

## **Max Weber (1864-1920)**

Weber rejected Marx's economic determinism, functionalism and reductionism. He believed that religion could be a cause, not just a consequence, of economic action.

Weber's concept of *Verstehen* (understanding) was important in the development of interpretative sociology.

### Key works

*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5)

*The Religion of China* (1913), *The Religion of India* (1916-17), *Ancient Judaism* (1917)

*Economy and Society (Wirtschaft und Gessellschaft)* (published posthumously in 1920s)

*The Sociology of Religion* (excerpted from *Economy & Society*)

*From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (English translation of selected works by Gerth and Mills, 1946)

### Key religion concepts (ideal types)

Religious leaders: magician, priest, prophet.

Types of theodicy:

1. A messianic eschatology which predicts a future era of peace and justice in this world
2. Reward or punishment in the afterlife
3. Reward or punishment in the next life ("karma")
4. Dualism, which posits two divine beings or forces in a battle over the world

Salvation programs: human effort or divine gift.