

University of Copenhagen

Department of Economics

Economic Sociology

Summer exam 2017

Guidelines in answering the questions

Q1

The student shall list Portes five orientations for Economic Sociology:

1. A critique of the general understanding of how unregulated markets work emphasizing the role of trust in economic transactions
2. A critique of the role self-interest is given in economic theory in the explanation of economic transactions
3. A recognition of the point that economic transactions does not take place in a vacuum but are part of cultural and social ties between agents
4. The fact that rational intentions can lead to unintended consequences
5. An emphasis on the role power plays in market interactions.

And discuss these

In addition, the student shall explain Aspers critique of economic and sociological man – and explain why identities is seen as a better concept. One important argument for this is that identities are created in an interaction between the agents. No agent can decide his or her identity alone – as it is created in the interaction and judgements with other agents in the market.

Q2

There are several issues to be dealt with in answering this question:

1. A streamlining of the concepts used by economic sociology in the analysis of the market like how to understand the agent (sociological man, identity) and the context of the social market actions i.e. the understanding of the concept embeddedness.
2. A use of the understanding of the influence of social interactions and trust among agents on their market transactions.
3. A focus – or more precisely – a lack of focus in economic sociological analysis of have money function in the market.
4. A discussion of how to understand the labor market – as a market similar to other markets or an special case.
5. How to understand global markets
6. The relationship between market actions and non-market actions of economic content like transactions within the family or the black economy.

In dealing with these issues the student shall show his/her ability to reflect on those and to use core classical sociological concepts like power (Marx), rationality (Weber) and order (Durkheim).

Q3

In the discussion on whether Economic Sociology should be a supplement or an alternative to economic theory the important thing is that the student argues for his/her position e.g. by reference to recent developments in economic theory that are relevant for the critique raised by Economic Sociology.