

Proposal for Economic Sociology related Course in Response to the Call for International Experts for the 2020 BFSU International Summer School

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Main Subject Area: **Sociology (8)**

Area: **Economic Sociology**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course title: **Regional Development(s), Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Course Description:

The course is based on the idea according to which the different forms of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial actions are crucial elements to understand the current economic development, both at the local and the global levels. Accordingly, the main approaches of economic sociology will be applying in the analysis of empirical cases which has been investigated in the literature, whereby adopting a comparative perspective. The first classes (*lection 1 to 3*) will be devoted to illustrating the main analytical tools that will be empirically explored in the second part of the course (*lection 4 to 8*). Respectively:

- The connection between relational structures in which entrepreneurs are embedded and their economic actions.
- The incentives/constraints affecting economic actions and outputs.
- The informal institutions (i.e. values, routines, cognitive orientation, social conventions, trust) affecting economic processes.

The aforementioned approaches will be orienting the analysis of empirical cases concerning the following topics:

- Dynamics of competition in small and medium firms in international and highly globalized markets.
- Spatial concentration in specific territorial areas of economic activities (e.g. Silicon Valley, industrial districts, High-tech clusters) and innovation.
- Economic competition between different capitalist models (coordinated/not-coordinated; Asian capitalisms) and within the same models (local and territorial competition).
- New capitalism and new entrepreneurship: sharing economy and social/economic innovation from below, immigrant entrepreneurship, female entrepreneurship.

Language: The course will be taught in **English**, in the form of **lecture**, and doesn't require any requisites.

Assessment: students will be required to make a **presentation of a paper** – to be identified with the instructor – discussed with peers and teacher during the second half of the course. Students will be then requested to write a **short essay** (maximum 1.500 words) about the paper they have read, which has to be critically analysed according to one of the approaches illustrated in the first part of the course. In greater detail:

Weekly continuous assessment: 20%

Presentation of a paper and discussion: 35%

Final short essay: 45%

COURSE SYLLABUS

Name of the Instructor: Luca Storti, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Economic Sociology

Type of class arrangement: Type A

Course description and objectives:

The course aims to offer some insights both theoretically and empirically concerning several crucial phenomena of the current economic scenario: i) different regional developments between and within countries; ii) competition and interaction between entrepreneurs; iii) social and economic innovation. In sum, the objectives of the course are threefold: i) enrich the students' capability of autonomous analysis of some puzzles of the economy; ii) familiarize the students with relevant investigations in social sciences regarding the institutional analysis of economic dynamics; iii) enable students presenting scientific analysis (conceptual framework-data-findings), and applying these tools to similar cases.

Topics:

- Changing capitalism(s) and regional development
- Entrepreneurship and relational networks
- Institutions, regional development, and entrepreneurship
- Institutional environment, and economic outcomes
- Small firms and big markets
- Spatial concentration and economic innovation
- Territorial competition
- New capitalism, new entrepreneurship, and social innovation

Teaching methods: i) Frontal lecturing; ii) Interactions based on “question of the day model”; iii) Presentation and peer discussions concerning some of the papers included in the syllabus. Presentation/discussion will mainly take place in the second half of the course.

Assessment: As we mentioned in the previous section, students will be required to make a **presentation of a paper** – to be identified with the instructor – discussed with peers and teacher during the second half of the course. Students will be then requested to write a **short essay** (maximum

1.500 words) about the paper they have read, which has to be critically analysed according to one of the approaches illustrated in the first part of the course. In greater detail:

Weekly continuous assessment: 20%

Presentation of a paper and discussion: 35%

Final short essay: 45%

Syllabus

	Content	Teaching method(s)	Main readings
July, 7th: Changing capitalism(s) and regional development	Despite Capitalism has changed towards a high financialized stream of processes, regional and local economic development is still relevant: How? Where? And Why?	Frontal lecturing (session 1-3). The second part of the lecture will be interactive based on the question of the day technique (session 4). The instructor will pose a question on topics of the lecture to develop analytical thinking.	Swedberg (2013); Hall, Soskice (2001);
July, 9th: Entrepreneurship and relational networks	Entrepreneurs are pivotal actors of economic processes both at the international level (big and medium entrepreneurs) and at the local one (micro and small entrepreneurs). How social networks which they are embedded in do shape their economic action? How do they shape/use the networks which they belong to in order to gain profit?	Frontal lecturing (session 1-3). The second part of the lecture will be interactive based on the question of the day technique (session 4). The instructor will pose a question on topics of the lecture to develop analytical thinking.	Storti (2018); Uzzi (1997).
July, 14th: Institutions, regional development, and entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial action is shaped by the political regulation of the economy. How and why can political regulation (local-national-international ones) set up opportunities and constraints to entrepreneurial action?	Frontal lecturing (session 1-2); Discussion of a paper between teacher and peers (session 3-4).	Storti (2014); Witt, Redding (2013)
July, 16th: Institutional environment, and economic outcomes	Institutions are also social norms creating (partly) coherent environments. How can institutional environment shape economic outcomes? (i.e. small Chinese immigrant entrepreneurs acting between social norms and social capital: the Guanxi effect)	Frontal lecturing (session 1-2); Discussion of a paper between teacher and peers (session 3-4).	Lin et al. (1995b); Liu, Nandhakumar, Zachariadis (2018);

<p>July, 21th: Small firms and big markets</p>	<p>Big economic companies/entrepreneurs compete at the international level. However, several medium and small firms/entrepreneurs are also active within international markets. What kind of social resources does allow small firms to be active in big markets, even without scaling up their size?</p>	<p>Frontal lecturing (session 1-2); Discussion of a paper between teacher and peers (session 3-4).</p>	<p>Colli (2002); Wand, Warn (2017)</p>
<p>July, 23th: Spatial concentration and economic innovation</p>	<p>It is well known that economic activities might be concentrated at the local level (e.g., Industrial districts, clusters, etc.). What does make specific territorial areas devoted to intense economic dynamics? What mix of factors (i.e., socio-institutional variables) does make innovative entrepreneurial orientation spread out in some territorial areas?</p>	<p>Frontal lecturing (session 1-2); Discussion of a paper between teacher and peers (session 3-4).</p>	<p>Ferrary, Granovetter (2009); Lin (1995a)</p>
<p>July, 28th: Territorial competition</p>	<p>A variate of forms of capitalism does exist (i.e. Liberal Capitalism; Coordinated Capitalisms; Asian Capitalisms). How and why do they differ between and within them in terms of entrepreneurial and territorial competition? The analysis will mainly compare the US model, the Central and Southern European ones, and the Chinese one.</p>	<p>Frontal lecturing (session 1-2); Discussion of a paper between teacher and peers (session 3-4).</p>	<p>Dilli, Elert, Hermann (2018); Lin (2011)</p>
<p>July, 30th: New capitalism, new entrepreneurship, and social innovation</p>	<p>New types of economic action are emerging from below: social entrepreneurs, horizontal and shared way of organizing production and exchanges, new forms of cooperation between young and well-educated entrepreneurs; egalitarian exchanges of knowledge to foster innovation; enhancement of “new issues” such as social responsibility and environmental sustainability. What kind of mechanisms help explain these new economic/entrepreneurial paths?</p>	<p>Frontal lecturing (session 1-2); Discussion of a paper between teacher and peers (session 3-4).</p>	<p>Moulaert 2016; Ramella 2015; Wachsmut, Weisler 2018. Zu (2019); Gast, Gundolf, Cesinger (2017).</p>

Required and recommended readings

- Colli, A., *Pocket Multinationals: some reflections on "new" actors in Italian industrial capitalism*, in H. Bonin et al. (eds.), *Transnational Companies, 19th-20th Centuries*, Plage, Paris, pp. 155-178, 2002.
- Dilli, S., Elert, N., Hermann, A.M., *Varieties of entrepreneurship: exploring the institutional foundations of different entrepreneurship types through 'Varieties-of-Capitalism' arguments*, in "Small Business Economics", 51-2, pp. 293-320, 2018.
- Ferrary, M. and Granovetter, M., *The role of Venture Capital Firms in Silicon Valley's Complex innovation network*, in "Economy and Society", vol. 38, pp. 326-359, 2009.
- Gast, J., Gundolf, K., Cesinger, B., *Doing Business in a green way: A systematic review of the ecological sustainability entrepreneurship literature and future research directions*, in "Journal of Cleaner Production", 147, pp. 44-56, 2017.
- Hall, P.A., Soskice, D., *Varieties of Capitalism. The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001.
- Lin N., *Yungmei. "Local Market Socialism: Rural Reform in China*, in "Theory and Society", vol. 24, pp. 301–54, 1995a.
- Lin, N. et al., *Sociocultural Regime in Institutional Development: The Family Enterprise of Private Colleges in Taiwan*, in "Asiatische Studien/. Special Issue on Chinese Societies at the Dawn of the Third Millennium" vol. 1, pp. 173–95, 1995b.
- Lin, N., *Capitalism in China: A centrally managed Capitalism (CMC) and its future*, in "Management and Organization Review", 7-1, pp. 63-96, 2011.
- Liu, J., Nandhakumar, J., Zachariadis, M., *When guanxi meets structural holes: Exploring the guanxi networks of Chinese entrepreneurs on digital platforms*, in "The Journal of Information and Strategic System", vol. 27-4, pp. 311-334, 2018.
- Moulaert F., *Social Innovation: Institutionally embedded territorially (re)produced*, in "Social Innovation and Territorial Development" McCallum, D. and Vicari Haddock, M. (eds), pp. 11-24, 2016.
- Ramella, F., *Sociology of Economic Innovation*, Routledge, London, 2015.
- Storti, L., *Being an Entrepreneur: emergence and structure of two immigrant entrepreneur groups*, in "Entrepreneurship and Regional Development", 26 (7-8), pp. 521-545, 2014.
- Storti, L., *Deepening the liaison: Mixed embeddedness and economic sociology*, in "Sociologica. International Journal for Sociological Debate", 12-2, pp. 23-37, 2018.
- Swedberg, R., *The Financial crisis in the US 2008-09: losing and restoring confidence*, in "Socio-economic review", vol. 11, pp. 501-523, 2013.
- Uzzi, B., *Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The paradox of Embeddedness*, in "Administrative Science Quarterly", 42(1), pp. 35-67, 1997.
- Witt, M. A., Redding, G., *Asian business systems: institutional comparison, clusters and implications for varieties of capitalism and business systems theory*, in "Socio-Economic Review", Vol. 11-2, April 2013, pp. 265–300, 2013.
- Wachsmuth, D. and A. Weisler, *AirBnB and the rent gap: Gentrification through the sharing economy*, in "Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space", 50-6, pp. 1147-1170, 2018.
- Wang, Y, Warn, J, *Chinese immigrant entrepreneurship: Embeddedness and the interaction of resources with the wider social and economic context*, in "International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship", <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0266242617726364>, online published: August 28, 2017.

- Zu, L. *Fostering Social Innovation and Youth Entrepreneurship for the Achievement of the UN 2030 Agenda: The Chinese Way*, in “The Future of the UN Sustainable Development Goals”, eds. S.O. Idowu, R. Schmidpeter, L. Zu, Springer, New York, 2019.

The aforementioned papers/book should not be assumed as compulsory; only a few of them will be required. **The course has been thought for students not having a preliminary knowledge of economic sociology.** Students who might feel to carry a preliminary reading could refer to the following book: Trigilia, C., *Economic Sociology: State, Market and Society in Modern Capitalism*, Blackwall Publishing, 2002 (limited to chapters 8 and 10). In this respect, the Instructor is available via mail before the course will be starting.

Torino, 29th November 2019

