European societies are facing big challenges and are undergoing major transformations. Economic sociologists study social processes on all levels of analysis and considering transformation processes in economic and social life. Economic sociologists use and study socially defined categories, social-political institutions, practices, relations and the ways economic actors interpret and use them when coping with crises and challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises, social and political transformation etc. In light of this, a most interesting field of interest to economic sociology is how exchange relations change or sustain in the recent transformation processes.

We want to focus on how different social processes have transformed European countries and regions especially on the level of categories, exchange patterns as well as on social and economic structures. Please feel free to send in theoretically oriented as well as empirical studies dealing with transformations in Europe over the last decades. You can apply either to the already organized sessions mentioned below or to the overall conference theme.

As usual, we also invite papers related to more general topics of economic sociology such as:

- Theoretical developments
- Methods, case or regional studies
- Studies on markets, reaching from labor markets to markets for special goods
- Morality and economy
- New forms of social inequality
- Digitalization

We invite economic sociologists to submit either an abstract of presentation addressing one of already proposed sessions (see the list below/attached) or covering the general topics mentioned above.

Please submit your proposals no later than April 15th here: https://forms.gle/RSnxVTBTuVx8vgSF7.

In case of any trouble, please do not hesitate and contact either one of the local organizers or one of the network’s coordinators. Proposals should not exceed 150 words. We welcome proposals related to all the mentioned themes. You find all information on the website network too: https://www.europeansociology.org/research-networks/rn09-economic-sociology.

The ESA Research Network 09 “Economic Sociology” Midterm Conference is going to be held in Warsaw, one of the largest cities of Eastern Europe, a region that recently went through large-scale transformation from a planned economy to a free-market one. The region became the laboratory for neo-liberal experiments, which influenced the labor market, industrial relations, the social-institutional embeddedness of the economy and the way other areas of social and political life are organized.
Thanks to the support of the European Sociological Association, we will be able to support a couple of early career researchers (PhD students and early-stage postdocs) with travel grants. The applications for travel grants ought to include an extended abstract of not more than 1000 words.

Calendar 2022

April 15    Deadline for paper submissions
May 1    Information about accepted submissions
June 30    Deadline for registration
July 15    Preliminary program published
Sept. 8-10    Mid-Term conference in Warsaw

Organizers:

European Sociological Association, RN09 Economic Sociology
Polish Sociological Association, Section of Economic Sociology
University of Warsaw, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences and Resocialisation
Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology

Venue:
University of Warsaw Library (BUW) [LINK]

Local Organization:
Mikolaj Pawlak (mikolajpawlak@uw.edu.pl), Marta Olcoń-Kubicka (molcon-kubicka@ifispan.edu.pl)
Session overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Categories, transformations and exchanges under state socialism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Critique of neoliberalism in the public debate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A comparison between Eastern and Western Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Technological change and new economic practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Constructing spatial justice: The territorial quantification of needs and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Valuation in the economy and beyond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Towards cashless society – A world without money or a world focused on money?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Exploring gender inequalities in times of asset-based welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Socio-economic development, well-being and happiness – problems, measures, findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Institutions and transformation processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Institutional and network mechanism of migrants access to labor markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Effects of technological change, the Covid19 pandemic and the Great Recession on labor markets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mateusz Fałkowski
Pilecki Institute, Berlin
m.falkowski@instytutpileckiego.pl

Categories, transformations and exchanges under state socialism

Most research in the field of economic sociology concerns the social embeddedness of economic decisions of actors operating in the context of democracy and market economy. The proposed session concerns the transactions and adaptation processes in the different context: that of real socialism in Eastern Europe before 1989. The analysis of processes occurring in real socialism with analytical tools of economic sociology still can provide valuable insights both for understanding post-communist economies and societies, and for the development of relevant theories. It should also be noted that e.g. Polish or Hungarian sociology or anthropological research of that time offered interesting insights worth looking at in retrospect. Submitted texts may concern, for example (but not exclusively):

- Formal and informal exchanges under state socialism, role of state enterprises, and „second economy“
- Redistribution, consumption and adaptational processes under state socialism
- Revisiting old research and approaches (e.g. organizational sociology, anthropology) and drawing conclusions for today’s research and theory
- Path dependency and impact of state socialism’s institutions on economies and societies in post-communist countries
Critique of neoliberalism in the public debate:

A comparison between Eastern and Western Europe

The critique has accompanied neoliberal intellectual discourse and non-discursive practices since their genesis. Some aspects of the critique were adopted and strategically absorbed into the ideologic and practical dimensions of neoliberalism. Due to recurring crises of post-Washington-Consensus-order, and to the process of democratization of economic expert knowledge, the problematization of neoliberal capitalism became “a hot topic” in many liberal democracies. In Western Europe, the spectre of debate includes the issues of global and neo-colonial exploitation, economization of social relations and individual biographies, and financialization. In recent years, also in Eastern Europe, the narrative on the historical necessity of neoliberal modernization has been publicly challenged both by leftist public intellectuals, politicians, and journalists and by a few former liberal leaders of the transformation who respond to appeals for self-criticism. The session aims to discuss the main and marginal streams of the debate on neoliberalism and indicate its imitative and alternative dimensions in Eastern Europe in comparison to Western critical discourse. Papers referring to the genealogy of the debate on neoliberalism, (in)formal and argumentative strategies of communicating the critique to socially differentiated audiences, and the impact of the debate on the practical and material performance of the neoliberal economy are welcomed.

Technological change and new economic practices

We are living in digital society or information civilization or surveillance capitalism. All these descriptions of today type of societies referring to the profound technological change we are experiencing in every sphere of our life. The speed and scope of these changes are overwhelming. The new economic sociology, in my opinion, do not stress appropriately the consequences of this technological change on economic practices. In many theoretical approaches in economic sociology including networks, institutions, performativity, organizational studies, political economy we can find very interesting analysis of changes in economic practices as consequences of technological change. May be it is time to look at these new economic practices from sociological, anthropological, economic perspectives using micro or macro analysis, local or global context making technological change a center of our discourse.
Constructing spatial justice: The territorial quantification of needs and responsibilities

Repeatedly, states are confronted with questions of spatial justice yet lack the cognitive devices of markets in order to deal with them. In most policy fields where the attribution of needs and responsibilities to political territories becomes subject to decision making there are no prices available that could be used as a cognitive device of information, evaluation and allocation. If indicators as a functional equivalent to prices are available, they very likely are the outcome of highly presumptuous forms of quantification and calculation in-kind in a territorial scheme. At the same time, formal mechanisms of spatial justice do not exist in every policy field nor are they restricted to the allocation of money. While rules of fiscal federalism allocate money, rules of asylum federalisms allocate people, school planning allocates social infrastructure to certain territories. How do processes of categorization and commensuration facilitate or inhibit the institutionalization of formal mechanisms of spatial justice? The session especially invites paper proposals addressing burden sharing in asylum policy. However, comparisons of the construction of spatial justice across different policy fields are also welcome.

Valuation in the economy and beyond

Practices of categorization are central to valuation in the economy and beyond. This session invites conceptual and empirical papers that apply a valuation studies perspective (in the broadest sense) to discuss economic and non-economic forms and practices of valuation (i.e. attributing value to or establishing the worth of a specific object or a category of objects) and their relations. For instance, the papers may compare economic with non-economic forms and practices, investigate links between economic and non-economic valuations, scrutinize conflicts and contention between economic and non-economic forms and practices, or explore drivers and consequences of broader social transformations with regard to economic and non-economic valuation.
Towards cashless society – A world without money or a world focused on money?

The issue of money has been interesting for sociology for quite a long time. Starting with classical work by Simmel, up to recent publications about new forms of money or financialization of life – sociologists notice that not only money itself, but also its forms influence greatly social relations and have impact on social structure. Although the issue of cultural values, or material aspects of money have been explored, the category of “cashless society” or “cashlessness” is only getting more attention from sociologist. For example, the term „cashless” is right now almost obsolete in such prestigious international, sociological journals as the „American Journal of Sociology”, „American Sociological Review” or „Sociology”. As more and more societies are really transforming into the cashless economy (e.g. Sweden), the economic sociology should use its experience and investigate a nature of this transformation, especially how new forms of cashless exchange transform economic institutions, economic actors’ interests and consumer behaviors. We welcome papers discussing topics relating to cashless economy, like – social impact of payment cards and mobile payments, cultural and economic consequences of money withdrawal, consumer society as cashless society, etc. We invite papers that use both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Exploring gender inequalities in times of asset-based welfare

In the context of increasing financialisation, financial tools, markets and institutions have become increasingly pertinent in providing welfare. The everyday person is expected to use assets in case of income shortfalls; for instance the house is assigned a welfare function by using price increases as a basis for income during retirement. These new forms of asset-based welfare require individuals to engage with various forms of financial investment and management throughout their everyday lives.

Yet, we know little about how social and cultural worlds influence everyday financial practices and despite evidence suggesting that women are disadvantaged in financial systems, surprisingly little is known about how gender affects financial practices in times of asset-based welfare. Understanding the gendered dynamics of investment is essential to resolve inequalities in the system. Therefore this session aims to explore the role of gender in asset accumulation and seeks to bring together research across countries and disciplines.
Socio-economic development, well-being and happiness – problems, measures, findings

While economists more and more widely accept subjective and objective well-being as an important social goals of economic development, especially in a framework of the relatively new branch of economics, namely “happiness economics”, national income (GDP or GNP) still remains the most commonly used indicator of development. On the other hand, sociologists still relatively seldom include purely economic processes, economic growth included, as the topics that should be incorporated in sociological investigations. Several widely known social oriented indexes of human development or progress underestimate or totally neglect economic growth and other economic processes as their components. This session will discuss interrelations between economic and social as well as objective and subjective aspects of development, with special emphasize on human well-being and happiness. Papers on measurements and interpretations of relations between development and other complex social phenomena and processes like trust, governance, psychological functioning, political changes etc. are invited as well. Three types of papers are invited: theoretical, methodological and presenting research findings on national or comparative international level.

Institutions and transformation processes

This session aims to deeper explore the relationship between institutions and transformation processes. One the one hand, economic institutions can either trigger transformation processes or hinder them. On the other hand, societal or political transformation processes may result in the change of economic institutions. From an economic sociological perspective, core economic institutions (markets, firms, stock exchange, money etc.) as well as economically relevant institutions (politics, unions, religion etc.) matter in economic transformation processes. We invite contributions that help to theoretically conceptualize, empirically study and deeper explore how economic institutions affect or hinder societal or political change, and how transformation processes of any kind in turn affect economic institutions. Examples may include but are not limited to core economic institutions named before, and societal transformation processes such as those induced by the creation of the European Union, the introduction of the Euro, the rise of nationalism, or financial, ecological or, recently, the pandemic crises.
Institutional and network mechanism of migrants access to labor markets

In this session, we propose to discuss the forms taken by labor market entry points for migrants – the social structures that enable participation of migrants in a labor market but at the same time often sort them to its given sector. Entry points are elements of broader migration infrastructures. Entry points might be formal institutions set by states running their migration policies; they might be institutions set for other purposes (i.e. in higher education where migrant students often enter the labor market); they might be organized by for-profit actors intermediating in employment (i.e. employment agencies); they might be social networks of personal relations providing information on jobs.

In studies of migrants' entry points to labor markets we see the interplay of formal and informal and interactions between macro-level state policies and micro-level individual decisions mediated by institutions and social networks. We invite papers contributing to the knowledge about the mechanism of migrants' access to the labor markets.

Effects of technological change, the covid19 pandemic and the Great Recession on labor markets

The growth of the so-called “digital” or “information” economy foster the creation of new jobs over the past decades. In some countries, such trend compensated the contraction of the traditional manufacturing sector. One positive outcome derived from the development of this “New economy” was the creation of value added activities increasingly rewarding higher education and enhancing productivity. However, under the context of the Great Recession, the expected positive effect of this transition seems to be overshadowed by the increasing precariousness of employment conditions in many of the newest employment niches, particularly within the context of what is known as “gig economy”. The Covid19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated this trend even further.

This session aims to provide a forum for discussing the impact on labor markets of the effects derived from the 2008 Great Recession and the parallel development of the “digital and information economy”. To what extent is the observed precariousness inherent to the development of the “new economy”? To what extent the Great Recession has shaped the development of the digital economy? How could the effects of the Great Recession and the development of the digital economy be disentangled? Are its effects the same over all economic sectors?