

# Hendrik S. Houthakker

**Hendrik Samuel Houthakker** (December 31, 1924 – April 15, 2008) was a prominent American economist.

## Contents

**Life and career**

**Selected bibliography**

**References**

**External links**

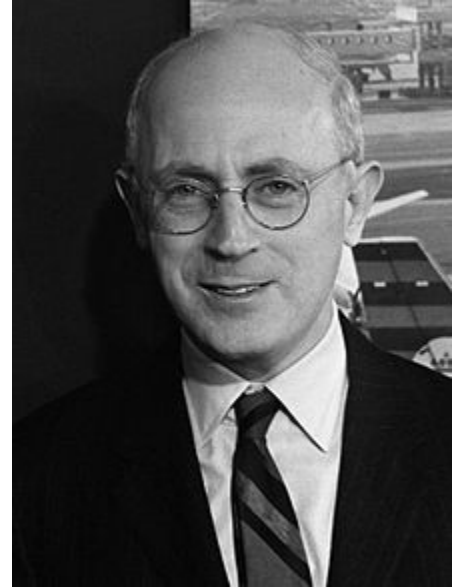
## Life and career

Houthakker was born in Amsterdam. His father was a prominent art dealer. As a teenager he lived through the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and, according to an interview he gave to the *Valley News*, was once arrested by the Gestapo but escaped and was sheltered for some months by a Roman Catholic family. He completed his graduate work at the University of Amsterdam in 1949.<sup>[1]</sup> He taught at Stanford University from 1954 to 1960 and then completed the rest of his career at Harvard University. In 1961 he was elected as a Fellow of the American Statistical Association.<sup>[2]</sup> Houthakker served on President Nixon's Council of Economic Advisers from 1969 to 1971.

Houthakker's contributions to economic theory have been summarized by Pollak (1990).<sup>[3]</sup> He is particularly well known for the Strong Axiom of Revealed Preference, to which his name is often attached.<sup>[4]</sup> This paper reconciles Paul Samuelson's revealed preference approach to demand theory with the earlier ordinal utility approach of Eugene Slutsky and Sir John Hicks, by showing that demand functions satisfy his Strong Axiom if and only if they can be generated by maximising a set of preferences that are "well-behaved" in the sense that they satisfy the axioms of choice theory, that is, they are reflexive, transitive, complete, monotonic, convex and continuous—essentially the conditions required for a Hicksian approach to demand theory.

Houthakker's wife, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, was a Polish-born philosopher and founder of the World Phenomenology Institute; they were married for 52 years, up to his death. Through her he became friendly with Karol Wojtyła, subsequently Pope John Paul II.

### Hendrik S. Houthakker



Hendrik S Houthakker (1969)

<b>Born</b>	December 31, 1924 <div>Amsterdam,<div>Netherlands</div></div>
<b>Died</b>	April 15, 2008 <div> (aged 83)</div> <div>Lebanon, New Hampshire, United States</div>
<b>Nationality</b>	Dutch American
<b>Institution</b>	Harvard University <div>Stanford University</div>
<b>Field</b>	Behavioral economics <div>Econometrics</div>
<b>Alma mater</b>	University of Amsterdam
<b>Doctoral students</b>	Christopher A. Sims <div>Elhanan Helpman</div>
<b>Influences</b>	Richard Stone

Barack Obama Sr. (Barack Obama's father) worked as a research assistant for Houthakker over the summer in 1963 at Harvard.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Selected bibliography

---

- Houthakker, Hendrick S. (1959), "The scope and limits of futures trading", in Abramovitz, Moses; et al., *The allocation of economic resources: essays in honor of Bernard Francis Haley*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, OCLC 490147128 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/490147128>).


## References

---

- <http://dare.uva.nl/document/2/141824>
  - View/Search Fellows of the ASA (<http://www.amstat.org/awards/fellowlist.cfm>), accessed 2016-07-23.
  - Pollak, R. A. (1990). "Distinguished Fellow: Houthakker's Contributions to Economics". *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. **4** (2): 141–156. doi:10.1257/jep.4.2.141 (<https://doi.org/10.1257%2Fjep.4.2.141>).
  - Houthakker, H. S. (1950). "Revealed preference and the utility function". *Economica*. New Series. **17**: 159–174.
  - "A Letter About Barack H. Obama Sr.'s Record in College" (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/06/18/us/obamas-father-college-record-letter.html>). *The New York Times*. 2016-06-18. ISSN 0362-4331 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0362-4331>). Retrieved 2016-06-19.
- Bernstein, Adam (2008-04-23). "Hendrik Houthakker, 83; Economist, Nixon Adviser" (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/22/AR2008042202871.html>). *Obituaries*. Washington Post. p. B07. Retrieved 2008-04-28.
  - Valley News*, 19 April 2003, article and interview with Houthakker.

## External links

---

- Home page at Harvard ([https://web.archive.org/web/20070410084349/http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/houthakker/houthakker\\_bio.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20070410084349/http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/houthakker/houthakker_bio.html))
- Biography at the New School (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070504043252/http://cepa.newschool.edu/het/profiles/houthakk.htm>)
- Hendrik S. Houthakker (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/58573805>) at Find a Grave 

---

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hendrik\\_S.\\_Houthakker&oldid=822330084](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hendrik_S._Houthakker&oldid=822330084)"

---

**This page was last edited on 25 January 2018, at 19:22.**

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.