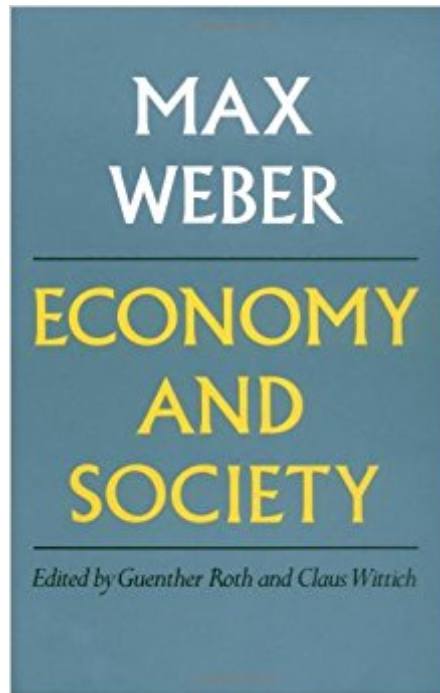


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# Economy And Society: An Outline Of Interpretive Sociology (2 Volume Set)



## Synopsis

Max Weber's *Economy and Society* is the greatest sociological treatise written in this century. Published posthumously in Germany in the early 1920's, it has become a constitutive part of the modern sociological imagination. *Economy and Society* was the first strictly empirical comparison of social structures and normative orders in world-historical depth, containing the famous chapters on social action, religion, law, bureaucracy, charisma, the city, and the political community with its dimensions of class, status and power. *Economy and Status* is Weber's only major treatise for an educated general public. It was meant to be a broad introduction, but in its own way it is the most demanding textbook yet written by a sociologist. The precision of its definitions, the complexity of its typologies and the wealth of its historical content make the work a continuous challenge at several levels of comprehension: for the advanced undergraduate who gropes for his sense of society, for the graduate student who must develop his own analytical skills, and for the scholar who must match wits with Weber. When the long-awaited first complete English edition of *Economy and Society* was published in 1968, Arthur Stinchcombe wrote in the *American Journal of Sociology*: "My answer to the question of whether people should still start their sociological intellectual biographies with *Economy and Society* is yes." Reinhard Bendix noted in the *American Sociological Review* that the "publication of a complete English edition of Weber's most systematic work [represents] the culmination of a cultural transmission to the American setting...It will be a study-guide and compendium for years to come for all those interested in historical sociology and comparative study." In a lengthy introduction, Guenther Roth traces the intellectual prehistory of *Economy and Society*, the gradual emergence of its dominant themes and the nature of its internal logic. Mr. Roth is a Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. Mr. Wittich heads an economic research group at the United Nations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The complete *Economy and Society* has been around a long time in this English version, but before that it was a long time coming: excerpts by Talcott Parsons were published as *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, which you can still buy, and that Parsons would call one of his own books *Economy and Society* indicates postwar sociologists were perhaps expecting this to never appear. Writing in the chaos at the end of Wilhelmine Germany and the beginning of the Weimar Republic, Weber tried to take the insights he had scattered in his historical-sociological writings and expound them very, very systematically in an "introductory" textbook. This massive two-volume set is based on what he did accomplish along those lines by the time of his death in 1920. The level of abstraction is fearsome, but in contradistinction to later social theory (which considered itself all the more successful the more "counterintuitive" its proposals were) Weber's *verstehende* or "interpretive" sociology studies rationality as it is patently apparent at the levels of the individual, group or "concern", and nation. If you are even moderately reflective about your life in the contemporary world, no matter where, Weber's typologies of action and organizational structure will seem like sharper delineations of your common-sensical picture of life. At a time when the October Revolution had exploded in the European consciousness, Weber was intent on damping-down criticism of the "irrationality" of modern society and enthusiasm for Utopian experiments.

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