification before God. As a result, the demands of transcendence – that one approach an activity without any instrumentality or egoism whatsoever – was channeled into the only available source of justification, which was inner-worldly activity. And here Weber's description of the Puritan pursuit of the calling intersects with his own understanding of personality.

Recall that Weber insisted that social scientists should conduct research such that they methodically foreground the subjective value-constitution of their topic of study and never confuse their own value stance for something that is objectively guaranteed. Similarly, the Puritan pursuit of a calling was driven by the attempt to satisfy what Weber takes to be the original question that generates value systems – what justifies existence in the face of suffering? – without recourse to any extra-subjective supports.[44] The ascetic response to this problem was to rationalize a method of living such that it released the individual "from dependency on the world and nature" and subjected the self "to the supremacy of the purposeful will" (PSC 81). The goal of such methodical conduct, Weber writes, is to turn the Puritan into "a 'personality,'" one who "'*creates*' his salvation *himself* " (PSC 81, 79, emphasis in original). In this description, one becomes a personality by rejecting any inner-worldly guarantees and orienting oneself only toward the ultimate values that lead to salvation. It is only once the Puritans rejected magical guarantees evident in the everyday that they oriented themselves entirely toward becoming a personality, someone who methodically subordinated their given, ordinary needs and conduct to a higher purpose.

In its pure form, the Calvinists pursued their calling without any regard to the content of that calling or the consequences of their activities. However, while the ideal-typical Puritan, like Calvin himself, could endure the inability to

[44] Cf. Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions."

know where he fit into God's plan, the psychological burden this placed on "ordinary people" transformed the nature of the pursuit of a noninstrumental purpose (PSC 76). Such non-virtuosos again looked to the domain of everyday, material needs for an objective and intelligible guarantee of their salvation. Less rigorous Puritan thinkers such as Richard Baxter argued for "the providential character of the interplay of private economic interests" which "one can recognize ... by their *fruits*," a notion Weber links to "Adam Smith's well-known *apotheosis* of the division of labor" (PSC 109, emphasis in original).

For Puritans who could not bear the full burden of pursuing their calling entirely as an end-in-itself, the objective result of the economic system, such as profits, become a providential sign that satisfied their need for an objective justification before God. These objective and calculable outcomes of market forces are a lure for a secular theodicy that obscures its subjective basis through seemingly technical concepts like productivity and progress. In order to disabuse his reader of this temptation, Weber portrays the individual confronting the "mighty cosmos of the modern economic order" whose "overwhelming coercion" determines the minutest details of individual life conduct (PSC 120) as strictly analogous to the experience of the highest Puritan in front of a fully inaccessible God, "remote from any human understanding, a being who had allotted to each individual his destiny according to his entirely unfathomable decree, and who controlled the tiniest detail of the cosmos" (PSC 73). Just as the strict Puritan could find no source of justification in God's cosmos, so too, Weber seems to be saying, should we give up any hope of finding an immanent source of meaning in the modern economic and administrative cosmos.

In short, it was only when the economic order was enchanted as a source of justification that the Protestant spirit could be sustained by enough non-virtuosos such that it would lead to the development of a capitalist cosmos. Yet it is precisely this enchantment Weber wants to dissolve so as again to compel his readers to confront the burden of constructing a personality with no metaphysical buttresses. Social scientific research can unearth and bring to the fore the ultimate values embedded in the structures of our everyday activities and experiences. And on this basis, one can then recognize and affirm those values as ends-in-themselves and thereby pursue those activities such as to become a personality.

Even as Weber's account of personality rests on an opposition between unreflective immersion in the everyday and the achievement of personality, it is vital to note that personality does not exist in complete opposition to or flight from the everyday. The specific content of a calling, such as the vocation of being a scientist or an artist, is always, to an extent, pre-given by the existing routines and structures of various value spheres. Weber criticizes, especially in his later writings such as "Science as a Vocation," those who are unable to "meet the challenge of ... *everyday life*" and so seek escape into

undifferentiated artistic or religious experiences.[45] Yet the embracing of a pregiven calling is not in itself sufficient. One must also come to recognize the values embedded in the everyday as ultimate values, values that arise in response to our ideal or extraordinary needs, so as to achieve an appropriate distance from one's own calling. Like the strict Calvinist, we must learn to pursue a calling because of a devotion to those ultimate values as ends-in-themselves and not because of the specific content of one's chosen vocation. Only then can one prepare for and enable the emergence of something extraordinary and new: "inspiration" in science and, more importantly, charismatic leadership in the political world that can perhaps generate the new values and loyalties that would overcome bureaucratic inertia.[46]

In all, Weber's interpretation of epochal political tendencies, such as the rationalization of domination into bureaucracy or the susceptibility of the masses to demagogic leadership, are informed by his normative goal of compelling some people to take on the task of becoming a personality even in our disenchanted world.[47] A personality, for Weber, is someone who consciously determines the meaning of their life by affirming ultimate values as ultimate values and subordinating their tasks to that choice. His analysis of value and personality forces his reader to confront fundamental aspects of this condition in the wake of the loss of certainty in overarching religious or moral worldviews. But it also tends to reinforce a picture of the world according to which meaning comes about from a fundamentally subjective imposition of value. And this reinforces Weber's reduction of politics to the interplay between the instrumental rationality characteristic of established institutions and charismatic political leadership or movements. Values, personality, political leadership – they all must be won in the course of struggle with the calculable routines of political institutions. And this is so even as Weber also disdains the complete retreat from the world or flight from the everyday.

I have dealt with these works by Weber not just to reveal the underlying normative impulse animating them but also to bring to light that Weber's conception of the relationship between value and personality crucially illuminates his account of domination, thus helping to reveal the systematic coherence of his thought. Indeed, the central distinction driving Weber's view of personality – between heteronomous acceptance of the everyday and the achievement of personality by recognizing values as ends-in-themselves and acting on that basis – reappears in the structure of Weber's theory of domination. Even

[45] Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2004), 24, emphasis in original. As Harvey Goldman emphasizes, a crucial aspect of forming a personality is "submission or devotion to the work or object." Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann*, 73.

[46] Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, 74–75.

[47] Cf. Goldman, *Politics, Death, and the Devil: Self and Power in Max Weber and Thomas Mann*, 184–192.

though part of being a personality is being methodically devoted to everyday tasks, Weber's notion of personality presupposes that our mundane activities and routines are characteristically calculable and instrumental such that we can only confront them properly when we recognize the ultimate values that structure and give meaning to their instrumental routines. Similarly, Weber's view of domination is based on an opposition between everyday needs and the extraordinary needs that find satisfaction through ruptures with existing orders of domination. Weber's account of personality and his view of domination are mutually reinforcing: His portrayal of everyday institutions as inherently structured by instrumentality and domination further accentuates the burden of forming a personality and achieving the requisite distance from the everyday.

Even in his analysis of the relationship between value and personality, then, Weber presents a vision that emphasizes hierarchy and rule. In this respect, he pursues ideas and concerns already central to the longer tradition of social liberalism. At its best, Weber's account makes clear the difficulty of finding and affirming values in a world where they have become embedded in the taken-for-granted background of our actions and where large-scale economic and administrative structures exercise an almost overwhelming compulsion. But in reducing meaning to a subjective imposition of ultimate values, Weber opens up a gulf between the everyday world and the task of becoming a personality. The everyday becomes a domain of instrumentally calculable routines that one must constantly struggle to subordinate to the individual will. Here, Weber's view of personality reinforces the social liberal view of the welfare state and forms the backdrop for current theories of democracy and domination. In both cases, everyday institutions like welfare institutions are mechanisms for meeting calculable material needs, and they must be subordinate to the immaterial values of becoming a personality.

## CHARISMA AND DOMINATION IN *ECONOMY AND SOCIETY*

In his later work, Weber more fully develops the conceptual linkages, only implicit in *The Protestant Ethic*, between values and extraordinary ruptures with the everyday. In his account of the interrelated nature of the extraordinary, charisma, and value rationality, Weber intimates that our capacity to form a personality is predicated on past, and perhaps future, charismatic movements that proclaim new values through ruptures with the everyday. Here, I examine the fragmentary writings posthumously collected as *Economy and Society* to show how Weber's concept of personality and his distinction between ideal and ordinary needs translates into a sociology of domination organized around a fundamental differentiation between "ordinariness" or "everydayness" (*Alltäglichkeit*) and "extraordinariness" (*Außeralltäglichkeit*). For Weber, societies are animated by the tension between the predictable, calculable routines of institutions oriented toward the satisfaction of material needs and the extraordinary movements and experiences that meet our ideal need for meaning in the face of suffering. Politically, this division

grounds Weber's skepticism of all democratic action beyond the struggle for charismatic leadership. As his later writings are fragmentary, Weber never fully spells out the logical connection between everyday needs and hierarchical orders of domination. At times, Weber's belief in the inevitability of domination seems to be based on psychological assumptions. He assumes most people are content to be passive followers. Yet, as I argue, the connection goes deeper and rests on a functional argument. Because material needs are always the object of technical calculation, all societies beyond a certain basic level of complexity will accede to the functional pressure to relegate their management to hierarchical institutions.

Weber's analysis of domination proceeds without the explicitly normative intentions of the theorists we encountered in Chapter 1. He presents his view as a value-free analysis of the possible foundations for orders of domination. Yet his analysis provides the basis for much that comes after, insofar as his thought tends to predetermine the fundamental problems or questions to which current theories of domination are an answer, as well as their underlying image of the social world. They begin from Weber's analysis of the modern bureaucratic state as an order of domination, asking only if there is more space than Weber allows for subordinating that state to democratic deliberation (neo-Kantians) or else focusing on moments of resistance and disruption. Radical democrats look to Weber's theory of charismatic movements against established forms of domination as pointing to forms of democratic agency that could resist or disrupt the forms of domination he describes.[48] They all fail to uproot the more foundational categories that structure and produce Weber's view, remaining instead in his shadow.[49]

However, this is so because Weber's theory of domination is more than just a value-neutral categorization of the different forms domination may take. There is an implicit normative structure to his thought, one that continues his earlier concern with the idea of personality. And this is because, in his later thought, Weber develops the idea of charisma as an account of the source of the ultimate values necessary for personality as well as a theory of the relationship between charismatic forms of agency and structures of domination. The great conceptual innovation of Weber's late thought is his development of the idea of charisma and the closely related concept of value rational action. Weber acquires the concept from Rudolph Sohn's critical history of cannon law, where he contrasts the earlier, charismatic Christian community with the routinization of the Catholic Church.[50] Weber develops the idea in the direction of a

[48] Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*.

[49] Keith Breen, *Under Weber's Shadow: Modernity, Subjectivity, and Politics in Habermas, Arendt and Macintyre* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

[50] Christopher Adair Toteff, "Max Weber's Charisma," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 5, no. 2 (2005): 189 204; Peter Haley, "Rudolph Sohm on Charisma," *The Journal of Religion* 60, no. 2 (1980): 189 204.

systematic theory of the origins of values and value systems. Yet most commentators have missed the systematic importance of the concept of charisma because they have not examined its connection to Weber's idea of value and personality.[51] Charisma, in Weber's account, is the mode of domination or leadership that arises from the human need for meaning. For Weber, all systems of value try to explain the existence of unearned suffering in the world. And all such value systems originate in charismatic ruptures with and challenges to existing, settled institutional orders. They answer our ideal need for meaning in the face of suffering – a set of needs that are in perpetual tension with the demands of what Weber calls the ordinary or the everyday. The drama of history, for Weber, comes from the progressive rationalization of these charismatic experiences and movements – going from diffuse, magical modes of action to the highly rationalized theology of Calvinism. Put differently, this is the movement from charisma as a basically affective, irrational force to charisma as producing a rational system of ultimate values.

Yet, significantly and curiously, Weber never develops a theory of value-rational domination to complement his category of charismatic domination despite the fact that he often argues that charisma gets rationalized to produce value systems such as natural law. My contention is that this exclusion is systematic and grounds Weber's skeptical view of democracy and the welfare state. Within the logic of Weber's analysis of domination, the (missing) idea of value-rational domination corresponds to an idea of pure democratic autonomy, such as Rousseau's notion of the general will. A value-rational social order would harmonize the wills of individuals in the structure of domination by reference to these legitimate higher values. So, in Rousseau's *Social Contract*, domination becomes value rational insofar as the government is

[51] While previous commentators have examined the important interrelations between Weber's accounts of personality, charisma, and domination, they have failed to specify the role of the ordinary/extraordinary distinction in generating Weber's pessimistic view of democracy. Though Kalyvas highlights the extraordinary as a category in Weber, he fails to account for the importance of natural law in the structure of Weber's argument, such that he does not acknow ledge that Weber has a well developed view of "collective self determination, in the sense of a union of particular wills capable of issuing higher laws" and why it is no longer a viable political model (Kalyvas, *Democracy and the Politics of the Extraordinary: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt, and Hannah Arendt*, 69, cf. 65). Peter Breiner's account more fully addresses this problem and, as do I, points to the mutually constitutive relationship between Weber's analyses of personality and his account of domination. Weber's "typology of legitimate forms of domination ... [is] constructed from the vantage point of the very ethic [of personality] they are meant to instanti ate," writes Breiner (Peter Breiner, *Max Weber and Democratic Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 212). The following builds on Breiner's insight by drawing attention to the importance of the extraordinary in how Weber constructs his typology of domination in relation to personality and value. The apparent circularity of Weber's argument is dissolved once we see how both his account of domination and his view of personality arise from the idea that ultimate values originate in the demand to satisfy extraordinary needs and so in charismatic ruptures with instituted orders of domination.

subordinate to the sovereign. Under these circumstances, individuals experience coercion as nothing more than their own actions, insofar as the general will governs such coercion.

Yet Weber implicitly views an account like Rousseau's as reflecting a broader belief in natural law as something that could ground or justify an order of domination (what would be value rational domination). In Weber's account, the modern ideal of democracy is a legacy of early modern natural law doctrines that, in turn, were based on the Christian idea of natural law. And the Christian idea of natural law was a systematization of the moralized charisma that first arose from the ancient Jewish prophets. In Weber's story, though, this highly rationalized mode of charisma gives birth, not to democracy, but to the legal-rational, bureaucratic order of the *Protestant Ethic*. As he argues there, we are forced to live like Calvinists by the objective, anonymous compulsion of the modern capitalist order. The modern welfare state is simply a manifestation of this modern bureaucratic rationality or else a combination of it with the earlier traditional/patrimonial understanding of legitimacy.[52] The charismatic expectations embodied in movements like the socialist movement, which Weber very much interprets as a secularized version of charisma, will inevitably be absorbed by the hierarchical structures of everyday social and political institutions.[53] Though he never makes it explicit, value-rational domination provides Weber's interpretation of democracy, and so to understand Weber's rejection of democracy, we must examine the logic of his theory of domination – and particularly his implicit rejection of the category of value-rational domination.

In his "sociology of domination," Weber develops his three famous ideal-types of domination: charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational. While value rationality is, in Weber's initial sociological categories, one of the four possible grounds for the belief in the validity of an order (alongside affective, traditional, and legal-rational), when it comes to his discussion of legitimate domination, only the latter three of the categories are enumerated as a possible basis for legitimate orders (charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational, respectively).

[52] Weber's argument here laid the groundwork for the extensive debate about the welfare state as representing a "re feudalization" or "de formalization" of the rule of law. In this debate, then, democratic ideals or values are mostly interpreted as a return to particularism and class legislation over and against the neutrality of bourgeois legal rationality. For a discussion of Weber's relationship to the refeudalization thesis, see Stephen M. Feldman, "An Interpretation of Max Weber's Theory of Law: Metaphysics, Economics, and the Iron Cage of Constitutional Law," *Law & Social Inquiry* 16, no. 2 (1991): 205–248; John P. McCormick, *Weber, Habermas and Transformations of the European State: Constitutional, Social, and Supranational Democ racy* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70–125; David M. Trubek, "Max Weber's Tragic Modernism and the Study of Law in Society," *Law & Society Review* 20, no. 4 (1986): 573–604.

[53] For Weber's views of social democracy, see Victor Strazzeri, "Max Weber and German Social Democracy: A Study on the Relationship between the Liberal Bourgeoisie and the Labor Movement in Imperial Germany (1882–1899)" (Freie Universität Berlin, 2017).

Why does value rationality fall out? As we will see, it is because value rationality is actually charisma in its most ethically rigorous and so most extraordinary form, whereby it fully answers the extraordinary need for meaning and salvation but is irreconcilably opposed to the domain of everyday, material concerns. At the core of Weber's conceptual terrain is his tri-partite definition of domination – traditional, legal-rational, and charismatic – which in turn are structured around two binaries: ordinary/extraordinary and naturalistic/rationalized. As ideal types, each of Weber's categories of domination is an effort to take to a logical extreme these underlying oppositions. Traditional and legal-rational are both orders based on ordinary, material, calculable needs – with traditional the non-rationalized, naturalistic end of the continuum and legal-rational, the rationalized end. Charisma is the non-rationalized answer to the extraordinary need for meaning – a need which, in contrast to our material needs, cannot be answered through calculable routines. And value rationality is the rationalized mode of charisma. In the purest manifestation, values, as an answer to our ideal needs, are essentially noninstrumental and so opposed to the instrumental structures that arise from our material needs. As we saw before, one becomes a personality for Weber by affirming values as ultimate ends that guide and determine your actions. Weber's sociology of domination thus embodies this tension between personality and the everyday. Personality is won in the struggle with the instrumental demands of everyday, material needs, which Weber links with traditional and legal-rational domination.

In *Economy and Society*, Weber defines domination [*Herrschaft*] as "the situation in which the manifested will (*command*) of the *ruler* or rulers is meant to influence the conduct of one or more others (*the ruled*) and actually does influence it in such a way that their conduct to a socially relevant degree occurs as if the ruled had made the content of the command the maxim of their conduct for its very own sake (emphasis in original)."[54] Two things are worth noting about this definition. First, Weber does not emphasize the substantive content of the beliefs that ground orders of domination. Rather, his analysis occurs on a more formal level: He is interested in the structures that relate the commands of rulers to the conduct of the ruled. And second, he emphasizes how in relations of domination, the dominated come to act as though the command is an end-in-itself. That is, they act in the exact opposite manner of a personality, accepting the command of another as though it were something they affirmed as an end-in-itself.

This definition already starts to indicate why value rationality vanishes from Weber's theory of domination. In his first discussion of how actors may "ascribe legitimacy to a social order," Weber includes "value-rational belief:

[54] Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 946, hereafter cited in text as "ES." I have checked this translation and modified where necessary. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der Verstehenden Sozio logie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980).

valid is that which has been deduced as an absolute" (ES 36). The pure type of legitimacy grounded through this belief is, Weber says, "*natural law*," which consists of the "the sum total of all those norms which are valid independently of, and superior to, any positive law" (ES 37, 867 emphasis in original). Yet, in an ideal-typical order grounded in natural law, rulers and ruled would be in a situation of equality vis-à-vis the dictates of natural law, which emerge not from a particular will but from the "immanent and teleological qualities" of the meaningful universe (ES 867). In other words, legitimate domination and value rationality operate as something like opposed ends of a continuum in Weber's thought – the belief in the latter entails the denial of the presence of the former (domination) in a given social situation. This, however, only begins to indicate an answer to the question of why Weber excludes value rationality from the legitimating grounds for domination. Indeed, the question then becomes why Weber assumes it is historically and empirically impossible to ground a social order in natural law and thus render domination value rational.

The answer to this question resides in the relationship among Weber's three forms of legitimate domination, which is organized around the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary needs. At the center of his sociology of domination, Weber places three types of social orders and three distinct "claims to legitimacy" (ES 215): traditional domination legitimates itself on the basis of "the sanctity of immemorial traditions" (ES 215), legal-rational on the basis of a system of formal rules that empowers office holders, and charisma on the basis of the extraordinary personal qualities of the ruler. Unlike the possible subject orientations by which actors "ascribe" legitimacy to an order – traditional, affectual, legal, and value rational – Weber develops these three forms of domination from an external perspective that considers the necessary objective and material conditions of their existence. Put differently, Weber folds into his conceptualizations the problem of how sustained relationships of domination confront the need to materially reproduce society.

This is reflected in the centrality of material needs and the demands of the everyday in Weber's account of the three forms of legitimate domination. Thus, despite their differences, bureaucracy (legal-rational domination) and patrimony (traditional domination) are both "structures of everyday life [*Alltagsgebilde*] . . . concerned with the satisfaction of recurring, normal everyday needs [*Alltagsbedarfs*]" (ES 1111). In contrast, charisma is the mode of domination characteristic of the satisfaction of "*extra*ordinary needs, i.e., those which *go beyond* the sphere of everyday economic routines [*ökonomischen Alltags*]" (ES 1111, emphasis in original) and so is a form of domination in constant tension with the ongoing demand for material reproduction. Charisma satisfies a different category of needs from traditional and bureaucratic domination: the extraordinary need for meaning and ultimately for salvation, an answer to the problems posed by theodicy.

The relationship between the forms of domination is thus organized around this distinction between everyday and extraordinary needs (Table 2). On the

TABLE 2 *Forms of domination in Weber's sociology*

| | **Everyday/ordinary needs** | **Extraordinary needs** |
|---|---|---|
| **Naturalistic** | Patrimonial (traditional) | Charismatic |
| **Rationalized** | Bureaucratic (legal rational) | Value rational |

one side is legal-rational and patriarchal domination, where the first is rationalized and the second naturalistic; on the other, charisma and (while empirically nonexistent for Weber) value-rational domination. And charisma, and, by extension, value rationality, have a privileged location in Weber's account: as that which breaks with the ordinary, charisma is "the specifically creative revolutionary force of history," the only form of domination which, rather than being subject to necessity, "seeks to make material and social conditions according to its revolutionary will" (ES 1116–1117). Furthermore, the charismatic satisfaction of extraordinary needs, once rationalized, provides the ground for value-rational action, which Weber defines as action "determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some [action] . . . independently of its prospects of success" (ES 24–25). In Weber's theory, value-rational action finds its historical basis insofar as charismatic movements satisfy and respond to the extraordinary need for meaning in the face of suffering. And it is this value-rational subordination of material needs to methodical conduct that, for Weber, is the precondition for forming oneself into a personality.

The associations between the extraordinary, value rationality, and personality are thrown into high relief by Weber's description of social orders based on everyday, material needs, a description that positions them as inimical to forming a personality. Weber repeatedly emphasizes how patriarchal and bureaucratic domination are based on specific modes of economic accumulation. Each is constituted by a distinctive mode of satisfying everyday needs. Patrimonial domination rests on an economic system that is fixed within the limits set by natural needs, while bureaucratic domination is tied to the self-aggrandizing dynamic of capitalist accumulation. Based on "personal relations that are perceived as natural" (ES 1007), patrimonial domination is the form of domination that is least perceived as the product of conscious human effort or will. And central to its logic, according to Weber, are the static material needs of the patrimonial master, which is why patrimonial domination is a "naturalistic" form in my typology. Patrimonial domination "is not direct toward monetary acquisition but toward the satisfaction of the master's wants" (ES 1010, cf. ES 1014). Because the master's wants are only "quantitatively different from that of his subjects," the patrimonial ruler can use surplus production to reduce the exploitation of his subjects, a possibility that is absent where there is "a qualitative expansion of needs which is in principle limitless" (ES 1011). In sum, patrimonial domination is, in Weber's description, a mode of satisfying

ordinary needs that is in principle delimited by the actual or real biological needs of individuals.

Bureaucracy, the institutional form legitimated through legal-rational means, is, in Weber's description, opposed to patrimonial domination, rationalized rather than naturalistic, in every respect save one. Where patrimonial domination is personal, bureaucratic domination is impersonal; where the origins of the traditional norms constraining patrimonial domination are shrouded in mystery, the entire validity of the norms governing bureaucracy consists in the nature of their enactment; where the will of the patrimonial ruler is free unless constrained by tradition, the bureaucrat can only issue a command if it is in conformity with a rational system of norms and thus, in a strict sense, is as much dominated by the abstract order as are the subordinates.[55] At the same time, both bureaucracy and patrimonial domination are instrumentally oriented toward satisfying everyday, material needs. Yet, there is again one crucial difference in their respective foundations in everyday needs, and from this difference flows, in Weber's account, all the other oppositions enumerated above. While patrimonial domination rests on the fixed needs of the patrimonial ruler and his subordinates, bureaucratic domination is tied to the in principle unlimited drive for capitalist accumulation. "The development of the *money economy* is the presupposition of a modern bureaucracy," writes Weber (ES 963, emphasis in original; cf. ES 968). The crucial point is that the market economy is characterized by the fact that economic actors do not orient themselves toward "the satisfaction of wants" but toward "estimated profitability by means of calculation" (ES 91, 101). Unlike the satisfaction of material wants, the calculation of profit is unlimited, and in Weber's famous description of the "mighty cosmos of the modern economic order" in *The Protestant Ethic*, it is precisely this limitless accumulation that gives capitalism its structuring force – Weber's "overwhelming coercion" – in relation to everyday life conduct (PSC 120). Bureaucracy also rests on a peculiar means of satisfying material, everyday needs. Only now, the material demands of society are satisfied through the rational accumulation of capital, a form of need satisfaction that produces a self-aggrandizing functional logic of profit seeking. And this demands a system of domination "whose functioning can be rationally predicted, at least in principle, by virtue of its fixed general norms, just like the expected performance of a machine" (ES 1394).

The fact that patrimonial and bureaucratic domination are both instrumentally oriented toward the satisfaction of everyday needs reveals a further similarity: They are both, in Weber's account, structures of heteronomy, of the very submersion of the everyday that Weber's theory of personality

[55] Weber very much adopts the Marxian theme that the interlocking capitalist bureaucratic order produces a form of impersonal (in my language, abstract) domination. See Victor Strazzeri, "Max Weber and the 'Labour Question': An Initial Appraisal," *Max Weber Studies* 15, no. 1 (2015): 69 100.

opposes. Again, though, they represent two opposed ideal-typical descriptions of what it means to live in a heteronomous order or to fail to become a personality. At one end, in patrimony, heteronomy consists of direct subjection to the will of another in a context where norms of action are experienced as natural and given. In many ways, patrimonial domination, as resting on the master–slave relationship, is the paradigmatic case of heteronomy, where the ruler expects the unquestioned obedience of those subject to his direct command. At the other end, bureaucratic heteronomy consists of indirect subjection to an impersonal system of rules that are ultimately followed simply because of the empirical circumstances of their enactment rather than because they align with a meaningful value system. Here, heteronomy is at the same time obscured and intensified, as now even "the typical person in authority ... [is] subject to an impersonal order by orienting his actions to it in his own dispositions and commands" (ES 217). However, individuals within a bureaucratic order do not view themselves as obeying the concrete will of another or working to secure their master's happiness. Rather, they obey the command as an end-in-itself, out of a disposition of duty that disregards "personal considerations," as they owe their obedience to an "impersonal order" (ES 218, 225 cf. 959). That is, in a bureaucratic order, individuals recognize themselves as having the capacity to act autonomously, in the Kantian sense – placing their particular will underneath a formally general system of laws. Yet, while acting out of a sense of pure duty, Weber's bureaucrats are means without ends, subjected to whatever force or movement imposes values, from without, on the bureaucratic structure.

So far, we have seen how Weber folds the question of material reproduction into his account of legitimate domination. Identifying material or everyday needs as the basis of both patrimonial and bureaucratic domination, he presents both as social orders of heteronomy. The question, then, is where personality is located in Weber's social theory; to find it, we must look to his theory of charisma. Turning to Weber's account of charisma, I argue that it functions as a contradictory form of domination in Weber's thought. While charisma often can and does justify rules to those rules, in its purest manifestations it constitutes an orientation toward ultimate values that is strictly opposed to all human domination. Weber locates democracy in this space, and so his account of the impossibility of sustaining a purely value-rational social order is also, implicitly, an attack on the possibility of a democratic social order freed of the rule of man over man.

Weber provides the most sustained treatment of charisma in the "Sociology of Religion" sections of *Economy and Society*. Initially bound up with "everyday purposive conduct" (ES 400), as in the use of magic for instrumental ends, charisma develops into religious systems through the removal of charismatic experiences from the realm of the everyday – for instance, through the development of orgiastic cults – and the rationalization of initially undifferentiated charismatic experiences of spiritual forces

into relatively systematic theological worldviews. In Weber's description, the most important transition comes with the moralization of these charismatic experiences. While magic satisfies the need for meaning with reference to external forces, moralized charismatic leaders explain suffering by reference to internal, moral experiences of guilt, debt, and responsibility. At times of collective existential crisis – Weber's primary example is the Israelites who faced "great powers which threatened their homeland"[56] – charisma acquires a prophetic moralism which interprets a people's entire fate "as constituting a pattern of 'world history'" determined, in the Israelites' case, by their failures to meet "the ineluctable obligation resulting from [God's] promises" (ES 418). The prophets spoke to "the destiny of the state and the people."[57] They were proto-democratic demagogues who condemned the failures of the existing rulers in the name of a higher order of values. Insofar as Weber thinks this represents the most rigorous form of charisma, the prophet constitutes the most important charismatic figure in Weber's sociology.[58] Furthermore, in the prophet we find Weber's fullest development of the internal connections between charisma, value rationality, and natural law.

The prophet, more than any figure in Weber's sociology, is the autonomous creator of values. Taken together, the prophet and the Calvinist reflect the two sides – one Nietzschean, one Kantian – of Weber's analysis of personality. To the Kantian image of the Calvinist methodically subordinating one's desires to the calling as an end-in-itself, Weber adds the figure of the value-creating prophet that reveals/creates a moral order in response to the failings of his people. The prophet is distinct from the priest because he is answering to "the personal call" rather than subordinating his will to "a sacred tradition" (or, for that matter, the calling prescribed by a bureaucratic order), and the prophet differs from the magician because he proclaims "divine revelations" through "doctrines or commandment" (ES 440). The charismatic qualities of the prophet demonstrate that the prophet is providing an authentic path to salvation. But the prophet differs from the traditional charismatic leader by promulgating a doctrine that provides both a rational, moralized explanation for individual suffering and a path to salvation. In short, the prophet marks the moment when the extraordinary nature of charisma moves from a largely affective experience of extraordinary, ecstatic states to the foundation of systematic value systems. They provide to their followers "a unified view of the world derived from a consciously meaningful attitude toward life," one that can provide a "systematic and coherent meaning, to which man's conduct must be oriented if it is to bring salvation, and after which it must be patterned in an integrally meaningful manner" (ES 450). What the prophet reveals, in short, is natural law – an immanent order to the universe that prescribes value-rational

[56] Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism* (New York: The Free Press, 1952), 268. [57] Ibid., 269.
[58] Yet one that is little discussed. For an important exception, see Christopher Adair Toteff, "Max Weber's Charismatic Prophets," *History of the Human Sciences* 27, no. 1 (2014): 3–20.

actions in response to the problem of theodicy. The prophet marks the transition from affective forms of charisma, forms which are already in tension with all forms of everyday domination, to a value-rational charisma that claims to reveal natural law. Such charisma gives normative guidance in the evaluation of existing institutional structures and requires a complete subordination of the everyday to value-rational conduct.

Weber's discussion of natural law reveals why such value-rational legitimation is no longer available, and so why he excludes it from his typology of domination. The meaningful order of prophetic revelation provides a standard by which to evaluate positive or instituted law. Similarly, natural law is "the sum total of all those norms which are valid independently of, and superior to, any positive law" (ES 867). Natural law, Weber argues, is the form that the standards inscribed into the meaningful cosmos take "once religious revelation and the authoritarian sacredness of a tradition and its bearers have lost their force" (ES 867). In other words, natural law provides a value-rational legitimacy for domination: According to natural law, an order is legitimate only insofar as it conforms to the immanent, meaningful structure of the universe. As such, the doctrines of natural law point to a possible reconciliation between individual wills and the community – between personality and domination – that is ruled out in both patrimonial and legal-rational domination. Why does Weber think it is no longer available as a source of legitimacy? Why must we start again, so to speak, with new forms of charismatic domination that can challenge the sclerosis of bureaucracy and tradition?

In a few condensed pages of brilliant argumentation, Weber explains the transformation of natural law as a value-rational source of legitimacy into legal-rational domination. In Weber's view, natural law represents the fusion of the substantive – that is, value rational – and formal – that is, instrumentally rational – elements of law. Natural law found a formal basis in liberal social contract theories that sought to ground the legitimacy of positive law in "a community of economic agreement created by the full development of property" (ES 869). While this could be taken as purely formal criteria of legitimacy, Weber perceives that its force rested on substantive beliefs about "the eternal order of nature and logic" – that is, by the lingering influence of the prophetic worldview created by the ancient Jews (ES 870). However, this fusion of the substantive and the formal in natural law doctrines almost immediately ran up against the problem of class: The fusion was undermined by the need to accept as legitimate "the acquisition of rights which could not be derived from freedom of contract, especially acquisition through inheritance" (ES 870). The formal structure of contract ran up against the substantive question of how goods were acquired in the first place (and thus the question of divergent class interests), which points toward "socialist theories of the exclusive legitimacy of the acquisition of wealth by one's own labor" (ES 871). The fusion of substantive and formal in natural law rested, Weber's argument suggests, on the relatively homogeneous interests of the bourgeois, and thus the emergence of

working-class demands in the name of natural law inevitably mobilized the substantive elements of bourgeois natural law theories against the formal elements. In a way, this is a return of natural law to its prophetic origins, as Weber views socialism as largely an "ideological surrogate" for the prophetic faith in salvation, one that provides "a quasi-religious belief in the socialist eschatology" (ES 486, 515, cf. 491–492).

Because of the breakdown of the fiction of unified bourgeois interests, Weber contends that "the conflict between the axioms of substantive and formal natural law is insoluble" such that "the axioms of natural law have lost all capacity to provide the fundamental basis of a legal system" (ES 874). All that remains as a source for legal authority is then the formal aspect of natural law, shorn of all metaphysical dignity. Weber thinks that, as a result of the decline of natural law into class conflict, lawyers and the other members of the legal system increasingly gravitate to legal positivism. Without a shared view of natural law, they must posit that legitimacy arises only from the legitimate enactment of the law and the conformity of the legal system to the demands of technical control and prediction – in short, legal-rational legitimacy and bureaucratic domination. Far from standing on the side of justice and a transcendentally meaningful order, lawyers and the law now "take the side of the 'legitimate' authoritarian political power that happens to predominate at the given moment" (ES 876).

Natural law, then, can no longer serve to reconcile the individual to domination by inscribing such domination in a meaningful order. In the long run, charisma is routinized and becomes part of the everyday order of heteronomy. Typically, charisma coexists with patrimonial domination, becoming reabsorbed into the sacred foundations of such naturalized social orders. But when it takes on a moralistic character, as it does with prophetic charisma, the value-rational orientation necessary for salvation overcomes tradition and leads to methodical forms of conduct that, as we know from *The Protestant Ethic*, is Weber's necessary pre-conditions for capitalist accumulation. The implicit theodicy of natural law doctrines, with their promise of reconciling collective life with individual personality, gives way to the perfect heteronomy of modern bureaucratic domination.

## CONCLUSION

Max Weber's thought is centrally concerned with what it means to self-consciously form a personality in the modern world. One becomes a personality by affirming values as ends-in-themselves, as consciously chosen values that are not given in the world. To this idea, Weber's late work adds a brilliant account of the origins of values and value systems in charismatic ruptures with the everyday. Underneath Weber's account of personality and values is his divide between the everyday world of calculable, ordinary needs and extraordinary ruptures with the everyday, ruptures that point

to our ideal needs. With this socio-theoretic framework, Weber renews the broader tradition of social liberalism that he inherited. Like earlier social liberals such as Stein and Schmoller, Weber viewed the social reforms embodied in Bismarck's welfare state as mechanisms that would defang the charismatic expectations and demands of democratic movements such as the socialists.

Weber's thought exercises an abiding influence on contemporary democratic theory and theories of the welfare state because it so powerfully captures political experiences that are today familiar: navigating expansive bureaucratic agencies, adjusting our lives to the rationalizing demands of the economy, and observing political decision-making from a far remove. For Weber, these mundane experiences reflect the deeper socio-theoretic fact that, since all social and political institutions are determined by everyday, calculable needs, they must presuppose and reproduce relations of domination. Yet, even as Weber draws attention to these phenomena, his understanding of the everyday as thoroughly instrumental and calculable blinds him to the mundane yet nontechnical judgments that always accompany technical calculation within institutions. Especially where state institutions make persistent claims to legal-rational legitimacy and so to having rendered political life calculable, democratic theorists need to be alert to how their inherited theoretical categories reinforce the very things that foreclose more expansive democratic possibilities.

My interpretation of Weber reveals how contemporary democratic theory inherits and reproduces central aspects of Weber's thought, even as theorists seek to overcome his explicitly elitist political vision or relativist view of values and legitimacy. The foregoing analysis shifts our attention toward the question of where democratic theorists locate calculation in political life – that is, to whether their conceptions of democratic agency presuppose that everyday, routine politics is primarily a matter of instrumental and technical calculations. While many political theorists have rightfully challenged Weber's elitism, agnostic account of legitimacy, Nietzschean disdain for the masses, and notorious call for a charismatic presidency in the Weimar Republic, my argument rather points to Weber's underlying assumptions about the instrumental, calculative character of economic and political institutions, structures, and activities. My goal now is to unsettle and unseat these assumptions. To do so, we must shift perspectives: from the neo-Kantian theory of the relationship between values, science, and subjectivity to Heidegger and Arendt's phenomenology of worldliness. Indeed, as I will discuss, Heidegger's turn to the idea of world was born out of an internal critique of the incoherence and insufficiency of the neo-Kantian theory that is the backdrop for Weber's thought. For my argument, the significance of this shift resides, not, as for Heidegger, in reopening fundamental philosophical questions, but in altering how we can view the relationship between calculation and the everyday for politics. Arendt will use the concept of worldliness to develop a view of the everyday as a domain of worldly structures that constantly mediate between our individual

instrumental calculations and the space of shared judgments and plural perspectives among others. This change in perspective grounds a new theory of the relationship between democracy and the welfare state. In contrast to Weber's charismatic movements, I contend we should view democratic action in welfare institutions as processes of world-making, whereby social movements engage with and draw out the nontechnical facet of welfare institutions, understood as worldly mediators between technical calculation and shared judgments. A worldly interpretation of economic structures and practices is already present in and presupposed in the practical participation of democratic movements within the welfare state. They embody what Weber and the earlier social liberals want to reject – that political participation in the welfare state, far from reflecting the victory of instrumental, everyday needs over charismatic values, could constitute spaces of democratic judgment and action.

# 3

# From Value to World

## *Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, and the Politics of World-Making*

Social liberalism and Bismarck's reforms were both a challenge to the largest and most active bearer of democratic ideals in nineteenth-century Germany: the socialist workers' movement. In the terms of Max Weber's theory, they were both attempts to hasten the inevitable defeat of the charismatic expectations driving the workers' movement, integrating workers and activists into the calculable routines of the everyday. Weber premises his thought on the hope that state intervention through welfare politics could foreclose more fundamental democratic transformations. This chapter advances a theoretical perspective that challenges not just this political aspiration, but the fundamental philosophical presuppositions that ground it. To do so, it argues for a shift in perspective from Weber's theory of value to a theory of worldliness, one drawn from the thought of Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt.[1] Worldliness, as I understand it, points to how our involvement in the everyday world is never reducible to technical calculation. I use Heidegger's critique of the neo-Kantian philosophy of value and Arendt's appropriation of this critique to develop this concept of worldliness.

Weber's notion of value reduces meaning to an act of subjective will, a reduction that is mirrored in his notion of charismatic ruptures with the everyday. In place of Weber's theory of value, Heidegger and Arendt develop an account of world, and this chapter will argue that their concept of world provides valuable resources for theorizing the relationship between democratic agency and the welfare state. A complex and multifaceted concept in both of their respective thought, I deploy the notion of worldliness to make sense of the possibility of collective agency even within institutional structures conditioned

[1] For the most extensive and insightful existing discussion of the relationship between Weber and Arendt's thought, see Christian Volk, *Arendtian Constitutionalism: Law, Politics and the Order of Freedom* (Oxford: Hart, 2015).

by and bound up with the imperatives of the capitalist economy. My analysis of welfare institutions as worldly mediators follows from my reconstruction of Heidegger and Arendt. The basic intuition underlying Heidegger and Arendt's critique of the concept of value is that our evaluative judgments, far from descending from a set of subjective values, are already given in our everyday, meaningful practices within the world. Our judgments are always about some object or thing that brings us together with other actors, or else our judgments occur in the context of such objects. And it is the permanence of these objects – the embodiment of our worldly activities – that serves to give our judgments a stable, persistent context and so a distinctively political form of objectivity. This analysis implies that there is no such thing as means–ends calculation as such. Technical calculation, which strives to treat subjects as objects, is mediated by a material world that constitutes a space of collective, nontechnical judgments.[2] Welfare institutions, then, are both mechanisms of technical control and worldly objects that form the potential context for political judgment and mobilization.

Given that both Heidegger and Arendt are responding directly to the legacy of Weber and German neo-Kantianism, their analysis of the notion of worldliness also helps to clarify the assumptions, inherited from Weber, that prevent contemporary theorists from articulating these democratic possibilities within the welfare state. Indeed, I will show their view of worldliness provides theoretical tools for envisioning the welfare state as a site of democratic mobilization and participation – a perspective embodied in the response of the German workers' movement to Bismarck's reforms. Leaders of the German socialists quickly recognized the democratic opportunities created by Bismarck's reforms: August Bebel wrote to Engels in 1883 of the "possibilities for agitation" provided by the health insurance law.[3] As an account of the structure of our experience of and involvement in political life, Arendt's analysis of worldliness draws out central aspects of this democratic engagement with the welfare state – aspects that are obscured by Weber's socio-theoretic categories as well as by the official Marxist self-understanding of the SPD.

In the first place, then, this chapter develops a systematic account of the concept worldliness, especially insofar as it bears on the relationship between political action and economic structures. Yet my broader concern is with how this approach can help us perceive and articulate the location and structure of democratic action within the welfare state. While Arendt does not elaborate a theory of the welfare state, she does provide a range of conceptual terms that prove fruitful for thinking about the relationship between political action and

[2] As Bonnie Honig notes, political institutions posit "the very human agency" that they otherwise marginalize "for the sake of equity, regularity, and predictability." Honig, *Emergency Politics: Paradox, Law, Democracy*, 85.

[3] Quoted in Wolfgang Ayaß, "Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialversicherung bis zur Jahrundertwende," in *Sozialstaat Deutschland: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Ulrich Becker, Hans Günter Hockerts, and Klaus Tenfelde (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 2010), 31.

economic forces in contemporary postindustrial societies. In particular, and against the common wisdom about her thought, Arendt offers valuable resources for considering the role welfare institutions play in allowing economic activities and processes to enter political life as the possible objects of public judgment and collective action. And she does so by calling into question basic assumptions that inform both the neo-Kantian and radical democratic views of the welfare state: most centrally, their shared tendency to conceive of economic activities only in terms of instrumental rationality and technical calculation.

After examining Heidegger's critique of the philosophy value as opening up the analysis of worldliness, the following provides a revisionist interpretation to Arendt's thought. It may appear peculiar to turn to Arendt for inspiration on theorizing the significance of economic affairs and the welfare state for democracy. As her critics argue, she notoriously insisted that economic and social problems were inappropriate objects of public debate and political action. Few aspects of her thought have attracted as much critical scrutiny and evoked as much frustration from even sympathetic commentators.[4] While for some scholars Arendt's thought is valuable precisely for its uncompromising defense of the autonomy of political action, many others seek to rescue Arendt from her apparently overdetermined criticisms of the social by reformulating her distinction between the political and the economic-cum-social: For instance, they claim that the distinction is about an instrumental and anti-political ethos or mentality rather than social problems as such, or else they emphasize Arendt's criticisms of the modern administrative state or argue that Arendt's critique of the social constitutes a euphemism for her abhorrence of the practice of social climbing.[5]

In the following, I revisit Arendt's analysis of worldliness to argue that, far from stringently upholding the divide between politics and economics, she

[4] Richard Bernstein, "Rethinking the Social and the Political," in *Philosophical Profiles: Essays in a Pragmatic Mode* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986); Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, "Justice: On Relating Private and Public," *Political Theory* 9, no. 3 (1981): 327–352; *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 145, emphasis in original; Bonnie Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, ed. Bonnie Honig (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 146.

[5] Dana Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); "The 'Autonomy of the Political' Reconsidered," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 28, no. 1 (2008): 29–45; Ella Myers, *Worldly Ethics: Democratic Politics and Care for the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*; Kirstie M. McClure, "The Social Question, Again," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 28, no. 1 (2008): 85–113; Jill Locke, "Little Rock's Social Question: Reading Arendt on School Desegregation and Social Climbing," *Political Theory* 41, no. 4 (2013): 533–561. Arendt's skeptical view of social politics is reinforced, in the American context, by her troubling views on race. For a critique of Arendt's views of race, see Kathryn T. Gines, *Hannah Arendt and the Negro Question* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

elucidates sophisticated accounts of both the possible interrelationships between them and the vital importance of economic matters in political life.[6] For Arendt, the danger is not the invasion of politics by economics but rather the reduction of economic matters to instrumental calculation. Against this reduction, Arendt provides resources for theorizing the economic, not as a domain of instrumental mastery and technical calculation, but as a site where material necessity and political action might be appropriately mediated. Arendt is as much concerned about the *loss* of the contexts in which economic problems can appear as objects of shared concern as she is with the invasion of politics by instrumental or calculative mentalities and attitudes. In her analysis of class, interests, and property, she recovers what I call the worldly dimensions of the economic – the institutional conditions that allow economic matters to appear as possible objects of public deliberation and action. In drawing attention to these moments, Arendt orients political reflection to the issue of how the various objects and institutions that mediate the domain of economic necessity become sites of public debate, participation, and mobilization. This is the tack taken by German workers and socialists reacting to Bismarck's laws. They mobilized around the new institutional structures created by those laws, engaging with them as worldly objects. As objects – as worldly, tangible things – such goals and institutions themselves open up shared spaces of appearance and judgment. They thereby become the objects of democratic attachment and the occasions for the exercise of political freedom, augmenting our involvement with and concern for the world.

## FROM VALUE TO WORLD

In my discussion of Weber, I argued that the conceptual categories he adopted from the Southwestern neo-Kantian philosophy of value informed not only his methodological self-understanding but also his substantive approach to theorizing political economy. From neo-Kantianism, Weber inherits the focus on the constitutive role of subjective value-orientations in the generation of knowledge in the cultural sciences. He goes beyond his philosophical contemporaries, however, in linking the possibility of transcendental value-relating to a historical sociology of the genesis of such values, an account which centers on charismatic ruptures with the everyday domain of repetitive material needs. Even as the neo-Kantian philosophy of the social sciences has, in many respects,

[6] In recently published drafts of the essays that would become *The Human Condition*, Arendt makes this point clear. She writes that her critical focus is not on the "economic sphere of life; this sphere as a whole always belonged to the public concern. But this sphere is only to a very small degree the sphere of labor." Hannah Arendt, "Karl Marx and the Tradition of Political Thought: The Broken Thread of Tradition. *Draft*," in *The Modern Challenge to Tradition: Fragmente eines Buchs*, ed. Barbara Hahn and James McFarland (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2018), 253. I am grateful to Ari Elmeri Hyvönen for bringing this passage to my attention.

been superseded in philosophy, it lives on through Weber's substantive sociology of domination, which forms the theoretical background for how political theorists conceptualize the normative promise and diagnose the social pathologies of the welfare state project. The philosopher who is most responsible for consigning the neo-Kantian understanding of the cultural sciences to the graveyard of intellectual history is Martin Heidegger. Heidegger wrote his dissertation with Rickert and his early philosophical efforts were immersed in the neo-Kantian tradition.[7] Yet, starting with his first lecture course and culminating in *Being and Time*, Heidegger relentlessly critiques the incoherence of the neo-Kantian concepts of value and value relation, a critique that will be appropriated and transformed by Arendt.

Together, Heidegger and Arendt's critiques point to the dependence of the subjective idea of value on our more fundamental involvement in the world, available through phenomenological rather than transcendental analysis. Heidegger's substitution of the pre-given, meaningful world for constitutive value stances enables Arendt to develop a theory of economic activities that shows how the everyday, as always already bound up with the disclosure of a world, is irreducible to instrumentality.[8] Rather, our instrumental, economic activities are interwoven with the constitution of a shared world. Yet Heidegger himself did not pursue this line of thinking. Lacking an account of the intersubjective constitution of the world, Heidegger remains closer to the neo-Kantians and Weber than he acknowledges, insofar as he too, despite his recovery of the pre-given, meaningful world, reduces the everyday to instrumentality. It is here that Arendt parts ways with Heidegger. While for him the so-called "ontological difference" between everyday objects and the background disclosure of meaning reveals the instrumental character of everyday human affairs and so the superiority of philosophical and poetical thought, Arendt pursues Heidegger's own insight into the meaningfulness of the everyday world by tying it to her account of plurality and intersubjectivity.

While Heidegger's public attitude toward neo-Kantianism was highly critical, his early thought developed in large part from the same general context as neo-Kantian philosophy of value: The attempt to refute the domination of natural-scientific categories and recover the basis of cultural science in human life. Heidegger devotes the 1919 lecture course that first established his reputation, "The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview," to a

[7] Ingo Farin, "Early Heidegger's Concept of History in Light of the Neo Kantians," *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 3, no. 4 (2009): 355 384; Theodore J. Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Ian Lyne, "Rickert and Heidegger: On the Value of Everyday Objects," *Kant Studien* 91, no. 2 (2000): 204 225.

[8] For a contrary reading, one that argues that Arendt adopts Heidegger's antipathy towards the everyday, see Dana Villa, "Arendt, Heidegger, and the Tradition," *Social Research* 74, no. 4 (2007): 991 992.

critical examination of the neo-Kantian grounding of the cultural sciences in the concept of value.[9] Value, as we saw in Chapter 2, provides the crucial hinge for the neo-Kantians and for Weber. Values at once secure the objectivity of the cultural sciences – thus elevating the cultural sciences to the same epistemic level as the natural sciences – while also showing how the cultural sciences are transcendentally based in the autonomous personalities of the scientists.

In these lectures, Heidegger subjects the neo-Kantians to a telling critique. However, as Heidegger views phenomenological critique as "a positive sounding out of genuine motivations" rather than mere demonstration of logical inconsistency, his criticisms all seek to give the neo-Kantian defense of the cultural sciences a firmer ontological ground (TDP 107). Heidegger provides this ground through his recovery of the everyday world. The world, he argues, is passed over by the neo-Kantians precisely because they start from a natural-scientific worldview and work backward to a defense of the cultural sciences. In the neo-Kantian framework, values constitute the validity of knowledge insofar as the community of researchers takes them up as binding norms.[10] This is even more so for cultural sciences, insofar as the very reality of the objects of knowledge are dependent on the binding normativity of the values that are deployed in constituting the objects through value-relations. But where, Heidegger asks, does this bindingness come from? Either the neo-Kantians take them as objects that transcend the research community, therefore violating their critical strictures (this was Weber's critique of Rickert), or else they take them to be presupposed in the actual practices of researchers, thereby reducing them to a historically variable, and so nonbinding, value. Heidegger thus concludes that the neo-Kantian method "presupposes, in its most proper sense and as the condition of its own possibility, just what it is supposed to arrive at" (TDP 36).

The internal contradictions of the neo-Kantian project, Heidegger then argues, can be traced back to a single source: "the primacy of the theoretical" (TDP 50).[11] The neo-Kantians take values as analogues to objects out in the world. While they resist taking them as objective in the sense of independent or standing against individuals, they are nonetheless objects of theoretical cognition that guide the production of knowledge. As a corollary, the neo-Kantians,

[9] Translated as Martin Heidegger, *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, trans. Ted Sadler (London and New Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, 2000), herafter cited in text as "TDP."

[10] For an excellent discussion of this aspiration, see Beiser, "Normativity in Neo Kantianism: Its Rise and Fall."

[11] In calling for an end to the primacy of the theoretical, Heidegger adds an important remark that should inculcate against the pragmatist interpretation of *Being and Time*: "This primacy of the theoretical must be broken, but not in order to proclaim the primacy of the practical, and not in order to introduce something that shows the problems from a new side, but because the theoretical itself and as such refers back to something pre theoretical" (TDP 50). For the classic reading that focuses on Heidegger's account of practical involvement, see Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being in the World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

and especially Weber, reduce naïve (i.e., cognition before form-giving value-relations) to a stream of undifferentiated perceptions of sense data (in the language of *Being and Time*, they understand objects as present-at-hand [*vorhanden*]).[12] They begin with a theoretical model of human interaction with the world, where brute perception of thing-like objects and processes comes before the imposition of constitutive values, and work their way back from there to the subjective, lived basis of cultural knowledge.

To challenge this primacy of the theoretical, Heidegger introduces his central concept of world and worldliness. Heidegger argues that the concept of value seeks to capture genuine features of, even as it distorts by viewing through an overly theoretical lens, the nature of the everyday world. To see this, he first strives to bring into sight the everyday world, which consists of our pre-theoretical environment [*Umwelt*]. When one is immersed in the world, Heidegger observes,

> the meaningful is primary and immediately given to me without any mental detours across thing oriented apprehension. Living in an environment, it signifies to me every where and always, everything has the character of world. It is everywhere the case that 'it worlds' [*es weltet*], which is something different from 'it values' [*es wertet*]. (TDP 61)

In this important passage, Heidegger already lays out some of the core concerns he would explore in *Being and Time*. When one encounters something, one does not encounter it as a brute object but directly, as, say, a lectern, as always already a meaningful part of one's environment. There is no moment when values are applied to sense-data so as to constitute a meaningful object. Rather, all objects, unless they are theoretically apprehended, are pre-structured by the so-called worlding of the world. Value thus arises from the inherent meaningfulness of objects as they appear to us. Insofar as every experience in a world is pre-given as meaningful, it is also pre-given as valuable in some way. We do not primarily experience this value by relating the environmental object to a subjectively held value or ultimate end. Rather, the object always shows up to us as in some way pre-judged by the totality of our meaningful commitments. As Heidegger later notes in *Being and Time*, when we interpret something (i.e., recognize it as culturally significant) "we do not stick a value on it" but instead lay out the involvements "the thing in question already had" (BT 190–191).

[12] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962), 111, 32 33, hereafter cited in text as "BT." Present at hand (*vorhanden*) is how objects appear from the perspective of detached, theoretical contemplation, while ready at hand (*zuhanden*) is how they appear from the perspective of practical, non theoretical involvement with the object. Heidegger states this point most clearly in his discussion of Descartes' ontology, which he takes the philosophy of value to be attempting to "round out" by adding on a layer of subjective and cultural meanings and use values. There, he writes, "[a]dding on value predicates cannot tell us anything at all new about the Being of goods, *but would merely presuppose again that goods have pure presence at hand as their kind of Being*" (BT 132, emphasis in original).

Broadly, then, Heidegger's argument begins from our pre-given involvement with a meaningful world. The world does not simply occur; rather, it "worlds," is "given" to us, as indicated in the German phrase "es gibt," which is typically translated as "there are." That is, we encounter the world as already meaningfully structured through our activities and commitments. And by starting with this everyday, pre-given world, Heidegger can reveal the illegitimate prioritization of a subjective, theoretical perspective inherent in the neo-Kantian philosophy of value. Starting from theoretical perception and trying to move back to the meaningful involvement, the neo-Kantians are forced to transform the meaningful world into graspable, object-like values. Against this, Heidegger insists that our involvement in the world cannot be articulated in terms of subjectivity or objectivity, and our language, which is structured around that opposition, leads us away from this more basic set of experiences. As that which first makes objects intelligible, the world is not something that is itself an object, and as that in which individuals move in their everyday involvements, it is not something that is subjectively constituted by individuals. With his analysis of the everyday world, Heidegger draws attention to the fact that the values that, for Weber, are constitutive both of personality and of social-scientific knowledge, are grounded in a totality of historically given meaningful involvements, a totality that always escapes full theoretical description.

Arendt will pursue Heidegger's critique of the philosophy of value and subjectivity to challenge the reduction of the everyday to instrumental action. But in this she departs from Heidegger, who, in his analysis of "Dasein" in *Being and Time* – humanity from the perspective of our situatedness in the world – ends up sharing this perspective with Weber. Heidegger understands everyday Dasein, while immersed in a meaningful world, as constantly covering-up the ultimate significance of its own action by unownedly relying on the meanings given by "the one."[13] Beyond further illuminating his relationship to Weber and neo-Kantianism, Heidegger's critique of the everyday in terms of unownedness is worth considering because many commentators take Arendt to be repeating it, although with a political, rather than philosophical-existential, focus.

While Heidegger's thought underwent numerous refinements between his early lectures critiquing the neo-Kantian philosophy of value and *Being and Time*, one of the most significant was his attempt to develop a satisfactory

[13] I prefer the translations "ownedness" and "unownedness" to authenticity and inauthenticity for *eigentlichkeit and uneingentlichkeit*, for the reasons enumerated in Edgar C. Boedeker, "Individ ual and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating Das Man, the Man Self, and Self Ownership in Dasein's Ontological Structure," *Inquiry* 44, no. 1 (2001): 96, n. 35. The term ownedness highlights the individualizing and self disclosing aspects of Heidegger's account of being towards death, aspects that are important for Arendt. Dasein (There Being) is Heidegger's term of art for humans, one that is meant to avoid the subjectivity associated with other terms.

account of the roots of human self-misunderstanding in our existential constitution. "The kind of being which belongs to Dasein," he writes, is "such that, in understanding its own Being, it has a tendency to do so in terms of that entity toward which it comports itself proximally and in a way which is essentially constant—in terms of the 'world'" (BT 36). This effort is bound up with a second major shift in his thinking: The idea that the everyday world of pregiven meanings is always already constituted through the public norms of "the one" and, as a result, that humans have an existential tendency to "fall" into these norms and thereby cover-up their own existential constitution. "The one" is Heidegger's term for the taken-for-granted, always already there background norms of how "one" does something around here. Importantly, Heidegger thinks this is an unavoidable and positive aspect of being human. These public norms are what allow for the "constancy" of the self and so is part of Dasein's positive constitution (BT 166–167). Yet, with this necessary existential horizon provided by the one comes the "one-self," the self-understanding that is characteristic of the one, which is how individuals tend to understand themselves in a day-to-day manner.[14] This tendency to understand one's self in terms of the "one-self" Heidegger dubs "fallenness." Heidegger's concern with unownedness is not conformism or shallowness as such. Rather, he worries that fallenness and the they-self lead individuals to an ontological projection that takes themselves, others, and the world as technically and instrumentally manipulable.

Within these various self-understandings given in the everyday, Heidegger thinks, lurks an implicit ontological pre-understanding. In their day-to-day existence, individuals act in such a way that the existential horizons that constitute the meaning of their activities are transparent to them.[15] They do not recognize that their ability to use a hammer as a hammer is always already constituted through the horizon of the totality of significations implied in such a use. Similarly, in their day-to-day interactions with others they do not recognize the horizon of being-with that constitutes all the roles and activities that make sense in a given context. As a result, Heidegger argues, they tend to misunderstand the ontological constitution of the world, others, and themselves. In order to take the public norms of the one for granted and act in such a manner, individuals implicitly understand themselves as ready-to-hand objects that can be fitted into a web of what Heidegger terms concernful [*Besorgnis*] engagements. "Everydayness takes Dasein as something ready-to-hand to be concerned with," Heidegger writes (BT 336). And, further, in taking being-with-others as something ready-at-hand, we further pass over the totality of meanings that constitute ready-to-hand objects and take them as something present-at-hand: "the phenomenon of the world itself gets passed over" and in its place humans understand "the meaning of Being . . . by what is present-at-hand

[14] For the important distinction between the one and the one self, see ibid. [15] Ibid., 70 72.

within-the-world, namely, Things" (BT 168). Our everyday absorption with the world and fallenness in the they-self, while an unavoidable and necessary part of our existential constitution, leads us astray ontologically. We tend to understand others and ourselves only in terms of ready-to-hand objects that are to be used according to public rules, and then, more fundamentally, to see the ultimate reality underneath those norms (whether a transcendental entity or discrete material objects) as simply present-at-hand objects that can be fully described in terms of conceptual knowledge. Both of these ontological misunderstandings are driven, Heidegger thinks, by the structure of the everyday, where individuals' concernful involvement with objects and fallenness into the public norms of the one lead them to pass over the existential horizons that are like the proverbial water around the fish.

By implicitly projecting ourselves as ready-to-hand and Being as present-at-hand, our everyday comportment generates an ontology that takes others and the world as technically calculable and instrumentally manipulable objects. With the ontological projection formed through our everyday concernful use of objects and fallenness into the they-self, Dasein comes to understand its own obligations and activities as dischargeable through the technical actions, as if the norms were just more objects to reckon with. In our everyday concern, Dasein is "something that gets managed and reckoned up" (BT 336). Consequently, everyday "common sense" understands obligations as "only the satisfying of manipulable rules and public norms and the failure to satisfy them. It reckons up infractions of them and tries to balance them off" (BT 334).[16] Heidegger's concern is not just with the vulgarity or utilitarianism of such everyday morality, as this ontological understanding is shared by the "theory of value": Even as they constrain instrumental self-interest through the categorical imperative, neo-Kantians still regard humans "as an entity with which one might concern oneself, whether this 'concern' has the sense of 'actualizing values' or of satisfying a norm" (BT 339). Heidegger argues that this ontological projection is also the condition of possibility of the domination of one person over another. When an individual understands itself in terms of the they-self and others as ready-to-hand objects, there arises the possibility that one can "take 'care' away from the Other and put itself in his position in concern . . . [i]n such solicitude the Other can become one who is dependent [*Abhängigen*] and dominated [*Beherrschten*]" (BT 158).

In sum, Heidegger argues that the ontological projection that makes possible instrumental mastery arises from the structure of the everyday. In passing over our basic existential constitution, everyday comportment gives rise to an ontological understanding that takes objects primarily as present-at-hand, others as ready-to-hand such that they can be manipulated through the concernful pursuit

[16] For an insightful development of this view of responsibility, see Satkunanandan, *Extraordinary Responsibility: Politics Beyond the Moral Calculus*.

of ends, and all responsibility as a system of calculable and dischargeable rules. Heidegger's critique of unownedness, then, rests on an analysis of the everyday in terms of instrumentality. He construes this instrumentality, however, ontologically: Before the everyday can be the domain of materially driven instrumental action, it must already generate the ontological projection that makes instrumental action possible. To this account of the instrumentality of the everyday, Heidegger, like Weber, opposes the extraordinary, now interpreted as moments when the abyss-like basis of Dasein intrudes into and disrupts such everyday mastery, moments that are the condition of possibility of ownedness.

Heidegger identifies death as an ever-present possibility that could disrupt the everyday if its existential implications are taken seriously. Death, properly understood, cannot be fitted into the concernful engagements of the everyday. The everyday norms and rules given by the one rest on the possibility of representation, insofar as individuals are represented as "one's occupation, one's social status, or one's age": "representability is not only quite possible but is even constitutive for our being with one another" in an "everyday manner" (BT 283). The one thing that escapes such networks of representation is death. In death, "this possibility of representing breaks down completely ... no one can take the Other's dying away from him" (BT 284, emphasis in original). The nonrepresentability of death, the extraordinary moment that cannot be subsumed under the calculative norms of the everyday, is what ultimately individuates Dasein's out from the domination of the one. Existentially, death is precisely what reveals that Dasein is neither an object of cognition nor something relative to calculable public norms. Rather, death is what "discloses Dasein as a possibility" (BT 309). Dasein is a possibility because, insofar as we are limited by mortality, we can choose between the possibilities provided by public norms without a final, calculable justification for such choices.

Heidegger calls this act of conscious appropriation of the historically embedded practices into which we are thrown "owned historicality," which is made possible by "resoluteness" [*Entschlosseinheit*].[17] Owned historicality is the resolute awareness of the concrete situation that "brings Dasein into the simplicity of its fate. This is how we designate Dasein's primordial historicizing, which lies in its owned resoluteness and in which Dasein hands itself down to itself, free for death, in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen" (BT 435, emphasis in original). It is made possible by the call of our primordial guilt, which is in turn a guilt that exists because of death. The call – that which brings Dasein face-to-face with the necessity of taking over public meanings in an individual manner – appeals to Dasein because Dasein is constitutively guilty.

[17] I have been particularly helped by Thomson's discussion in thinking through these issues. Iain Thomson, "Heidegger and the Politics of the University," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 41, no. 4 (2003): 515 542; "Heidegger and National Socialism," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005). Notably, Heidegger told Karl Löwith that the chapter on historicality was the philosophical basis for his Nazism. Thomson, "Heidegger and National Socialism," 34 35.

The accusation of the call – "Guilty!" – exceeds the effort of the everyday to transform responsibility into something calculable, dischargeable, as "the guilt can be neither augmented nor diminished. It comes *before* any quantification, if the latter has any meaning at all" (BT 353, emphasis in original). Dasein is constitutively guilty, in turn, because of our mortality – every choice leaves a residual of lost possibilities, and so Dasein is intrinsically guilty in whatever possibilities it projects itself onto. But we constantly cover up these aspects of existence because of our immersion in the instrumentality of the everyday.

In sum, Heidegger's critical engagement with the neo-Kantians points to the ontological shortcomings of their concept of value, which, in its effort to work back from scientific knowledge to the lived basis of cultural activity, fails to grasp the meaningfulness of the everyday world. As a result, he is able to articulate how Weber's response to instrumentality, far from overcoming the meaninglessness of the everyday, reinforces it – an insight that will be crucial for Arendt's own account of the worldly aspects of the economic. Yet, even as Heidegger seeks to recover the everyday from the positivistic ontology of the neo-Kantians, he follows Weber in critiquing the everyday in terms of instrumentality, only now understood in an ontological rather than subjectivist manner. Humans are constituted such that they fall into the calculable routines of the everyday, covering up their constitutive guilt. The call of conscience and the possibility of death enable some people to overcome this fallen condition and resolutely embrace their destiny. These conflicting tendencies – between Heidegger's analysis of the non-masterable meaningfulness of the everyday world and his disdain for the calculable norms of the one – run through his early thought. Thus, even as he hopes that through resoluteness "existence can master [*meistern*] the 'everyday,'" Heidegger regretfully acknowledges that "it can never extinguish it" (BT 422).

Even as Heidegger seeks to recover the everyday world from the neo-Kantian philosophy of value, he ends up reaffirming their reduction of the everyday to instrumental calculation and technical control. Yet Heidegger's analysis will enable Arendt to provide a phenomenology of worldliness that rejects precisely that reduction. For Arendt, we are to view the world as constituted, not through the pregiven meanings of the one, but through the plural perspectives of the many people situated around it. Heidegger's effort to recover the everyday world looms large over Arendt's thought, perhaps most of all her reflections on the modern world in *The Human Condition*.[18] Yet she will ultimately reject his view of the everyday – and, in the process, provide an account of economic activities and institutions that shows how they are bound up with the noninstrumental aspects of the everyday world. Arendt's analysis of the concepts of labor and work in *The Human Condition* is an effort to grapple with the significance of economic processes and the activities behind them, both in themselves and in relation to other forms of activity, such as the participation in public life.

[18] Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), hereafter cited in text as "HC."

As Arendt distinguishes them, labor refers to activities focused on the unceasing satisfaction of biological needs, while work signifies those activities that transform raw materials into the lasting tools and objects of the built human world. Work and labor, then, constitute two analytically distinct but interrelated aspects of economic activities. Crucially, she challenges the notion that economic activities can be exhaustively understood in instrumental terms and that they therefore always pose a threat to collective political life, which depends, in Arendt's view, on a variety of perspectives and the exercise of nontechnical judgments on matters of collective concern.[19] And here, too, Arendt's interpretation of worldliness breaks decisively with Heidegger, insofar as Arendt argues that the meaningfulness of the given world is only ever constituted intersubjectively and not through the interplay of the calculable norms of the One and the individualizing break through resoluteness.

After her critical discussion of the rise of the social in the first portion of *The Human Condition*, Arendt introduces her "unusual" (HC 79) distinction between labor and work – one which she intimates was obscured by the Greek *polis*'s elevation of political life above the household, as well as by the philosophical denegation of the world in favor of contemplation. Labor, as the activity corresponding to the "vital necessities" of "life itself" (HC 7), at first appears trapped by the cycles of biological necessity. But Arendt observes that without a fixed objective context outside of nature, life cannot take on its cyclical rhythm: "[it] is only within the human world [built through work] that nature's cyclical movement manifests itself as growth and decay" (HC 97). Labor, while distinct from work, nonetheless relies on work's capacity to build a durable context of lasting objects for the manifestation of cyclical necessity. Work, in these terms, creates what can broadly be termed everyday objects: things that are defined primarily in terms of their use or purpose, as with a table or a chair. Arendt quickly finds, however, that the internal logic of *homo faber* – humans understood in their capacity as workers and makers – undermines the very goal of erecting a stable world that led her to turn to work in the first place. Centrally, and in contrast to the repetitive cycle of laboring, the creation of everyday objects is primarily intelligible in terms of instrumentality. "Here it is true that the end justifies the means," writes Arendt, "it does more, it produces and organizes them" (HC 153). Indeed, the mentality of *homo faber* very much mirrors Heidegger's description of the One as viewing the world as calculable, dischargeable duties – the world as viewed through the eyes of a bureaucrat. The standards of *homo faber* are first and foremost instrumental, determined by the use of the

[19] In approaching her this way, I build on work that argues that Arendt is rejecting the ancient Greek understanding of the *vita activa*, combining labor and work into the single category of economic necessity, distorting subsequent philosophical and political reflection. Patchen Markell, "Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of *the Human Condition*," *College Literature* 38, no. 1 (2011): 15 44; Roy T. Tsao, "Arendt against Athens: Rereading *the Human Condition*," *Political Theory* 30, no. 1 (2002): 97 123.

final object *homo faber* produces. Though an object "is an end with respect to the means by which it was produced . . . it never becomes . . . an end in itself, at least not as long as it remains an object for use" (HC 153). Yet, on these terms, Arendt finds that the world of objects can no longer fulfill its role as providing a stable context that mediates between subjectivity and the cycles of nature. When everyday objects are understood only as means, they inevitably get pulled back into the rhythms of necessity characteristic of labor. While work was meant to build a context in which the human relationship to nature could be meaningful, on its own terms it is incoherent – "utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness" (HC 154).

At this point in Arendt's argument, then, her analysis of work appears to repeat Heidegger's critical account of the One and the everyday. Whatever the distinction between labor and work may be doing, Arendt nonetheless embraces a view of the private, economic sphere as an instrumental domain constantly overwhelmed by material necessity or else the calculable routines of social roles and representations. Yet, as Arendt's argument proceeds, we see that the reduction of everyday objects and economic activities to instrumentality, far from being the starting point for Arendt's reflections, is actually the problem she seeks to diagnose and counter.

This becomes clear in the course of her discussion of *homo faber*'s response to the problem of meaninglessness. Aware that instrumentality alone cannot establish meaning, *homo faber* searches for some source of meaning that can guide its instrumental pursuits. Against the world of everyday instrumentality, *homo faber* picks out some end or ultimate value and declares it beyond instrumentality, an "end in itself" (HC 155). This was Weber's move – meaning could be constituted by affirming values as ultimate ends-in-themselves. Arendt registers two complaints against *homo faber*'s attempt to stop the meaninglessness of instrumentality by elevating an end-in-itself. The erection of an end-in-itself, she says, causes *homo faber* "to turn away from the objective world of use things and fall back upon the subjectivity of use itself" (HC 155). Unable to grasp the meaningfulness of the world, *homo faber* comes to understand all meaning as derived from the subjective, noninstrumental orientation toward an end-in-itself that give objects their purpose – as in the neo-Kantian theory of value. Arendt repudiates this move because it installs humans as the complete master over nature and the world, "robbing both of their independent dignity" (HC 156). This leads Arendt to her second complaint against the erection of the end-in-itself: that it misunderstands the nature of meaning and worldliness, which, if you recall, refers in part to the way in which a stable world of objects orients and contextualizes other human activities. "Meaning," Arendt writes, "must be permanent and lose nothing of its character, whether it is achieved or, rather, found by man or fails man and is missed by him" (HC 155). As Arendt observes, the very dignity of an instrumental activity depends on the ends of that activity being viewed as independent, an independence that cannot be manufactured by arbitrarily declaring something an end-in-itself.

Such concerns, Arendt notes, led Plato to react to Protagoras' belief that man is the measure of all use-things and declare that the god, not man, is the measure even of use objects (HC 158–159). But Arendt thinks that this retreat to fixed, objective standards is no longer possible. Having identified *homo faber*'s need for a given source of meaning that transcends the domain of use, how does Arendt avoid the path taken by Plato? A first clue is to be found in Arendt's careful choice of words in her observation about meaning. While, according to Arendt, Plato searches for transcendental or objective measures to govern the domain of use, she writes only that meaning must be "permanent" for it to help constitute the meaningfulness of the world.

Here, then, Arendt picks up and develops Heidegger's insight into the structure of the everyday world. For Weber, meaningfulness was a product of subjective choice – it was not something that could really be missed by our activities. In contrast, Arendt develops this idea of permanence in a resolutely worldly direction, without tracing meaningfulness back to extraordinary, meaning-giving moments of resoluteness: The permanence of meaning comes from the stability of the built material contexts in which we carry out our activities. In the final two sections of her chapter on work – "The Exchange Market" and "The Permanence of the World and the Work of Art" – Arendt gives an account of how the significance of objects can be permanent without transcendental grounds such that they can constitute the meaningfulness of the world. By attending to how objects form a space within which they and others appear, Arendt finds a source of meaningfulness that can ensure the world fulfills its purpose of providing a stable context that mediates between the instrumental demands of necessity and the political realm of action. While *homo faber* starts from the instrumentality of economic pursuits and so must turn to something noninstrumental – the end-in-itself – for a source of meaning, Arendt's account challenges the starting point of that effort: that economic activities and everyday objects are adequately grasped in terms of instrumentality.

The first change in the significance of objects occurs, Arendt argues, when we move from the privacy of production and use to the publicity of the exchange market. Once production is oriented toward exchange, "the finished end product changes its quality somewhat but not altogether" (HC 163). When objects emerge from the privacy of production and use and enter into the "public realm" of the market, their durability changes from durability in use to durability in exchange (HC 163). Objects, here, acquire a limited permanence that outlasts their immediate instrumentalization. Crucially, Arendt points to the fact that, in the market, objects appear to others as the source and real meaning of value. "Value is the quality a thing can never possess in privacy but acquires automatically the moment it appears in public," writes Arendt (HC 164). This value is formed neither by private use and need nor by a distinct set of ultimate ends-in-themselves but by the fact that objects "[appear] to be esteemed, demanded, or neglected" (HC 164). In the marketplace, objects acquire a new meaning and significance as they are subjected to the judgments of a

public. However, such judgments remain limited, insofar as the criteria of the exchange market remains exchange and, thus, usefulness relative to other objects: In the market, objects "exist only in relation to some other thing" (HC 166). While opening up Arendt's alternative account of how we can talk about the meaning or significance of objects, of their ability to form a stable context for human action, the exchange market fails to sustain the permanence and meaningfulness of the world. The moment that the appearance in the public of the market gives objects a new durability and imbues them with value, the market reabsorbs them into the relativity of exchange and, by extension, the flux of means and ends Arendt has already diagnosed.

Despite this failure of the exchange market to ground the permanence of meaning, Arendt's analysis has shifted the location where such permanence could be found. Rather than something intrinsic to the purpose of an object or descending from a transcendental end-in-itself, the exchange market reveals that value, permanence, and meaning, properly understood, comes from the esteeming of a discerning public. Yet, even as the market opens up some space for evaluative judgment about everyday objects, a space not immediately overwhelmed by necessity, it nonetheless remains caught in the relativity of exchange. Finally, however, Arendt turns to a class of objects whose distinctive nature is to hold open this space for as long as they exist: the work of art.[20] Works of art, Arendt writes, are objects "which are strictly without any utility whatsoever and which, moreover, because they are unique, are not exchangeable and therefore defy equalization through a common denominator such as money" (HC 167). The work of art, because it is beyond use, "can attain permanence throughout the ages" (HC 167); it is actualized only when it is preserved so as "to shine and to be seen" (HC 168). Simply put, the work of art's purpose is to hold open a space of appearance in which it is talked about, evaluated, and passed on. And it is this space that halts the decaying forces of necessity and exchange and ensures that in the work of art "the very stability of the human artifice . . . achieves a representation of its own" (HC 167–168). But understood only in this manner, the work of art, as something extraordinary that is removed from the domain of use objects, only further highlights the instrumental nature of everyday objects.

But Arendt immediately challenges this view. Art, for Arendt, is not a matter of independent aesthetic objects and values; on the contrary, in her analysis of exchange she points to how value is more fundamentally constituted by the appearance of objects to judging spectators. The significance of the work of art does not exist independently of that space of appearances. And this phenomenological ground she gives for the nature of value and permanence leads her to her last insight, one that finally undermines any reduction of economic activities

[20] For further discussion, see cf. Bernard Flynn, "The Places of the Work of Art in Arendt's Philosophy," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 17, no. 3 (1991): 217 228; Markell, "Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of *the Human Condition*," 31 34.

and everyday objects to instrumentality. She writes, "[e]verything that is, must appear, and nothing can appear without a shape of its own; hence there is in fact no thing that does not in some way transcend its functional use, and its transcendence, its beauty or ugliness, is identical with appearing publically and being seen" (HC 172). This quality of everyday object indicates how meaningfulness can have a permanence that transcends use: The significance of every object is to some extent determined by its public appreciation, an appreciation that indeed can be missed by whoever creates the object. Because the product of all instrumental action – its end, in the most literal, material sense – appears to others, a core element of all objects exceeds the terms of mere use and instrumentality. Such transcendence, however, is not constituted by some set of absolute standards or intrinsic values posited over-and-against the domain of material necessity and instrumentality. Rather, it comes about from within economic activities and everyday use-objects, as every object, no matter how ordinary, is "judged not only according to the subjective needs of men but by the objective," meaning lasting and permanent rather than transcendental, "standards of the world where they will find their place, to last, to be seen, and to be used" (HC 173).

## CLASS, INTEREST, AND PROPERTY: THE WORLDLY MEDIATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC

The world is the constructed, material space of meaningful objects in which we move, a space that connects and separates us from each other. Values arise, not from a subjective act of meaning-giving, but from how objects appear to others to be judged and esteemed, helping sustain the world and make it more permanent. Instrumental calculation occurs in and through this material world. There is no bureaucratic rationality without the material infrastructure of papers, cabinets, buildings in which people move and act. Instrumental action means rationally acting toward an end, but as Arendt reminds us that end becomes an object – a thing – that then appears to us as something more than just a moment in chains of instrumental action. Arendt's phenomenological account of the significance of everyday objects opens up a way of analyzing economic activities as always exceeding the terms of instrumentality and technical control. It forms the backdrop for her analysis of modern capitalism, which, in her mind, risks transforming the contexts of economic activities such as to rob them of these worldly mediations. Here, I will examine a constellation of concepts – class, interest, and property – that together fill out Arendt's vision of the possible worldly and institutional mediations of material necessity and instrumentality.[21] Arendt's unusual take on each otherwise familiar concept

[21] Commentators have at times considered these concepts independently as antidotes to the supposed emptiness of Arendtian politics, but they have not reconstructed them together to provide a complete picture of Arendt's attitude towards the political significance of economic phenomenon. "Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of *the Human Condition*," 25 27; Zerilli,

positions them as at once instrumental and noninstrumental, at once oriented toward some concrete goal or instrumental end while also holding open a noninstrumental space of appearance and judgment. Her analysis, focusing on the manner in which each concept mediates between subjective, material needs and political spaces of appearance and judgment, rests on her observation that objects always appear and so are more than mere instruments that can be subject to the will of a single individual.

While elliptical, Arendt's discussion of class in *On Revolution* brings out its connection to her non-reductive account of work and the objects work creates. Arendt introduces her conception of class in the course of a discussion of the American Constitution as a "tangible worldly entity."[22] Arendt emphasizes the object nature of the American Constitution so as to separate it from any notion of collective will or homogeneous agency. While the people are the source of the power that animates the institutional space formed by the Constitution, they are not, for Arendt, what gives the Constitution its specific function. Rather, she says, the importance of the Constitution was that it was "a written document, an endurable objective thing, which, to be sure, one could approach from many different angles and upon which one could impose many different interpretations, which one could change and amend in accordance with circumstances, but which nevertheless was never a subjective state of mind, like the will."[23] One of the structuring narratives of *On Revolution* concerns the relative absence of such worldly, shared objects in Europe, objects that could open up a space for need and necessity to appear as possible public concerns. Instead, social needs tended to enter public life in an unmediated manner, which means they were never subjected to any sort of institutional reification into a tangible thing that could be the object of shared judgments. The fact that suffering was not transformed into a worldly object of possible public concern meant that the response was one of compassion rather than solidarity, an emotion which "abolishes the distance, the worldly space between men where political matters, the whole realm of human affairs, are located."[24] Similarly, the French revolutionaries' attack on hypocrisy rested on an effort to bring subjective motives, which "are destroyed in their essence through appearance," into the political world without a mediating transformation into worldly interests.[25]

Arendt thinks there still existed some important, albeit limited, mediating and worldly institutional structures in Europe. In place of a worldly object like the American Constitution, European society was stabilized by "interest, the solid structure of a class society."[26] Yet interest is the aspect of class that would seem the least political, especially given Arendt's supposed hostility to economic

*Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, 21–22, 105; Erik J. Olsen, *Civic Republicanism and the Properties of Democracy: A Study of Post Socialist Political Theory* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 356–408.

[22] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1963), 157. [23] Ibid. [24] Ibid., 86. [25] Ibid., 96. [26] Ibid., 163.

and social interests, and so furthest from providing a worldly object like the Constitution. At this point, though, Arendt gives her distinctive and idiosyncratic interpretation of the nature of such interests: "this interest," she writes, "was never an expression of will, but, on the contrary, the manifestation of the world or rather of those parts of the world which certain groups . . . or classes had in common because they were situated between them."[27] As with the Constitution, class interests are not a product of the will – of either subjective belief or else objective class-consciousness that could, say, be represented by a party – but a worldly, tangible thing that at once unites and separates people, arising from a shared space in the world. While interests are produced by economic and social needs, they are not reducible to them. And this is because interests are always also the manifestation of the world, of how such needs are reified into worldly objects – interests – that open up a space of common appearance and judgment.

But how exactly can we conceptualize class and interests as manifestations of the world? In focusing on their worldly dimension, Arendt's account risks divorcing both interest and class from any association with economic considerations – those of class to needs and risks arising from different relative economic locations and of interests to the instrumental pursuit of economic ends. Here the connection to Arendt's understanding of work proves crucial. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt identifies interests with "the matters of the world of things in which men move, which physically lies between them and out of which arise their specific, objective, worldly interests. These interests constitute, in the word's most literal sense, something which *inter-est*, which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together" (HC 182, emphasis in original). These objective things, Arendt notes, "varies with each group of people" who act in relationship to them (HC 182). Does this mean that such things are just given by the contingent circumstances into which people are thrown? To an extent, yes. But as *things*, as objects, they will always be the product of work and so, according to the logic of Arendt's account, related to the demands of economic necessity. Indeed, one of the crucial functions of work is to transform "the naked greed of desire" and "the desperate longing of needs" into things that "are fit to enter the world" (HC 168).[28] As such, interests will have the same double-face as all objects. They will at once be born out of the specific material needs and structural risks scholars typically

[27] Ibid., 163 164.

[28] I take it Arendt exaggerates for rhetorical effect when she says that interests, as she understands them, "have no connotation of material needs or greed." "The Great Tradition I. Law and Power," *Social Research* 74, no. 3 (2007): 722. Arendt is trying to push back against moralized critiques of interest that, in associating them with greed and material needs, seek to elevate anti worldly criteria for evaluating the disinterestedness of public action (cf. Arendt's discussion of goodness at HC 73 78).

associate with class and economic interest, just as everyday objects always retain their association with instrumental purposes. But as objectified transformations of those subjective needs, they will also be judged according to standards that exceed mere instrumentality and thereby hold open a space in which they and others can appear. Class, in this view, is constituted by economic structures without being reducible to them. And this is because material necessity can never appear as such but must be given a worldly shape.

The final element of Arendt's understanding of the worldly dimensions of the economic is property. Property, Arendt writes, is "the privately owned share of a common world and therefore is the most elementary political condition for man's worldliness" (HC 253). As with both class and interest, Arendt attempts to recover a more fundamental worldly, and so mediating, significance of property over and against its reductive association with economic instrumentality and material needs. While in the self-understanding of the ancient Greeks, private property was almost entirely bound up with necessity and mastery, Arendt identifies that only as the "privative" trait of privacy – privacy from this perspective means "to be deprived of things essential to a truly human life" (HC 58). Arendt thinks this understanding captures some important experiences – the association between privacy and "things that need to be hidden" (HC 73) – even as it also leads to the reduction of property to the isolated domain of "force and violence" required to master necessity (HC 31). She then goes on to distinguish the non-privative traits of privacy from this association with instrumental and technical mastery:

> The non privative trait of the household realm originally lay in its being the realm of birth and death which must be hidden from the public realm because it harbors the things hidden from human eyes and impenetrable to human knowledge. It is hidden because man does not know where he comes from when he is born and where he goes when he dies. (HC 62 63)

Arendt's picture of the non-privative trait of privacy captures aspects of property neglected by the ancient Greek understanding of the private mastery of necessity. Here, the private is not the domain of things that concern myself rather than others, nor is it a matter of things that can be technically mastered as opposed to those that call for a variety of perspectives. Indeed, the private signifies those aspects of the human world that escape our capacity for both conceptual and literal production and mastery.

The non-privative traits of privacy also alter the significance of property for politics. While in the Greek conception privacy was necessary because it liberated citizens from material necessity, here property becomes a pre-condition for public appearance:

> Not the interior realm, which remains hidden and of no public significance, but its exterior appearance is important for the city as well, and it appears in the realm of the city through the boundaries between one household and the other. (HC 63)

Property is a worldly location, one that provides an opening into a common space of appearance while also distinguishing one household from another.[29] Much like class and interest, then, Arendt's distinctive interpretation of property strives to at once capture its economic dimensions without reducing it to its most obviously economic aspect – the right of control over a certain set of things or goods. Rather, what Arendt points to as crucial about property is precisely how, while bound up with the private concerns of material necessity, it is always more than merely economic, mediating between the satisfaction of needs and the appearance of things in public.

Arendt then attacks liberal understandings of property. "The distinguishing mark of modern political and economic theory . . . in so far as it regards private property as a crucial issue," she writes, "has been its stress upon the private activities of property-owners and their need of government protection for the sake of accumulation of wealth at the expense of the tangible property itself" (HC 71–72). Wealth, in Arendt's view, refers to property only as a bundle of consumable goods or instrumental objects, thus reflecting only that side of property that relates it to material necessity and the technical management of needs. So, a society can be at once wealthy – abundant in material goods and even having government protection for the private ownership of wealth – and still lack property, understood as tangible, worldly locations (cf. HC 61). The liberal defense of privacy in terms of the accumulation of wealth, which entails the unrestricted right to dispose over a domain of goods, obscures the worldly aspect of property Arendt thinks is most vital – that it forms part of the durable context within which both individuals and common things can appear to be discussed and judged.

Indeed, the modern, liberal view not only obscures the connection between privacy and a worldly location from which to appear but also eliminates the fuller significance of everyday objects that Arendt reconstructs in her account of work. In a footnote on Marx's awareness of world alienation, Arendt approvingly cites his view that the liberal understanding of property "considers things only as properties and properties only as exchange objects" (HC 254). The reductive understanding of property as ownership turns things into abstract properties disconnected from both use and, more importantly, the worldly question of appearances. With this view in mind, then, Arendt's understanding of property as a "location in a particular part of the world" (HC 61) is crucially bound up with her recovery of the full significance of everyday objects and economic activities. Much like all things, then, property for Arendt is both economic – a domain separated from the public realm because it is concerned with the instrumental satisfaction of material needs – and more than merely instrumental because it is also a location with an outer face, one that appears and opens up onto the public. Once property is reduced to mere ownership and

[29] See also Markell, "Arendt's Work: On the Architecture of *the Human Condition*," 26.

dominion, it loses this mediating function and thereby its role in contributing to the constitution and ongoing stabilization of a shared world.

In her discussion of the "social question," Arendt fails to pursue the line of analysis implied in her theory of the relationship between worldliness and economic institutions, structures, and activities. Instead, she comes to see the welfare state through the lens of technical calculation, as having to do with "things where the right measures can be figured . . . and are not subject to public debate."[30] In her critique of the rise of the "social," she views welfare institutions as continuous with the process of continuous accumulation that began with the expropriation of monastic possessions during the Reformation, an event that sparked "the two-fold process of individual expropriation and the accumulation of social wealth [in contrast to property]" (HC 248). "Expropriation," she writes, "the deprivation of certain groups of their place in the world and their naked exposure to the exigencies of life, created both the original accumulation of wealth and the possibility of transforming this wealth into capital through labor" (HC 255).

But alongside her notoriously scathing evaluation of the politics of the social, Arendt at times expresses support for welfare institutions, but only on the grounds that they maintain the boundary between politics and unworldly modern economic forces, rather than because they restore, to some extent, the worldly dimensions of economic activities by limiting the scope of expropriation. In a 1970 interview, Arendt remarks, "only legal and political institutions that are independent of the economic forces and their automatism can control and check the inherently monstrous potentialities of this process [of expropriation and accumulation]. Such political controls seem to function best in the so-called 'welfare states.'"[31] Here, she presents welfare state institutions as external checks or controls on economic activities and forces, boundaries that exist outside of these processes and that do not fundamentally channel them in a more worldly direction. However, because she views the welfare state primarily as a project of controlling unworldly processes of appropriation rather than restoring to economic activities some degree of worldliness, Arendt at other times equivocates and identifies welfare politics as furthering or augmenting expropriation: "Overtaxation, a *de facto* devaluation of currency, inflation coupled with a recession—what else are these but relatively mild forms of expropriation?"[32] More broadly, though, this means that Arendt never considers together the two sides of her analysis of her contemporary welfare state politics: the external, political control of economic processes and her call "to make a decent amount of property [in her distinctive sense] available to

[30] Hannah Arendt, "On Hannah Arendt," in *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*, ed. Melvyn A. Hill (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 317.

[31] "Thoughts on Politics and Revolution," in *Crisis of the Republic* (New York: Harvest, 1972), 212.

[32] Ibid., 211 212, emphasis in original.

every human being" – that is, to think about what aspect of welfare entitlements and institutions restore the worldly, institutional mediations of economic activities, mediations that allow needs and necessity to appear as potential objects of shared public action.[33]

Arendt, contrary to the view of her many critics, is deeply concerned with the appropriate role played by economic matters in political life. For her, contemporary capitalist societies are marked, not by the ascendency of economic over political concerns, but by the destruction of the mediating institutional structures that render material necessity a possible object of collective deliberation and action. Arendt's analysis of the worldly dimensions of the economic displaces the terms of Weber's social theory, and by extension, the political conclusions of those whose underlying socio-theoretic categories are determined by his thought. The basic terms of Weber's thought – most centrally, the opposition between noninstrumental ultimate values and the material world of instrumental calculation – presupposes the very loss of worldly attachments and mediations that, for Arendt, are the precondition for our collective involvement in the world. Yet, for Arendt, these worldly attachments are still available to us, even as the inherited theoretical perspective of the tradition obscures our experience of them. Beginning from the theoretical, the philosophy of value is compelled to work back toward the meaningfulness of the world, turning meaningfulness into a subjective imposition of values. Weber's call for personality and charismatic leadership demonstrates the political consequences of this view when it confronts mass democracy. Just as, for Arendt, the inherited viewpoint of the tradition obscures our ordinary experiences of worldliness, leaving us with no vocabulary in which to express them, so too does Weber's theoretical perspective obscure crucial aspects of democratic politics in the formation of welfare institutions. As an account of the experiences, especially the experiences of politics, that escape the theoretical categories of thinkers like Weber's, Arendt's thought illuminates how democratic social movements engage with the institutional network of the welfare state. Her thought articulates the horizons of democratic political action within the welfare state that was implicit in the vision of the social forged in the political struggles of the German working class.

## CITIZENSHIP AS WORLD-MAKING: THE WORKING-CLASS VISION OF THE SOCIAL

As we saw in Chapter 2, Weber and the social liberals saw welfare institutions as mechanisms for integrating the lower orders into the emerging German state. By transforming the democratic demands of the socialist movement, interpreted by Weber as part of a quasi-theological eschatology, into the objects of

[33] Arendt, "On Hannah Arendt," 320.

calculable state action, welfare institutions would render intractable conflicts manageable. Yet German workers and socialists themselves rejected the terms of the social liberal understanding of reform. Instead, they forged a vision of the social that, rejecting the integrative aspirations of social reform, intrinsically tied social reform to demands for political change and democratization. As historian Dennis Sweeney notes, both positive and negative evaluations of reform tend "to assume that the construction of the social and the articulation of social pedagogies were part of a unitary process and largely indifferent to party political and ideological formations."[34] As such, "they ignore how the social in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany was not a unitary or unmarked space but rather a complex of sites forged in political-ideological struggles."[35] And central to these ideological struggles was how social reforms should relate to democracy. In contrast to the social liberal view, the SPD articulated a vision of reform that positions democratization, mass politics, and workers' participation as intrinsic to successful reform efforts. And this vision rested on the implicit idea that social welfare institutions, far from being hierarchical mechanisms for managing economic needs and social risks, opened those risks and needs up to collective political judgment and potentially transformative action – that welfare institutions functioned as worldly mediators between material need and collective political judgment.

While workers and their representatives played an important role in the 1848 revolution, the German labor movement first found organizational form through Ferdinand Lassalle and the General Association of German Workingmen (*Allgemeiner Deutsche Arbeiterverein*), founded in 1863. Lassalle was crucial in advancing a distinctive working-class political consciousness and so challenging the exclusivity of the German bourgeois, but his political programs tended toward precisely the state-centric amelioration of the conditions of workers supported by Stein and Schmoller. Indeed, in 1863, Lassalle wrote to Bismarck that "the *Arbeiterstand* instinctively gravitates toward dictatorship once it can be rightly convinced that this dictatorship will be carried out in its own interests."[36] Ironically, the Lassallean organizations suffered under his and his successors dictatorial leadership, and in 1869 disaffected Lassalleans joined with the rival Union of German Workmen's and Educational Societies (*Verband deutscher Arbeiter- und Bildungsvereine*) to found the Social Democratic Labor Party in Eisenach. SPD leaders and activists sought, as much as possible,

[34] Dennis Sweeney, "Reconsidering the Modernity Paradigm: Reform Movements, the Social, and the State in Wilhelmine Germany," *Social History* 31, no. 4 (2006): 409.

[35] Ibid., 407.

[36] Quoted in Hermann Beck, "Working Class Politics at the Crossroads of Conservatism, Liberal ism, and Socialism," in *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990*, ed. David E. Barclay and Eric D. Weitz (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 69 70.

to eliminate the lingering influence of Lassallean statism on the working-class movement. At the same time, however, they saw that the increasing state recognition of the plight of workers powerfully legitimated the agitation of the SPD and the free trade unions.

The decline of dogmatic, laissez-faire liberalism and the increasing recognition of the interlinked "social question" and "workers' question" by social liberals posed both a threat and an opportunity to the German workers movement, as did Bismarck's partial pursuit of state socialism through his social insurance laws. As a promise, the influence of social liberal discourse reflected widespread concern over the grievances of workers – both as legitimate claims in themselves and as the potential source of conflict and political disruption. It signaled the growing acceptance of trade unionism and the politicized negotiation of working conditions and wages. The late nineteenth century saw a flurry of research into working conditions in factories, living conditions in overcrowded cities, the history of trade unions and guilds, and possible ameliorative social welfare institutions such as insurance schemes. At a municipal level, liberal politicians, often working in uneasy alliance with SPD councilors, pursued projects, such as public housing, publically regulated work exchanges, and various forms of municipal welfare and work relief, all aimed at improving the working and living conditions of the proletariat.[37] If the SPD could claim these reforms as their own and use them to intensify the solidarity of workers, they would provide powerful tools for recruitment and political mobilization. As a threat, the increasing impact of social liberalism, insofar as it was pursued to create and reinforce the image of a "social monarchy," began to trouble the SPD's commitment to political democratization as a precondition for any meaningful change in the working conditions of laborers. Given the express goal of social liberalism was to avoid "destabilizing" demands for republican government, these various social reform efforts, focusing SPD activists on immediate gains and encouraging participation in existing state institutions, threatened the SPD's standing as the only social force fully upholding the democratic legacy of 1848.

On the surface, much of the SPD's engagement with social welfare institutions confirms both the hopes of the social liberals and fears of radicals in the party. Yet despite such apparent convergence, workers and socialist activists decisively broke with the social liberal desire to use material amelioration of workers' conditions as an antidote to working-class radicalism and the SPD's strategic engagement with social reforms.[38] Instead, workers insisted on the

[37] On the SPD and municipal social reform politics, see Jan Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt Am Main, 1866 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[38] From the perspective of intellectual history, James Kloppenberg similarly argues for the basic convergence between left liberal (or what I call social liberal) views and more moderate social ists. Yet his argument neglects the basic and persistent disagreement over the scope and nature of political democracy. James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and*

close relationship between social reform and political reform and, relatedly, the role that self-organized workers would play in workings of the institutions that threatened to turn them into passive clients. Through their practical engagement with social reform efforts, the SPD articulated a vision of the social at odds with the social liberal project. While social liberals hoped to integrate workers, as much as possible, into the political institutions and social norms of the existing German society, the SPD used social reform to craft an alternative vision of citizenship, one that focused on interclass solidarity in pursuit of political principles rather than on individual contributions to society – contributions articulated, in Germany, especially through the framework of education (*Bildung*) and social respectability. Even as SPD leaders, activists, and members accepted and worked within emerging social welfare projects, they contested both the moralizing and individualizing understanding of the social question advanced by reformers and any implication that the creation of social welfare institutions indicated a lessening of class tensions in German society. If anything, the SPD saw such partial concessions as a sign that victories for the dominated classes would only be won through constant extra-parliamentary pressure and the strategic use of parliamentary institutions to pressure both the government and the bourgeois parties.[39]

Bismarck's social reform initiatives immediately confronted the SPD with the question of the relationship between political and social reform. For thinkers like Stein and Schmoller, the purpose of social reform was to disassociate these two questions. The SPD leadership was implacably hostile to the constitutional structure of the German Reich, with its sham parliamentarianism and unaccountable executive. While universal suffrage in Reichstag elections gave the SPD a political foothold, the political influence of popular movements was restricted both by the extremely unequal electoral districts, heavily tilted toward rural areas, and the power of the states in the upper house – the *Bundesrat* – dominated by Prussia, with its three-tier, unequal suffrage system. The socialists' hostility both to the conservative-dominated government and to the pro-government bourgeois, represented by the National Liberals, only intensified as the anti-socialist laws forced the SPD organization underground. State suppression of the SPD made anti-government, pro-democracy rhetoric into a crucial rallying point for the underground party organization. *Der Sozialdemokrat*, the underground SPD official paper smuggled into Germany from Zurich, regularly updated party members and workers on the repression of workers' organizations and pummeled the bourgeois parties for abandoning their political principles. Indeed, the SPD's unwavering defense of democratic principles allowed it to attract constituencies beyond the industrial working

*Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870 1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[39] Ritter, *Social Welfare in Germany and Britain: Origins and Development*, 71 75.

class and was a major source of its appeal to the educated strata of German society.[40]

When Bismarck announced his pro-worker social reform program, the SPD had to formulate a response that accepted the material gains of the reforms without abandoning their program of political reform. The first, more straightforward strategy pursued by the SPD was to denounce Bismarck's proposals as inadequate: Bismarck's reforms were inevitably constrained by the domination of capital such that only the socialization of production would make adequate levels of redistribution and social protection possible.[41] No doubt, this tack left the SPD open to the charge of being the irresponsible opposition, able to advance unrealistic demands without them being subject to the pressures of political negotiation. Yet to the charge of stinginess, the SPD added another, more formal, critique of Bismarck's social reforms, which sought to show how the very structure of social reform would be inevitably shaped and constrained by an undemocratic constitutional system. In particular, the SPD, along with the left-liberals, vocally attacked the government for introducing accident insurance without commensurate measures to ensure the safety of workers, such as new safety regulations and expanded factory inspections. Their point here was not just that the payment levels were inadequate: rather, it was to show that, when push comes to shove, Bismarck's real desire was to protect the total domination of employers over their own enterprises.

This argument implicitly points to the depoliticizing and rationalizing implications of insurance as a social practice.[42] By transforming the more immediate, personal relationships of employer and employee into general risk categories,

[40] On the breadth of the SPD's electoral support, see Jonathan Sperber, "The Social Democratic Electorate in Imperial Germany," in *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990*, ed. David E. Barclay and Eric D. Weitz (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998). For the importance of democratic commitments to SPD activists and intellectuals, see Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878 1890* (Prince ton: Princeton University Press, 1966), esp. 27 38; Glen R. McDougall, "Franz Mehring and the Problems of Liberal Social Reform, in Bismarckian Germany 1884 90: The Origins of Radical Marxism," *Central European History* 16, no. 03 (1983): 225 255.

[41] Ayaß, "Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialversicherung bis zur Jahrundert wende"; Lidtke, *The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878 1890*, 158 171.

[42] Accident insurance, Greg Eghigian observes, "*seemingly offered German policymakers and reformers a way to institutionalize collective responsibility for the plight of workers without the threat of politicizing them.* Modern insurance treated the world as composed of various kinds of risks. Rooted in statistics and probability, however, insurance's notion of risk had less to do with the threat of danger than with the hazards of chance and randomness . . . Insurance's logic of risk was and is therefore based on statistical principles of normativity (according to how one is situated in relation to the mass of others), not on juridical principles of justice (according to how culpable one is)." Greg Eghigian, *Making Security Social: Disability, Insurance, and the Birth of the Social Entitlement State in Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 56, emphasis in original.

accident insurance alleviated employers of direct accountability for industrial accidents. This was especially pressing in Germany, as the 1871 Employer Liability Law, far from reducing industrial conflict, generally led to drawn-out legal battles to prove employer negligence, processes that only heightened workers' class consciousness.[43] Insurance, and especially worker injury insurance, was attractive to Bismarck and the German government in part because it promised to transfer liability to general employer associations and so shield employers from direct accountability for the safety of their workers – and from the contentious political conflicts that arose when workers were injured.[44] To the SPD, this served, quite appropriately, as proof that in the absence of political democracy that would genuinely empower workers and the majority, social reform efforts would lead to "the surrender of popular rights for the factory owners."[45]

On the issue of factory inspections and workers' safety, the SPD's views tended to merge with the left-liberals, even as a practical alliance was rendered impossible by the suffrage question.[46] Yet where left-liberal parties were in power, such as at the municipal level, their choices revealed the limits of the social liberal understanding of reform. Liberal social reformers acting through municipal government and civil society welfare groups gave primacy to notions of self-help, responsibility, and subsidiarity.[47] While many liberals viewed union-run friendly societies and insurance schemes favorably, these were seen as an alternative to potentially redistributive state aid, which was to be restricted to the extremely indignant. Similarly, social liberals – and here they were allied with Protestant and Catholic social reform groups – strongly endorsed the principle of subsidiarity, whereby social insurance and welfare schemes should be run by voluntary associations separate from the state. Yet their defense of subsidiarity was motivated by hopes that subsidiarity would lead to fiscal self-policing and, more importantly, inculcate values of thrift and responsibility among the recipients of social assistance. In this vein, social liberals linked subsidiarity to the development of a professional welfare administration marked by bourgeois social norms and the deployment of scientific

[43] Mary Nolan, *Social Democracy and Society: Working Class Radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890 1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 52 53.

[44] Ritter, *Social Welfare in Germany and Britain: Origins and Development*, 36 37.

[45] Quoted in Nolan, *Social Democracy and Society: Working Class Radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890 1920*, 53.

[46] Gustav Seeber, "Linksliberale und Sozialdemokratische Kritik an Bismarcks Sozialreform," in *Bismarcks Sozialstaat: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sozialpolitik und zur Sozialpolitischen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. Lothar Machtan (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1994), 85 91.

[47] Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt Am Main, 1866 1914*, 238; Ralf Roth, "*Bürger* and Workers: Liberalism and the Labor Movement in Germany, 1848 to 1914," in *Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990*, ed. David E. Barclay and Eric D. Weitz (New York: Berghahn Books, 1994).

expertise to address social welfare problems.[48] As a result, liberal reformers were skeptical of – if not outright hostile toward – active worker participation in the administration of social welfare institutions (more so with poor relief, less so with insurance), especially when such participation introduced a self-assertive and adversarial element into how workers viewed their social entitlements. Indeed, these questions of workers' participation in municipal welfare institutions tended to divide the SPD from the social liberals more than issues of redistribution and taxation.[49]

Finally, the SPD's attitude toward social reform, welfare institutions, and the very concept of the social more broadly was always filtered through, and determined by, their belief in organizing the masses for democratic politics and their attachment to the party as an independent political form. Even as German liberals later, during the 1890s, attempted to utilize mass-political techniques, they remained splintered and weakened by Bismarck's tactics during and after unification.[50] Furthermore, social liberalism remained marked by a basic hostility to divisive politicization through party politics – a phenomenon again especially marked at the municipal level – and instead remained attracted to notable politicians and a rarefied view of public discourse.[51] Weber's advocacy of a charismatic presidency accepted mass politics while positioning the masses as entirely reactive and passive. This opened up space for the SPD, aligned with the free trade unions, to use new welfare institutions as instruments for further agitation and organization. Beyond the immediate instrumental usefulness of welfare institutions, which both attracted new workers to the movement through the promise of material benefits and provided extensive resources for the employment of party activists, the SPD's vision of social reform saw mass mobilization as an *intrinsic* part of achieving the ends sought by reformers more generally.[52] In their view, without mass agitation, social reform efforts, no matter how fine-tuned by experts, would not address the most pressing issues facing workers, such as limited housing, mass unemployment, and, most importantly, direct conflicts with employers over

[48] Sweeney, "Reconsidering the Modernity Paradigm: Reform Movements, the Social, and the State in Wilhelmine Germany," 416 417.

[49] Sweeney writes, "Over the course of these conflicts, SPD and trade union leaders returned to the theme of worker control, the self organization of workers in welfare institutions, which they argued was compromised both by bourgeois control within the reform institution itself and by the property franchise in German municipalities more generally a franchise that prevented workers from electing their own representatives to the very governing bodies which created the institution in the first place." Ibid., 423.

[50] Blackbourn and Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany*, 261 285.

[51] Dennis Sweeney, "Liberalism, the Worker and the Limits of Bourgeois *Öffentlichkeit* in Wilhel mine Germany," *German History* 22, no. 1 (2004): 36 75.

[52] Philip Manow, "Social Insurance and the German Political Economy," *MPIfG Discussion Paper* 97, no. 2 (1997): 11.

wages and working conditions. Moreover, the SPD's practice rejected the notion, so central to the social liberal discourse, that the social question was ultimately driven by fixed conflicts of interest that could be abstracted from the agency of workers and so resolved from above by state institutions.

One of the most dramatic examples of this view was enacted in the sickness insurance funds created through the 1883 law. These institutions became bastions of social democratic agitation even under the repressive Bismarckian anti-socialist laws, leading to repeated calls for a government crackdown.[53] These forms of participation were part of a much larger field of institutions that counterbalanced the tendency of the party to empower certain aspects of the leadership, such as through their ability to control the party conventions. They fit well with an ideology that valorized, not unmediated, direct democracy, but broadening the possibilities for political mobilization and political participation while still allowing for some division of labor and structures of leadership within the workers' movement.[54] By 1902, an estimated 100,000 worker representatives sat on the boards of the sickness insurance funds, marking them out as one of the most democratic public institutions in the largely authoritarian German state.[55] In that year, socialist activist and labor leader Paul Umbreit encapsulated these aspects of the SPD's attitude toward social reform: self-organized workers either "assist the state, which seriously wants to undertake social reform, in combating unhealthy exploitation or they wrest real social reforms from that state which views the protection of employer interests as its sole purpose." Through this popular engagement with welfare state institutions, workers can "direct [social reforms] to new possibilities," reworking such institutions so that they "call on and organize workers themselves as the most knowledgeable interpreters of their own wishes and demands."[56]

[53] Ayaß, "Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialversicherung bis zur Jahrundert wende"; Hennock, *The Origins of the Welfare State in England and Germany, 1850 1914: Social Policies Compared*, 151 165; Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany*, 126 127.

[54] For the classic critique of these forms of leadership from the perspective of direct democracy, see Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchic Tendencies of Modern Democracy*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: The Free Press, 1962). Furthermore, recent historical research has shown how Michel's perception of the deference of the party membership to intellectual leaders may have been skewed by the relative lack of an industrial working class membership base in Marburg. "A close examination of his activities in Marburg, a small party branch without any significant base in the industrial working class, in which an unusual amount of deference was accorded to university educated intellectuals, suggests that his reading of the mentality of the party's rank and file may have been skewed by the experience," writes Andrew Bonnell. Andrew G. Bonnell, "Oligarchy in Miniature? Robert Michels and the Marburg Branch of the German Social Democratic Party," *German History* 29, no. 1 (2011): 34.

[55] Ritter, *Social Welfare in Germany and Britain: Origins and Development*, 79.

[56] Quoted in Tennstedt, *Vom Proleten zum Industriearbeiter: Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialpolitik in Deutschland 1800 bis 1914*, 416.

## CONCLUSION

German social reform efforts, ranging from municipal reforms and civil society welfare organizations to Bismarck's landmark social insurance laws, brought with them normalizing effects. Social reformers hoped that recognizing the material grievances and interests of the working class could enable the state and welfare institutions to carry out the cultural work of integrating workers into the norms of social respectability and into the German nation-state, with its perceived mission of becoming a colonial world power. As Stein, Schmoller, and Weber make clear, this project of integrating workers through social reform was also meant to forestall the advance of threatening and destabilizing democratic principles and institutions – most notably, universal suffrage. In these respects, social liberalism, as articulated by writers like Stein and Schmoller and embodied in a broad range of political and cultural efforts, carried with it continuities with the earlier cameralist discourse of enlightened absolutism. Even as social liberalism accepted limited parliamentarianism and civil society as a domain with its own dynamics, it shared with cameralism a faith in the ability of social-scientific discourse and state institutions to master the contingencies born of the social. At a conceptual level, both cameralism and social liberalism accomplish this by presenting the social question as, first and foremost, a clash of material interests, material interests which can be abstracted from the situation at hand and made the object of technical knowledge and instrumental manipulation by state institutions.

Yet, as I have argued, viewing reform and welfare institutions only through this liberal vision of the social obscures the opportunities for democratic agency that the formation of these new institutions opened up, opportunities irreducible to, even if bound up with, the disciplinary and integrative effects of such institutions. Of course, worker and SPD participation in these institutions focused some of their attention on immediate material gains rather than the total transformation of society. But the qualified SPD acceptance of social reforms did not reflect a convergence with social liberalism. Rather, the SPD and the workers' movement, primarily through their practical engagement with these new institutions, pioneered their own vision of the social, one at odds with the social liberal project. This vision links social reform intrinsically with demands for democratization, mass political agitation and movement politics, and the direct participation of workers in the administration of welfare institutions. To the extent that they could, socialists put this vision into practice using social reform to open new horizons of democratic action. They approached welfare institutions as occasions for world-making, drawing out the noninstrumental, worldly aspect of such institutions through direct participation and mass mobilization.

In light of these historical experiences, we can see how Arendt's theorization of the worldly dimensions of the economic provides valuable resources for considering the significance of social welfare institutions for democratic life.

From the perspective of Arendt's theory of worldliness, welfare institutions – ranging from various forms of collective insurance to regulation of economic activities to direct public provision of economic goods, such as housing or material sustenance – work to transform the bare necessities of material need into the objects of collective action. They provide shared vocabulary and set of reference points for public deliberation about, and intentional action upon, the demands of material necessity. The reification of bare necessity may take forms as mundane as an administrative record documenting an individual's situation and needs or as elaborate as the construction of a housing project. Through this transformation of bare necessity into a possible object of public action, welfare institutions promise to restore a worldly mediation to economic activities and so a limit to expropriation in capitalist society, placing certain forms of property beyond the reach of accumulation and thus providing individuals with a stable share of a common world. A pension, for example, can be fruitfully viewed as a worldly object – something that not only satisfies material needs of citizens but that also provides such citizens with a stable location in the world and a measure of glory or public esteem – as well as a worldly interest – something constitutive of a class of individuals who share a particular location in the world relative to a shared object.

The republican, neo-Kantian, and radical views of the welfare state all accept the anti-worldly, Weberian vision of welfare institutions as instrumental mechanisms for managing the everyday. They are held captive by a theoretical architecture designed to foreclose the democratic vision of social movements like the German workers' movement. The neo-republican view of welfare institutions as social insurance in the context of market failures accepts the highly individualizing, rationalizing, and technical image of welfare institutions as separate from any shared world of political deliberation or action. Even as the neo-Kantians bring such moments of deliberation into view, they present them as part of a disembedded world of norms that then structure and guide welfare institutions as ultimate ends to instrumental means. This leaves them vulnerable to the radical critique that the rationalizing, normalizing effects of the means reveal those norms to be mere normalization. All begin though, with the image of welfare institutions as mechanisms of technical rationality and instrumental calculation. As a result, all three theoretical viewpoints fail to recognize the sort of political possibilities enacted by the German workers and socialists, which drew on the worldly, mediating aspect of welfare institutions as political structures.

Even as socialists recognized that Bismarck's intention was to transform the political demands of workers into technically controllable social needs, they were able to engage with these welfare institutions as worldly, mediating structures by insisting that workers and activists play an active role in their democratic administration. In this regard, such institutions functioned to mediate certain bare necessities – in the case of sickness insurance, biological life itself – so as to transform them into the possible objects both of technical

management and of collective judgment and action. Workers and socialist activists drew out these nontechnical aspects of such welfare institutions to constitute a shared, democratic world. These workers and activists, increasingly participating in the administration of these institutions, were not just concerned to disrupt authoritative patterns for interpreting the interests of workers: More fundamentally, they sought to ensure that such institutions were structured so as to bring out the worldly, noninstrumental aspect of these interests, thus constituting spaces of appearance, judgment, and participation. Workers thus took up Bismarck's unacknowledged invitation to judge his work, responding to what he initiated to create new, worldly sites of public appearance and judgment, and thereby to open up unforeseen horizons of democratic action.

# 4

## From World to Emancipation

### *Jürgen Habermas, Domination, and the Welfare State Revisited*

If the twin "social question" and "workers' question" defined Western European welfare politics in the nineteenth century, in the first half of the twentieth century they were eclipsed by the "population question": What, if anything, could be done about Europe's precipitously declining birth rates? Before World War I, many welcomed the decline, advancing the neo-Malthusian view that, with finite resources, slower population growth would increase standards of living. Radical neo-Malthusians called for the legalization of birth control and abortion as well as national sex education programs. Pro-natalist views were primarily restricted to conservative and agrarian circles, who viewed declining birth rates through their broader anxieties about cultural decay and the relative moral superiority of large agrarian households over small urban families. World War I induced a shift in these discourses. Research challenged the theoretical foundations of the neo-Malthusian view by pointing to the underutilization of existing resources and the economic burdens of an aging population. Moreover, the problem of the population was now connected to war and inter-state competition. Declining populations marked a perceived existential threat, as many European intellectuals worried about the relative growth of less "civilized" races, especially the "Slavic menace" from the east. In response, engaged intellectuals and political party members began debating a range of policy responses, and ideas that originated in far-right circles, such as taxes on bachelors and childless families and tax rebates or direct payments for large families, entered mainstream political discourse. While divergent in how the family should be managed, all these debates took it as a potential object of deliberate state action and intervention, an object that was inherently tied to broader imperatives born of both economic and military competition.

Such interwar anxiety about the population and the strength of the nation provided the backdrop for the development of Sweden's family policies. Sweden, today widely admired as a leader for gender equality, was also, for a

time, a leader in advancing and implementing pro-natalist ideology and policy. Just as the social question presented both a threat and an opportunity to those seeking the democratic self-organization and political mobilization of the working class, the population question provided an opening for feminist family policy interventions that would challenge male domination in the household and society. Swedish family policy reflects the dilemma I have been analyzing throughout this book: How and when can democratic social movements use state institutions to transform structures of domination? In the Swedish case, the broader instrumental imperatives arising from the state and the economy, such as anxieties about declining birth rates or labor force participation, structured the field of political action facing feminist social movements. As a result, the pursuit of emancipation followed a contradictory, provisional path. Insofar as they helped render explicit otherwise submerged structures of domination, welfare institutions became sites of democratic action and judgment for democratic social movements. At the same time, though, those very institutions displaced political conflicts over domination, presenting gender domination as a matter of, for example, family policy interventions that would benefit everyone equally.

This chapter returns to the themes of Chapter 1 to examine the relationship between domination, welfare institutions, and democratic social movements – the dynamics evident in the Swedish case. I anchor my analysis in a reconstruction of Jürgen Habermas's theory of domination. Most scholars approach Habermas as a normative theorist who identifies the moral basis for political critique and democracy in the universal features of human communication or else as a Weberian critic of instrumental rationality in modern societies. Here, I focus on another aspect of Habermas's thought: his analysis of the practices through which domination is sustained as well as overcome. As I reconstruct him, then, Habermas helps to answer the question: Under what conditions, and through what processes, are entrenched relationships of domination subject to democratic transformations? In particular, I draw two concepts from Habermas's early thought that fall out with his turn to neo-Kantianism: the *causality of fate* and the *dialectic of moral life*.[1] While Habermas articulates these ideas in the course of his engagement with the thought of Hegel and Freud, I contend that they contain theoretical insights that travel beyond that immediate context. The "causality of fate" refers to the peculiar manner in which individuals who exist within a structure of domination come to understand themselves as participants in that structure; while the "dialectic of moral life" refers to the

[1] J. M. Bernstein goes as far as to deem the causality of fate the core of Habermas's thought, one that Habermas strategically hid behind a more orthodox Kantian façade. J. M. Bernstein, *Recovering Ethical Life: Jürgen Habermas and the Future of Critical Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 7. I am more interested in the analytic usefulness of these categories than their relationship to Habermas's thought as a whole, although I also will provide reasons to think that Habermas does substantially revise his views of domination.

political dynamic through which that recognition propels the potential transformation of that structure. Together, they provide an analysis of struggles against domination as non-linear, provisional political projects, always fragile and subject to reversal, but nonetheless the genuine result of individuals coming to recognize how their actions are embedded in and help reproduce structures of domination.

These two concepts in Habermas's thought bring us back to problems I explored in my reconstruction of different theories of domination in Chapter 1. In contrast to those accounts, Habermas's theory enables an analysis of the interplay between all three levels of domination – direct, structural, and abstract. Further, my reconstruction of Habermas and examination of Swedish family policy builds on my analysis of the worldly mediation of instrumental and technical calculation in welfare institutions. Recall that all three views of domination I discussed in Chapter 1 began from an instrumental view of social and political institutions. As a result, all three tended to view welfare institutions, not as the potential infrastructure for democratic political mobilization, but as inert material precondition for such normative relationships (i.e., welfare institutions ensure a right to exit or a certain minimum material well-being for democratic deliberation) or else as disciplinary mechanisms constituting subjects in the first place.

Rather, as we saw in the preceding chapter, such welfare institutions function, not just as technical mechanisms for hierarchically managing material needs and providing social protection, but as potential spaces for collective democratic action against entrenched structures of domination. Through my engagements with Weber, Heidegger, and Arendt, I challenged the picture of social welfare institutions as structures of means–ends calculation and developed an alternative image of such institutions as occasioning collective, nontechnical, and participatory forms of political judgment. Yet this view can only get us so far. Heidegger and Arendt's analysis of worldliness and concern about modern world alienation, when it is not overtly elitist, positions all agents in the same relation to these modern processes. They are concerned with transformations that affect how the world appears to everyone equally – or indeed that affect the possibility of any agents seeing themselves as participants in constructing and preserving a common world in the first place.

Nonetheless, in pointing to how every attempt at domination – or, as Arendt translates *Herrschaft*, rule – produces lasting objects that can become the occasion of democratic politics, Arendt shakes the hold of Weber's conceptual categories. Welfare institutions, so I have been arguing, can constitute precisely the sort of objects that Arendt thought could occasion such involvement in sustaining a shared world. But they are also mechanisms in political struggles that are about something – about the fact that people exist in relations of domination with each other. Here, I expand upon this line of thinking to consider a set of concerns Arendt does not deal with at length: how material contexts of worldly action relate to different forms of domination.

In his early work, and especially *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas provides a compelling answer to this question, one centered on what he calls, following Hegel, the causality of fate.[2] The causality of fate refers, for Habermas as well as Hegel, to the distinctive sort of objectivity of structures constituted through human practices. Habermas's reconstruction of the idea of the causality of fate enables him to analyze relations of domination as forms of self-objectification that generate their own potential to be overcome through democratic action – a dynamic Habermas calls the dialectic of morality. Like Arendt's account of work and worldliness, Habermas calls attention to the way in which collective democratic agency is mediated by the material world – democratic action occurs within and is organized by a material, institutional infrastructure that shapes and enables action. Yet, unlike Arendt, Habermas views such self-objectification as a necessary component of domination that *at the same time generates the conditions of its own undoing through critical self-reflection*. Similarly, welfare institutions represent forms of collective self-objectification based on existing balances of social forces and interests that, at the same time, expose those relationships to the sort of critical challenge and overcoming Weber rejects.

The first two sections of this chapter examine Habermas's critique of domination. I focus, first, on his concepts of the causality of fate and the dialectic of moral life, reconstructing them as a fruitful account of the interplay between collective democratic movements and structures of domination. I then turn to how aspects of Habermas's mature thought build on his early view to integrate all three levels of domination – direct, structural, and abstract – into a single framework. I then turn to the critique of gender domination in Sweden to show how Habermas's categories can help illuminate concrete struggles in the welfare state. Focusing on the two breakthroughs of family policy – the first in the 1930s and the second in the 1960s – I argue that the course of Swedish policy reflects the dialectic of fate: welfare institutions helped revealed submerged structures of domination, occasioning democratic mobilization, even as they partially displaced political challenges to those same relations of domination. As I approach it, then, Habermas's theory points to the fundamentally provisional and partial nature of struggles against domination. Welfare institutions can help reveal implicit relations of dependence and domination, enabling individuals to recognize their role in reproducing those structures and helping form the infrastructure for collective political action to transform domination. However, there is no inevitable logic to such struggles, no guarantee that the formation of welfare institutions will generate political energies that successfully transform structures of domination. In this respect, Arendt reminds us that such political mobilization will always involve questions of political judgment

[2] Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), hereafter cited in text as "KHI."

that exceed the terms of technical calculation. Welfare institutions open up spaces that enable precisely such nontechnical judgments about the shape of the world, including the extent to which a democratic movement has successfully transformed a structure of domination. Such judgments, by their very nature, are an invitation to future democratic action against domination.

## CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION AND THE CRITIQUE OF DOMINATION

In *Knowledge and Human Interests,* Habermas provides his most sophisticated early statement of his view of the task and foundations of critical theory. While much of *Knowledge and Human Interests* concerns the status of different forms of knowledge, Habermas's ultimate goal is to ground a critical analysis of relations of domination [*Herrschaft*].[3] In this way, critical theory can distinguish between when "theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed" (KHI 310). Much of the critical reception of *Knowledge and Human Interests* has focused on the status of the three "knowledge-constitutive" interests Habermas proposes: interests in technical control, intersubjective understanding, and emancipation from arbitrary power relations. Habermas develops his account of these three interests by examining the presuppositions of the natural sciences focused on causal prediction, the hermeneutic sciences focused on cultural understanding, and the emancipatory sciences – most centrally, psychoanalysis – focused on overcoming arbitrary relations of domination.

Critics like Thomas McCarthy contend that Habermas's argument fails because the third interest is not at the same deep-seated, anthropological level as the other two.[4] While I disagree with this line of critique, here I focus instead

[3] While Shapiro translates *Herrschaft* as power, I translate it as domination to make the language consistent with my discussions of Weber and Arendt. This also makes it clearer that the emancipatory interest in self reflection is different from both the technical and practical interests, insofar as it is an interest in the *abolition* of domination, whereas the other two are interests in the *achievement* of technical control and practical understanding.

[4] Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), 92–94. I differ from McCarthy because I do not think the emancipatory interest is a third interest on the same level as the first two. That is, critical theory does not seek to produce knowledge with the same epistemic status as the other two forms of knowledge. Rather, Habermas is arguing for a dependency of the first two types of knowledge on the emancipatory interest: both technical and cultural knowledge presupposes the human ability to challenge and overturn relations of domination. This is most clear in Habermas's analysis of knowledge based on the emancipatory interest, which only becomes valid through the practical transformation of those who receive the knowledge: "the validity of general interpretations depends directly on statements about the object domain being applied by the 'objects,' that is the persons concerned, to *themselves*" (KHI 261, emphasis in original).

on a less appreciated aspect of Habermas's argument: his detailed analysis of domination, one that accounts for both the reproduction domination as well as the dynamics through which those subject to such structures can challenge and transform them. Habermas develops this analysis through the twin ideas of the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality. The causality of fate is Habermas's term for the peculiar manner in which structures of domination seem natural or necessary, and the dialectic of morality names the political dynamic through which critical self-reflection potentially overcomes structures of domination. While he never quite states so as such, Habermas also aims at reviving the Marxian critique of ideology. Habermas seeks to refute the view that a critique of ideology is inherently vanguardist and must rest on a strong notion of false consciousness and objective class standpoint.[5] Critical self-reflection along the model of psychoanalysis, on the contrary, shows that the objective standpoint of ideology critique is only achieved by collectively and democratically overcoming structures of domination that, at first, appear as a second nature and exercise a causality of fate.[6] And the dynamic through which this happens is the dialectic of morality, in which the dominator is positioned by the dominated as refusing to acknowledge a common life context and so as engaged in a form of normatively undesirable self-objectification – a point I will explain more below.

But I also want to examine Habermas's argument regarding the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality to show how it rests on a historically specific view of domination. Habermas intends his analysis of domination to apply in particular to class domination in capitalism. The theory of domination implicit in *Knowledge and Human Interests* is a version of the theory of structural domination discussed in Chapter 1. This also applies to the related view of ideology Habermas develops – what he calls systematically distorted communication. For Habermas, structural domination and systematically distorted communication go together and both are about the specific structure of class domination. As Habermas theorizes it, class domination in capitalism is a

[5] Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 1 41; "A Post Script to *Knowledge and Human Interests*," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 3 (1973): 157 189. This does not entirely resolve the question of the authority of the critic. Many in critical theory abandoned the model of psychoanalysis precisely because it seemed to model political practice off the hierarchical relationship between analyst and analysand. My main contention is that the insights Habermas develops through his reconstruction of psychoanalysis are severable from the specific nature of the analytic situation. For a more skeptical view of this separation that calls attention to the central role of transference in the psychoanalytic cure, see Amy Allen, "Psychoanalysis and the Methodology of Critique," *Constellations* 23, no. 2 (2016): 244 254.

[6] For a productive use of this insight in democratic theory, see Robin Celikates, "Recognition, System Justification and Reconstructive Critique," in *Reconnaissance: Identité Et Intégration Sociale*, ed. Christian Lazzeri and Soraya Nour (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2009).

form of structural domination mediated by the structure of the market – a form of domination that demands legitimacy via the ideological fiction of free exchange.

I emphasize the historical nature of this model of domination (as Habermas sees it), as he will come to abandon the theoretical terms of *Knowledge and Human Interests* because he thinks they are inadequate for the non-class-specific forms of domination of late capitalism. In his later work, Habermas moves from an analysis of class-specific forms of *structural* domination to an understanding of capitalism that emphasizes non-class-specific *abstract* domination. At the same time, Habermas abandons the critique of ideology – abstract domination does not require ideological legitimations in the same way as structural domination – and moves to the critique of functionalist reason, which focuses on fragmentation as the cultural form of abstract domination. In contrast to the theorists we examined in Chapter 1, then, Habermas is concerned with understanding the relationship between direct, structural, and abstract domination. Yet he fails to theorize their interrelationship because, first, he reduces structural domination to class domination, and second and as a result, he imposes a linear historical sequence according to which we move from direct to structural to abstract forms of domination in capitalist societies. In short, Habermas's theory has the ingredients to, in conjunction with Arendt's theory of worldly mediation, overcome the shortcomings of the theories we addressed in Chapter 1 – yet they are ingredients he himself failed to combine in the right way because of his linear historical story.

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas develops his model of structural domination through his discussion of the type of knowledge distinctive to psychoanalytic interpretations – the type of knowledge that rests in the general human interest in emancipation from structures of domination. Habermas is interested in psychoanalysis, not because he accepts any particular theories in Freud or others, but because it presents a form of knowledge that focuses on *practical* self-transformation. He points to psychoanalysis as a science that, in contrast to both predictive and hermeneutic sciences, "moved in the element of self-reflection" (KHI 214). In the most general terms, Habermas views psychoanalysis as a science of the neurotic symptoms of internalized domination, an internalization that provides domination with a pseudo-natural causality – of what Habermas calls systematically distorted communication.

> The institution of relations of domination [*Herrschaftsbeziehungen*] necessarily restricts public communication. If this restriction is not to affect the appearance of intersubjectivity, then the limits of communication must be established in the interior of subjects themselves ... The analyst instructs the patient in reading his own texts, which he himself has mutilated and distorted, and in translating symbols from a mode of expression deformed as a private language into the mode of expression of public communication. (KHI 228)

A psychoanalytic interpretation attempts to show how the particular neuroses of the analysand are produced by and connected to more general relations of domination that compel the internalization of needs that cannot achieve public recognition. The idea is that these structures of domination form the field of what sorts of needs can be articulated and received as legitimate. In other words, psychoanalytic interpretations can help reveal dominant ideological structures – ideological in the sense that they universalize and naturalize certain structures, ideas, or values that are in fact partial and changeable.

The first aspect of the causality of fate, then, is how psychoanalytic interpretations reveal the connection between individual symptoms and these broader structures of domination. The second is how such interpretations can lead to the practical self-transformation on the part of individuals, such that they can recognize such structures of domination and overcome them. While psychoanalysis seems to provide a great deal of authority to the analyst as a sort of equivalent for a political vanguard, Habermas is clear that psychoanalytic interpretations only become true retrospectively, through the patient's ability to re-orient both their life narrative and their stance toward the future.[7] That is, the analyst does not provide a "true" interpretation that overcomes the false consciousness of the patient. Rather, the interpretation becomes true just through this self-transformation:

> Whereas in other areas theories contain statements about an object domain to which they remain external as statements, the validity of general interpretations depends directly on statements about the object domain being applied by the 'objects,' that is the persons concerned, to *themselves*. (KHI 261, emphasis in original)

Only "the successful continuation of an interrupted self-formative process" can validate the interpretation offered by the analyst (KHI 260). Even the explicit avowal or verbal acceptance of the interpretation by the analysand is insufficient, as a superficial acceptance of the critical narrative could itself be a form of resistance. Rather, the truth of the interpretation must be judged relative to "the context of a self-formative process as a whole" (KHI 269) – that is, the analysand must act as though they now recognize their former symptoms as produced by the internalization and naturalization of relations of domination and so transform such social conditions.[8]

[7] This raises difficult questions about the role of transference in psychoanalysis and how that translates to politics, see Allen, "Psychoanalysis and the Methodology of Critique." I cannot fully resolve the issue here. Much depends on whether we see Habermas as trying to model politics off of psychoanalysis or whether he is drawing out the model of political emancipation implicit in psychoanalysis.

[8] Habermas notes that analysis is "a word in which critique as knowledge and critique as transformation are not accidentally combined" (KHI 272).

## THEORIZING STRUCTURAL DOMINATION

By taking psychoanalysis as his model, Habermas initially develops self-reflection in terms of the individual overcoming the psychic internalization of domination. Similarly, systematically distorted communication, as a linguistic reformulation of the notion of ideology, rests on the idea that the systematic social restriction of the communication of needs claims – needs claims incompatible with the existing social order – produces neurotic symptoms. Habermas then uses the idea of structural domination to transfer this interpretation of psychoanalysis into a general social theory. He makes his view of structural domination most explicit in the course of his critical reconstruction of Marx. Habermas finds in Marx's expressly political writings, attention to the "interdependent" development of, on the one hand, technical control of nature through "productive activity," which proceeds in a linear fashion, and, on the other, "critical-revolutionary activity . . . through which the dogmatic character of surpassed forms of domination and ideologies are dispelled" (KHI 55). Habermas presents his own theory as providing a firmer foundation for this second dimension of Marx's political view, an aspect of self-development Marx was unable to fully grasp because he remains "restricted to categorical framework of production" (KHI 55).[9] By this, Habermas means that Marx tended to subordinate the activity of political revolution to the broader development of the forces of production and so to the linear historical narrative implied by historical materialism.

But while he rejects the linear philosophy of history, Habermas accepts and builds on Marx's analysis of class domination. Habermas takes it for granted that the evolution of normative structures occurs through the "antagonism of classes" (KHI 60). So, when Habermas speaks of domination in *KHI*, he has in mind a specific form of domination: structural class domination. Structural domination rests on the problem of "distributing the surplus product created by labor. This problem is solved by the formation of social classes, which participate to varying degrees in the burdens of production and in social rewards" (KHI 54). Domination, then, arises from the ability of one group to secure a portion of this surplus that is greater than what they could secure if the distribution were decided through free and open communication. Or, in the terminology I developed in Chapter 1, structural domination points to the reflexive power of certain groups to determine the rules of societal cooperation in the counterfactual realm of norms.

This notion of structural domination allows Habermas to argue that such distortions of public communication, far from being the idiosyncratic feature of

[9] This idea is further developed in Jürgen Habermas, "Labor and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena *Philosophy of Mind*," in *Theory and Practice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973). See also the discussion of these issues in Benhabib, *Critique, Norm and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory*, 44–69.

individual psyches, in fact arise from the systematic structures that, to persist, must present themselves as objective:

> The grammatical relations of communication, once distorted by force, exert force themselves ... The distortion of the dialogic relation is subject to the causality of split off symbols and reified grammatical relations: that is, relations that are removed from public communication, prevail only behind the backs of subjects, and are thus also empirically coercive. (KHI 59)

Habermas's notion of systematically distorted communication is meant to explain this possibility for restricted communication to take on an empirically causal force. Systematically distorted communication can become a social phenomenon precisely because, in structural domination, seemingly objective institutions mediate class relations. The market makes direct domination, in the sense theorized by republicans, into a form of structural domination through the fictive neutrality of the private labor contract. As a result, this form of domination, Habermas avers, requires ideological justification. Because of the structure of market exchange, the dominant classes in capitalism could resort to claims with a "universalistic structure and appeal to generalized interests," despite the inherently partial nature of their claims, precisely because the market appears ideologically, as a neutral, apolitical form of social organization.[10] Ideology, here, is translated into the idea that structures of domination transform what should be communicably justifiable relationships into apparently objective, grammatically frozen structures.

Thus, Habermas glosses Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism as an account of "the institutionally secured suppression of the communication through which a society is divided into social classes," a suppression which "amounts to fetishizing the true social relations" (KHI 60). Structural domination requires systematically distorted communication precisely because the structures that support it – paradigmatically, the market – split off symbols (prices) from their basis in reciprocal communication.[11] Moreover, Habermas wants to argue, such systematic restrictions on communication can be discerned in neurotic symptoms, which reflect needs and desires that are incompatible with the structuring institutions that mediate and support class domination. In short, the notion of systematically distorted communication only makes sense on a social level if you view domination as a relationship between two classes mediated by seemingly objective structures that gain their objectivity by covertly restricting the scope of public communication. The notion of structural domination allows Habermas to take the concept of systematically distorted communication and show how it explains the objectification of the social structures that both support and obscure class domination. Conversely, just

[10] Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, 22; cf. "Natural Law and Revolution."

[11] See the discussion in Bernstein, *Recovering Ethical Life: Jürgen Habermas and the Future of Critical Theory*, 168 171.

as the overcoming of neurotic symptoms requires individual self-reflection that enables the subject to recognize the source of such pseudo-objective causal forces in one's own life history, so too does the overcoming of systematically distorted communication entail self-reflection. Again, the implicit notion of structural domination allows Habermas to transfer his understanding of self-reflection from the individual to the social sphere.

Recall that the diagnosis of neurotic symptoms was only one side of Habermas's account of psychoanalysis. The other is that the diagnosis becomes valid only retrospectively, through the transformed practical stance of the patient. And just as systematically distorted communication scales up the critical diagnosis side of psychoanalysis, Habermas's reconstruction of the twin ideas of the causality of fate and the dialectic of moral life shows how this practical self-transformation occurs at the societal level. Habermas makes this clear in a significant passage in *KHI*, one that, more so than elsewhere, both brings forth the stakes of his critique of Marx and draws together that critique with his interpretation of the early Hegel. From Hegel, Habermas draws the idea of the "dialectic of moral life" missing in Marx. While Marx, Habermas argues, implicitly relied on the idea of a dialectic of moral life, Marx was unable to make this explicit because he restricted knowledge to a "theoretical-technical" form (KHI 56). Hegel originally developed his notion of the dialectic of moral life through an interpretation of Christianity that is, at the same time, a critique of the formalism of Kantian ethics.[12] Hegel's account, Habermas argues, reveals the possibility of a form of "reflective knowledge" constitutively distinct from technical knowledge: while technical knowledge mediates between a subject and external nature as its object, reflective knowledge "mediates two partial subjects of society that make each other into objects—in other words, two social classes" (KHI 56). In Hegel's dialectic of moral life, Habermas finds a foreshadow of his own notion of critical self-reflection. Like critical self-reflection produced in psychoanalysis, reflective knowledge in Hegel's account dissolves a false objectification and produces a recognition of the socio-historic, and so alterable, basis of pseudo-natural structures and neurotic compulsions in relations of domination.

Hegel develops the idea of the dialectic of moral life in a discussion of guilt and punishment. The central point of Hegel's account is that the criminal's experience of guilt is actually an experience of self-alienation. The act of the crime separates the criminal from the community, which, because of our constitutive dependency on others, is in fact a suppression and objectification of the criminal's own life context. Through his transgression of the community, the criminal separates from the "the complementarity of unconstrained

[12] For Hegel's original account, see G. W. F. Hegel, "The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," in *Early Theological Writings* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), especially 224–247. See also the excellent discussion in J. M. Bernstein, "Love and Law: Hegel's Critique of Morality," *Social Research* 70, no. 2 (2003): 393–432.

communication and the reciprocal gratification of needs" (KHI 56). This complementarity represents a "common life context" between the criminal and those he has wronged (KHI 56). Those wronged seek to punish the criminal, a punishment that the criminal at first experiences as an external force but which actually reflects "the violence of the repressed ... which he has himself provoked" (KHI 56). Eventually, through the experience of guilt, the criminal is compelled to recognize "in the repression of the other's life the deficiency of his own" (KHI 56). In other words, the criminal comes to recognize that, in treating the other as an object, he is also treating himself as an object, implicitly conceiving of his constitutive indebtedness to the other as though it were an external, objective fact with no bearing on his subjectivity.

Hegel's dialectic of moral life, like Habermas's reconstruction of psychoanalytic self-reflection, focuses on the subject in relation to the totality of the community. The dialectic of moral life plays out through the criminal-qua-individual's separation from the community, where his desire for individual sovereignty is purchased at the price of self-objectification and the denial of his own dependence on reciprocal communication. Habermas then transfers this model to the plane of class struggle between collective actors. If Marx had fully distinguished cultural interaction from the development of the technical control of nature, he

> could have ... constructed the disproportional appropriation of the surplus product, which has class antagonism as its consequence, as a "crime." The punitive causality of fate is executed upon the rulers as class struggle coming to a head in revolutions. Revolutionary violence reconciles the disunited parties by abolishing the alienation of class antagonism that set in with the repression of initial morality. (KHI 57)

Here the criminal becomes a location within a general structure of social domination that enables members of a certain class to extract an exploitative share of production. The ruling class, through this crime, alienates itself from the common moral context implicit in its claim to legitimacy (i.e., that market exchanges are legitimate and embody universal freedom). The ideology of market exchange presupposes that everyone's interests are taken into account equally – this is the common moral context. In other words, there is a contradiction between the universal claims of the bourgeois and the reality of the crime of exploitation. Revolutionary violence, although experienced by the bourgeois like an external force, is the manifestation of their self-alienation. Such violence, then, compels the ruling class to recognize their own objectification. In abolishing the structures of domination that enable their exploitation and accepting decision-making on the basis of unconstrained communication, they can overcome such alienation and embrace the universal core of their claim to legitimacy – a claim which reflects the reciprocal relationship to the dominated classes that was in place before the appropriation of the surplus production. Thus, class struggle, Habermas writes, "is a process of reflection writ large," a "repeated dialectic of the moral life" the results of

which "are always sedimented in the institutional framework of a society, in social form" (KHI 61). So, in the first place, the idea of structural domination allows Habermas to substitute the two classes for the criminal and the community of Hegel's original. Since structural domination, as Habermas understands it, gives rise to collective agents, there are concrete actors who can commit the crime and so begin the dialectic of moral life. At the same time, since their domination is structurally mediated – that is, the ruling classes do not recognize their domination as domination but rather see it as the outcome of objective market forces – the dialectic of revolutionary violence can occasion a moment of self-reflection where dominating groups come to see and overcome their self-objectification.

The two sides of Habermas's argument – that structural domination produces systematically distorted communication and that it can be overcome through revolutionary praxis that leads to self-reflection – are brought together via the notion of the causality of fate. Habermas describes both pseudo-objective social structures buttressing domination and the revolutionary struggle against domination as exercising the causality of fate. Systematically distorted communication, Habermas argues, can be construed as exercising a "causality of fate," one produced by the "invariance of life history," rather than the "causality of nature . . . anchored in the invariance of . . . natural laws" (KHI 271). For this reason, the apparently nature-like compulsion of ideology can "be dissolved by the power of reflection" (KHI 271). Conversely, the punishment of the criminal, one that represents the force of the criminal's suppressed life, also represents the "causality of fate" – and so too, by extension, does the revolutionary violence against the ruling class (KHI 56, 57). The process of self-reflection is made possible because distorted social relationships generate structures that "prevail only behind the backs of subjects" (KHI 59) – systematically distorted communication rests on forms of self-objectification. At the same time, however, that self-alienation produces negative experiences that, while at first also experienced as a form of external causality, induce self-reflection insofar as they reveal the initial distortion that generates the causality of fate. In other words, a purely normative critique of the moral failings of those subject to distorted relationships – whether in a dominant or subordinate position – is insufficient. Rather, they must experience a causality of fate that fully reveals their self-alienation in distorted relationships.

Based on this insight, Habermas rejects the idea that simply pointing to intersubjectivity as an ideal is sufficient for inducing self-reflection. "Thus," he writes, "it is not unconstrained intersubjectivity itself that we call dialectic, but the history of its repression and re-establishment" (KHI 59). That history of self-reflection operates through the causality of fate – a movement from self-objectification in hierarchical social forms through violent recognition of this self-objectification and to reconciliation and the reorganization of society based on unconstrained, reciprocal communication. This focus on the dialectic suppression and re-establishment of intersubjectivity distinguishes Habermas's analysis of structural domination from Forst's. Forst remains fixated on the

unmediated interactions between the dominators and the dominated as expressed in the demand for a justification. Rather, Habermas's shows how the dialectic of moral life interacts with these processes of objectification through the construction of a world – even if the commonality of that world is not immediately recognized by everyone related through it. As I will show through my discussion of the Swedish welfare state, this is the point of contact between Arendt and Habermas. Through the dialectic of moral life, welfare institutions can become shared, worldly objects that bring to light these submerged structures of domination, thus opening them up to political transformation.

In all, then, Habermas's arguments in *Knowledge and Human Interests* presuppose structural domination as its object of critique. Without conceiving of society as class struggle mediated through structures that render domination covert, Habermas could transfer neither systematically distorted communication nor self-reflection from the individual level to that of collective action and general social transformation. Yet, as I will now argue, Habermas came to abandon the view that contemporary capitalist society could be meaningfully described as an order of structural domination. He came more and more to focus on *abstract* domination – a form in some ways continuous with structural domination but, in other crucial respects, beyond it.[13] While structural domination focuses on the mediation of class domination by abstracting systems, Habermas moves to theorize the domination by such abstract systems themselves. As Habermas's focus moves from structural to abstract domination, he reduces the significance of class conflict and so of both systematically distorted communication and self-reflection through immanent critique. In place of ideology, Habermas emphasizes the pathology of the fragmentation of consciousness, one that cannot be overcome through class conflict construed as a dialectic of moral life.

## FROM STRUCTURAL TO ABSTRACT DOMINATION

Throughout the 1970s, Habermas began revising the socio-theoretic underpinnings of his critical theory. While he would not fully declare class conflict a thing of the past until *The Theory of Communicative Action*, these transitional works find Habermas expressing doubts about the adequacy of Marxian class analysis.[14] In *Legitimation Crisis*, Habermas argues that the increasing intervention of the state into wage-setting conflicts and the achievement of class

[13] Thus, for Marx, value represents a form of "real abstraction" but, in Habermas's view, Marx's argument remains about the interaction between such real abstractions and class struggle. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Vol. 2, 332–343.

[14] *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, Vol. 1; *The Theory of Communicative Action: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, Vol. 2, hereafter cited in text as "TCAI" and "TCAII."

compromise means that "the social identity of classes breaks down and class consciousness is fragmented ... class compromise ... makes (almost) everyone at the same time both a participant and a victim."[15] If everyone is, to some degree, a perpetrator, then class conflict cannot be the driving force behind society-wide self-reflection. There is no group in society that is the equivalent of the criminal who could generate a dialectic of moral life. In Habermas's analysis, the increasing importance of the education as a mechanism of social stratification magnify the effects of class compromise. He speculates about the "*possibility* that ... [the] differential exercise of social power could outlive even the *economic form* of class domination ... 'domination' ... would [then] be refracted ... not through bourgeois civil war, but through the educational system of the social welfare state."[16] In all, Habermas's provisional analysis of late capitalism focuses on the decline of the market wage and labor-capital relationships as the institutional core of capitalism and the rise of social welfare institutions as new sites of social conflict – conflict generated by legitimation crises rather than economic crises.

This hypothesis about the displacement of class conflict compels Habermas to abandon the notion of structural domination. Indeed, since domination can no longer be traced back to concrete class actors, he argues we have to rethink the sources of social pathologies in late capitalist society. In his mature analysis in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas now calls attention to "the reification of communicatively structured domains of action" – a form of domination that "does not produce effects distributed in any class-specific manner" (TCAII 332, cf. 352). Such forms of abstract domination are not totally divorced from structural domination: both are sociologically accessible from the perspective of the functional demands for the material reproduction of the lifeworld. Before the emergence of capitalism, societies are marked by direct forms of domination, with material production managed through political hierarchies that must be insulated from critique. The emergence of capitalism makes critique of those sorts of status hierarchies less costly, even as it produces a new form of structural domination. Under the conditions of bourgeois capitalism, when the material demands of society are mediated through the free play of market forces and so focus around the systemic media of money, the material demands of society produced a concrete class hierarchy of capital-owners and wage-laborers. Thus, systemic imperatives played out through "strictly class-specific lifeworld" that produced struggle (TCAII 352). Abstract domination represents a further autonomization of systemic demands of the economy from the lifeworld. Now, both money and power mediate the material demands of society, such that their effects are no longer structurally channeled into classes that stand in a particular relationship to the means of production. Domination, here, takes on a peculiarly abstract form. Even as people experience

[15] *Legitimation Crisis*, 39.

[16] "Toward a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 166, emphasis in original.

its effects as disempowering and invasive, it is no longer possible to trace it back to unifying hierarchical relationship. Habermas, however, does seem to think that abstract domination plays out through concrete actors – only now the center of gravity has shifted toward technocratic experts and their clients.

Habermas's analysis of late capitalism leads him to abandon two central planks of his early view of critical theory: immanent critique and the idea of systematically distorted communication. For Habermas, these developments counteract each other. The decline of systematically distorted communication implies that relationships of structural domination are more vulnerable to open political challenge, yet the rise of these abstract, functional processes, immune to immanent critique, re-protects abstract domination from normative claims. So, Habermas's first argument is that, with the move from structural to abstract domination, "[c]ulture loses just those formal properties that enabled it to take on ideological functions ... the modern form of understanding is too transparent to provide a niche for ... structural violence by means of inconspicuous restrictions on communication" (TCAII 196, cf. 388). This is so because, as the administrative activities as well as economic decisions becomes increasingly divorced from what Habermas terms lifeworld domains of communicative action, the discourses of morality and law detached from their metaphysical backdrops. The separation of system and lifeworld makes impossible the "global interpretation of the whole ... capable of integration" characteristic of bourgeois ideologies like the belief in the legitimacy of market capitalism (TCAII 354). As a result, relationships of domination can no longer be obscured by systemic constraints on communication that carry the "traces of the sacred" (TCAII 354) – something Habermas thinks is a feature of early bourgeois ideology. Late capitalist forms of consciousness, Habermas implies, are incapable of accepting the implicit restrictions on communication necessary for particular social claims to present themselves as universal.

Yet, whatever gains arise because structural forms of domination cannot hide behind such distortions of communication, they are offset by the increasing "technicization" of bourgeois culture. Part of the effectiveness of taking structural domination as a starting point was that critical theory could point to the gap between the ideals implicit in structures like the market and the reality of class domination – a gap represented, also, by the negative moment in the dialectic of morality, one that gains traction from the difference between the reality of sundered life and the appearance of external punishment. Thus, Marx could "be content to take at its word, and to criticize immanently, the normative content of the ruling bourgeois theories of modern natural law and political economy."[17] However, Habermas argues that, with the changes sketched above, "bourgeois consciousness has become cynical ... [and] has been

[17] "Historical Materialism and the Development of Normative Structures," in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 96–97.

thoroughly emptied of binding normative content."[18] The increasing separation out of autonomous subsystems from the lifeworld means that both activities in the subsystem and the intellectual production connected to those activities in the social sciences no longer rely on normative views of legitimacy. The internal rationalization of the social sciences compels them to turn away from normative reflection.

This process is furthered by the functional role scientific research takes on in late capitalism. For example, while in early capitalism the function of the bourgeois social sciences was to legitimate the emancipation of the economy from state control, in late capitalism what demands justification is the "structural depoliticization" necessitated by the displacement of class conflict into the political system.[19] The social sciences supply a rationale for that depoliticization, Habermas argues, "either by democratic elite theories ... or by technocratic systems theories. In the history of bourgeois social science, these theories today have a function similar to that of the classical doctrine of political economy."[20] Even as the rationalization of bourgeois culture means domination cannot by ideologically legitimated, the increasing functionalization of that same culture nonetheless provides means for obscuring social conflicts.

Because of this cynical turn in bourgeois consciousness, the totalizing normative standpoint characteristic of bourgeois culture is replaced by fragmentation, which Habermas calls "the functional equivalent for ideology formation" (TCAII 355). Habermas introduces the concept of fragmentation because, despite the decline of totalizing ideologies, conflicts that play out between social and systemic forms of integration do not come to explicit consciousness. The fragmentation of consciousness prevents the articulation from within the lifeworld of holistic interpretations of abstract domination rising. Such interpretations are implicit in people's everyday experiences but never attain a level of clarity that can satisfy the demands of rationalized scientific domains (TCAII 355). Thus, the technicization of bourgeois culture noted above also prevents the formation of general diagnoses of social pathologies – most centrally, the invasion of systemic imperatives into the lifeworld – out of the inchoate experiences of abstract domination. Such fragmentation is furthered by the fact that abstract domination, as noted above, does not produce concrete classes structured via the market. These effects are mediated through expert cultures and state institutions that prevent the formation of the sort of critical class consciousness that could generate the dialectic of moral life. Here, communication is limited and impeded, even as it is not distorted in the technical sense in which Habermas talks of systematically distorted communication. Thus, the model of discursive politics Habermas develops after *The Theory of Communicative Action* emphasizes different problems than the

[18] Ibid.; see also "Further Reflections on the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 442; Titus Stahl, "Habermas and the Project of Immanent Critique," *Constellations* 20, no. 4 (2013): 533–552.

[19] Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, 37. [20] Ibid.

critique of structural domination would imply. Rather than structures of ideological restrictions on communication within the lifeworld, Habermas seeks to diagnose the "illegitimate independence of social and administrative power vis-à-vis democratically generated communicative power."[21]

In short, under the conditions of late capitalism as he interprets them, critical self-reflection cannot take the form Habermas sketches in *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Without the structural domination of class-based bourgeois capitalism, Habermas cannot transfer the dialectic of morality to the social level of class conflict. While he still focuses on the critique of domination, Habermas's emphasis now shifts to reconstructing, through a quasi-transcendental analysis of the lifeworld, the pre-theoretical experiences of reification so as to overcome the fragmentation of late capitalist consciousness.

Habermas's project only makes sense to the extent that we believe the technocratic state has successfully pacified class conflict in late capitalism. If not – if abstract domination cannot fully displace structural domination as the defining feature of capitalist society – then Habermas was overly hasty in dismissing critical self-reflection and systematically distorted communication as key components of a critical theory of society. Moreover, the abandonment of the early model only makes sense to the extent that we think class is the paradigmatic form of structural domination. As Nancy Fraser argues in her seminal critique of *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas's divide between system and lifeworld fails to account for forms of power – such as gender domination – that run across both spheres.[22] Fraser faults Habermas for transforming this methodological dualism into a substantive divide between distinct social spheres, a move that, in her view, leads Habermas to shield the gendered hierarchy of modern societies from critical scrutiny. Habermas's foregrounding of reification at the expense of "dominance and subordination" fails to deal with gender domination.[23] This failure is a direct result of Habermas's hypothesis of a move from structural to abstract domination. Gender domination represents a form of structural ideology that relies on suppressed communication. Despite Habermas's protestations that he never intended to present an "innocent image of 'power-free spheres of communication,'" the logic of his account precisely discounts the possibility that, in contemporary societies, "social integration proceeds via norms of domination which sublimate violence,"[24] As Amy Allen contends, the idea of systematically distorted

[21] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, 358.

[22] Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender," in *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 139.

[23] Ibid., 138.

[24] Jürgen Habermas, "A Reply," in *Communicative Action: Essays on Jürgen Habermas's The Theory of Communicative Action*, ed. Axel Honneth and Hans Joas (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 254.

communication can helpfully capture the way in which gender domination both shields gender norms from domination and constructs individuals as attached to their gender roles. Habermas's theory of moral development assumes processes of socialization shot through with power relationships.[25]

Taking seriously his idea of structural domination puts Habermas in close proximity to the analysis of gender domination one finds in a theorist like Judith Butler. Butler's analysis of gender norms shows that culture still has the linguistic resources to naturalize themselves and shield themselves from critique even as economic conflicts may become more transparent. And Butler's analysis of the melancholic structure of gender builds on the same insights behind Habermas's reconstruction of psychoanalysis. In Freud's classic analysis, melancholy is distinct from mourning insofar as the melancholic subject fails to articulate their grief and loss, instead attaching to a substitute object.[26] Gendered subjects are constituted by a loss of a potential object of love, a loss that the melancholic subject "refuses to acknowledge."[27] Our ambivalent relationship to that original object – at once attraction and hatred because the object rejects us – then becomes an ambivalent relationship to ourselves. In melancholy, the subject substitutes their own ego for the lost object, trying to keep alive their relationship with the other. Yet the ego can never be a perfect substitute and so cannot fully compensate for the loss. Instead, we are kept in our state of loss, only now we blame ourselves, taking out our anger toward the lost object on our own ego. For Butler, this melancholic structure of heterosexuality helps account for the "hyperbolic identifications by which mundane heterosexual masculinity and femininity confirm themselves."[28] Gender domination, then, rests on prevailing foreclosures on avowing certain suppressed needs and, moreover, the loss of the possibility of even acknowledging that loss as a loss (what Butler calls a "double disavowal"[29]). Similarly, for Habermas, the formation of the super-ego through the "establishment of abandoned loss objects in the ego" operates via a "sanctification of certain propositions." The commands of the super-ego, as the product of the unmournable loss, function as "libidinally-bound basic propositions ... immunized against critical objection." Nonetheless, they "are not excluded from public communication as such" but "remain within a common, unmutilated language" (KHI 244).

Butler's account of gender domination helps us see that Habermas's move from structural to abstract domination is hasty. Habermas's overarching linear concept of history blinds him to the persistence of these structural forms of domination. For example, the changing nature of carework in capitalist societies reflects the interaction between structural and abstract forms of

[25] Allen, *The Politics of Ourselves: Power, Autonomy, and Gender in Contemporary Critical Theory*, 72 95.
[26] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia."
[27] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, 182. [28] Ibid., 147.
[29] Ibid., 139 149.

domination. The replacement of the family wage structure by the dual-income household entailed the "mediatization," in Habermas's sense, of childrearing. A portion of the material labor of childrearing has been transferred over to public or private childcare, and so the labor is now explicitly mediatized through either money or power. Nonetheless, abundant evidence attests to the partial effects of this mediatization on power-relations in the lifeworld: even in the most "advanced" countries on these issues, women still take on a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities as well as of the unpaid "administration" of childcare. At the same time, however, this mediatization means that childcare is increasingly thematized as a social and political problem, thereby breaking down a normative consensus secured through systematic distortion on communication and exposing gender hierarchies to discursive challenge. More generally, we can analyze the *ambiguous* structuring effects the increasing use of the systemic media of power and money have on lifeworld domains such as the family. By this, I mean the manifold ways in which the development of systems media both re-distributes certain functional imperatives – thereby, for instance, increasing the capacity for exit – even as it provides new bases for male domination, as evident in the patriarchal structure of many forms of social protection.

More generally, welfare institutions embody the curious duality of both the reproduction and the overcoming of domination that Habermas describes in his analysis of the causality of fate and the dialectic of moral life. Insofar as social welfare policies externalize of relations of domination in institutional form, they can then become objects of a dialectic of moral life. This does not happen by referring to some preexisting, commonly accepted standard of mutual recognition but through an ongoing struggle that is often experienced by individuals as a sort of causality of fate. Habermas provides a theoretical vocabulary for understanding the interactions between direct, structural, and abstract domination – which, as I argued in Chapter 1, are typically divorced. The causality of fate reflects the congealing of a structural relation of domination into an abstract structure, and the dialectic of moral life captures a process through which such abstract forms of domination are made the potential object of collective political transformation. Similarly, Butler's analysis of the melancholic constitution of subjectivity analyzes how structures of domination intersect with abstract systems of social normalization and integration. Welfare institutions are likewise perched between these different levels of domination, as they are both the product of human action and the balance of social forces and bound up with the broader imperatives of reproducing abstract moral, economic, and political systems. In sum, welfare institutions mediate between domination and democratic transformations. In this respect, feminist social movements, to which I now turn, have proved exemplary in using welfare institutions to enact a dialectic of moral life against such entrenched forms of structural domination, such as patriarchy, even at the risk of reinforcing abstract domination.

## GENDER AND DOMINATION IN THE SWEDISH WELFARE STATE

With that in mind, I now turn to examine how this dynamic plays out in practice by focusing on the case of gender politics in the Swedish welfare state. I argue that the contradictory development of Swedish family policy can be fruitfully thought of in terms of the causality of fate and the dialectic of moral life. In the Swedish case, this comes through quite clearly in the contradictory mixture, both in public discourse and policy materialization, of unconditional claims of equality and efforts to turn the family into an object that could further the needs of the Swedish national community. In this respect, I depart from radical-democratic feminist theories that focus only on the instrumentalization of political claims by social institutions and structures. The development of Swedish family policy casts a critical light on what feminists often term "social feminism: discourses and movements that frame feminist claims in terms of 'the women question'" – what are women for? – and so "keeps women's radical demand for freedom . . . bound to an economy of use."[30] By advancing equality under the guise of social improvement, Swedish feminists implicated themselves in the rationality of the existing state such that they reinforced a view of the family and gender relations as objects of hierarchical administrative management. Without denying that the critique of social feminism captures central aspects of the development of family policy in Sweden, the following will challenge this critique of the welfare state, deploying my account of welfare institutions as worldly mediators and of political struggles against domination as the dialectic of moral life. My analysis shares radical-democratic concerns about the instrumentalization of emancipatory claims by the functional demands implicit in the reproduction of economic structures and the nation-state. Yet it also draws attention to the converse phenomenon: how the pursuit of those same instrumental imperatives produces lasting objects that occasion collective, political judgments and forms of self-objectification that can inaugurate a dialectic of moral life.

My focus in the following is to analyze and understand the contradictions within the various "equality strategies" pursued by Swedish policy makers and feminist activities. The eventual crisis of Swedish social democracy in the 1980s and 1990s is bound up with the tensions in earlier equality strategies – and, in particular, with how various actors sought to transform gender inequality without directly challenging male domination within the economy. The first breakthrough of family policy in the 1930s foregrounded the tense relationship between demands for political equality and concerns around social protection, especially of mothers. As feminist political actors sought to increasingly influence established politics, they faced increasing pressure to reframe their claims in terms that avoided explicitly critiquing gender domination. The second breakthrough of family policy in the 1960s was in response to much more

[30] Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, 8 9.

explicit feminist political claims challenging gender domination throughout society. Nonetheless, I argue, these feminist claims and policies remained bound up with a causality of fate, insofar as gender equalization was predicated on the entry of women into the workforce and so on robust private-sector job growth. This expectation, which enabled Swedish policy-makers and political actors to avoid a direct challenge to the material benefits of male domination, proved to be false. As a result, the state took on the responsibility for ensuring female entry into the workforce. When that strategy produced a fiscal crisis, the result was that gender conflict was remapped onto conflict between the private and the public sectors. Sweden's crisis, then, closely fits the model of the causality of fate, where the suppression of a shared life-context produces effects that are experienced as though they were a quasi-natural force. Yet from this history of crisis we can discern the potential for dialectic of moral life, one in which the beneficiaries of domination must confront their position.

For much of its history throughout the twentieth century, Sweden's welfare state has been held up as an aspirational model, an exemplar of how conscious political action and determined social movements could reconcile the forces of global economic competition with collective solidarity. In 1932, the Swedish Social Democrats (*Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti*, SAP) formed their first majority government and entered a long period of political hegemony, which ended only in 1976 with the formation of a non-socialist government.[31] While welfare state formation preceded the SAP's rise to power – for instance, Sweden introduced the world's first national pension in 1906 – their position enabled them to pursue comprehensive and universalist social guarantees tied to active labor market institutions and countercyclical monetary policies. For many, or Sweden provides the model for what a universal social-democratic welfare state can and ought to look like. This political exemplarity extends to Sweden's pursuit of gender equality through state social policy. Currently leading the European Union's gender equality index, with almost equal labor force participation between men and women, Sweden also fares well in studies of gender equality in time devoted to household tasks.[32] Swedish political parties across the spectrum publicly subscribe to a gender equality framework, and the Swedish state has pioneered "gender mainstreaming" as a policy paradigm.[33] Furthermore, the roots of Sweden's concern with gender equality

[31] Francis Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Richard Daly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 159.

[32] Hook, "Gender Inequality in the Welfare State: Sex Segregation in Housework, 1965 2003," 1512; Ann Numhauser Henning, "The Policy in Gender Equality in Sweden" (Brussels: Com mittee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, European Parliament, 2015).

[33] Diane Sainsbury and Christina Bergqvist, "The Promise and Pitfalls of Gender Mainstreaming," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11, no. 2 (2009): 216 234. Nonetheless, women still take a disproportionate amount of carework and family leave. Jenny Ahlberg, Christine Roman, and Simon Duncan, "Actualizing the 'Democratic Family'? Swedish Policy Rhetoric versus Family Practices," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 15, no. 1

run deep. Even as Sweden was relatively late to introduce universal suffrage (1919), the struggle for voting rights produced a strong infrastructure of feminist groups and organizations, one that cut across class and party lines.[34]

Yet evaluations of Sweden's social and economic politics have not always been so effusive.[35] Marika Lindholm has characterized the early Swedish response to the women's movement as a "conservative revolution," insofar as the concrete institutionalizations of gender equality was driven less by women's direct activism than by "the forces of class formation and class struggle" and the processes of "urbanization, proletarianization, and industrialization."[36] Lindholm's skeptical analysis is oriented by how the gains of the women's movement were achieved through male-dominated political parties that sought the political incorporation of women so as to further their own, non-feminist (although not necessarily anti-feminist) agendas. Moreover, the achievements of the women's movement were intimately bound up with the dynamics of Sweden's labor market, as policy actors increasingly came to recognize that the organization of the family was an economic question that affected Sweden's labor supply and labor market structure. One result of how the pursuit of gender equality has been conditioned by these structural imperatives is the gender segregation of Sweden's labor market, with women overrepresented in lower paying public sector careers and underrepresented in the private sector.[37]

How should we theorize the ambiguity and duality of the process of women's emancipation in Sweden? The following will contend that it embodies

(2008): 79 100; Guðný Björk and Rostgaard Tine Eydal, "Gender Equality Revisited Changes in Nordic Childcare Policies in the 2000s," *Social Policy & Administration* 45, no. 2 (2011): 166.

[34] As Diane Sainsbury observes, "one effect of the protracted Swedish struggle for suffrage was the continuance of the cross class alliance in women's politics into the 1920s and 1930s, after it had been dissolved by male politicians . . . Liberal and social democratic women maintained close ties during the 1920s and 1930s. They worked to increase women's representation in parliament and to improve maternity benefits, child welfare, the situation of solo mothers, and the rights of professional and working women." Diane Sainsbury, "Gender and the Making of Welfare States: Norway and Sweden," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 8, no. 1 (2001): 128 129.

[35] Much as it currently functions as a utopian embodiment of political hopes and desire, Sweden has previously stood for the corporatist depoliticization of conflicts in the welfare state, according to which expansive social policies required elite level economic planning and negoti ations via encompassing organizations shielded from democratic contestation and accountabil ity. See especially Schmitter, "Still the Century of Corporatism?"

[36] Marika Lindholm, "Swedish Feminism, 1835 1945: A Conservative Revolution," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 4, no. 2 (1991): 139.

[37] For helpful critical reflections along these lines, see Ruth Lister, "A Nordic Nirvana? Gender, Citizenship, and Social Justice in the Nordic Welfare States," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 16, no. 2 (2009): 242 278; Ann Shola Orloff, "Should Feminists Aim for Gender Symmetry?: Why the Dual Earner/Dual Carer Model May Not Be Every Feminist's Utopia," in *Gender Equality: Transforming Gender Divisions of Labor*, ed. Erik Olin Wright (London: Verso, 2009).

the dialectic of moral life theorized by Habermas. As a result of the first breakthrough for gender equality in the 1930s, Swedish policy discourse, for the first time, took the family as a potential object of political intervention, thereby rendering gender relations a matter of public concern. At the same time, though, with its narrow focus on public support to help families balance work with child rearing so as to encourage larger families, the policy breakthrough of the 1930s still presumed the single-breadwinner family model. It would take until the 1960s for equality itself to become the explicit goal of policy interventions – for gender domination to be named as the problem that political mobilization must address. The changes in the status of women in Sweden, like the formation of the Swedish social policy and its economic governance regime more generally, reflect the materialization of emancipatory claims and movements in institutional structures conditioned by, but not reducible to, these social forces. This is the case because the social policy institutions that took women and the family as objects of public discourse and state action also functioned as worldly objects around which women's organizations could mobilize and articulate their claims to unconditional equality. Even as those institutions embodied hierarchical gender norms and structures of domination, they also materialized those same norms such that they could be subject to political challenge and potential transformation.

The story of women's emancipation in Sweden represents, then, a particular enactment of the twin logics of the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality the externalization and materialization of gender norms in new welfare institutions rendered explicit the suppressed, exploitative structure of gender domination. What was first experienced as the causality of fate is now set loose as something requiring discursive redemption. Feminist political discourse positioned male domination as structurally akin to Hegel's criminal, who suppresses a common life context by extracting a surplus of labor from the community. Put more concretely, this theoretical perspective illuminates how the history of women's emancipation through the welfare state embodies a contradictory structure of politicization and conflict displacement. Even as welfare institutions and social policies were vital for turning gender domination into the object of political action and for materially altering the relative position of women, those same institutions provided a mechanism for improving the position of women without directly compelling men to recognize their role as dominators, thereby averting more divisive political confrontations.

In its earliest institutional manifestations and political mobilizations, the Swedish women's movement was caught up in an ambivalent relationship both to social problems and to established political institutions. For many participants in women's early political struggles, social issues provided an expedient avenue for women to gain recognition as political actors. The first Swedish women's organization, the Fredrika Bremer Association (*Fredrika-Bremer-Förbundet*, FBF), was founded in 1884, and initially advanced a

liberal feminist line focused on equality.[38] While in some respects the FBF's claims were narrowly focused on equal formal rights for women, such that it spoke mainly to the concerns of upper-middle-class constituencies, the early FBF also constituted a space in which the social processes of gender construction itself could be discussed, critically scrutinized, and overcome.[39] As the FBF became more institutionally established, its leadership shifted the organization's focus toward social issues and the social improvement of women. In part, this increasing pragmatism was driven by the practical exigencies of the struggle for suffrage. But the turn toward social issues was also driven by the more general rise of maternalist rhetoric in the late nineteenth century.[40] In Sweden, Ellen Key's strongly maternalist writings were the most pronounced manifestation of this trend, and she criticized the FBF for failing to recognize the distinctive vocation of mothering and neglecting the social conditions of mothers, especially working mothers.[41] Partially in response to Key's criticisms, but also driven by the growing recognition and incorporation of women into Swedish society, in the 1890s and early 1900s, the FBF increasingly focused on social welfare concerns, such as housing, childbirth, and maternal health, alongside its struggle for suffrage and against prohibitions on night work.

Within the Social Democrats, feminist activists faced similar pressure to reformulate their claims in the less-threatening terms of social improvement.[42]

[38] For a history of the society's activities and ideological currents, see Ulla Manns, "Gender and Feminism in Sweden: The Fredrika Bremer Association," in *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow Ennker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[39] Ibid., 158; Gunnar Qvist, "Policy towards Women and the Women's Struggle in Sweden," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 5, no. 1 4 (1980): 63 64.

[40] For the general development of this discourse, see Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880 1920," *The American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (1990): 1076 1108; *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of the Welfare State* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

[41] There is controversy about the extent to which Key's writings were maternalist. Certainly, she called for social recognition of mother and caregiving, and this fit with a broadly socialist agenda to provide public support for mothers. For some commentators, this shows she was actually ahead of her time in challenging the gender division of labor. However, she also drew on Darwinian views to argue that women were more evolutionarily and biologically suited for mothering (as they had not faced the selection pressure men had faced in the working world) and that mothering constituted their higher contribution to society. For contrasting views, see Yvonne Hirdman and Michel Vale, "Utopia in the Home," *International Journal of Political Economy* 22, no. 2 (1992): 5 99; Torborg Lundell, "Ellen Key and Swedish Feminist Views on Motherhood," *Scandinavian Studies* 56, no. 4 (1984): 23 24.

[42] The following overview draws on Renée Frangeur, "Social Democrats and the Women Question in Sweden: A History of Contradiction," in *Women and Socialism, Socialism and Women: Europe between the Two World Wars*, ed. Helmut Gruber and Pamela Graves (New York: Berghahn Books, 1998).

Founded in 1889, the SAP, like most European labor parties, initially focused on the concerns of the male working-class. The parliamentary representatives of the party sided with the interests of their male members when they supported the 1909 protective legislation banning night shifts for women, despite opposition from the FBF and the party's female members. Despite these betrayals, the party had an active female membership, and official support for women's clubs dated back to 1894. Between 1902 and 1909, there was also a Women's Trade Union, although this was eventually folded into the Tailor's Union, which reduced women's representation in Social Democratic conferences. The influence of this early independence lived on through the Women's Trade Union's publication, *Morning Breeze*, which remained the SAP's women's publication. Most notably, women had to go their own way on suffrage when the party executive, in 1905, postponed supporting universal suffrage so that they could prioritize male suffrage.[43] This pushed socialist women into an alliance with their bourgeois counterparts. While middle-class activists achieved women's suffrage in municipalities by including a property restriction (1908), they were only able to achieve national suffrage by allying themselves with socialist women and dropping their support for property qualifications – an alliance that achieved the full franchise in 1919.

This new electoral reality induced the party to create the Women's Federation so as to attract more female members and voters. The creation of the federation did not result in greater acknowledgement of men's power over women, either within the party or in workers' situation more generally.[44] And it certainly did not result in greater acknowledgement that, as a result of these broad structures of domination, women could have divergent interests from the male members of the party. As Gunnel Karlsson notes, throughout its history, the Women's Federation in the SAP was caught in a bind that meant that "the transformation of questions from 'women's issue' into more or less gender-neutral family issues" was a "a necessary strategy to ensure that such issues actually reached party level, and did not fade into oblivion."[45] The founding mandate for the Women's Federation avoided the issue of gender domination and inequality, instead calling for a focus on "those political and

[43] Ibid., 429.

[44] Thus, while the party reversed course on whether to have a women's federation, they still operated according to the logic the party leadership expressed when it rejected a federation in 1908: that a federation would be unnecessary because working class men and women "always have the same interests" and so the opinions of a women's federation "would always coincide with the party." Gunnel Karlsson, "Social Democratic Women's Coup in the Swedish Parliament," in *Is There a Nordic Feminism? Nordic Feminist Thought on Culture and Society*, ed. Drude von der Fehr, Bente Rosenbeck, and Anna G. Jónasdóttir (London: Routledge, 1998), 49.

[45] Ibid., 50. "Instead of discussing the distribution of power and other values between women and men, the issue is transformed and presented in connection with, say, family policy, which, viewed from the perspective of gender conflict, is hardly a controversial matter." Ibid., 47.

social questions which especially affect the interest of women, their children and homes."[46]

Twice, Swedish Social Democratic women's clubs attempted to submit resolutions that called for labeling men who abandon their children as "scabs" – first to the Social Democratic Party Conference (1905) and then at the Social Democratic Women's Conference (1910).[47] This effort contains a striking normative logic, one that would become more familiar in radical feminist critiques in the 1960s: just as the ideology of the market enables capitalists to exploit workers, so too does the ideology of gender difference enable men to exploit women by extracting their surplus child-rearing labor. Male workers who take advantage of that power relationship are no different from individual workers who abandon solidarity and side with the capitalists by breaking a strike. Unsurprisingly, neither was even translated for inclusion in the official list of party resolutions at either conference.[48] During the 1920s, gender conflict remained salient in the party, as many male SAP parliamentary representatives sought restrictions on women's working so as to shore up the single-breadwinner family model. However, the party leadership sided decisively with their women members, and Per Albin Hansson went so far as to compare the pro-restrictions representatives to National Socialists.[49]

Hansson would prove important for the movement of so-called women's issues from the periphery to the center of party rhetoric and practice, albeit in a manner that emphasized the domestic rhetoric of women's political contributions. The ideological reorientation he pioneered provided more space for autonomous feminist discourse within the SAP. In 1928, Hansson was elected party chairman and gave a speech that came to define the ideological contours of Swedish Social Democracy. In the speech, Hansson famously redefined the goals of the SAP as building "the People's Home" (*Folkhemmet*). While the idea of the people's home had deep roots in non-socialist Swedish political discourse, by embracing the people's home, Hansson steered the SAP away from its identity as a strictly class-based party.

On the economic front, this meant a retreat in political ambition – a retreat that was informed by the desire for cooperation among the labor elite within the LO (*Landsorganisationen*: the overarching trade union group), the disastrous large strike of 1909 that discredited a general strike strategy, and the surprise loss of seats in the 1928 election, which was expected to bring gains for the SAP. While the people's home signaled retreat from economic democracy, it

[46] Quoted in Frangeur, "Social Democrats and the Women Question in Sweden: A History of Contradiction," 430.

[47] Ibid., 425 426.

[48] Within the party grassroots, these more radical strains increasingly competed with Key's maternalism, which provided women members with recognition and a rationale without pushing them into conflicts with male members. Ibid., 439.

[49] Ibid., 436.

opened up a new front regarding social policy. The idea of the people's home enabled the SAP to form cross-class coalitions in pursuit of social solidarity, a strategy that paid dividends in the so-called cow trade crisis settlement with the agrarian Center Party, according to which the Center Party supported the SAP's active labor market policies during the Depression in exchange for ongoing agricultural subsidies. The Red–Green alliance, and later the coalition between industrial workers and salaried professionals, would provide the crucial political foundation for the formation of Sweden's comprehensive social welfare policies.[50]

In the first place, then, the metaphor of the people's home announced that the SAP would become a party of the whole nation. The idea of the home pointed to potential harmonization of interests and perspectives of society's members: as Hansson articulated it, "in a good home, equality, consideration, cooperation, and helpfulness are the guiding rules. If all this is seen as applying to a nation's and citizens' home, then it will mean the dispersal of the social barriers that now divide the citizens."[51] In keeping with this metaphor, Hansson directly appealed to the SAP's female members to make the people's home "bright and happy" by attending to the "comfort and well-being" of its members.[52] Even as Hansson's deployment of the idea of the people's home reinforced women's subordinate role within the party, it opened up discursive space to decenter the concerns of male workers in the party's political activities. The consumption patterns, division of labor, and interior architecture of the home were now political concerns that rivaled, even if never fully equaled, questions of collective bargaining, workers' protection, and workplace control. Crucially, in the background for Hansson's use of the metaphor of the people's home was the perception of a crisis in households – a crisis of inadequate housing supply, inappropriate housing conditions, and irrational consumption patterns. A new field of social-democratic policy intervention was emerging. The reorientation of the SAP coincided with, and reinforced, the rising anxiety about Sweden's slowing rates of population growth.

Two years after Hansson became Prime Minister, the question of Sweden's population was thrust into the forefront of public debates with the publication of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's *Kris i befolkningsfrågan* (*Crisis in the Population*

[50] Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875 1975*; Esping Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*.

[51] Quoted in Seppo Hentilä, "The Origins of the Folkhem Ideology in Swedish Social Democracy," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 3, no. 1 4 (1978): 327. There is a question, of course, of whether this was simply a rhetorical move to attract parliamentary support or if it marked a more fundamental realignment of Hansson and the SAP's attitude towards political confron tation. As Sejersted notes, during the suffrage negotiations of 1918, Hansson "did not hesitate to advocate extraparliamentary means." Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 160.

[52] Quoted in Frangeur, "Social Democrats and the Women Question in Sweden: A History of Contradiction," 440.

*Question*).[53] Published in 1934, the text became a landmark in the formation of Swedish family policy. Just as Hansson's use of the people's home had drawn into SAP rhetoric associations from non-socialist national traditions, the Myrdals' deft appropriation of conservative and bourgeois anxieties about population growth helped advance a broader social reform agenda.[54] The Myrdals broke with those traditions by translating the population question into a social scientific idiom. The decline of birth rates was now to be located in the contradictory location of the family in a capitalist society. And so both the overall population and the family could now become the objects of state policy-making: "the population question is here transformed into the most effective argument for a thorough and radical socialist remodeling of society."[55] The bourgeois family, they declared, was dead. Popular discourse about the family looked back "to society before industrialization," yet the rise of wage-labor dissolved the economic bonds that had led to family formation for large swaths of the population.[56] Industrialization had reduced the economic inducements that previously lead to family formation for many, and the smaller, bourgeois family was appropriate to the era of early industrialization when general social interests were not clearly recognized.[57] Yet the bourgeois family was rendering itself extinct by failing to reproduce at the level necessary to sustain Sweden's population. The individual interest in family planning was contradicting society's general interest in a sustainable population level. The era of the individual and the individualistic family was over. Rather, the family should be reconceived as part of the "great national household," with key functions of the family socialized so as to induce individuals to raise a socially necessary number of children.[58]

Both Hansson's image of the people's home and population question as advanced by the Myrdals opened up a contradictory field for political challenges to gender domination. On the one hand, both moves partially

[53] An English edition, which included the population committee reports, was later released as Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941).

[54] On the relationship between Hansson and earlier national traditions, see Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 161. On the mild national ism of the Myrdals, see Allan C. Carlson, *The Swedish Experiment in Family Policy: The Myrdals and the Interwar Population Crisis* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 84.

[55] Quoted in Carlson, *The Swedish Experiment in Family Policy: The Myrdals and the Interwar Population Crisis*, 89.

[56] Ibid., 63.

[57] In the Myrdals' view, the modernization process means that the economic, educative, protective, and even recreational functions of the family are increasingly taken over by public, social institutions. This focuses the family on its affective functions, although at the cost of smaller families and a lower birth rate. Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy*, 5 6.

[58] Quoted in Carlson, *The Swedish Experiment in Family Policy: The Myrdals and the Interwar Population Crisis*, 95.

universalized what had previously been segmented as "women's issues." This was most obvious in the Myrdals' efforts to link family policy to population decline and broader concerns about the quality of Sweden's workforce and workers' suitability for industrial society.[59] This co-existed uneasily with more explicitly eugenicist arguments for engineering the quality of the population stock.[60] Yet the idea of the people's home and other aspects of the Myrdals' arguments produced alternative generalizing viewpoints: both discourses positioned consumption and housing patterns as central economic and political concerns with effects beyond the family. The issue of population concerned "the whole fabric of society."[61] The technological rationalization of the household would now drive modern industrial production, and women's participation in the workforce would both provide a new reservoir of skilled workers and create demand for services. The people's home implied a partial equalization of the traditional, demand-side concerns of wages, work, and production – concerns that focused around the political conditions of male workers – with supply-side issues of household consumption. From the perspective of the national household, gender relations could no longer be segmented off from industrial relations.[62]

Nonetheless, this broadening of family issues did so from an instrumental viewpoint that justified the claims of feminists only in terms of the economic imperatives of Sweden's national community. Indeed, the Myrdals embraced a Weberian, instrumental view of the relationship between ultimate values and technical planning, one which theoretically downplayed any intrinsic connection between institutional reforms and the generation of participatory spaces that would enable new political groups to sustain and advance democratic reform efforts. For Gunnar Myrdal, the objects of policy-making are "weak creatures" who are "unfaithful to their own ideals" because of "short term-interests and jealousies." Formal political institutions, led by planners and intellectuals, enabled "higher values" to "come into their own on a more universal level, where they exercise more influence."[63]

[59] As Alva Myrdal declared, "technical developments seem to be moving toward heightening the requirements with regard to the quality of human beings." Quoted in Hirdman and Vale, "Utopia in the Home," 36.

[60] Alberto Spektorowski and Elisabet Mizrachi, "Eugenics and the Welfare State in Sweden: The Politics of Social Margins and the Idea of a Productive Society," *Journal of Contemporary History* 39, no. 3 (2004): 333 352.

[61] Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy*, 2.

[62] As the Myrdals wrote, "the tendency is toward organization and management through social policy, not only with regard to the division of incomes in society but also with regard to consumption decisions within the family." Quoted in Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 245.

[63] And Quoted in Hirdman and Vale, "Utopia in the Home," 31. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, both the Myrdals were extremely interested in public architecture and housing design a

In no small part due to the Myrdals' public intervention, family policy became a central concern of Swedish government policy and public discourse during the 1930s. Family policy in the 1930s focused on "increasing fertility, stabilizing family formation (and gender relations), and enhancing the economic conditions for families with children."[64] In early 1935, the non-socialist parties passed a resolution in the Riksdag that called the population issue "a question of the continued existence of the Swedish people."[65] Finally, the SAP Social Minister Gustav Möller, in response to the Budget Committee, officially formed the Royal Population Commission, which was to produce proposals for the 1936 sitting of the Riksdag.[66] The commission released a series of reports in 1935 and 1936 on a broad range of topics, but among its most central proposals were reforms to the Swedish tax code to encourage marriage and the introduction of extensive new supports for both mothers and children.

Gunnar Myrdal was elected to the Riksdag in 1935, and the 1936 election was fought largely on issues arising from the population commission, which the SAP rode to a strong victory. The 1937 sitting of the Riksdag became known as the "mothers and babies" session, during which the SAP passed laws providing for additional prenatal care and delivery assistance, means-tested maternity support and motherhood allowances as well as motherhood support through sickness insurance funds.[67] The 1938 sitting took up further issues from the commission reports, loosening restrictions on abortion and contraceptives, increasing tax deductions for families with three or more children, and banning employment discrimination on the basis of marriage, pregnancy, or childbirth.[68] With war on the horizon, the wave of reforms came to an end. In late 1938, the SAP government declared a "reform pause" so as to consolidate the budget and move resources into armaments. The Myrdals left Sweden for America, returning only after the war.

In an immediate respect – as a response to the population crisis – these reforms were successful. As Sejerstedt notes, "the population crisis was overcome. During the hegemonic phase of Social Democracy, from approximately 1940 to 1970, marriage rates reached record highs. The birthrate was higher than during the 1930s, while at the same time the number of children born out

medium through which they hoped they could directly influence the living habits and consumption patterns of Swedish families, directly engineering the contours of the everyday.

[64] Åsa Lundqvist, *Family Policy Paradoxes: Gender Equality and Labor Market Regulation 1930 2010* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2011), 130.

[65] Carlson, *The Swedish Experiment in Family Policy: The Myrdals and the Interwar Population Crisis*, 116.

[66] The expert commission was and continues to be a standard mode of policy formation in Sweden.

[67] Lundqvist, *Family Policy Paradoxes: Gender Equality and Labor Market Regulation 1930 2010*, 32. Gunnar Myrdal supported universal rather than means tested maternity benefits but lost due to budgetary constraints.

[68] Ibid., 35.

of wedlock was extremely low."[69] Not accidentally, though, the reforms of the 1930s and 1940s functioned to reinforce the single-male breadwinner family model. The public discourse and institutional models of the 1940s and 1950s "still glorified motherhood and the nuclear family."[70] Women did not enter the workforce in large numbers, nor was there a marked redistribution of carework within the family. Only 30 percent of women worked outside of the household, and these rates were lower for married women during typical child-raising years.[71] Maternity benefits and prenatal care certainly improved the ability of women to support their families, but they did not alter the fundamental structure of family relationships or the division of household labor.

At the same time, the rise of a conscious family policy regime, especially as it came to interact with Sweden's labor market institutions, created a set of institutional objects and spaces which feminist activists could later, in the 1960s, take up to advance a more fundamental challenge to Sweden's established gender patterns. As we saw with Arendt, such welfare institutions can become worldly objects – spaces of political judgment and action that enable actors to explicitly address shared political concerns. But just as the 1930s efforts to alter gender relationships were in response to the population crisis, in the 1960s the radicalization of family social policy was structured by the dynamics of Sweden's labor market. In 1960, the Swedish government emphasized the need to find a solution to Sweden's expected labor shortage, with demand for workers projected to increase 13 percent between 1960 and 1965.[72] The labor shortages coincided with the emergence of both a new public debate on gender equality and gender roles as well as of well-positioned feminist activists within key state and welfare institutions. While other countries – most notably, Germany – responded to the demand for workers by introducing guest worker policies, Swedish actors saw the labor shortages as an opportunity to bring women into the workforce and so to discursively reframe family policy in terms of labor power and labor reserves.[73]

[69] Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 247. This success was also driven by the postwar economic boom a boom from which Sweden benefited particularly because of its quasi neutrality during the war.

[70] Lundqvist, *Family Policy Paradoxes: Gender Equality and Labor Market Regulation 1930 2010*, 61.

[71] Jane Lewis and Gertrude Åström, "Equality, Difference, and State Welfare: Labor Market and Family Policies in Sweden," *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 1 (1992): 66. Recently, though, some have argued that these rates undercounted women's part time work in the 1950s. Sejersted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 248.

[72] Jonas Hinnfors, "Stability through Change: Swedish Parties and Family Policies, 1960 1980," in *State Policy and Gender System in the Two German States and Sweden 1945 1989*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Distribution, Dept. of History, Uppsala Universitet, 1999), 115.

[73] This was also in large part because Swedish political actors were much less willing to bring in foreign guest workers. Jason Jordan, "Mothers, Wives, and Workers: Explaining Gendered Dimensions of the Welfare State," *Comparative Political Studies* 39, no. 9 (2006): 1109 1132.

Like the earlier debate about the population question, this political strategy contained political and normative tensions. Swedish state feminists used the labor market shortage to try to equalize the position of women without directly challenging what Yvonne Hirdmann calls the "male norm" in the Swedish welfare state. Politicians assumed that, because of employment growth, the gains of women would not come at the expense of the inherited privileges of male workers, such as their hegemony within the better-paying industrial labor market. Instead, female workers largely entered the public sector, leading to the marked gender segregation of the Swedish workforce that in turn contributed to political and economic crises. In retrospect, the emancipation of Swedish women through welfare institutions produced a contradictory dynamic: at once enabling direct challenges to and alterations of structures of male domination and yet also displacing those conflicts and the more fundamental social transformations they potentially augured.

These contradictions are connected with the broader SAP economic and political strategy. The 1960s stands as the heyday of social-democratic economic and social policymaking. And, crucially, the projected labor shortages were a product of the success of the SAP's full-employment strategy, which was guided by the so-called Rehn–Meidner model. The Rehn–Meidner model, developed by the LO economists Gösta Rehn and Rudolf Meidner in the late 1940s, called for solidaristic wage-bargaining that, by artificially raising wages at the lower end, would induce productivity growth and, in combination with economic openness, squeeze out less efficient sectors.[74] Inflationary pressures from the higher end of the wage spectrum were to be held down through solidaristic bargaining and taxation policies that decreased the purchasing power of workers. Finally – and here was what proved to be a crucial political vulnerability of the Rehn–Meidner model – the model had to deal with the problem of underinvestment. Efficient firms would be under-profitable due to the combination of high wages and international competition, which ruled out protectionist policies that passed excessive wage costs to consumers.

The solution was to socialize investment through public saving and restrictive fiscal policies. The wage-earner funds proposal advanced by the LO in the late 1960s was the most ambitious version of this idea – and one which showed that the Rehn–Meidner model ultimately required some partial democratization of the ownership structure of capital. These background institutional conditions for the labor shortages of the 1960s are important, as women ended up entering the labor force just as the Rehn–Meidner model was coming under increasing political strain. Nonetheless, for policy actors in the 1960s, full

[74] For an overview of the logic behind and eventual breakdown of the Rehn Meidner model, see Jonas Pontusson, *The Limits of Social Democracy: Investment Politics in Sweden* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); "At the End of the Third Road: Swedish Social Democracy in Crisis," *Politics and Society* 20, no. 3 (1992): 305 332.

employment policies in the private sector were the assumed future for efforts to alter the career trajectories of female citizens.

These structural factors were the background conditions for the acceptance of a dual-earner family model. Yet the 1960s also witnessed a concerted effort to shift the public discourse around gender norms, moving from the 1930s emphasis on the people's home, where women would participate through the family, to a rhetoric of gender equality (*jämstählldhet*). At the 1960 SAP convention, activists managed to pass a resolution that affirmed "the struggle for equality, which was started by workers in the old capitalist society, has been widened to a struggle for equivalent treatment for all citizens, whether they be men or women."[75] Another important shift in public discourse came in 1962, when the journalist Eva Moberg published an influential article on women's "conditional liberation." For Moberg, the idea of balancing women's two roles could only result in a "paroled liberation," one in which women's main task was still "to care for and foster her children." "Both men and women have *one* lead role, that as human beings," Moberg declared.[76]

With these shifts in public discourse at their back, Swedish activists advanced their gender equality agenda through multiple political channels. These efforts were informally coordinated by Group 222, a loose but highly influential network of journalists, politicians, trade unionists, bureaucrats, and social scientists who met monthly at the home of the labor union activist Anika Baude.[77] Before generating the major policy shifts of the late 1960s and 1970s, these activities already helped lead to new policy orientations within important corporatist governance institutions, especially the labor market board (*Avancerad Maskin Service*, AMS). In the 1950s, the AMS had begun considering the barriers to female participation in the workforce, such as lack of training and information, and in 1961 it began a range of activities focused on female workers, including education initiatives as well as direct incentives such as grants and allocations for female vocational training.[78] Prominent activists

[75] Jane Jenson and Mahon Rianne, "Representing Solidarity: Class, Gender and the Crisis in Social Democratic Sweden," *New Left Review*, no. 201 (1993): 86.

[76] Quoted in Lundqvist, *Family Policy Paradoxes: Gender Equality and Labor Market Regulation 1930 2010*, 61, emphasis in original.

[77] Rianne Mahon, "Child Care in Canada and Sweden: Policy and Politics," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 4, no. 3 (1997): 409. Group 222 was both an incubator for policy ideas, such as increased childcare, gender neutral insurance policies, and individual taxation, as well as a mechanism for disseminating those ideas through the media and party elites. See also Christina Florin and Bengt Nilsson, "'Something in the Nature of a Bloodless Revolution . . .': How Gender Relations Became Gender Equality Policy in Sweden in the Nineteen Sixties and Seventies," in *State Policy and Gender System in the Two German States and Sweden 1945 1989*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Distribution, Dept. of History, Uppsala Universitet, 1999), 45.

[78] Christina Florin and Bengt Nilsson, "'Something in the Nature of a Bloodless Revolution . . .': How Gender Relations Became Gender Equality Policy in Sweden in the Nineteen Sixties and Seventies," in *State Policy and Gender System in the Two German States and Sweden 1945 1989*,

within the AMS worked to legitimate gender equality as a goal for labor market policy, often against the resistance of leaders within the LO.

Toward the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, the aspiration to gender equality was concretely, if partially, embodied in state policy-making. The three most significant results of this commitment to gender equality were individual taxation, a shift from maternity support to family leave, and the expansion of public childcare – all of which were expected to, and succeeded in, cementing women's labor market attachment.[79] With perhaps the most far-reaching implications, mandatory individual taxation was passed into law in 1981 (individual tax filing was optional beginning in 1969). Given the steep progressivity of the Swedish tax system, individual rather than joint taxation of family income significantly reduced the effective marginal tax rate for married women's earnings. In 1974, the Riksdag passed the law replacing maternity insurance with gender-neutral parental leave, which allowed for seven months' leave and combined a basic level with 90 percent income replacement.[80] Last, the Swedish state took up a massive project of building and funding public childcare provision. The support for municipal public childcare led to a large increase in the availability of spaces – from 18,000 in 1965 to 125,000 in 1975.[81] By 1979, 29 percent of young children were enrolled in public childcare, and parties across the political spectrum remained committed to expanding the number slots.[82]

What were the effects of this second breakthrough for family policy and gender equality in Sweden? In principle, the reforms entrenched a principle of dual-breadwinner/dual-caregiver model in the logic of Swedish family policy, one in which men and women would equally distribute both paid work and caregiving.[83] Women entered the workforce in large numbers, with participation in the labor force rising to 59 percent in 1970 and 74 percent by 1980.[84] Yet these changes were far from achieving Fraser's "universal caregiver" model, one that would transform the gendered connotations of work and care.

ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Distribution, Dept. of History, Uppsala Universitet, 1999).

[79] The gender equality radicalization of the 1960s also led to changes in the regulation of sexuality, although this was a slower process abortion was only legalized in 1975.

[80] Lundqvist, *Family Policy Paradoxes: Gender Equality and Labor Market Regulation 1930 2010*, 73.

[81] Hinnfors, "Stability through Change: Swedish Parties and Family Policies, 1960 1980," 105.

[82] Lewis and Åström, "Equality, Difference, and State Welfare: Labor Market and Family Policies in Sweden," 68.

[83] Fraser calls this the universal breadwinner model, supported through state provision of care. Nancy Fraser, "After the Family Wage: A Postindustrial Thought Experiment," in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 51 55.

[84] Jenson and Rianne, "Representing Solidarity: Class, Gender and the Crisis in Social Democratic Sweden," 91.

During the 1970s and into the 1980s, more radical feminist groups such as Group 8 challenged the continued gendered connotations of care, and women in the Women's Federation pushed for changes that would ensure a more equal distribution of carework, such as a six-hour workday and a "daddy quota" in parental leave.[85] Indeed, the forms of female workforce participation that the reforms engendered remained unequal, with women working an average of 24 hours per week (in 1982–1983) versus 41 hours for men. Furthermore, women took the vast majority of parental leave and maintained their role as the primary caregiver.

Such figures point to the partial success of the 1960s/1970s reforms, and they could buttress a linear view of Sweden's social policy development, one in which the task would just have been for policy-makers to have gone further in, say, developing a family leave policy or trying to break down gender norms.[86] However, there were deeper contradictions built into the gender equality strategy Swedish policy actors pursued, contradictions that reflect Habermas's notion of the causality of fate. And these contradictions are born, in part, of the political compromise behind these reforms: women were to gain the same status as men, but only through employment growth that would not affect the inherited privileges of male workers. Activists and politicians implicitly framed gender inequality as a matter of unequal opportunities rather than of structures that enabled and reproduced male domination. As Orloff notes in her critique of efforts to use the Scandinavian welfare states as a model for women's continued emancipation, these reforms do little in the way of addressing "men's attachment to the powers and privileges of masculinity."[87] These more direct confrontations of male privilege could be suppressed by assuming the continued success of Sweden's full-employment policy, which would enable the labor market to absorb the influx of female workers.

Yet the entry of women into the labor force did not follow this path. Women increased their participation just as the Rehn–Meidner model was coming undone. Demand for workers in industrial jobs was lower than expected. Instead, women largely entered the public sector, and the expansion of the welfare state – including of services to enable women to work – became the main driver of female employment. Sweden today continues to have one of the most gender-segregated labor markets, although the ongoing shift to a

[85] Ibid., 89 91; Karlsson, "Social Democratic Women's Coup in the Swedish Parliament"; Sejer sted, *The Age of Social Democracy: Norway and Sweden in the Twentieth Century*, 451 452.

[86] This view is represented by Olson's use of Sweden for thinking about a reflexive and participa tory welfare state. In his view, the positive effects of Sweden's care policies are undermined by residual "structural barriers, cultural norms, and economic disincentives" which together "undermine some of the progressive effects of family leave policy." Olson, *Reflexive Democracy: Political Equality and the Welfare State*, 70.

[87] Orloff, "Should Feminists Aim for Gender Symmetry?: Why the Dual Earner/Dual Carer Model May Not Be Every Feminist's Utopia," 138.

postindustrial economic regime has enabled efforts toward desegregation.[88] Nonetheless, through the 1970s and 1980s women were primarily employed in the public sector. During the 1980s, 80 percent of new jobs were created in the public sector, and 75 percent of these new jobs went to female workers.[89] Alongside this, public sector employment as a percentage of total employment increased from 12.8 percent in 1960 to 30 percent in 1980.[90] And this public sector expansion, predictably, produced a large increase of both the Swedish budget and the overall Swedish tax burden, which by 1990 was absorbing 60 percent of GDP.[91] Rather than de-gendering employment and care, the state was itself feminized, both in terms of the gender of its employees and in the swirl of public discourse, where suppressed gender conflict was playing itself out as a clash between the public and the private sectors.

Between 1983 and 1991, Swedish social democracy entered a period of crisis. In 1983, the Swedish employers association unilaterally withdrew from tri-partite peak-level wage negotiations, marking the end of Swedish corporatism. In 1991, the SAP was defeated in the wake of the economic crash of 1989, when a bursting real estate bubble forced the government to bail out several banks. A bourgeois coalition came to power on a promise of welfare state restructuring and crisis management and immediately faced a jump in unemployment from 2 percent in 1991 to 10 percent in 1993. The budget deficit soared to 13 percent of GDP, and it was left to the SAP, which returned to office in 1995, to clean up the mess.[92]

The relative importance of the various causes of the crisis of Swedish social democracy remain subject to debate, but the dominant view is that this was an economic crisis born of imbalances internal to the Swedish growth strategy. Certainly the crisis was a result, in part, of underlying shifts in the structure of Swedish production. But technological change is mediated by the institutional contours of wage-negotiation and labor-force entrance, and these institutional structures imparted to the crisis an irreducible gender dimension, as gender domination and gender conflict was displaced onto the state through public sector expansion. So, while it is true that, in the 1970s and 1980s, Swedish firms faced increasing international competition; that they were shifting away from Fordist production toward more knowledge-intensive industries such as services and engineering; and that this increasingly required international investment and the formation of multi-national corporations, the Swedish state's ability to

[88] Anne Lise Ellingsaeter, "Scandinavian Transformations: Labour Markets, Politics and Gender Divisions," *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 21, no. 3 (2000): 335 359; Mandel and Semyonov, "A Welfare State Paradox: State Interventions and Women's Employment Oppor tunities in 22 Countries"; Numhauser Henning, "The Policy in Gender Equality in Sweden."

[89] Kimberly Earles, "The Gendered Effects of the Reregulation of the Swedish Welfare State," *Socialism and Democracy* 18, no. 1 (2004): 113.

[90] Sven Steinmo, "Globalization and Taxation: Challenges to the Swedish Welfare State," *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 7 (2002): 845.

[91] Ibid., 846. [92] Ibid., 852.

respond to these shifts so as to sustain solidaristic social policies was hampered by the fiscal imbalances produced by the gender equality strategy begun in the 1970s.[93] Instead, the Swedish economic and social policy regime went into crisis.

The crisis of social democracy had three related aspects: underinvestment, inflationary wage pressures, and fiscal expansion. In each case, the crisis tendencies were exacerbated by the suppressed gender conflicts outlined above. The Swedish economic approach was already under strain when women entered the labor market en masse, with growth slowing beginning in 1970. Slowing productivity growth made it harder to pursue the squeeze strategy, as there would be less growth in booming industries to absorb recently unemployed workers, and so the Swedish government began to subsidize struggling firms. Combined with increased wages, this meant that Swedish firms were relatively underprofitable and so were underinvesting in productivity increases. Due to its transformative and democratizing political effects, the Rehn–Meidner solution to this dilemma – wage earner funds – were not introduced until 1983, and then only in a watered-down form.[94] As a result of its increased spending on public sector employment, the state also could not step in to help fill the savings and investments shortfall.[95] Swedish firms responded to this underinvestment crisis by seeking to divide the labor movement and lower wages so as to restore profitability. Solidaristic wage setting squeezed profits, but it also squeezed employees in more profitable sectors by keeping their wages artificially low.[96] These fissures were intensified by the size of public sector unions, for whom wage negotiations were less easily tied to

[93] On these changes, see Pontusson, "At the End of the Third Road: Swedish Social Democracy in Crisis"; Gerhard Schnyder, "Like a Phoenix from the Ashes? Reassessing the Transformation of the Swedish Political Economy since the 1970s," *Journal of European Public Policy* 19, no. 8 (2012): 1126 1145; Steinmo, "Globalization and Taxation: Challenges to the Swedish Welfare State."

[94] Jonas Pontusson, "Radicalization and Retreat in Swedish Social Democracy," *New Left Review* 165 (1987): 5 33.

[95] Pontusson also speculates that Swedish firms moved towards a preference for equity funding rather than credit because of the increasing risk of research and development as opposed to Fordist productivity increases. "At the End of the Third Road: Swedish Social Democracy in Crisis," 324. This contrasts with the 2000s, when Swedish government spending on R&D was amongst the highest in the world. I think this is further evidence that the budgetary dilemmas born of public sector expansion constrained the state's ability to preserve the Rehn Meidner model. Schnyder, "Like a Phoenix from the Ashes? Reassessing the Transformation of the Swedish Political Economy since the 1970s," 1135 1137.

[96] Indeed, these tensions in the labor movement were evident earlier, expressed most dramatically in the wildcat miners' strikes in 1969 (Kiruna strikes). These strikes were a reaction to the wage constraints imposed on blue collar workers relative to white collar workers. On one interpret ation, the radicalization of the SAP during the 1970s was an effort to respond to these underlying tensions in the labor movement, and so the failure of that radicalization in the face of determined employer resistance is part of what paved the way for the split of the labor movement in 1983. Schnyder, "Like a Phoenix from the Ashes? Reassessing the Transformation of the Swedish Political Economy since the 1970s," 1131 1132.

productivity increases. Employers sought to restore profitability in part by offering additional wage increases to higher-skilled workers, knowing that this would enable them to keep wages lower in other sectors.

The breakdown of solidaristic wage setting aggravated the two other crisis tendencies in the Swedish welfare state: inflationary pressures and budgetary expansion. Equal workforce participation was bought at the price of large-scale public sector expansion, which undermined the commitment to fiscal restraint, one of the necessary planks of the Rehn–Meidner model. The breakdown of centralized wage setting generated inflationary wage increases in several sectors, especially the public sector. Wage increases entered into a destructive cycle with the budgetary expansions produced, in part, by the size of Sweden's public sector. Inflation continuously pushed workers into higher tax brackets, and the budgetary demands meant that these additional tax revenues could not be redistributed back to workers. Workers came to discount tax increases in their wage demands, leading to even higher inflation as well as new budgetary pressures.[97] This challenged the SAP's electoral coalition. Male workers increasingly supported the non-socialist parties (the Moderates and the New Democrats) in the early 1990s, while women remained loyal to the SAP – a reflection of the increasingly divergent interests between the private, male-dominated and public, female-dominant employment sectors. Rather than confront these pressures directly, the Swedish government responded with devaluation in 1982 and credit market deregulation. Both temporarily sustained purchasing power and firm profitability, yet they also contributed to the unusual size and scope of the economic crisis when it did arrive in 1989, which extended beyond a fiscal crisis to a banking collapse and a run on the krona.

The crisis of Swedish democracy was in part a product of the contradictions of gender emancipation in the welfare state. Rather than confronting the proceeds of male domination directly, the Swedish strategy was to seek equality through labor market expansion and solidaristic wage setting. Put differently, rather than directly expropriating men by dismantling their privileged location in society, this strategy sought to indirectly tax men by equalizing wages between male and female sectors of the economy, keeping private sector wages artificially low so as to enable higher public sector wages. As an indirect strategy of conflict avoidance, one that did not produce any stronger forms of solidarity or collective political action, it proved unsustainable in the long run, eventually contributing to the crisis of solidaristic politics more generally.

The crisis of the Swedish welfare state had a deep and specific gender dimension. The crisis was enabled by the underlying contradictions in the gender equality strategy pursued by the SAP and state feminists, which in turn had roots in the earlier logics of Swedish family policy. As Åsa Lundqvist observes, "the history of the Swedish family is ... not one of linear progress

[97] Pontusson, "At the End of the Third Road: Swedish Social Democracy in Crisis," 315 318.

from gender inequality to shared responsibilities under the auspices of the state, but rather one of false starts and contradictions between different and sometimes incompatible interests and goals."[98] Beginning in the 1930s, Swedish family policy at once took up gender relations as potential objects of deliberate collective action and judgment but also subordinated gender issues to instrumental questions of economic reproduction. "Women's issues" were universalized in two contradictory ways: first, as an issue of domination and justice, and second, as an issue of economic competitiveness through population growth. In practice, the formation of institutions that advanced gender emancipation were inseparable from the instrumental matter of managing the population, a viewpoint which led intellectuals like the Myrdals to position family relationships as technical concerns to be engineered through social policy. Politicizing gender relations through such instrumental frames also enabled Swedish policy actors to pursue equality policies without directly confronting male privilege and domination. Indeed, Swedish policy placed minimal demands on men, and when it has, it has focused mostly on equalizing caregiving rather than dismantling male power structures in the state and the workplace.[99] The equality strategy begun in 1960 exemplifies this effort to achieve parity while minimizing direct challenges to domination itself.

Even as Swedish family policy was connected with both integrative and disciplinary mechanisms as well as the broader imperatives of Swedish economic structures, feminist activists within the state were able to use welfare institutions as mechanisms for unearthing and challenging structures of domination. Welfare institutions provided a language and a set of institutional frameworks for making public how male domination enabled the exploitation of female work. The struggle of Swedish feminism has been to compel democratic institutions to confront those exploitative structures with the same force as they have confronted exploitative relationships between workers and capital. Unfortunately, the history of Swedish family policy reveals that male workers were often willing to side with employers to preserve the material gains of male hegemony, as evinced in the breakdown of solidaristic wage bargaining. To put it in terms of Habermas's dialectic of moral life, men, rather than acknowledging their status as the exploiter (criminal) and so viewing the indirect taxation as a reflection of their suppressed common life context, chose to view it as a form of external causality that could be evaded by breaking solidarity. The fiscal crisis of the Swedish state was the working through of this causality

[98] Lundqvist, *Family Policy Paradoxes: Gender Equality and Labor Market Regulation 1930 2010*, 129.

[99] From the 1980s to the present, however, Swedish activists have been increasingly concerned with issues of political representation in leadership roles, including agitating for representation quotas in both the public and the private sector.

of fate, as suppressed and displaced emancipatory claims for the transformation of domination exercised their force. Nonetheless, the process of female emancipation is still ongoing, with welfare institutions necessary and unavoidable, if ambiguous, instruments for challenging the structures of domination that support and reproduce patriarchy.

## CONCLUSION

The modern welfare state has had a profound impact on family structures and gender relations. As a result, the formation of welfare institutions has been a key site for political struggles over the structures of domination that support male privilege. The preceding has argued that dual concepts of the causality of fate and the dialectic of morality provide a framework for theorizing struggles over such institutions. Habermas's analysis of the structure of self-reflection and emancipation helps show how welfare institutions, as embodiments of broader societal norms, can become sites of political struggle over the shape of the world. Feminist theories of gender domination, such as Butler's, help expand Habermas's conception of domination to contemporary struggles in the welfare state. Contra Habermas, there has been no linear transition from direct forms of domination, such as those characteristic of feudalism, to structural, class-based domination to finally technocratic, abstract, non-class-specific domination. Habermas's lingering class reductionism is here evident. Rather, we can use these different concepts of domination as lenses to analyze the interplay between, for example, structures of gender domination and the functional, abstract imperatives of economic or administrative systems.

In the Swedish case, challenges to male domination were mediated by a family policy regime that followed contradictory imperatives – at once trying to equalize the conditions of women and contribute to the reproduction of Swedish capitalism. These welfare institutions became a mechanism for redistributing the disproportionate benefits of male hegemony, thereby furthering challenges to the naturalness of gender structures. At the same time, the displacement of gender conflict onto the welfare state foreclosed more direct, transformative challenges to the established gender order in Sweden. The eventual crisis of the Swedish social democratic model was generated, in part, by the simultaneous acknowledgement and suppression of these claims. Seeking equality through public sector expansion, the causality of fate exercised its power through the implicit appropriation and redistribution of earnings from male-dominated to female-dominated economic sectors. Solidarity depends on relative dominant groups recognizing that their earnings are the product of structural domination in their ability to set, at the reflexive level, the terms of social cooperation, which enables those positioned as male to benefit from the unpaid or underpaid carework of those positioned as women. In other

words, genuine solidarity depended on whether men would come to recognize the dialectic of moral life implicit in the causality of fate to which they were subject. The history of social institutions embody the repetition of such dialectics of moral life, the sedimentation of past struggles, positioned between the imperatives of the reproduction of capital and the state and the emancipatory demand for a society without domination.

# Conclusion

## *Democratic Theory and the Future of the Welfare State*

This book has defended three ideas. First, democratic theorists should approach the welfare state, not primarily as a set of instruments for ensuring an ideal distribution of material goods or securing certain social and economic rights, but as a network or infrastructure of institutions that shape the possibilities for democratic action. Welfare institutions are vital mechanisms for the empowerment of subordinate groups and so can become important sites of political mobilization and objects of political judgment and critique. Second, welfare institutions should be understood as "worldly mediators" between calculable needs and the shared world of political action. Worldliness, for Arendt, captures how the built objects that form the context for human activity are never merely their underlying functional or instrumental uses. Even as everyday objects are tied to instrumental goals, they are never reducible to them, insofar as they also appear to be judged by an audience. Welfare institutions render individuals and social activities into the object of technical calculation, subject to the functional imperatives of broader economic and administrative processes, but, as worldly mediators, they always at the same time produce lasting objects that can become the context for political judgment and action. Third, when understood in this way, we can see how democratic social movements can use welfare institutions to challenge and overturn relations and structures of domination in society. Welfare institutions mediate between the three levels of domination – direct, structural, and abstract – such that the creation and transformation of welfare institutions often reduces domination at one level even as it reinforces domination at another. But in so doing, such welfare institutions become crucial sites for political struggle, providing possibilities for democratic movements seeking to build an emancipated society.

Democratic political action occurs under conditions not of the actors' own making. In contemporary societies, subordinated groups, in seeking more democratic forms of political life, face both entrenched structures of

domination as well as trans-national economic forces that threaten to thwart their projects. This is especially the case for democratic projects that occur within the structures of the modern welfare state. My argument has sought to respond to a persistent anxiety about such engagement with and participation in welfare institutions: that social welfare politics represents the substitution of potentially transformative political claims with economic interests that admit of technical management. From this perspective, measures such as unemployment insurance, health insurance, and pensions, all of which arose alongside ritualized collective bargaining, represent efforts to co-opt the leadership of the workers' movement. Family policy functions to ameliorate the relative condition of women while generally leaving intact the gendered division of labor and the domination it entails. As we saw, such anxieties coincide with the initial emergence of the welfare state itself, insofar as Bismarck's welfare measures were explicitly targeted at the growing German workers' movement – the movement that became the carrier for Germany's frustrated democratization. My vision of a more democratic and participatory welfare state seeks to contend with the persistence of these anti-democratic structures while revealing the traces of historical possibilities that outrun the contingent compromises that constitute contemporary welfare institutions. My argument has been an effort to find these traces and situate them within a broader theoretical account of their significance for democratic politics in capitalist societies.

Max Weber's thought, developed as an effort to contain and steer Germany's democratization so as to preserve elite rule, continues to structure the underlying conceptions of institutional form and political agency implicit in contemporary accounts of welfare institutions. Reducing ordinary political institutions to structures of technical calculation, Weber's ideas led democratic theorists to identify democracy with either moments of extraordinary, non-calculable rupture, or else to turn to an imagined domain of rational deliberation, direct participation, or public reason that stands apart from and steers machine-like administrative structures. In place of these views, I developed a theory of welfare institutions as worldly mediators that illuminates how democratic social movements can use welfare institutions to challenge domination at the three levels at which domination manifests: direct, structural, and abstract. Arendt's concept of worldliness ground her to an analysis of mediating economic institutions that simultaneously respond to material needs and constituted shared spaces of appearance. Welfare institutions, far from just reducing political claims to the objects of administrative technique, also function as worldly objects, gathering new collective actors and becoming the site of potential democratic action. They are mediators that, while always bound up with economic imperatives, also serve to transform bare material needs into the possible objects of collective judgment and political action.

As worldly mediators, welfare institutions also stand in a particular relationship to structures of domination in society. Just as they mediate between

biological needs and collective democratic judgments, so too do welfare institutions make relationships of domination the potential object of deliberate political action. Welfare institutions embody a society's views about moral desert and social contribution as well as prevailing distributions of power. They gather, in a concrete, institutional form, the diffuse expectations that create and reinforce those distributions. Domination, as I argued, exists along three dimensions or in three "worlds": as a direct relationship of domination between two individuals, as a structural relationship embedded in norms, and as an abstract set of practices that constitute individuals as subjects. Democratic social movements engaging with welfare institutions contend with domination on all three of those levels. Even as welfare policies address domination along one angle, they may leave untouched or even reinforce it on another. Democratic struggles against domination are always provisional, with the lasting results of past movements becoming the potential basis for future mobilization. In the language of critical theory, such politics operates through the force of the negative – the utopian possibility of a society free of domination is revealed through challenges to current, existing structures. Swedish feminists, for example, found only partial emancipation in their engagement with welfare institutions. Even as such institutions made explicit structures of domination within society, they also partially displaced the direct challenge to the structures of male domination within Swedish society. The welfare state does not just reflect the functional response to the insecurities produced by capitalism, or else the linear unfolding of the logic of rights – rather, welfare institutions embody, but always only partially, the iterated, ongoing struggles against the power of dominant groups in society.

My goal here has been to provide some theoretical concepts that could help orient scholars and actors interested in how democratic social movements can engage with welfare institutions to achieve lasting social change. I have tried to show that those theoretical concepts have traction by examining historical episodes of democratic mobilization within welfare institutions. While it has not been my express focus, such questions are also salient in contexts, such as the United States, without the tradition of national-scale welfare institutions characteristic of continental Europe. The American "divided" and "submerged" welfare state not only fails to provide consistent forms of basic social insurance to all citizens; it much more divides recipients into categories of deservingness that overlap with racial and gender hierarchies.[1] While all welfare states have "residual" programs that provide targeted rather than universal benefits, the USA is distinctive in both how punitive the conditions for such

[1] Jacob S. Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State: The Battle over Public and Private Social Benefits in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

benefits are and in the fact that some typically "core" welfare institutions, such as health insurance, are residual.

Nonetheless, the USA has a notable history of democratic social movements centered on welfare institutions, movements that have pushed for the creation of more participatory models of the welfare state. These were especially prominent during the second major growth of American social policy after the New Deal – the Great Society of the 1960s – which coincided with the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the student movement. One famous example is the National Welfare Rights Organization and the "overload" strategy advocated by Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, which sought to provoke crises at local welfare offices to force a more generous federal program.[2] But perhaps the most notable connection between my theory and the American case is the history of "Community Action Program" (CAP) during the War on Poverty. The CAP was run out of Lyndon Johnson's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and the idea was to collaborate with local communities in funneling resources for economic development and anti-poverty work. The CAP projects were meant to include the "maximum feasible participation" of those who were meant to benefit from the project – a phrase that became the watchword of the subsequent political backlash to the programs.[3] Even so, in many cases, the projects became objects of political mobilization and a source of resources for democratic social movements challenging racial domination.

The CAP embodied a tension between the two visions of participation I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. For many, the principle of participation was meant to encourage local responsibility and discipline through supervisory subsidiarity. In this view, the CAP was consistent with, in the words of OEO director Sargent Shriver, "traditional and time-tested American methods of organized community effort to help individuals, families and whole communities to help themselves."[4] This view of the CAPs dovetailed with a broader shift in the deployment of American state power, whereby "participation" was meant to enable more effective forms of pacification and counterinsurgency both domestically and abroad.[5] But others took a more radical view,

[2] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, "The Weight of the Poor: A Strategy to End Poverty," *The Nation*, May 2, 1966; *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage, 1977).

[3] Most prominently championed by Daniel Moynihan, in an argument that became crucial for the effort to shift the Democratic Party away from the "New Liberals" and reclaim white male voters. Recent scholarship has shown that the CAP was relatively successful, all things considered, and many programs created then continue to this day. See David Torstensson, "America's Wars on Poverty and the Building of the Welfare State," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia, American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[4] Quoted in ibid.

[5] Alyosha Goldstein, *Poverty in Common: The Politics of Community Action during the American Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Stuart Schrader, "To Secure the Global Great

positioning the CAP projects as potential mechanisms for building broader political movements against structures of domination in society. In New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, youth and women of color activists used CAP projects to launch a broader critique of how entrenched racial domination structures other public services, such as the education system. As Noel Cazenave notes, reviewing the successes of CAP projects in New York, they provided "an organizational base for social protest at a time when poor people of color generally found the local white power structure unresponsive to their needs" and so "offered an important experiment in participatory democracy."[6] While the fragmentary nature of the American welfare system means that the CAPs did not necessarily produce the sort of society-wide crystallization of an implicit structure of domination evident in the Swedish case, they nonetheless were crucial sites for the formation of solidarity among the dominated. Not surprisingly, then, their history has been clouded by the intense racial backlash that mobilization provoked.[7]

The example of the CAP shows, so I hope, that the analysis provided in this book can travel to these other contexts. But with that in mind, one persistent question I have faced while writing this book is: Is this all too late? A nostalgic paean to the "golden age" of welfare state politics, now in the past? The dominant story since the 1970s has been the breakdown of this welfare state settlement, through a combination of domestic political counterattack against the power of labor, retrenchment of universal social programs, the rise of monetarism as an alternative paradigm to Keynesianism, and the deregulation of capital flows that has placed increasing pressure on nation-states to ensure fiscal discipline. What guidance can theorists take from historical struggles that occurred under such different historical conditions – authoritarian politics in Germany, the heyday of managed capitalism in Sweden? What can that history tell us today? I now turn to these questions, before concluding with some remarks about what normative and political vision for today my argument implies.

In large part, my approach to thinking about the welfare state seeks to dislodge the narrative of the so-called Golden Age. The "Golden Age" of the welfare state refers to the height of trade unionism, Keynesianism, and planning from World War II to the breakdown of that system in the early 1970s. This period witnessed low levels of inequality, driven by both progressive taxation and union-driven wage compression and broad societal consensus about the

Society: Participation in Pacification," *Humanity: A International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 7, no. 2 (2016): 225 253.

[6] Noel A. Cazenave, *Impossible Democracy: The Unlikely Success of the War on Poverty Commu nity Action Programs* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 180.

[7] Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarcer ation in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

value of Keynesian economic management. Moreover, and perhaps most fundamentally, this period witnessed high levels of economic growth in North America and Europe, driven largely by rebuilding in the aftermath of World War II, and which ameliorated political conflict.[8] The Golden Age was important proof for a teleological view that the logic of rights inevitably propelled the formation of modern welfare institutions. For those attached to this linear view of political history, the breakdown of that settlement thus called the entire welfare state project into question.

Without a doubt, the Golden Era saw a subordination of the autonomy of capital to the demands of democratic movements. But this period was also notable for the extent to which welfare institutions also supported structures of domination based on gender, race, and global, neo-colonial hierarchies.[9] In short, welfare institutions did not embody the inexorable unfolding of rights-claims but created a field of relationships that presented both opportunities and risks for democratic social movements. And, in this respect, there is no fundamental discontinuity with today. Instead, there are several new fronts in political struggle. In light of this, it is important to recognize that the recent transformation of welfare institutions has been fundamentally political. While both technological change and declining growth conditioned political struggle since the 1970s, such forces are always political indeterminate. There was no necessary "decline" of the welfare state.[10] Rather, relatively powerful political actors, in response to the threat of the fundamental democratization of capital, regrouped, exploited intra-group divisions among democratic movements and used the state to limit the power of democratic forces like trade unions and entrench strict fiscal discipline.[11] But this pathway was not the only possible political response to the structural forces that undermined the postwar settlement. The creation of wage-earner funds in Sweden, which would have democratized investment decisions, provided another possible response to the structural dilemmas facing the postwar growth model.

The breakdown of the postwar settlement, even as it provided a powerful opening for a conservative, anti-democratic vision of economic and political governance, also provides the groundwork for building a more genuinely

[8] Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty First Century*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[9] See Gurminder K. Bhambra and John Holmwood, "Colonialism, Post Colonialism, and the Liberal Welfare State," *New Political Economy* 23, no. 5 (2018): 574 587; Adom Getachew, Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self Determination (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 142 175.

[10] While demographic change, to be sure, strains general social insurance schemes, it is, again, a centrally democratic political problem as to how these strains are managed and distributed. For a discussion of these shifts, see Anton Hemerijck, *Changing Welfare States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[11] Ho fung Hung and Daniel Thompson, "Money Supply, Class Power, and Inflation: Monetarism Reassessed," *American Sociological Review* 81, no. 3 (2016): 447 466.

inclusive and democratic welfare state. A democratic politics of the welfare state today should start from the mobilization of groups that were largely excluded from the postwar settlement. While the rise of industrial trade unionism was a powerful force for the democratization of welfare institutions, the entrance of women into the workforce, the shift toward service-based economies, and the rise of casualized labor all constitute new fronts in democratic politics. They put pressure on welfare institutions that were built based on the assumption of single-male breadwinner families and single-employer career paths that no longer hold. Rather, democratic social movements can and have pushed for forms of welfare institutions untethered from these assumptions. Some of these would extend already familiar policies: extending universal education to include universal childcare, nationalized social insurance schemes where they are lacking (such as in the USA), interventions in urban housing markets to reduce exploitation by landlords, and the political organization of precarious workers to counter the power and collusion of firms in labor markets.

But these changes also point to the need for new, more fundamentally transformative policies such as those grouped as "pre-distribution," even as my theory situates such policies within the distinctive question of whether they enable democratic agency.[12] In contrast to traditional redistributive policies, which focus on post-facto narrowing of inequality through direct transfers, predistributive policies attempt to ensure equal access to productive resources at the beginning of each individual's life course. While many of these are familiar – many in-kind services, especially those focused on education, are a type of predistribution – the more radical proposals focus on altering the distribution of capital such that every individual is guaranteed a certain share of productive resources. This could be either through a direct universal basic income, capital grants when people reach a certain age, or a collectively owned sovereign wealth fund, such as that in Norway, that would provide an annual dividend.[13] Unlike social insurance programs, these provisions are not directly tied to participation in the paid workforce, and so they do not reinforce a distinction between paid work and unpaid carework, nor do such provisions assume that individuals are able-bodied workers or require stigmatizing and humiliating determinations of disability.

[12] Martin O'Neill and Thad Williamson, eds., *Property Owning Democracy: Rawls and Beyond* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2012); Alan Thomas, *Republic of Equals: Predistribution and Property Owning Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[13] These ideas reach back to Thomas Paine's *Agrarian Justice* and have recently received high profile attention, including an op ed in the *New York Times*. Elizabeth Anderson, "Thomas Paine's 'Agrarian Justice' and the Origins of Social Insurance," in *Ten Neglected Classics of Philosophy*, ed. Eric Schliesser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Matt Bruenig, "A Simple Fix for Our Massive Inequality Problem," *New York Times*, November 30, 2017.

But I approach these policies differently than many of those who defend the ideal of "property-owning democracy." Even as my focus has primarily been to provide conceptual tools for thinking about the location of democratic agency in the welfare state, a democratic theory of the welfare state can provide guidance for institutional reforms. In general, in-kind services with universal access and social insurance policies are more likely to produce the democratic dynamics I identify than targeted, direct transfers and cash benefits. Many thinkers argue that direct transfers prevent "upward redistribution" toward undeserving, middle-class recipients. Further, according to their advocates, cash benefits are less paternalistic and avoid rent-seeking and other forms of political action that "distort" efficient market processes. But in terms of my theory, universal programs ensure, first, that people view such benefits as part of their collective activity, rather than an individual entitlement divorced from the activities of others, and second, that there is a set of public-facing institutions around which groups could organize or act. Put differently, welfare institutions should create new solidarities as well as democratic opportunities, and proposals for political change should also be judged on that basis.[14]

This has implications for efforts to shift toward a predistributive welfare state. Prominent approaches focus on an ideal of distributive justice, only now guaranteed before individuals enter the labor market, or else of independence from the consequences of others' decisions, as in defenses that use the republican idea of freedom. My theory enjoins us to examine, as well, what sort of relationships such institutions produce – what constituencies they create – as well as what institutional pathways for political action they enable. For example, a guaranteed minimum income could be achieved both through a negative income tax, where those below a certain income level would receive a tax credit, or it could be achieved by institutionally restructuring control over capital, as with a sovereign wealth fund. From a purely (pre)distributive perspective, these may have equivalent effects, but they have different implications for the structure of social relationships the welfare institutions produce. While the former attempts to make welfare policies as individualized as possible, such that they maximally enable participation in the market, the latter creates new institutional pathways that could be used by democratic social movements.

But this also requires situating the analysis of specific institutional mechanisms and proposals within a broader account of the current constellation of political conflict and manifestations of domination. Here, one central, recent change is the rise of the politics of consumer debt. As sociologist Monica Prasad has shown, easy access to consumer debt has become a functional substitute for many welfare programs, helping individuals respond to unexpected drops in

[14] For a more detailed discussion of these concerns in relationship to market based approaches, see Klein, "Fictitious Freedom: A Polanyian Critique of the Republican Revival."

income. Moreover, encouraging individual debt and participation in the stock market has become, in Colin Crouch's words, a sort of "privatized Keynesianism," where consumption and growth are sustained through credit.[15] These efforts to restore growth, such as through financialization, increased capital mobility, and consumer borrowing, further undermined the solidaristic bases of social policy and produced the destabilizing crisis tendencies that helped fuel the 2008 financial crisis.[16] Yet, even as the rise of private credit has been a result of the decline of welfare solidarities, they have created new political constituencies that can potentially mobilize to demand a democratic reorganization of the current institutional structure of money and credit. Greta Krippner shows how credit itself becomes a site of and mechanism for political organizing, which can both focus on discriminatory access to credit as well as try to collectivize various forms of credit distribution, such as through calls for community loans.[17] These movements resemble the early demands of the workers' movement for collective self-organization vis-à-vis employers. They call attention to how the distribution of access to credit reinforces structures of gender and racial domination. As the distribution of credit becomes increasingly socialized, as through implicit government guarantees as the lender of last resort, then access to credit becomes an increasingly political question, one potentially subject to democratic judgment. Here, then, is a political and democratic basis for political mobilizations pointing toward a "predistributive" welfare state. The political institutionalization of predistribution should focus on institutions, such as public banking and other ways of guaranteeing access to credit, that will help to constitute democratic social movements, such as debtor relief organizations, and provide them an institutional foothold within formal political structures.

As a historical reconstruction of the democratic potentials of previous struggles over the social, my argument seeks to provide a usable past, neither romanticized nor cynical, that could aid in envisioning a further democratization of the welfare state and developing a political strategy adequate to that vision. This means putting the democracy back in social democracy. Growing inequality and economic destabilization are generating new political crisis tendencies, and state efforts to control and dissipate conflicts will produce new institutional structures that can themselves become the sites of democratic world-making. As new conflicts and social needs arise and generate pressure for political intervention into economic relationships, these interventions can be structured to include the direct, institutionalized, and ongoing participation of

[15] Colin Crouch, "Privatised Keynesianism: An Unacknowledged Policy Regime," *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 11, no. 3 (2009): 382 399.

[16] On the connection between these strategies and the financial crisis, see Prasad, *The Land of Too Much: American Abundance and the Paradox of Poverty*.

[17] Greta R. Krippner, "Democracy of Credit: Ownership and the Politics of Credit Access in Late Twentieth Century America," *American Journal of Sociology* 123, no. 1 (2017): 1 47.

the social movements that helped bring the conflicts to light in the first place. Struggles for welfare must be connected to questions of democratic participation in the administration of welfare institutions – forms of participation that would also give social movement actors the resources and institutional footholds that generate new political dynamics.[18] This demands political strategies that strive to democratize the current administration of welfare programs, especially programs that can function to politicize new social domains and organize subordinate groups, such as unemployment insurance, public childcare provisions, or anti-poverty programs.

My goal has been to provide theoretical resources for viewing these social and economic conflicts as potential occasions for democratic world-making, inaugurating forms of political action that find their worldly embodiment in new participatory institutions within administrative and economic structures. Indeed, these democratic possibilities accompanied, albeit as fragments, the initial rise of welfare institutions in Bismarck's Germany. Struggles for gender equality have likewise used welfare institutions to generate new modes of democratic action and to fuel social movements seeking to transform entrenched relationships of social domination. The challenge facing political actors today is to devise strategies that could overcome the entrenched privilege of economic elites and dominant social groups – strategies that will also provide the solidaristic power of social movements with a material, institutional form that outlasts their episodic mobilization. These past victories can then become the basis of future struggles for a more democratic and participatory welfare state.

[18] For a more general account of social movements that focuses on this sort of infiltration of the state, see Steven Klein and Cheol Sung Lee, "Towards a Dynamic Theory of Civil Society: The Politics of Forward and Backward Infiltration," *Sociological Theory* 37, no. 1 (2019): 62 88.

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