The main purpose of the course is to demonstrate how the social pre-
conditions may both limit and stimulate economic change from non-market to various
types of market economy, and how some economic choices induce social costs and
gains while some other choices induce other costs and gains. The course aims at
analysing the social factors in play during Central and East European transformation
in the light of more universal theories and concepts.

The course focuses on interdependence between economic system and social
systems at the time of deep and often radical change in the region. The theoretical
approaches of economic sociology including those dealing with group interests, path-
dependency, corporatism, rational choice and the institutional approach, will be
discussed together with empirical evidence from transforming economies of Central
and Eastern Europe. This will help to explain the interplay between the factors
promoting the changes and the factors constraining them.

Two levels of analyses will be considered: macro-level of economic and social
system, and micro-level of economic and social actors like: households, firms and
trade unions. The interplay between the two levels and specific role of the state will
be displayed.

It is expected that at the end of the course the students will be grunted with,
and be able to demonstrate, a detailed understanding of major terms of economic
sociology, like vested interests, social institutions, market regulation, economic
relations and their social embeddedness, rational choice and its limitations, shadow
economy, non-market economic relations, etc. The expected outcome is also the
understanding of general co-existence and co-determination of the economic and
social spheres of any economic process, in particular, at the time of deep
transformation. Students are expected to follow the set of common readings from the
syllabus, to give oral presentations, write reaction papers and prepare term essay (ca.
3000 words).
1. The sociological perspective on the economy

Readings:

2. Evolutionary theorizing versus rational choice theory

Readings:

3. Understanding social institutions and their role in a systemic change


4. Bureaucracy a rebour. The party-state economy and its social mechanisms

Readings:

5. Social Market Economy: the concept and reality

Readings:

6. The Outcomes of a systemic change

Readings:

7. Economy and social interests

Readings:

8. Economy and social structure

Readings:
9. The informal economy

Readings:
J. M. Kovacs: Introduction in: as above, pp. XI-XXIII

10. Consumers, citizens and employees: social actors in the economy

Readings:

11. The limits of economic rationality

Readings:
B. Misztal: Trust in modern societies, Policy Press, 1996, Chapter 1 (pp. 12-33)

12. Politics, the economy and society: how they interrelate?

Readings:
F. Block: The role of state in the economy, in: N. J. Smelser, R. Swedberg (eds.): The handbook…, (pp. 691-711).

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