

GRADUATE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGY -
ORGANIZATIONS, MARKETS, OCCUPATIONS, AND WORK

August 28-29, 2003

The doctoral exam in Economic Sociology - Organizations, Markets, Occupations, and Work is consists of three parts. The questions in Part I is required, but in Part II choose one of the three questions. In all you will have a total of three questions. The aim of the examination is to determine the student's command of this specialization within fairly stringent time and space constraints. No such examination can fully test the content of your knowledge, but it is intended to demonstrate your general familiarity with major theories and methods as well as contemporary issues in the specialization.

Please use your time over the next 24 hours as efficiently as possible. Each question of the examination should be allocated **no more than** 5 double-spaced typed pages for a total of 15 pages (excluding references) for the entire examination. You may consult your notes and readings, but you may not discuss any aspects of the examination with others until after all exams have been completed. A hard copy of the exam is preferred.

DATE AND TIME STARTED: _____

DATE AND TIME RETURNED: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

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PART I. Required Questions. Answer both questions in this section.

1. Sociology has engaged in theoretical dialogues with economics in two ways: (a) adopting the rational choice/self/interest theoretical position and applying it to sociological issues, and (b) proposing alternatives (especially sociological arguments) to this “economic” orientation. Identify a specific research area (e.g., labor markets, globalization, interorganizational relationships), and discuss:
 - a. How these theoretical orientations are reflected in the research literature in the chosen area;
 - b. What empirical evidence has been brought to bear on the orientations;
 - c. Take a position on this issue (for or against one or both orientations), justify your choice, and suggest ways in which your position may resolve potential conflicts in these “competing” orientations.

2. Select a specific, substantive area of research organization research, economic sociology, or research on globalization. Identify one unsolved problem that involves competing theoretical arguments in the literature. State the main theoretical issues involved, contrast the two theoretical logics, and derive their empirical implications. On this basis, propose a research design to empirically adjudicate between these competing arguments. The research design should consider the following issues:
 - 1) Operationalize key concepts;
 - 2) Formulate hypotheses that can be empirically verified;
 - 3) Describe evidence/data to be used for empirical examination;
 - 4) Suggest appropriate analytical methods.

The research design can be either a qualitative or quantitative study, or a combination of both. Provide justification for your choice.

PART II. Elective Questions. Choose one of the three questions in this section.

3. Discuss the specific historical conditions that separate “globalization” from previous periods of economic development. Elaborate on the benefits and costs of globalization according to different theoretical perspectives. Focus on a particular country or an area of research, and evaluate how empirical evidence has either supported or falsified these lines of arguments.

4. There is a substantial and growing body of research literature on social capital and the labor market. Review the research approaches, studies, and major findings. Discuss the present shortcomings or puzzling findings of this literature and suggest ways (conceptual and/or empirical) this research enterprise ought to consider to increase its contributions to economic sociology.

5. Choose a theoretical paradigm in organization research and identify a key theoretical idea (a concept or an analytical issue) in that literature (e.g., legitimacy in institutional theory, population density in pollution ecology, etc.). Discuss and illustrate how empirical research in that tradition over time has enriched, extended or in other ways contributed to the further development of this theoretical idea. What are the limitations in the current empirical research on this topic?