

**INTERNATIONAL  
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF  
ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY**



# **INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY**

**Edited by  
Jens Beckert and Milan Zafirovsky**

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# Introduction

The analysis of the economy has been a core concern of sociological scholarship ever since the institutionalization of sociology as an academic discipline. For 'classical' sociologists like Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Vilfredo Pareto and others, the understanding of the economy, its social and political constitution, and its effects on society were main areas of their scholarship. Many of their writings stand close to the institutionalist traditions in economics. During the post World War II period the focus on the economy in sociological scholarship receded. Over the last twenty-five years, however, economic sociology has experienced a dramatic revival of interest. This shows in the many anthologies and journal articles that have been published on the subject, in newly founded journals and in a growing number of monographs in the field.

Despite this great interest in scholarship in economic sociology, no publication has been available so far that gives a comprehensive overview of the core concepts, terms, substantial subfields and main contributors of economic sociology. It is this gap that the *International Encyclopedia of Economic Sociology* attempts to close. The Encyclopedia assembles about 250 articles by more than 160 different authors who are well-known experts on their topics. The chosen entries and the authors were selected by the editors together with the editorial board of twelve internationally leading economic sociologists.

We strove for the production of a volume that is broad, integrative and interdisciplinary. To this end we included central concepts, terms and authors from economic sociology but also from adjacent disciplines like economics, anthropology, political science and organization studies to the extent they are relevant for current research in economic sociology. The goal was to provide a comprehensive resource that gives an easily accessible overview over the expanding field of economic sociology.

The articles are structured in a specific way. Authors define their topic and its relevance at the beginning of their articles. The main part of the entries is devoted to the core debates, schools, concepts and developments of the topic, followed by a conclusion and outlook. Entries communicate the historical aspects of the subject, outlining traditional and contemporary developments and reflect in many cases country-specific aspects of the relevant debate. A broad international perspective has also been encouraged by choosing authors from a great number of countries. Cross-references, marked in **bold**, help the reader to find entries related to the topic. The bibliography at the end of each article leads the reader to crucial further publications on the issue.

The encyclopedia aims at all scholars, students and members of the general public wishing to explore the sociological perspective on the economy. They can be



sociologists, economists, political scientists, anthropologists or scholars from business studies and organization studies, as well as students and researchers from other disciplines. The book will give students and researchers a systematic up-to-date picture of the extent and range of work in economic sociology. In addition, the Encyclopedia is also of interest for research-oriented policy and business consultants, economic institutions, foundations and the like. To support this broad interest authors were asked to write in a reader-friendly though technically precise manner. Since the Encyclopedia encompasses a far broader range of subjects compared to existing readers in the field of economic sociology, it will be an important companion to research and scholarship upon which undergraduates, graduates, professors and researchers can draw. We hope that the reader will find the Encyclopedia a clear and concise guide to economic sociology

and its particular topics which also provides a springboard for further exploration, analysis and thought. The editors would like to thank the members of the editorial board for their many valuable suggestions, especially at the early stages of the development of the Encyclopedia. We would also like to thank the authors who wrote this large book in a collective effort that none of us could have accomplished alone. Special thanks go to Aileen Harvey, the Development Editor at Routledge, for her effective work in helping us with the organizational tasks that come with coordinating so many articles written by so many different authors. We also thank Gerard Greenway, the Commissioning Editor at Routledge, for entrusting us with this important and demanding project. Finally, Jens Beckert would like to thank Barbara Temps for her secretarial help.

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