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New Texts

János Mátyás Kovács

Petering Out or Flaming Up?

New Institutional Economics in East-Central Europe (translated by *Alexander Kurakin*) 17

Abstract

In the paper János Mátyás Kovács reflects upon frictions in the reception of the new institutional economics in Eastern Europe. Large-scale importation of new institutional economics (NIE) was predicted at the beginning of postcommunist transformation in Eastern Europe experimenting with deep-going institutional change. Textbook Marxism was vanishing while mainstream neoclassical economics was not widely spread. Under these conditions, NIE and ORDO liberalism could be seen as good options for many economists and sociologists. Surprisingly, Eastern Europe was not flooded with the NIE concepts. Moreover, NIE still has a rather low profile among the economists in the region giving way to rather eclectic research programmes. Using results of a research project carried out in eight countries, János Kovács gives a comprehensive picture of this peculiar transformation in economic and social sciences.

Keywords: new institutional economics; ORDO liberalism; East-Central European economics; postcommunist transformations

New Translations

Avner Greif

Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade (an Excerpt)

(translated by *Inna Kushnareva*)..... 35

Abstract

Varieties in economics, politics and societies are widely considered to be resulted from the influence of different institutions. However, economists, political scientists, and sociologists do not come to agree about what institutions are, which forces contribute to the maintenance of institutions and their changes, and how it is possible to affect institutions development. The author proposes an understanding of institutions which integrates outwardly opposite perspectives of institutional approach in social sciences. His conception gives opportunities to deal with institutional roots, maintenance, endogenous changes and the influence of previous institutions on the successive ones.

The journal «Economic Sociology» publishes the second chapter «Institutions and Transactions» in which the author defines the key concepts of his study in institutional backgrounds for markets and states.

Keywords: institutions; economic transactions; organizations; integrative approach to institutions.

Beyond the Borders

Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov

Bear Skins and Macaroni: On Social Life of Things in a Siberian State Collective,
and On the Performativity of Gift and Commodity Distinctions..... 59

Abstract

This article explores a multiplicity of meanings of exchange and multiplicity of relations that are established through exchange. The article is based on long-term fieldwork in the north of the Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia, in which it was observed how a single item that was changing hands between the same people acquired different meanings. This exchange was understood as trade as well as gift at its different moments. The article approaches this interplay of meanings from the point of view of Michel Callon's theory of performativity of economy. Callon's focus is on performative relationship between market economy and economic knowledge. In the article, this focus is complemented with the idea of performativity of distinction between gifts and commodities. It is argued that in a situation in which meanings of exchange are exchanged in addition to material objects, it is this relationship between market and non-market exchange that it performative in Post-Soviet as well as in Soviet and older imperial power/knowledge relations. This argument is important for the anthropological gift theory, in which these distinctions are understood as descriptive, rather than performative.

Keywords: gift; commodity; performativity; Michel Callon; Siberia.

Debate Studies

Maria Kravtsova

Corruption in Police: Changes in Police-Entrepreneur Relations..... 82

Abstract

The article demonstrates that the structure of corruption relations between police officers and small businessmen has been changing. Informal payments have been replaced by forms of corruption relations which do not involve payments but suppose long-term bilateral contracts and mechanisms of tit for tat reciprocity. These transformations influence the entrepreneurial climate in a significant way. The system where the role of personal ties with officials is especially important, some entrepreneurs feel much better. They have less cost loading, understand deeper their interests, and accumulate more resources in order to protect them in dealing with police officers. There are a lot of factors influencing business climate; therefore it is too early to suppose its significant improvement.

Keywords: corruption; informal relations; police; entrepreneurs.

Professional Reviews

Svetlana Barsukova, Vadim Radaev

Informal Economy in Russia: A Brief Overview..... 99

Abstract

The review is devoted to sociological studies in the field of informal and shadow economy in Russia. It discusses the rise of the shadow economy in the Post-Soviet era, involving transition from fictitious and virtual

economy to shadow dealings, from relationships of «blat» to business networking, and from pilfering to tax evasion. Moreover, it addresses the institutionalised practices of corruption and use of violence in business, the maintenance of inter-family reciprocal exchanges and the progressive legalization of business activities. The brief overview proposes key findings concerning the differences between the informal sectors of the Soviet and Post-Soviet periods and the main trends of the modern development in Russian shadow economy.

Keywords: informal economy; informal inter-family exchange; corruption; violent entrepreneurship; legalization of business activities.

New Books

Ivan Pavlutkin

Three Sagas of Economics, or Traits of Professional Cuisine. Book Review on Fourcade M. 2009. *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 112

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