

**Why Europe Was First**Social Change and Economic Growth in Europe and East Asia  
1500-2050*Erik Ringmar***Pub Date:** March 2007**Binding:** Paperback**Price:** £14.99 / \$28.99**ISBN:** 9781843312413**Category:** BUSINESS & ECONOMICS /  
Economic History**BISAC code:** BUS023000**BIC code:** KCZ**Extent:** 428 pages**Size:** 212 x 135mm; 8.3 x 5.3**Rights Held:** World**Description****An engaging and enigmatic historical review of the way in which some countries have become economic successes, leaving others in their wake.**

'A thought-provoking and well-written book that provides a unique and idiosyncratic contribution to world history.'  
—*Professor John M. Honson, author of The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*

'Ringmar provides the most concise and powerful explanation that I have read, and in enjoyable and skillfully-wrought prose. This is an intellectual feast.' —*Jack A. Goldstone, Hazel Professor, George Mason University*

For most of its history Europe was a thoroughly average part of the world: poor, uncouth, technologically and culturally backward. By contrast, China was always far richer, more sophisticated and advanced. Yet it was Europe that first became modern, and by the nineteenth century China was struggling to catch up. This book explains why. Why did Europe succeed and why was China left behind? The answer, as we will see, does not only solve a long-standing historical puzzle, it also provides an explanation of the contemporary success of East Asia, and it shows what is wrong with current theories of development and modernization.

**Readership:** Students and scholars of economic history, European history, Chinese history and development studies.

**Contents**

The Nature & Origin of Modern Society; The Failure & Success of East Asia; The Self-Transforming Machine; The Discovery of Distance; The Face in the Mirror; Institutions that Reflect; Origins of the Entrepreneurial Outlook; The Age of the Demiurge; Institutions that Get Things Done; A World in Pieces; The Polite Alternative; Institutions that Deal with Conflicts; Institutions & Revolutions; Reflection; Entrepreneurship; Pluralism; Europe & China Compared; Foreign Challenges, Japanese Responses; Japan & China in a Modern World; The New Politics of Modernization; Notes; Bibliography; Index

**About the Author**

Erik Ringmar is a Professor at the National Chiao Tung University, Hsinchu, Taiwan.

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