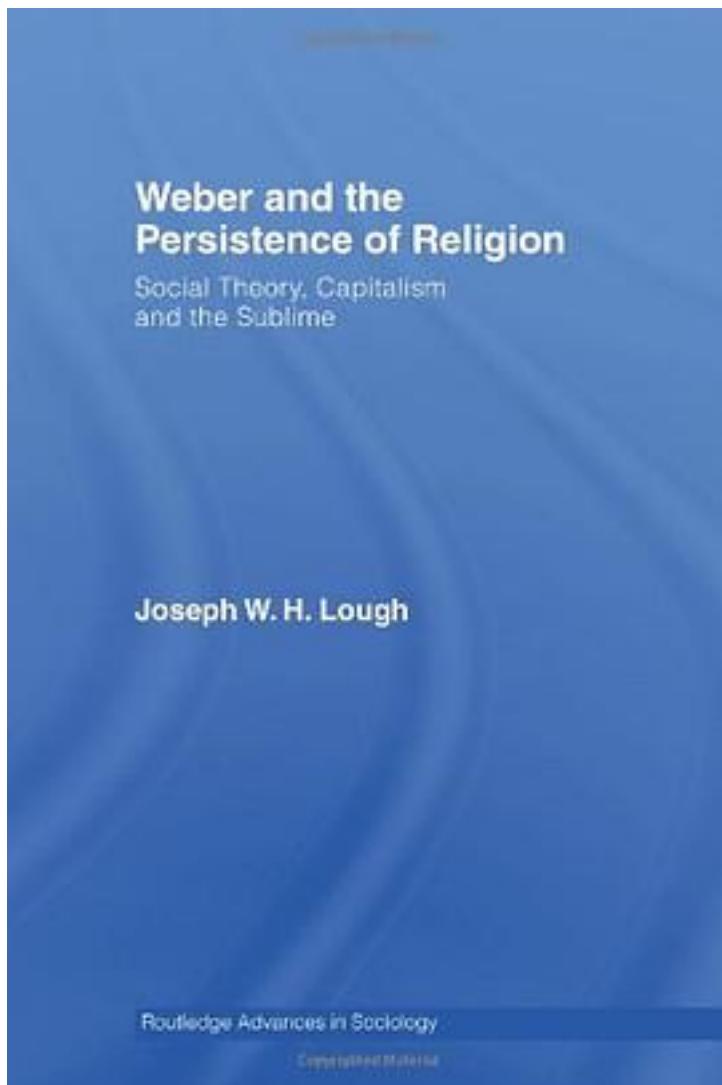


Weber and the Persistence of Religion



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At no other time in history have religion and spirituality played such important social and political roles in our world; and, yet, most people still feel that contemporary society is predominantly secular and that our world is largely disenchanted. Taking Weber's interpretations of capitalism and religion, "Weber and the Persistence of Religion" re-examines a wide range of classical and contemporary texts to help explain the character of religion and spirituality in mature capitalist societies. Joseph W.H. Lough shows how the peculiar disembodied character of contemporary spirituality and religion, along with the disenchanted character of public life, may be formally related to the increasingly disembodied, immaterial character of value in capitalist societies. In this intriguing book, of interest to students and scholars of social theory, history, the sociology of religion and philosophy, he explores how the increasingly antagonistic relationship between contemporary religion and its material forms of appearance displays an unmistakable likeness to what Marx described as the sublime value form of the commodity. Most disturbingly, Lough shows how the growing antagonism between contemporary spiritual subjectivity and practice and its material forms of appearance may explain the unremitting escalation in officially sanctioned mass death since the fourteenth century; if mass death is a defining feature of contemporary religion, it is vital that we understand why and how it has become so.

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