

## A Philosophical Interpretation of the Application of Ideal Types in Max Weber's Methodology of Social Sciences

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Ideal types are considered one of the important features in the study of social, cultural, and historical phenomena for understanding and interpreting the phenomena under investigation by scholars. However, ideal types, as tools for hypothesis formulation in social sciences, have always faced challenges due to their association with meaningful human actions. Some interpreters of Max Weber's methodology believe they should be discarded or are ineffective. Despite this, Weber emphasized their applicability in explaining social phenomena. He argued that ideal types can serve as tools for social scientists to achieve objectivity in social phenomena. In this research, I have sought to highlight the philosophical significance of ideal types as methodological tools in social science, as part of Max Weber's project to achieve objectivity in social phenomena.

**Keywords:** *Ideal types, Philosophy of Social Sciences, Max Weber, Philosophy of Science, Sociology of Knowledge, Objectivity in Social Sciences*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **The Importance of Conceptualization in Weber's Sociology:**

The Neo-Kantians, in contrast to the Hegelian epistemology of external reality, shared the Kantian dualism between reality and concept. Therefore, reality, as Hegel describes it, is not the actual product of concepts but is instead irrational and incomprehensible, and this concept is merely an abstract construction of our minds. As Dilthey believed, this concept is not subject to will, intuition, or mental awareness. According to Hermann Cohen, one of the early Neo-Kantians, the formation of a concept is fundamentally a cognitive process that cannot be rational in the way Kant suggested. If our cognition is logical and all reality exists within cognition, then the only reality we can comprehend through knowledge is rational. Consequently, metaphysics is reduced to epistemology and ontology to logic. Thus, the process of concept formation in both natural sciences and cultural-historical sciences must be universal and abstract, not in terms of their type but in terms of their subjects, which is not the case. (Max Weber, Stanford Encyclopedia). Max Weber, well aware of the importance of conceptualization in social and cultural sciences, strives to elevate it in his philosophy of social sciences, demonstrating its practical role, with ideal types representing this effort.

#### **Ideal Types According to Weber:**

According to Weber, a social scientist constructs unreal relationships to determine actual causal relationships. As Julien Freund wrote, ideal types should not be equated with reality in the sense that denote an absolute and certain truth. On the contrary, because of their unreal nature, ideal types can distance the scientist from actual reality. From this perspective, one might say that, intellectually and scientifically, the scientist can better grasp reality. Although this grasp or mastery might not necessarily be universal. It is clear that, for instance, the ideal types a social scientist constructs to understand the meanings of phenomena under study, such as a particular period or belief system, do not necessarily correspond to the perceptions held by contemporaries or followers of that belief system. (Weber 1399, 5). Weber first introduced the concept of ideal types in his famous article "Objectivity" in Social Science and Social Policy (in short, Objectivity). There, the approach Weber had in mind and pursued was (abstract economic theory) which created an ideal image of the rational action process in a free competitive market. Their application for Weber in a series of discussions about his theories on economics is summarized as wherever social scientists doubt the empirical presence of relationships in actual social states, or it is not obvious to them, they can use ideal types. They play the role of assisting the scientist's understanding of connections and depicting hypotheses and can illustrate causal relationships for them.

Weber's emphasis on the category of ideal types is that they are not hypotheses. But they can provide useful and helpful hypotheses to social scientists. The difference between ideal types and that model of conceptualization carried out by scientists (abstraction of concepts in natural sciences, based on real examples), according to Weber, is for these reasons: First, the selection of elements that are considered useful for constructing ideal types is somewhat arbitrary among scientists. (In fact, it should be said that they are dependent on the values of the individual researcher). On this basis, it should be noted that talking about the correctness or incorrectness of ideal types will not have much meaning. It is on this basis that Weber believes that ideal types are problematic for those who are looking for science without presuppositions. Because they immediately begin to define precisely (like individualism) or (feudalism) and become trapped in the realm of their vague perceptions. It should be said that naturalistic presuppositions are usually considered very dangerous by Weber, and if a researcher seeks to understand the essence of these phenomena, to the extent that (they go further in these relationships) and allocate them, they will be less ideal forms and may not correspond to the empirical world.

But the second case: is that ideal types, contrary to the claim we face in natural science conceptualizations, do not give us an accurate picture of examples that exist in the world. Rather, they are only able to provide a version or versions that can only resemble social examples. This, according to Weber, means that the social scientist cannot obtain concepts by abstracting realities. Because according to what was said, in encountering these realities, one cannot empty the mind of all presuppositions.

The third point: The notion that one can consider a real essence for these types of concepts is illusory. Because these concepts can be constructed in various ways. In this regard, Weber says: To create ideal types of (capitalist culture), some singular and diverse characteristics of modern material and spiritual culture must be highlighted and emphasized in an ideal construct that has internal consistency. On this basis (according to Weber), it can be claimed that a scientist can build many utopias that are not similar to each other, and at the same time, none of them can be observed as an existing economic system in empirical reality. But each of them claims to present a picture of the (idea) of capitalist culture. (Alasti 2013, 101 and 102). In further explanations, it should be said (according to Weber) that:

For example: Ideal types of capitalism in the phenomena studied by scientists can gather specific attributes that in reality are only seen in a scattered and disorganized manner. It should also be said that the ideal types related to capitalism include all the tendencies and goals for which the scientist or economist considers economic methods of achieving them, so that they may not have been fully realized anywhere in the world. (Weber 2020, 6).

Ideal types are used as concepts to understand social phenomena. For example, concepts such as imperialism individualism, or economic man can be used by the scientist concerning other data examined in a phenomenon under study. The "ideality" of these "types" refers to the fact that they are not referring to actually existing entities, but are considered as mental ideas that may not imply a specific type in the external world if the sample of individuals we study (in the form of prevailing public culture) believe in it, they will create a place for sociological discussions. Constructing concepts of ideal types in social sciences is used to understand a real matter. From this perspective, it can be said that to facilitate the understanding of real affairs, concept construction is used as an advancing tool of research towards achieving objectivity. Weber believes that in conceptualizing ideal types, not all aspects of reality are considered. Rather, attention is paid only to those aspects that are considered important and somewhat primary (in examining social science phenomena) from the perspective of the social science researcher. (Lallement 2022, vol. 1, 121)

Weber, in the article "Objectivity" in Social Sciences and Politics in Social Sciences, believes that the history of social sciences is a process that flows in a context of repeated efforts to analytically order reality with the help of conceptualization or reformulation of concepts based on transformed foundations. But it should be said that this process is not because all efforts made to construct conceptual systems have been entirely erroneous and futile, and it should be said that all sciences, even simple descriptive history, use and utilize the concepts existing in their own time. This process shows that conceptualization in social sciences is always dependent on the posing of problems and also varies according to cultural content. Concepts are considered as tools for achieving the goal of understanding phenomena. He believes that through constructing precise and unambiguous concepts, a correct recognition of the limitations of their validity is obtained, which relates to certain singular viewpoints that arouse our interest at a certain time. (Weber, 2020 "Objectivity" in Social Sciences and Social Policy" 162-163).

In most cases in social sciences, concepts, and their dimensions are not defined by directly referable signs, and this is one of the complexities facing a scientist in understanding and analyzing a social phenomenon. The role of indicators is to identify objective matters so that the dimensions of a concept can be measured and identified. For example, it might be said that thinning white hair, lost teeth, and wrinkled skin are indicators of old age. (Van Campenhout and Quivy 2006, 122).

According to Weber, it is only through the conceptualization of the ideal type that the perspectives we are studying in individual cases become clear. Confronting and comparing empirical reality with the ideal type can test the accuracy and correctness of a research process. In Weber's view, the

use of undifferentiated collective concepts of everyday language is like a cover for assimilating thought and action, and is usually a tool for demagoguery and hypocrisy, and has always been considered an obstacle to the correct formulation of issues (Weber, 2020 “Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy” 168).

In Weber's view, we understand reality only through a chain of intellectual modifications. The social sciences Weber refers to deal with practical meaning, and in most cases, this meaning can only be unambiguously conceived by relating empirical data to a limiting ideal sample (Weber, 2020 “Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy” 146).

According to Weber, concepts are like lenses through which we can understand and provide explanations. They are not mirrors of these realities. They are not exact symbolic equivalents of observed phenomena. Whenever we confuse our conceptual frameworks with the realities we want to analyze, we probably misunderstand those realities in several ways and misrepresent them. We probably oversimplify. Moreover, we mistakenly assume that regular relationships between concepts and propositions necessarily refer to equivalent ordered realities in observed realities. In particular, we are likely to collect and organize our observations in categorization baskets or frameworks determined by our concepts. In most cases, at least in social sciences, concepts should be used as heuristic or analytical tools. Scientists have created clear and measurable conceptual frameworks for two fundamental reasons. First: They are committed to producing studies that are potentially and independently verifiable by other observers. Second: Scientists are committed to producing results that allow for reasonable comparison. It should be said that phenomena can only be compared concerning reference frameworks that are clearly stated so that observers can measure both the proximity and distance of similarities and differences and understand how phenomena are often truly unique at the same time while being part of larger classes or groupings of similar phenomena. Many social scientists have assumed that clear, comparable, and measurable conceptual frameworks must be expressed either in numerical terms and intervals or used exactly, not just approximately. Many consider quantitative research not only more accurate and reproducible but somehow fundamentally more scientific and objective. (Bird 2020, 88). This issue has caused debate in the field of conceptualization in Weber's methodology, which has opponents and proponents. From this perspective, we briefly state some of these views.

#### **Donald MacIntosh's Conception of Weber's Ideal Types:**

He believes that the ideal types in Weber's methodology can be divided into three groups: traditional, charismatic, and rational. According to this classification, MacIntosh tries to clearly show their position in Weber's methodology. In his view, firstly,

they are ideas that existed in Weber's mind and he conveyed to others. Secondly, these ideas are about the ideal mental interests of participants in social action. But thirdly, they are not identical to ideas that accurately describe or express these mental interests. They are versions of these ideas that have been modified in the form of adequate meaning and take the form of general classifications. It is not specified how fundamental these classifications are, but if we move from value theory to epistemology, this point becomes clearer. Suppose we are looking to base our beliefs on something firmer than mere wish or imagination. How can one claim that an opinion is correct? There seem to be three possibilities. First, we might look for an objective basis for knowledge in the received opinion of society. Not the passing fancy of the population, but the settled belief of the nation, shaped and tested by many minds over many years. This is validation through tradition. Second, we might believe something to be true because it has been revealed to us by a supernatural force. This is validation by faith. Supernatural power is a precise definition of charisma. Hence this second ground of knowledge is charisma. Third, we might try to prove the truth of something through rational analysis or investigation. This is validation by reason. The question that arises is whether any other ground of knowledge is possible or even conceivable. It does not seem so. At least we cannot think of a fourth type of validation. For example, the doctrine of innate knowledge, upon examination, usually resolves itself into one of the three mentioned, faith. (MacIntosh 1977, 267).

#### **The Invention of Ideal Types as a Task for Social Scientists:**

Weber uses ideal types, a conceptual tool invented by the German historian G. Jellinek, to analyze social actions. In fact, for analyzing social actions, he can create categories, and build mental tables that are not real representations of the world but can, for research needs, illuminate some aspects of the investigation. In reality, the ideal type does not reflect an actual matter but provides tools and conditions for social scientists to easily analyze the components of their research. (Lallement 2022, vol. 1, 319). It should be noted that the concept of ideal types has also been used in natural sciences, such as ideal types of a particular species, or ideal gases in the kinetic theory of gases. Ideal here should be understood in the (most precise logical sense). (Baert 2018, 88).

According to Weber, ideal types are tools for scientific abstraction by which historians identify specific individuals and social configurations, to make them clear and understandable. This is neither a reflection nor a description of reality, but a one-sided emphasis that merges many features of scattered phenomena into a single concept about empirical reality. But they are utopian in that they don't exist in reality, they exist “nowhere”. They are mental constructs or heuristic tools aimed at highlighting and describing complex historical events or individual actions by focusing on

their distinctive aspects and features. They allow us to work with a purified version of the originals to draw out their distinctive and unusual features for greater precision in fully developing hypotheses about specific historical events. They are not meant to be common, universal descriptions. Instead, for Weber, they are a means of highlighting the most important and valuable aspects of reality for historical research. (McCarthy 2019, 137)

It should be noted that the concept of ideal types that Weber proposes can be said to have dimensions of the sociology of knowledge. This concept is of great importance to many sociologists. Although some believe that the concept of ideal types cannot have any practical and operational application in the field of social sciences. Hoffmann believes that Weber's ideal types bring social relations to stagnation. But in response to this objection, it should be said that Weber himself in some cases guides ideal types as a structure or construction that leads to the evolutionary process of a phenomenon towards objectivity. (Ashtiani 2014, 137)

As mentioned earlier, ideal types should assist social scientists in giving meaning to social phenomena. On this basis, Weber, in his methodology, to become more familiar with ideal types, expresses several examples of them. Such as Historical ideal types: As the name of this type of ideal type suggests, they relate to the category of phenomena that appear in specific historical stages (for example, in the emergence of capitalism). For example, Protestant ethics is considered a type of ideal type that emphasizes the importance of theology, determinism, asceticism, and critique of idolatry as its prominent features. Ideal types are a synthetic view from which the historian develops the abstraction of essential elements of a particular historical phenomenon. The purpose of constructing the concept of ideal type is to reach all the ways that reveal not the class or average character, but the unique individual characteristics of cultural phenomena. (McCarthy 2019, 138)

For example: General sociological ideal types: These are mainly related to phenomena that exist in historical stages and societies. Such as bureaucracy or constitutionalism (a historical example).

Ideal types related to actions: These are pure types of action based on the motivations of actors, such as emotional action.

Structural ideal types: This category is formed based on the causes and consequences of social action, such as traditional domination. (Ritzer 2021, 174)

According to Weber, any emotional content of subjective perception must be converted into ideal types or analytical structures to create content determination in which objective and tangible value choices are made. Weber provides an example of the perception of the color red to clarify his position on the historical method. The indeterminacy, ambiguity, and subjectivity of color perception, whose content cannot be universally expressed or confirmed, cannot

be the logical basis for the study of history. (McCarthy 2019, 170).

Weber believes that ideal types are created as hypothetical possibilities of human reflection and purposeful rational action to achieve an understanding of empirical reality and its conformity or deviation from constructed ideal types. Thus, historical science can determine the adequacy of an actual choice of means to achieve explicitly stated goals as well as its unintended consequences. By measuring the goals and means of actual consequences, we can determine the differences between the ideal structure and actual reality. As a result, ideal types as conceptual schemas help highlight rational and irrational elements in history. (McCarthy 2019, 171).

According to **Jürgen Habermas**, Weber's goal in constructing ideal types in his methodology is that they serve as useful and practical tools to advance rational actions oriented towards the actor's goals, capable of bringing the research process closer to objectivity. Goal-oriented actions are considered as guiding maps that lead an actor towards a practical result (of their intent). Therefore, Habermas believes that Weber's recommendation on conceptualization (based on constructing ideal types) should always be at the forefront of a social scientist's research process as an instruction. (Habermas 2020, 130).

Weber's recommendation for constructing ideal types by scientists working in the field of social sciences and culture examining the phenomena in question is that ideal types can assist researchers in properly understanding phenomena. However, Weber notes that ideal types are not concepts that a sociologist or historian can construct arbitrarily. Rather, from Weber's perspective, the correct principles for their construction are that they should be built by scientists in accordance with logical concepts. He further notes that to construct ideal types, a social scientist must act empathetically and devote themselves entirely to research in history to ultimately find an appropriate ideal type corresponding to the phenomenon they are interpreting. (Ritzer 2021, 172 and 173).

Regarding how the precise application of ideal types as invented tools in the hands of scientists works, it can be said that Weber, in his famous article "Objectivity", has tried to explain it clearly. There, he believes that ideal types are not in themselves a series of useless hypotheses. Rather, it should be said that they are guides and tools used to construct the scientist's hypotheses. Most of what Weberian interpreters say about ideal types is based on Weber's brief explanations in the "Objectivity" article. Weber explains there that ideal types are not even descriptions of social realities. Rather, it should be said that they are explicit tools free of any ambiguities that are used for accurate sociological descriptions (appropriate to the needs of scientists in explaining social phenomena). From this perspective, ideal types are the product of a series of one-sided emphatic results on one or more specific viewpoints. They are obtained through the combination of many individual

phenomena (concrete individual phenomena), which are ultimately arranged and organized in a single, independent analytical structure. According to Weber, ideal types are considered utopias for scientists. On this basis, Weber emphasizes that the task of the social scientist is to determine, in examining the phenomena under study, to what extent the ideal types used in the scientist's research process are far from or close to realities. (Weber, 2020 "Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy" 140 and 141).

According to Weber's views, an ideal type is formed by a one-sided emphasis on one or several viewpoints, based on which individual phenomena are arranged in an integrated analytical structure. In their entirely imaginary nature, they are considered a utopia that cannot be empirically found anywhere in reality. Utopia in the sense that they are considered an idea that we cannot empirically find in reality. Ideal types are considered for methodological ideas that play a central role in Weberian social methodology. Ideal types, as their nature suggests, never seek to claim validity based on reproduction or correspondence with reality. Their validity can only be determined in terms of adequacy, which positivism advocates ignore. We can use them because they help us better explain sociological phenomena. (Stanford Encyclopedia - Weber entry).

On this basis, positivists tend to merge Weber's ideal types with the general classification of theoretical concepts. From this perspective, their value is that they enable us to realize how far phenomena are from them. (Outhwaite 1983, 90).

Weber believes that ideal types are also a key and important element for historians and historical researchers. According to Weber, deep and precise examinations of the conceptual elements used in historical explanations have shown that whenever a historian wants to go a step further and intends to go beyond merely proving specific relationships and determine the cultural meaning of a social event for understanding, they must use concepts that can only be defined and expressed accurately and clearly in the form of ideal types. (Weber, 2020 "Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy" 143-144).

As a result, according to Weber, the construction of ideal types for scientists is considered as an instruction or mandatory production. (Weber has referred to the importance of this issue for scientists in his collection of essays on methodology in social sciences.)

On this basis, ideal types in all their applied areas in human sciences discussions are considered as a series of limit-statistical concepts through which a specific situation or action is compared and carefully examined by the scientist. Given this approach presented in the "Objectivity" article by Weber, scientists can use it to formulate and organize many social relationships to achieve objectivity. (Weber, 2020 "Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy" 145).

According to Weber, ideal types can create new horizons for the scientist to properly understand the reality of the phenomena under study. Given this view,

the scientist understands reality only through a chain of thoughts influenced by various values. Finally, Weber notes that if most social science researchers refuse to accept ideal types, they must ultimately accept two important consequences. First: They consciously or unconsciously use other similar concepts without formulating or logically explaining them. Second: In the realm of perceptions that are vaguely felt, they will ultimately remain trapped. (Weber, 2020 "Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy" 146).

### **The Nature of Ideal Types in Weber's Methodology:**

According to Weber, ideal types, in their practical meaning, refer to a kind of model type that encompasses characteristics of a phenomenon that a researcher always considers significant. However, Weber believed that any scientific effort should benefit from ideal types in their logical richness. (Baert 2018, 83). An important point in Weber's methodology regarding ideal types, which has been mentioned and is considered important, is the instrumental discussion and model that Weber cultivated in his mind. As stated earlier, it is obvious that ideal types for Weber are used as a heuristic tool and as a means of formulating hypotheses for social scientists. In fact, in a scientist's methodology, they play an intermediary role. They are not considered descriptive concepts and should only be assumed in accordance with the realities existing in the social scientist's mind. In other words, ideal types are more similar to the original version than to the original itself. For example: The profit-oriented economic man is often cited as a good example of ideal types in Weber's methodology. (Eliaeson 1990, 23).

If we want to speak more precisely about the nature of ideal types considering their application in explaining social science research for the social scientist, it should be said that: As stated, ideal types are not merely aimed at providing several descriptions of social events. Rather, it should be said that their goal is to provide unambiguous expressive tools for forming accurate descriptions for the sociologist. On this basis, in social structures, ideal types create a normative criterion for action. From this, we can deductively analyze factors of deviation from the pure conceptual type of rational action. Weber has tried to demonstrate this aspect (ideal types) of his methodology practically in his research. For example, the nature of one of the applications of ideal types in Weber's methodology can be expressed in his religious sociology. There, regarding the importance of Calvinism in the development of Western capitalism, Weber effectively used ideal types. Using Calvinism as a comparative standard, in his studies on Hindu, Jewish, and Chinese religions, he tried to show why the lack of rationalization and economic development in the East demonstrates the causal importance of Calvinism in the West. (Kolko 1961, 243).

McCarthy, regarding the nature of Weber's ideal types, believes that Weber's use of ideal types as purposeful and rational action for the social scientist also benefits

from a series of mathematical probabilities. Therefore, the causal explanation in this regard depends on whether we can determine that there is a probability that in rare cases can be expressed numerically, but is always somehow calculable that a certain observable event (public or mental) is followed. Although statistics are used to express idealized regularities and generalized uniformities, they must ultimately be related to meaningful events and therefore be empirically verifiable. Hence, it does not seem that Weber recognizes concepts that have replaced specific historical and cultural dimensions of rationalized sociology with the methodological requirements of the natural scientific method. But he is aware of this at a level, as he gives his particular method to history. (McCarthy 2019, 178).

In his article “The Meaning of Ethical Neutrality in Sociology and Economics,” Weber discusses the nature of ideal types constructed by researchers. He states that to determine the characteristics of a particular attitude, a researcher may construct ideal types that align with their ethical norms. They may also construct ideal types that ethically conflict with their moral attitudes. In a third case, they may construct ideal types without any attitude and any positive or negative evaluation. Regardless of the content of an ideal type, from an ethical, legal, aesthetic, religious, or other normative standpoint, it has only one function in empirical research. This function is to compare it with empirical realities to determine differences and similarities so that we can describe these realities with the most precise comprehensible concepts and causally understand and explain them. In fact, according to Weber, ideal types make a significant causal contribution to understanding and explanations in the social sciences. (Weber, 2020, “The Meaning of Ethical Neutrality in Sociology and Economics,” p. 77)

### **The Domain of Values (The Domain of Emergence of Ideal Types):**

Ideal types, as valuable tools (for better understanding social science phenomena), as stated, can be said to have a function similar to mathematical formulas in the social sciences for social scientists. Ideal types are used by social scientists to formulate precise social science phenomena, to achieve objectivity of phenomena. It should also be noted that ideal types are closely related to discussions of causality in social phenomena. Weber always considered the concepts of statistical types in his methodology to be mental constructs that were among the inherent characteristics of a phenomenon. (Baert, 2018, p. 88)

In the field of causality in social science phenomena, Weber believed that ideal types are not initially determinants of actual events, but rather guides to possible events, and carry the potential capacity for knowledge for the sociologist. (Ashtiani, 2014, p. 138) In his methodological works, when Weber turns his attention to explaining values, he uses ideal types as helpful tools to better explain this category. The

instrumental function and application of these concepts for social scientists allow them to reach a correct and clear understanding of aspects of a social phenomenon. In Weber's methodology, what is certain is that ideal types are not capable of providing an accurate picture of examples that exist in the world. Rather, they can provide the social scientist with examples that resemble social examples and social phenomena. Weber always emphasizes that one of the responsibilities of professional sociologists in examining social phenomena is the invention of conceptual tools (ideal types). (Ritzer, 2021, p. 172)

In summary, it should be said that the concepts of ideal types (constructs), or rather their existence, are strongly influenced by cultural and social, human contexts. From this perspective, it can be said that cultural and social contexts, given the values they contain within themselves and which naturally also influence social and cultural scientists, are considered places for the emergence of ideal types. To the extent that if the sample individuals being studied by the social scientist believe in it in that culture, this allows the scientist to discuss and examine the research topic. On this basis, Weber always advised professional scholars in the fields of culture, society, or history to be aware of the differences between statistical types and empirical phenomena, especially when they are engaged in precise scientific reporting, they should distinguish between these two categories. (Baert, 2018, p. 90) He also recommends to his colleagues the correct position and role of ideal types. For example: Weber criticizes this concept in Marx's sociological system regarding the lack of awareness and the emergence of the harmful role of ideal types in sociology in his article on objectivity. Likewise, he expresses his view with criticism on the proper applicability of the nature of such concepts in other human domains.

### **Weber's Critique of Marxist Ideal Types:**

According to Weber, the harmfulness of ideal types in the Marxist sense becomes evident when these constructs are assumed to be effective forces and empirically or valid tendencies, that is, truly metaphysical. Such as concepts related to class or gender (ideas in the sense of thought patterns that exist in human minds), the ideal type of these ideas (meaning ideals that guide humans), the ideal type of these ideals (ideals with which the historian approaches historical realities), these kinds of ideal types are considered highly misleading by Weber. (Weber, 2020, “Objectivity’ in Social Science and Social Policy,” p. 159)

On this basis, an interpreter like William Outhwaite believes that Weber's ideal types are undoubtedly something like a combination of conceptual schema and relatively independent empirical claims. Such as the relationship between bureaucracy and money economy. This may cause certain confusion, along with the fact that Weber does not use this word in its familiar sense, which means inefficiency, and another

problem is that his position on whether the ideal bureaucracy is efficient or not is not very clear. He believes that understanding these are minor problems that can be analyzed with a few conceptual analytical cuts. (Outhwaite 1983, p. 92)

### **Weber's Critique on the Use of Ideal Types in Historical Research:**

Weber was strongly opposed to a history researcher repeatedly using ideal types in their research. From his perspective, the overuse of ideal types in any discipline, especially history, implies that the discipline is somehow incomplete and has not reached the level of maturity it deserves. Although he believes that the use of ideal types for social sciences is undeniable. (Baert 2018, p. 90)

### **Ideal Types and Their Relationship with the Reality of Social Science Phenomena:**

In constructing ideal types, Weber always tries to use a series of parameters that follow a simple structure and are ultimately used in larger theories. For instance, when we create a particular ideal type, we should then ask whether that ideal type, as a tool, is capable of assisting our intended theory or not. From this perspective, it can be said that ideal types in Weber's view are a kind of synthesis of world interpretation and also a synthesis of moments in which such interpretations are born. Therefore, in Weber's interpretive sociology, elements such as psychological characteristics, personality, etc. are considered. According to Weber, the main reason for the distance between ideal types and social realities is that they are dependent on a series of human actions and behaviors, which from this perspective can never be considered absolute. On this basis, the consequences that a social science researcher has envisioned for them in their mind may never be realized. The mission of ideal types in social sciences, according to Weber, is methodological advancement towards achieving objectivity of social science phenomena (they act as tools). Although they are not considered hypotheses, they are used to construct hypotheses and thus tend towards the lawfulness of theories. A very important point about ideal types is that they are not rejected due to experiments and their confrontation and correspondence with external realities. Because an action, always accompanied by human motivations, due to its complex structure, can be said to be a mysterious matter. On this basis, Weber believes that it may not be recognized in its own time and may be recognized and examined at another time. In summary, it should be said that ideal types are tools for measuring social science phenomena. Although these concepts may not be valid for all humans at all times historically. But what is important is that these concepts are preserved in the context of society and the core of history and undergo changes and dynamics in accordance with the intellectual changes and developments of social science theorists. (Ashtiani 2014, pp. 152-153)

Ideal types have not been arbitrarily and accidentally summarized like mere tools for formulating phenomena by social scientists. Rather, they are based on the logic of theories and their relationship with the world of reality. (Which may have some degree of error, which is considered natural. But ultimately, they are organized and regulated by the social scientist.) Therefore, it should be said that they are not derived from the imagination of the social scientist and are related to the realities of social science phenomena.

### **Criticisms of the Concept of Ideal Types:**

The first criticism relates to the positivists' view, who tend to merge ideal types with the general classification of theoretical concepts. In their view, the value of ideal types depends on enabling us to understand how far complex social science phenomena are from us. Positivists believe ideal types may cause problems for researchers in some ways. From this perspective, one can consider the possibility of excess in their construction, and incorrect ideal types may be constructed that are not useful to the researcher at all. In this regard, they believe there is a flaw and inadequacy in this part of Weber's methodology. Individuals like Schutz believe that there is generally a paradox governing Weber's methodology. He argues that: Weber assumes the discovery of intended meaning - in fact, the actor's intended meaning - to be the task of social science. But it turns out that this intended meaning is given to the observer and not to the subject. In other words, Weber naively considered the meaningful phenomena of the social world as the subject of self-evident intersubjective agreement, exactly in the same way that we all assume the existence of a lawful external world in accordance with our concepts of understanding in everyday life. The social world, far from being homogeneous, is given to us in a complex system of perspectives. The commonality between these two criticisms is that ideal types are somehow too fluid and loose. The positivist intends to tie them to precise hypotheses and measurement operations, while individuals like Schutz intend to engage in explaining their adequacy. (Outhwaite 1983, p. 90)

**Drysdale** believes that one of the problems that every interpreter of the objectivity article faces is that Weber expresses his belief without regard to constructing a comprehensive theory of concept formation. Therefore, anyone who tries to reconstruct Weber's theory must resort to the strategy of idealization to deal with his arguments. This strategy carries several risks, the least of which is attributing to his theory a coherence that is more than justified (in itself). However, there is no alternative to a reconstructive interpretation. It should also be said that implicitly in Weber's approach to concepts and their use, there is the notion that logically there is a dual distinction between concepts and judgments. First, concepts are tools that serve the purpose of constructing hypotheses. The fact that Weber saw discrete logical functions of concepts on the one hand and judgments in the form of

hypotheses on the other, is demonstrated by his claim about the concept of ideal types: this is not a hypothesis, but guides the construction of hypotheses. It can be said that from Drysdale's point of view, the concepts of ideal types, despite the inadequacies or shortcomings they may have for explanation in the scientist's view, nevertheless, their positive aspect and guiding nature for the precise explanation of social phenomena (construction of hypotheses) is much more useful than that part of their deficiency. (Drysdale 1996, pp. 78-79).

### **CONCLUSION:**

The construction of ideal types is something that Weberian sociology, influenced by Kant, inherently creates. They form his most fundamental Kantian character, especially in interpretive sociology. Weber states that one cannot grasp the complexity of empirical reality in its collective coherence. Instead, one must have ideal types (analytical concepts) to guide one in understanding interactions. It can be said that ideal types for Weber are analytical representations of abstractions, which are used from the sum of empirical social realities to shape and aid understanding. Here one can think of the process of objective individual phenomena that fall under an (analytical) category. In the final process, it seems that one reaches a (mental construct) that Weber considers a utopia. This means that the result is no longer reality itself, but only a representation of it. From that point on, it is these conceptualizations that guide him in understanding social phenomena, the empirical reality (and the relationship of one concept to another), and not reality itself. Similar to what we see in Kant, where empirical facts are only interpreted through evaluation, classification, and representation. Weber argues for the understanding of ideal concepts as follows: If one grasps the implications of the fundamental epistemological idea of modern knowledge, which is ultimately derived from Kant, that is, concepts are primarily analytical tools for the thinker. Mastery of empirical data can only be this, genetic and precise concepts do not necessarily cause him to refrain from constructing ideal types. As it turns out, Weber relates his ideal types to Kantian epistemology: where understanding gives this meaning (constructed) from the concepts of the mind (interpretation). (Ege Atakan 2023, p. 5).

On this basis, according to Weber, it is the task of the social scientist to measure the distance between reality and the ideal type in each case. In Weber's view, the ideal type cannot be empirically found anywhere in reality. From this perspective, ideal types, as stated earlier, are considered a utopia. It can be claimed that the validity of ideal types for use as scientific tools is very weak, but Weber responds that if the researcher rejects the effort to construct ideal types as (theoretical constructs), that is, as useless or inevitable for his specific heuristic purposes, the inevitable result is that he consciously or unconsciously uses other similar

concepts without verbally formulating them and logically explaining them. (Aragona 2019, p. 5).

As a summary regarding the concepts of ideal types, considering Weber's methodology, it should be said that according to Weber, if the social scientist cannot effectively evaluate the effectiveness or applicability of ideal types, then it must be said that their construction by scientists is considered a futile and useless endeavor. From this perspective, it should be noted that the most abstract patterns of social sciences arise from logical deduction, which Parsons has named "pattern-variables". Like ideal types. (Sheikhavandi 2004, p. 142)

As a final word, it should be said that what emerges from the philosophical interpretation of ideal types in Weber's methodological collection is this: Social scientists can by no means approach objectivity, which is one of the important and necessary characteristics of any science, especially sociology that possesses this attribute (sociology whose propositions have the characteristic of objectivity), without considering this tool for hypothesis-making and analysis of their studied phenomena.

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