



World in Transition and Central European Transformation: Lessons Learnt

1-20 July 2013, Masaryk University (the Czech Republic)

8 ECTS

Central Europe was the focus point of global dynamics for a couple of times during the 20th century thanks to its strategic position in between Germany and Russia. It was also the region of primary importance after the fall of communism, when after massive campaigns it became the place of the historical first expansion of NATO to the former Eastern bloc. Yet not just the strategic position and security issues, but also ambitious plans for rapid transformation from a state-controlled system towards a free and democratic society during the 1990s caught widespread world attention.

The Summer School we offer aims at providing students with a broad understanding of state transformation issues in general and from the practical experience of the Czech Republic and its Central European neighbours it draws knowledge for potential use in other countries around the world which are undergoing their own transformation/transition process. During the course students will gradually come to understand various dimensions of the major transformation process – starting with sociological and political aspects, moving towards the economical side and concluding with the legal issues. The course is designed as an interdisciplinary forum, thus primarily, but not necessarily, it should engage students of social and humanity-related fields– Political Science, Law, Economics and Sociology.

The proceedings of the course will consist of four subsequent blocks and each will consist of a theoretical background in the prospective field, with practical experience of the Czech Republic/broader Central European region, and in the interactive session a current transformation state in the world will be discussed using the acquired knowledge. Each block will be taught and supervised by a leading Czech/Slovak scholar with expertise in the field. Students will be strongly encouraged to compare the different country cases and the dimensions. The interactive sessions will cover countries like China, Iraq, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Vietnam, Russia, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Cuba, South Africa and possibly others.

This intensive and dynamic programme will involve academic classes, active group work, meeting people personally involved in Central European transformation and visits to organizations like the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Radio Liberty – Radio Free Europe, Open Society Institute, the International Visegrad Fund and others. In addition to the academic programme, a rich cultural programme will be integral to the course along with field trips with the purpose of looking at the discussed issues on the ground level.

The participants of this course will:

- Grasp the theory of relevant academic fields towards a major transformation of a state system
- Learn about cases from the Czech Republic and its Central European neighbours' transformation experience and assess them critically based on theory and comparison
- Engage in stimulating interdisciplinary and intercultural discussions about current cases of transition states in the world
- Visit the major cities of the Central European region (Prague, Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest)
- Get to know organizations involved in the transformation of the Central European countries and important for global changes today
- Take part in a unique cultural programme

Module 1: *Struggles and Challenges of Political Transformation: Searching for Democracy*

Instructor: Michal Mochťak (mochtak@fss.muni.cz)

Description

The aim of the *Political Science* cluster is to provide basic information about the processes of political transformation during the democratization period. The three day session will be divided between the theoretically-oriented lectures and practical case-studies that are crucial for a better understanding of on-the-ground transformation processes. Students will be able to identify what the democratic transformation is all about, what it means to democratize a political system, what the most possible patterns of political change are, who and why democratizes and what the outcomes are. Moreover, they will understand that the process of democratization is an open-ended highway where a promising initial phase does not inevitably imply successful democracy in the end. On the basis of the last two decades, participants would be able to critically assess the opportunities and struggles of democratization in the modern world and describe the key challenges we face today. Specific attention will be paid to the position of election, which is still perceived as a key factor in the process of democratic transformation. The theoretical introduction will be demonstrated on case-studies from the Czech Republic and Slovakia which will be presented in contrast to the more turbulent contexts worldwide (Egypt; Mexico; Myanmar; Western Balkans; Russian Federation and others).

Outcomes

- Students will understand what the process of democratization is all about; what democracy is and is not; who and why supports democracy and what the possible outcomes of the effort are.
- Participants will get familiar with the Czech and the Slovak cases of democratization (predominantly the political dimension). Moreover, they will be able to recognize the contrast of successful transformation through comparison with the struggles of other countries worldwide.

- Students will critically assess and discuss today's democracy promotion programmes and their pitfalls.

States

- The Czech Republic
- Slovakia
- Egypt
- Mexico
- The Russian Federation
- Myanmar
- The Ivory Coast
- Kenya
- The Western Balkans

Prerequisites

- Go through all the assigned readings (will be provided later)

Module 2: “Everyday life in post-socialism”: Transformation in Central Europe from a sociological perspective

Instructor: Slavomíra Ferenčuhová (ferencuh@fss.muni.cz)

Description

The cluster *Everyday life in post-socialism* will introduce the students to the conceptual frameworks used by sociologists in the analysis of the societal transformations observed in the Central Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Our aim is to inform the students about some of the most important attempts to theorize these changes from a sociological perspective (both macro- and micro-perspective), as well as to critically discuss the key concepts that have appeared in the social sciences since the early 1990s (transition, transformation, (post)socialism, (post)communism). In the second plan, the focus of this cluster will be restricted to the sociological analysis of the city; we shall focus on the changes that the post-socialist cities (in CEE countries, but also in post-Soviet republics and Russia) have been undergoing since 1989/1991. The overview of the research on the transformations of urban forms, urban landscape, urban governance and everyday life in the cities will help us better understand the most important aspects of the transformation and the impacts it has had on the everyday life of the citizens and their environment. Eventually, we shall open the questions that resonate across the writings of sociologists, anthropologists and/or urban scholars (see for example Stenning and Hörschelmann 2008): what sort of historical period is post-socialism, when does it end, is the category (still) useful, and *who* is post-socialist?

Outcomes

- Students will become familiar with the key social-scientific theories and concepts used in the the research on social transformation in the CEE and they will be able to discuss them critically
- Students will understand the interconnections between the changes in urban forms and everyday life in cities and the broader social transformations
- Students will be encouraged to consider the applicability of the concepts and findings to other contexts

Discussed States

- The Czech Republic
- Slovakia
- Germany
- Hungary
- Poland
- Bulgaria
- Romania
- post-soviet republics
- China

Teaching units

1. - 4. Sociological perspectives on transformation; key concepts and their critique; macro and micro perspectives; continuity and change in post-socialism
5. - 8. Spatial aspect of social transformation; post-socialist city; urban forms; urban landscape; everyday life; urban inequalities; urban planning and policies
9. - 12. What is “post-socialism”? Is there an end to post-socialism? Who is post-socialist?

Prerequisites

- Go through all the assigned readings (will be provided later).

Module 3: Economic Transformation

Instructor: Libor Židek

Description

The economic cluster will provide students with knowledge about economic transformation from a centrally planned to a market economy. The key analysed country is the Czech Republic but independent lectures are dedicated to comparison with other countries from the region – Hungary and Poland. The main objectives of the module are to understand the basic steps of the transformation process and apply the knowledge of economic policy/macroeconomics to transformation cases.

At the end students will

- exercise orientation in the development of the economies in Central Europe during the transformation period,
- acquire dispositions for better understanding of contemporary economic development in similar transformation cases worldwide,
- gain deeper insight into the nature of the basic economic concepts through understanding of the development of the discussed economies.

Teaching units:

1. - 2. Functioning of the centrally planned system and the discussion about its (dis)efficiency
3. Theory of economic transformation (among others gradualism vs. shock therapy)
4. – 5. Economic policy during the transformation period – main steps of the economic policy; liberalization measures taken at the beginning of 1991.
6. Economic results (GDP, unemployment, inflation); outside relationships
7. Privatization, development of the banking sector.

8. Discussion about privatization (necessary to read the assigned literature in advance).
9. – 10. Transformation in Hungary and Poland
11. – 12. Gradualism vs. shock therapy: discussion about the pros and cons of each and assessing the experience of Central Europe, Russia, China, Vietnam and possibly Cuba and North Korea in the future (necessary to read the assigned literature in advance).

Bibliography

ZIDEK L.: Transformace české ekonomiky/Transformation of the Czech economy. *The book has been published in Czech. The English version of selected chapters will be provided.*

ZIDEK, L.: Transformation in Poland. Review of Economic Perspectives, Brno: Masaryk University, 11, 4, od s. 236-270, 34 s. ISSN 1213-2446. 2011 (<http://nho.econ.muni.cz/2011-4/transformation-poland>)

Compulsory reading for discussion:

Selected parts of Semler, D., Zonis, M. The East European Opportunity. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1992, pages 80-87, 95-102.

MLčoch, Lubomír: "Czech Privatization – Penalties for the Speed (a criticism of the radical liberalism)", Prague Economic Papers. VŠE, Praha 1997, no. 1, pp. 3–14.

Prerequisites: Students read the assigned literature before the lectures and understand the basic economic terms.

Module 4: Transformation of the Legal System: Seeking justice or reconciliation?

Lector: Pavel Molek (pavel.molek@law.muni.cz)

Description

The aim of the *Transformation of the Legal System* cluster is first to describe the starting situation of the Czechoslovak legal system at the end of the socialist period, i.e. the logic of the functioning of a socialist legal system. Afterwards, the solutions of five basic legal problems of transition from a non-democratic to a democratic legal system will be described: continuity vs. discontinuity of the legal system and institutions, rehabilitation, restitution, lustration, and prosecution of crimes of the past. Analysis of all these issues will include discussion about potential human rights violations caused by chosen solutions. The lecturer will describe the Czech/Czechoslovak solutions and these will be compared with solutions in other states of the same region, especially in Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Baltic states. Afterwards, the lecturer will ask the students to assess the applicability of these solutions on countries of their origin or interest, with the expected discussion comprising South Africa, China, Portugal and others.

Outcomes

- Students will be able to describe the Central European ways of transformation of legal systems, including typical mistakes that should be avoided in possible future transitions.
- Students will be able to assess the applicability of these solutions on other countries of possible future transitions.

Discussed States

- the Czech Republic
- Slovakia
- Germany
- Hungary
- Poland
- Baltic states
- South Africa
- China
- Portugal

Teaching units

1. - 2. Socialist Legal System 1948-1989
3. - 4. Continuity vs. Discontinuity
5. - 6. Rehabilitation
7. - 8. Restitution
9. - 10. Lustration
11. - 12. Prosecution of crimes of the past

Prerequisites

- Go through all the assigned readings (will be provided later).