

Weber's *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. A new edition has been published as MWG, Vol. I/20.

For a summary of the content of *Ancient Judaism*, see e.g. Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (1960), pp. 142–200, and Dirk Käsler, *Max Weber* (1988), pp. 111–27. For its early reception or rather non-reception, see again Käsler, *Max Weber*, p. 206.

See also *Ancient Judaism*, *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion*, *Economic Ethics of the World Religions*, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *The Religion of China*, *The*

religions of salvation (*Erlösungsreligionen*) See salvation

*religiöse Vergemeinschaftungen* See religious communities

religiosity See religion

**religious benefits (*Heilsgüter*)** This term is used by Weber to indicate what it is about religion that makes people want it and strongly hold on to it. It is related to a need in the believer for something that is considerably deeper than some doctrine or logical argument why God exists.

The term “religious benefits” can be found in Weber’s general sociology in Ch. 1 of *Economy and Society*, where it is mentioned in the paragraph on political and hierocratic organizations (ES:54–6). A hierocratic organization, Weber explains, is a religious organization that uses religious benefits to coerce its members. This can be done either by distributing such religious benefits to the members or by denying them such benefits.

There does not seem to exist a definition of religious benefits in Weber’s work. The reader, however, is told that religious benefits can be “worldly or other-worldly, material or spiritual” (ES:56). To this can be added that these benefits also have to constitute something of very high value to the believer.

In *The Protestant Ethic* Weber uses the term “psychological” or “religious premium,” which is clearly related to the concept of religious benefits, in the sense that it represents a religious incentive for action (see psychological or religious premium). Another related term is “religious interests” (e.g. ES:517).

In the essay on the Protestant sects, Weber notes that sects assign religious benefits or premiums for proving oneself in front of the other members (GM:321).

According to Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, the term *Heilsgüter* was mainly used in Lutheran and Calvinist theology of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. “I suspect,” he adds in a letter to the author, “[that] Weber has taken the term from the works of Matthias Schneckenburger and

Karl Bernhard Hundeshagen which he had read very carefully for his work on the Protestant ethic" (Swedberg 1998:256; for Schneckeburger and Hundeshagen, see e.g. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, "The German Theological Sources and Protestant Church Politics" [1993]).

"The German word [*Heilsgüter*] is a tricky compound noun," according to Sam Whimster (2002:96). "'Heil' means 'salvation' and 'Güter' has the double meaning of 'goods' (as in commodities) and 'goods' (as in virtue). 'Salvation goods' is exact but not terribly felicitous." An alternative would be "religious goods." It would also be possible to use "religious interests" (see the discussion of the expression "material and ideal interests" in the entry for interests).

See also interests, psychological or religious premium, social mechanisms

**religious communities and groups** The section on sociology of religion in *Economy and Society* is entitled "Religious Groups (The Sociology of Religion)" ("Religionssoziologie [Typen religiöser Vergemeinschaftung]"; ES:399–634). Weber here discusses several different types of religious communities or groups, of which the most famous are the church and the sect, but which also include the religious organization and various cults. Religious communities emerge when people orient themselves to each other with a sense of belonging together, in terms of some religion. Religious communities are organizations of domination (*Herrschaftsverbände*).

For an introduction, see Martin Riesebrodt, "Religiöse Vergemeinschaftungen" (2001).

See also church, congregation, hierocratic organization, religion, sect

**religious ethic (*religiöse Ethik*)** Weber discusses the concept of religious ethic as part of his sociology of religion in *Economy and Society* (ES:437–39). While the concept of magical ethic has to do with people's relationship to spirits, religious ethic has to do with their relationship to gods. At one point in time, "transgression against the will of god is an ethical sin which burdens the conscience, quite apart from its direct results" (ES:437). Religious ethics have developed throughout history and also been rationalized, through the efforts of prophets, priests, and laity.

In a letter to his publisher of December 30, 1913, Weber says that in his sociology of religion he discusses "the sociology of religious ethics" of "all religions" (Lang 2001:87).

**"Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions"** See "Zwischenbetrachtung"

**religious virtuoso (*religiöser Virtuose*)** In his sociology of religion We-