

# Nations Divided



# Nations Divided and the Moderating State

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## Cultural Clash and Nations Divided

Liberal Western societies are currently in an existential crisis. This crisis not only affects the political, economic and societal fields, but above all their fundamental legitimation, which is liberal culture. This is why liberal democracies are in an identity crisis. It is impressive to witness how surprisingly this development befalls the political elites. The latter considered themselves the winners of a global historical struggle of political systems at the turn of the millennium and have diagnosed the end of history (Fukuyama 1992). The West has been victorious and all others would follow behind (Ferguson 2011). Doubtlessly, this would take quite a while and one or another rear-guard action would be taken, yet the future path was supposed to be outlined. Everything would lead into global and liberal democracy. The liberal elites of the Western world found themselves in their very own story, just as if Gene Roddenberry had written the script for it. The sci-fi series Star Trek supplies the model: The first woman captain of a spacecraft; Russians and Chinese on the bridge together; a Red Indian serving as the first officer; and women kissing each other in public. Beyond mere fiction, however, real developments also looked very promising. The Chinese open up their markets, the Russians hold free elections, the Arabs revolt against their autocrats, Eastern European countries join the European Union, and the US elects a black President who introduces a health insurance system. So does everything turn out better? The current situation looks different. Although the Chinese have opened up their markets, they are still a communist state. The liberal idea that a free economy would almost automatically involve a liberalization of society turned out to be wishful thinking. Chinese state capitalism records tremendous growth rates so that the question arises for the Chinese whether this form of state is not superior to Western democracy anyway. Although the Russians have introduced free elections, they do not actually have a choice. Although the Arabs have revolted, they have widely lost their struggle against the autocrats. While a small urban minority holds on to their dream of a liberal society, the rural majority of the population tended to use their newly found freedom to live out traditional and religious ideas of society. This struggle is fought in Syria, and the losers have already been determined. Although the Eastern European states have joined the European Union, they bring with them their own ideas of what constitutes separation of powers, free

press and an integer administration. Long-standing allies and pioneers of liberal democracy in Europe – which means the Brits – leave the union and take to their heels. This fuels even fears of a resurgence of the Northern Ireland conflict. The British seek allies in the USA, where health insurance has meanwhile been abolished again, and where the government seriously discusses armament of teachers at schools. To quote another famous sci-fi series: The Empire strikes back! But where does this resistance against liberalism come from? Does not any reasonable thought speak for a liberal and democratic societal order? Did not Western democracies prove again and again that they are the best societal order and bound to survive more or less as a result of evolution (Parsons 1966)? In their struggle against the Ancien Régime, against imperialism, against the Nazis and against the Soviets (Parsons 1972)?

It is downright dangerous to consider this golden path an historical inevitability. Development towards the good is never inevitable. This is not least of all due to the fact that it is highly disputable in societal terms what can be seen as “good” (Bellah et. al 1992). At this point, Western democracies are threatened to fail for their own ideology. This ideology was created by those supporting milieus that have always benefitted from the process of liberalization: the intellectual and economically active bourgeoisie (Rousseau 1762, Hobbes 1651). The ideology links society’s liberalization with the term of rationality (Weber 1921). Any liberal development is related to the rationality from which it is fed. Classical social philosophy speaks about saving of energy (Spencer 1874) or social division of labor (Durkheim 1893), or even about the Golden Age generated by an invisible hand of the free market (Smith 1776). But rationality spreads in many different ways. This is why the process of liberalization has always been linked with the pedagogic claim to bring people onto the path of reason. Being built on rationality, liberal democracies are obliged to enlighten. In the age of an enlightened society, there cannot and must not be any irrational moments. While the rationality of all societal action was related with the liberalization of society, the state and politics gradually adopted the form of an enlightening democracy (Kant 1795). It was only the pedagogic direction of anything liberal, which made it possible to link rationality and democracy. Hence, in liberalism’s ideology, the democratic form of the state guarantees the rationality of societal life. Sadly, this is incorrect. Ultimately, the postulate regarding the end of history (Fukuyama 1992) is fed from the

tradition of this ideological development of liberalism. But unfortunately, we are not parts of a Star Trek story. We are in real life. Nowhere else is the afore-described conflict as obvious as in the field of religion. Not only does liberalism condemn religion, it even assumes religious traits itself. It is not surprising, therefore, that religion takes a very special meaning for many people in the current situation. This does not only apply to the Bible belt in the USA, to Utah or the Middle East, to Russia, Turkey or India. Contingency is expressed when the rational answers of a reasonable world are described as being possible in a different way. On the faith level, rationality can also look different. News becomes fake news, and facts are opposed to alternative facts. On the faith level, everything is possible in a different way, too. Rational discourse has reached its end, no consensus is in sight, and the clash of cultures has begun. Enlightened elites are exasperated with the “stupidity” of the voters, and it is precisely this apparent arrogance, which makes even more voters doubt the facts of political elites. In the past century, there was still the firm belief that more education for all groups of society can solve this dilemma. Yet not all supported this idea. For: education is not only expensive, education also creates the relationship of professional actors with differentiated rationalities, and not necessarily a reference to political common welfare. Rationality is also differentiated and depends on the observer’s viewpoint. What seems necessary in political terms, might be nonsense from the economic angle. What is feasible in science might be objectionable from an ethical perspective, and what appears genial in art might involve an economic disaster. Faith hovers above all this. This does not only mean belief in God and the actual existence of Noah’s Ark, but also the belief in rationality’s objectiveness.

The focus of this book is on the cultural division of modern Western societies. This division is deep and affects many societal areas. It is made visible by the ever stronger split between rich and poor, between educated and uneducated, between urban and rural areas, between believers and non-believers etc. Accepting this as cultural contradictions that have always been obvious is a far-reaching decision in social political terms. In the ideology of liberal modernization, such differences appear as passing phenomena that are pushed increasingly to the background in the further course of the modernization process. Nevertheless, the fact that this is not a development towards a golden age, but rather a fundamental cultural contradiction, is emerging only gradually.

For several decades, Western modernity has been left to itself and can no longer be legitimated by the comparison with socialist societies and their failing economies. For several years, liberal Western societies have stewed in their own juice, so to speak. Now, fundamental contradictions break up the level of everyday life and appear on the surface of society ever more visibly. This rising heat penetrates both the political and the intellectual discourse.

In the USA, this entire development becomes obvious by the discussion about fake news and the intrinsic value of liberal positions. Donald Trump lends a face and a voice to this contradiction. To regard this political development on the highest level merely as an intermezzo that will not stop the liberal modernization process in the long run is not only an unjustified stance, but also a fatal one. In this case, liberalism will fall prey to its own ideology.

The process of societal modernization is contradictory in itself. Modern society is split on a cultural level, and it is this split which fuels societal development. Hence, the cultural split is not a collateral damage of liberal modernization, but it is the driving force of the societal development process. Is it a process that will turn toward the better? This question is empirical rather than theoretical. Well, one is always wiser afterwards.

To understand this context, it is worthwhile to discuss the fundamentals of sociological modernization theories. The classic authors of sociological theory of society understood modernity and its cultural contradictions better than political liberalism or the functional theories of the golden age have done. The subsequent analysis will show that faces of charismatic politicians and populist autocrats can be found on two sides of one and the same coin (medal). The underlying policies are completely rational phenomena of modern Western societies.

# 1 The Personalization of the Political. On the Rationality of Charismatic Politics

If we have a look at political discourses in Western democracies, we will see that politics has increasingly been revolving around individuals for several decades. Some politicians attract a level of attention that cannot be justified by their activities. But even the most dominant autocrat is ultimately backed by giant machineries, bureaucracies, parties and interest groups. Where is the problem? Politics is a complicated matter, but discourse in the media reduces this complexity by focusing on an individual. And this will happen even more frequently, the more intellectual media are being replaced by social media such as Facebook and Twitter. For the political audience, this media-made simplification creates the impression that individuals might be in a position to transform political systems in a sustainable manner. On the one hand, such a personalization fuels the emergence of unusual personalities on the political stage, but on the other hand, it also increases a widespread hatred of the political system. Why is this the case? It is because even “great personalities” seem to fail in the face of the system. While an individual person, or an individual politician, is understood and accepted, the political system itself remains nebulous. Every media coverage builds knowledge about and thus trust in the individual among the voters, while ignorance and distrust – or even contempt - increase with regard to the complex political system. The American presidential system provides particularly fertile ground for this political development. Max Weber has already described the logic behind this development.

Max Weber concludes his lecture on “Politics as a Vocation” with a very pessimistic picture of politics in modern liberal societies: Politics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards. It takes both passion and perspective. Certainly all historical experience confirms the truth -- that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible. But to do that a man must be a leader, and not only a leader but a hero as well, in a very sober sense of the word. And even those who are neither leaders nor heroes must arm themselves with that steadfastness of heart which can brave even the crumbling of all hopes. This is necessary right now, or else men will not be able to attain even that which is possible today. Only he has the calling for politics who is sure that he shall not crumble when

the world from his point of view is too stupid or too base for what he wants to offer. Only he who in the face of all this can say 'In spite of all!' has the calling for politics. (Weber 1988b: 560, transl. by Waters/Waters 2015). In his lecture, which doubtlessly bears reference to Germany's political situation after World War I, Max Weber - who was politically liberal-minded - underlines the pure conviction ethics of political actors as responsibility ethics. In this context, conviction may signify both, holding on to old traditions and absolutizing revolutionary ideas. However, if we look at this lecture in the context of Weber's modernization theoretical "interim considerations", it clearly shows that conviction can also be considered and problematized in a different form in Western modernity. In this sense, Weber underlines above all the development of parties as modern bureaucracies and the differentiation of specialist civil servants and political civil servants in his lecture on "Politics as a profession". The actual tragic feature of Weber's cultural pessimism, however, becomes obvious when the phenomenon of conviction ethics is also referred to *political everyday business*, which need not query whether it is about restauration or revolution. In this context, Weber's problematization of the politician's professional binding to the "cause" and the appropriateness of the position become a problem mainly because it can itself be interpreted as conviction. After all, the binding to the objectiveness of what is right can become a far more crucial "conviction" beyond "left and right" than the interpretation of good and bad. It is the "facts" that inch into the center and unfold more or less a political identity of their own. Conviction requires facts and presents itself matter-of-factly in political discourse. In this way, politics can be made with facts and the convictions of others can be defamed as ideologies (cf. Schelsky 1983). This changes the significance of conviction ethics and responsibility ethics introduced by Weber. In Weber's sense, the modern politician must forego any form of conviction ethics - even in a secularized form - and can, hence, not be legitimized by referring to the objectiveness of his/her own position. Ultimately, based on the logic of Weberian thought, it seems only conclusive that a modern politician can be nothing but a representative of responsibility ethics and that it is only in this way that he/she can guide society.

Accordingly, conviction ethics reduces the contingency of the political space, but restricts the possible to such an extent that a functional reference to the necessary appears improbable. *This is why Weber's argumentation departs from the structural level and focuses on the*

*significance of the individual. For Weber, ambivalences exist on this level, and it is only these that make ethical action possible at all.* Individuals may show a politically ambivalent behavior and respond adequately (ethically) to new political challenges due to the responsibility for their action. This ethic of responsibility based on ambivalence makes it possible in the first instance to leave behind the logic of political contingency reduction. It is this type of politician, which Weber calls “charismatic”. They are prophets of reason and responsibility who are legitimated by the rationality of facts. The former American president, Barack Obama, can certainly be considered a prophet in this context. At the same time, it is easy to understand why liberal policy is so helpless with regard to post-factual matters.

Where does this idea of a charismatic, responsible policy as the necessary response to modern liberal society stem from? To answer this question, we have to look deeper into Weber’s theory toolbox.

What is the special feature of Western European / American development towards modernity? To answer these questions, Weber could already refer to other explanations. It is, above all, Karl Marx’s materialistic history philosophy, which he made into the point of reference of his debates. For Weber, the development of capitalism described therein did not offer a sufficient explanation to understand the special position of Western modernity, for supplying a causal explanation of societal “progress” merely from the dialectic development of the relations of production is far too one-sided (Weber 1988a, I: 206). It is true that Weber agreed with Marx, for: “It is interests (whether material or ideal) and not ideas that dominate human action directly. But: the “world views” created by “ideas” have very often acted as course-setters determining the tracks along which the dynamics of interests advanced action” (Weber 1988a, I: 252). Weber was very interested in this course that guided the ever faster moving train of Western modernity into its specific tracks at various historical locations. At every switchpoint, the development of society was contingent and therefore possible in a different way. Yet, every setting of the course reduced some of that contingency. And even if the train’s drive is fed by the passengers’ material interests, it is the ideas that determine its direction. Weber’s theory says that these different ideas are in a meaningful relation with each other and have a sort of logic reference to each other. This does not mean, however, that this relation is of a mono-causal nature. The train’s course has not been determined beforehand and its future path cannot be predicted, not

even if more and more sociologists join the train as passengers. Yet, it is possible to recognize the course-setting and to understand the logical link of the guiding ideas in hindsight. Keeping to the picture and comparing societal development to a train ride, it is material requirements that feed the train, but it is societal rationalization that determines its direction.

When all societal developments – hence historical developments in various human cultural circles – can be described in that way as a process of rationalization, the question arises anew as to the particular feature of the Western development, or to put it in Weber’s terms: the occidental development. The new question is then: What is the particular feature of occidental rationality? And: What did the occident’s rationalization process look like? In the current situation, we should complement these questions with: How will the journey continue? Many indicators show that switchpoints are set that are going to have a crucial impact on the future direction of modernity.

According to Weber, the prerequisite of the western modernization process was a rationalization process including a “disenchantment of the world”, which culminated in the historical emergence of Protestant sects. And here is the fault of Weber’s modernization theory. A fault that involves far-reaching consequences, since the acceptance of this disenchantment has gone through the entire liberal philosophy of society ever since Max Weber’s times. It is the foundation of a rationality of the “factual” which is oriented along science and technology, economy and liberal policy.

Weber’s disenchantment is fed by:

1. The rationalization of the interpretation of the world. This level describes the exclusion of irrationalities implying that various interpretations of the world cannot be logically harmonized. The process may then set in “when things are not logical”, when contradictions or clashes of meaning appear and become evident. If we imagine the world as an order created intentionally by an almighty god who subjects human beings to his will, this interpretation does not comply with the idea of this god’s will being influenced by human behavior – like a god of thunder who sends rain when people dance around a fire twice. Either man is subjected to god’s will or vice-versa. It is inconsistent to try and interpret the world simultaneously in both ways. In a society, this contradiction may be expressed by the struggle of different supporters (social classes). Which side will prevail in

the end, depends on the outcome of this struggle, but needs to be justified rationally in some way. The rationalization of the interpretation of the world will then mean that the contradicting relations are minimized by these rational explanations in an historical development process. It is, however, not clear right from the start what decisions will be taken for what interpretations contents-wise.

2. The rationalization of the institutions. It is only the institutionalization of worldviews that makes it possible to offer specific stimuli for rational action by establishing behavioral rules. According to Weber, these institutions are themselves subject to a process of rationalization. What is irrational in this context is, when things are incompatible and are, hence, not efficient with regard to people's control of actions.

3. The rationalization of the individual way of living. This means that people have to lend some meaning to their action and that this meaning refers to abstract worldviews, yet must also be present in a complex world, which usually comprises of more than the completely different things. Having specific worldviews or living them are two different things. Rationalization of the lifestyle means that a (certain) consequence of the way of living occurs, i.e. a "methodical systematization". It appears irrational here when people do not act consistently in this sense.

The empirical connection between these three levels of rationalization becomes obvious when we see that a consistent way of living in line with specific worldviews can be both supported but also obstructed by institutions. At the same time, the rationalization of institutions can come into conflict with the common worldviews. Different to many interpreters, Weber himself has never undertaken an analytical differentiation of his rationalization term. As reasonable as this may be for obtaining a first understanding of his modernization theory, the more it should be underlined that this is a purely analytical separation. *The empirical unity of the rationalization process manifests itself by the fact that disruptions or conflicts between the different analytical levels produce just the material which fuels the boost of societal development.* Hence, it is empirical unity instead of analytical difference that is of focal relevance for the modernization process. In a generalized form, this can be expressed as follows: What distinguishes (human) action and (instinctive) behavior in Weber's eyes, is the meaning ascribed to it. Social action is understood as re-

ferring this meaning to other people and their actions. When, however, the meaning of an action must not be lost in interaction, it must first of all be ‘understood’. Reaching such understanding is only possible when an action’s meaning can be followed (irrespective of the concrete logic it follows). On this abstract level, rationalization therefore denotes a societal constraint to ensure a consistent interpretation for the meaning’s sake. This constraint grows even more, when society offers different meanings in the wake of this differentiation into various “value spheres” – such as politics and economy. Interpreted in this way, rationalization is the prerequisite of societal integration under the primacy of social differentiation. The rationalization of the way of living leads to a differentiation of roles, which complies with the rationalization of the institutions. Nevertheless, this only describes the structural side. Indeed, this rationalization of institutions involves an internalization into logically differentiated action and interpretation patterns on the level of the individual. *The stronger this differentiation affects a person’s everyday way of living, the more ambivalent will the individual remain.*

What does this mean for modern ‘occidental’ rationalism? The specific feature of occidental rationalism can be understood on the basis of the three analytical levels of the rationalization process. The analytical separation of the rationalization process makes it possible to understand the aforementioned ambivalent structure of modernity. On the one hand, occidental rationalism interprets the world as an actively formable human environment, which can be dominated actively. This interpretation of the world is not self-evident. It is rather a cultural performance – something that needs to be constructed –, which Weber illustrates in his essays on the sociology of religion. It is a long historical path from the ‘magical’ world that dominates any human life and in which the spirits are always adversarial and have thus to be pacified, to the modern idea of a divinity expressed in people’s active action and in their way of living. This path started in ancient Judaism and ends with the Protestant sects whose reference to the Old Testament does not come about by chance (in this context, see especially Schluchter 1998).

On the other hand, the specific feature of Western modernity is expressed in the institutionalization of independent value spheres such as economy, politics, art etc. For Weber, the rational organization of enterprises and state bureaucracies has, above all, been a characteris-

tic feature of Western modernity. It was possible in an historical rationalization process to align the actions of the organization's members merely to the goals of the organization and thus allow for a purely rational and purpose-oriented orientation of the individual to rational (Western) economic activity (profit maximization by maximizing efficiency) or rational governance (maximization of obedience by maximizing legitimacy). The specific feature is that for the organization, the individual is merely a member of this organization and nothing else, hence an exchangeable cog in the machinery.

Ultimately, it is also a way of living in profession-ethical terms complementing the principles of the formable world and the autonomous value spheres, which characterizes Western modernity. Referred to economic rationality, this means that the individual does not work in order to live, but lives in order to work. More generally, we might put it like that: The modern individual does not behave in a purpose-oriented way to achieve specific goals or satisfy particular needs – which can be seen from the fact that his/her purpose-oriented actions do not stop when the goal has been reached – but behaves in a purpose-oriented way simply for rationality's sake. Hence, the means become the end. As a rule, in Western modernity, a purpose-oriented orientation of the way of living therefore assumes an unthinking intrinsic value.

The relationship between the active formation of the world, the rationalized professional activity and the materialization of institutionalized relationships is of crucial significance for understanding Western modernity and, in its quality as the meaningful connection, it provides the dynamite triggering societal change. Protestant sects turned out to be the vehicle of this societal change. They were the group that acted as central switchboards for the train of Western modernity.

The problem is, above all, 1. the reduction of the possibilities of societal formation on the institutions' rationalization level; 2. the demystification of the world and the accompanying scientification on the rationalization level of the interpretation of the world; and 3. the standardization of human existence on the rationalization level of the individual way of living. The relationship becomes obvious in an evolutionary paradox. The cultural achievement of interpreting the world as an actively formable unity and one that needs to be formed ultimately does not involve the rule of the individual over the natural world, but rather the rule of the shaped world over the individual. And although this forced relationship has been a self-induced one, it

cannot be dissolved as a result of its anchoring in the specific occidental rationality. From this viewpoint, modernity can be compared with a dark prison cell whose walls move increasingly toward the center of the room and restrict the inmate's freedom of movement to zero. In contrast to Edgar Allen Poe's short story, however, it is not Spanish Inquisition which moves the cell's walls, but the search for the cell's meaning triggered by the inmates themselves. Or to use another analogy: The more the individual wriggles in the cobweb of modernity, the more he/she will be trapped. This connection can certainly be called 'tragic' and it has been called the 'iron cage of bondage' by Weber. The switch toward this 'iron cage of serfdom' has been set by the Puritan professional individual striving for spiritual salvation. The crucial feature of Weber's idea of rationalization is that the intentions of the switchmen no longer need to matter once the switch has been set and the train has started rolling: "The Puritan wanted to be a professional – and we have to be so. For as asceticism has been taken out of the monks' cells into professional life and has started to rule inner-worldly morality, it helped to erect that powerful cosmos of a modern economic order tied to technical and economic requirements of mechanical-automated production, which today determines the lifestyle of each individual born into this engine (...) with an overwhelming constraint, and will possibly continue to do so until the last grain of fossil fuel has burned up" (Weber 1988 a, I:203, transl.).

Hence, the actual sense behind the specific setting of switches has been lost, industrial capitalism is no longer an institution, no longer a means to gain salvation or shape the world for the glory of God. In this sense, capitalism – just like rationalism itself – has been developed from a means to an end. It is a 'congealed spirit'. This is underlined by a second institution, which uniquely characterizes occidental modernity alongside the capitalist economic order: namely the bureaucratically legitimated state. In this way, human action not only loses its meaning, but also its values. Without such values, the means of action degenerates into an end in itself. Hence, in this 'final stage' of modern society there can no longer be any difference between value-rational and purpose-oriented action. There is simply 'rational action' 'purified' from its subjection sense.

"Politics as a Vocation" must be understood in this sense. The appointed politician is the downright incarnation of the idea of an active

formation of the world. Nevertheless, he/she is a prisoner of this rationalization process for the very same reason. It is the idea of an active formation of the world that paradoxically gives rise to the fact that politics has to face powerful limits. This relationship only becomes obvious when we deal with the question of the calling's legitimacy.

The problem therefore is to rationalize the world, which is expressed, for instance, in individual terms in the exercise of specific professional roles. Interpreted in this way, the vocational politician is trapped in a rationalized conviction ethics, which loses more and more of its meaning and its value orientation in the wake of the rational secularization of the vocational idea. It is replaced with "conviction" of the rational world or, as we would put it today, the systemic factual constraints of political opportunism as an own conviction, as an end in itself. Referring to "Politics as a vocation", Weber confronts this conviction ethics with a responsibility ethics that is distinguished, in particular, by referring to political feasibility and responsibility. Especially in a modern culture, in which the feasible originates from a conviction-ethical rationalization, the differences between conviction and responsibility ethics underlined by Weber tend to vanish. What is responsible becomes a systemic question of rational action and – in Weber's terms – itself a question of conviction. By solving this discrepancy, the creative potential of political action disappears at the same time. The following question then arises: *How can responsibility ethics be legitimized without referring to the 'conviction' of rational systems?*

For Weber, salvation from the paralyzing effect of modern rationalism and its enforced influence on the individual is only possible when the senselessness of a target-oriented and interpretation-specific rationality is recognized, and when it is not simply replaced with a new rational search for meaning and interpretation offers. Since the means has turned into an end anyway, this goal must, instead, attain a neutral level with regard to conviction and interpretation. Hence, it must no longer be the conviction-ethical pursuit of specific rationalities that matters, because these will necessarily lead straight into the iron cage. Instead, action must be oriented to the effects and present, so to speak, a reflexive reference of action to action's consequences. In Weber's terms, a transformation of the ethical foundations of societal coexistence is needed. The conviction ethics, which is exposed to rationalization and thus leads to societal constraint, must be replaced

with social responsibility ethics that recognizes societal practice in an unideological manner. The assessment of action is then no longer based on the consistent transformation of an idea of rationality, but rather on the practice-oriented impact assessment of one's own action. Although this impact assessment is then rational in itself, it cannot clearly be ascribed to societal inevitabilities, since it depends on the context. Anyway, the interpretation of everyday action is not imaginable without such internalization in our modern world, which is characterized by a differentiation of value spheres. Breaking up the constraint to reach consistency of the individual way of living always opens up more options than it excludes. Nevertheless, the basic problem of responsibility-ethical action is to impart it to other actors. The meaning of the actions can no longer be followed so easily and would have to be conveyed with a reference to a certain context. After all, rationalization was born from the necessity of an interactive mediation of meaning so that abandoning interpretation-specific rationalities also implies abandoning the meaning-imparting quality of rationality. Hence, the problem is related with legitimizing one's own action in the eyes of others without creating a possibility of ensuring understanding of meaning by way of common ideas of rationality. Rational, responsible policy can simply no longer be transmitted. The underlying rationality is understandable to very few intellectuals only. The wide mass of the population regards this policy as a constraint, as an iron cage, as a prison from which they must escape.

*Those who want to act in a responsibility-ethical way cannot legitimate themselves rationally, but rather depend on the principal readiness of others to accept this action without any rational discourse.* For Weber, there is, therefore, only an irrational opportunity to arrive at responsibility-ethical action, which does not produce legitimization by referring to rational societal structures, but rather to the acting individual as a *personality*. A 'charismatic' personality can ensure legitimacy of action without requiring an iron-clad understanding of meaning. Referred to the entire society, a responsibility-ethical way out of this plight can only be initiated by a charismatic leader. It is only such a leader who has a chance to free him-/herself from legitimacy-creating conviction ethics and look after the contextual impact of his/her actions.

Hence, both the argumentation and the sense of mission of the religious charismatic person are fed from the rational reference to a societally institutionalized idea. A charismatic person rationalizes the