

Weber: Social Action

Sociology

The four ideal types of action, and why Weber starts from meaning.

Ideal types: analytic exaggerations, not real categories.

Type of action	Driven by	Example
Instrumental-rational	Means fitted to ends	Choosing a cheaper supplier
Value-rational	A commitment held as right	Refusing a lucrative bribe
Affectual	Feeling in the moment	Striking out in anger
Traditional	Habit and custom	A family ritual meal

Verstehen: interpretive understanding of the actor's own meaning.
Weber pairs it with causal explanation, not against it.