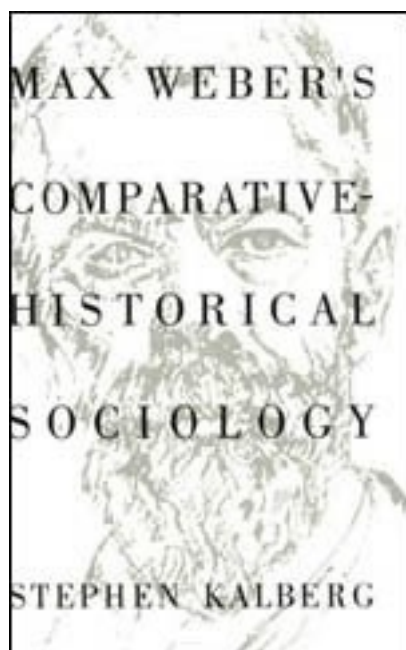


Max Weber's Comparative-Historical Sociology



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The revival of historical sociology in recent decades has largely neglected the contributions of Max Weber. Yet Weber's writings offer a fundamental resource for analyzing problems of comparative historical development. Stephen Kalberg rejects the view that Weber's historical writings consist of an ambiguous mixture of fragmented ideal types on the one hand and the charting of vast processes of rationalization and bureaucracy on the other. On the contrary, Weber's substantive work offers a coherent and distinctive model for comparative analysis. A reconstruction of Weber's comparative historical method, Kalberg argues, uncovers a sophisticated outlook that addresses problems of agency and structure, multiple causation, and institutional interpretation. Kalberg shows how such a representation of Weber's work casts a direct light upon issues of pressing importance in comparative

historical studies today. Weber addresses in a forceful way the whole range of issues confronted by the comparative historical enterprise. Once the full analytical and empirical power of Weber's historical writings becomes clear, Weber's work can be seen to generate procedures and strategies appropriate to the study of present day as well as past social processes. Written in an accessible and engaging fashion, this book will appeal to students and professionals in the areas of sociology, anthropology, and comparative history.

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