

Report of the project ERASMUS-JMO-2021-CHAIR project 101048187 Postsocialist societies and cultures under European Green Deal – POSTGREEN

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The objective of the project POSTGREEN has been to investigate, teach, and disseminate knowledge on the opportunities for the Green Deal to offer new ways for social and economic inclusion and innovation, especially in the post-socialist countries of the European Union ‘from below’, i. e. from the perspective of societies and cultures that are subjects of the green deal transformation.

The courses on green transformation

The new course has been designed by PI on political and economic transformations under Green Deal. The course focused on the anthropological analyses dealing predominantly with the ethnographic material on postsocialist European Union. The course has been continuing to be taught also after the completion of the project (in the ongoing academic year 2025/26 and the plan is to continue in teaching of this course). The number of students has followed the general pattern in the field, making the study of social anthropology stabilised over the period of three years when it comes to the number of students. The intention of syllabi and number of students enrolled has been satisfactorily fulfilled. The project helped to focus on an upcoming issue in social and cultural transformation of (postsocialist) Europe into green and digital continent and obstacles this transformation brought about.

The new course Societies and cultures under green deal was established. The update of the existing courses included: Political Anthropology for BA students, Social Policies and Integration, the teaching of a new course Human Rights in 21. Century and the update of the existing courses EU energy policy, Foreign Policy of the Slovakia, Security Studies. All courses integrated the division of the project into legacies of transformation, alternative innovations, and European demos. Topics for bachelor and master theses for graduating students have also been part of the project.

The course „**Political and Economic Relations and Cultures under Green Transformation (European Green Deal)**“ introduced students to discussions on social and economic transformations of European Union (EU) from the perspective of postsocialist societies and cultures of the EU. Special attention has been paid to the discussions /and readings/ dealing with transformation to carbon neutral society from the everyday perspective. The content of syllabuses has been revised each year (the course has been taught in winter semester), following the upcoming pressing social and political issues related to green transformation. The course included orientation of students in actual news and pending issues regarding ecological crisis.

The topics of the course have been divided into three parts. The first part dealt with the specific communist industrial legacies, causing in part skeptical attitudes among the population

regarding the green deal. The second set of issues focused on the actual alternative innovations resulting from these legacies of state socialism and postsocialism, to discover possible autochthonous patterns of green transformation. The third part of the course discussed the public sphere and political projects that can build upon legacies and alternative innovations in postsocialist Europe, well-connected to the European Green Deal.

The course has been organized as discussions about students' presentations and lectures by the PI. This pivotal course has been revised also for the new academic year and the major content of the course, dealing with green transformation, has remained its core component.

The topic of how to approach the population with autochthonous approach to ecological crisis after state-socialism has been offered in the academic journal by the course academics (Juraj Buzalka & Andrea Figulová (29 Nov 2023): Post-peasant progressivism as a kind of populism, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/14782804.2023.2288243)

The direct responsibility of the PI has been also the update of BA course **Political Anthropology**. This original course underwent restructuring under the new accreditation. Since 2022 the original course in the project was divided into the course Anthropology of Eastern Europe and Political and Economic Anthropology. The topics of the project POSTGREEN have been discussed in the course **Anthropology of Eastern Europe**. Two sessions have been directly devoted to the issue of anthropology of green transformations and Green Deal impact and several others indirectly discussed social and cultural transformations. The ethnographic case studies from postsocialist Eastern Europe has been discussed in the first place.

The course **Social Policies and Integration** has also been updated from being originally MA course on applied anthropology into BA applied anthropology course, dealing with how to understand the political system and what an anthropologist can do in/with public policies. The course was taught collectively by the members of the team. It was divided into sections dealing with political system, social organization of Slovak and East European societies, social and human rights policies in moder-era postsocialist societies. The course has benefited greatly from the input of POSTGREEN, and the course's content continues to be an integral part of the syllabus. The major aim also remains to offer practice-oriented knowledge for BA students of social anthropology to carry out fieldwork for their bachelor theses and to begin their work after the completion of their studies.

Other courses have been subject of changes, depending on the available lecturer (several lecturers have changed the team) but the original plan to teach planned courses has been followed. The actual individual sessions of the project, dealing with the green deal, have been taught on courses **EU energy policy**, **Foreign Policy of Slovakia**, **Security Studies**. The new elective course **Human Rights in 21. Century**, dedicated to the issues of environmental rights and justice, has been successfully offered to students over the course of the project.

Screenings of movies and documentaries

The initial plan had been to bring leading documentaries by professionals on ecological crisis for the wider academic audience. The first documentary screening has been organised within this intention. The follow-up discussion was organized by the academic instructors involved in

the project and covered especially the global dimension of climate change and how it influences the production and consumption of wine in various regions, including Slovakia. The remaining two planned events have been focusing on the national level. They have been extended to discussion with the author of the film on endangered bird species in the Carpathians /Hlucháň/. The documentarist, professional ecologist by training and public figure in the field of ecological politics /Erik Baláž/, provided thorough answers to questions asked by the viewers. The third screening has been modified to be represented by the painting exhibition by the renowned academic painter famous for his living in and getting close to nature in his works /František Guldan/. The topic of the exhibition has been the multiethnic character of Slovakia and the sources of autochthonous tolerance in Slovak society. All these issues have complained about the third planned dimension of the project, dealing with European demos. The discussion with organizers of the exhibition included the issues of nature preservation as the idea and practice native to Slovakia and the paintings' reflection of the recent transformation of Eastern Europe /the agrarian society of Slovakia had been transformed two-three generations ago by Soviet style industrialisation/. The issues of self-definition of Slovaks and other nationalities living in Slovakia, involving collective self-perception as being close to nature, have also been raised. The decision to include the exhibition of paintings, along with film screenings, as two very close representations of visual art, has been considered excellent by the attendees and organizers. The paintings have remained in the hall of the faculty for several months and made students, visitors, and employees visually aware of the multiethnic character of Slovak society, defined as being close to nature.

Textbook

The textbook has been provided in Slovak language, as the introductory texts into the green transformation of postsocialist Slovakia have been more suitable for early-stage students. Another reason has been that there have been no textbooks on anthropology of green transformation available in Slovak. The textbook shall attract students in the first place, and their native tongue is the most appropriate form to do so. Additionally, the academic article in the leading European Studies journal has been published in English (Juraj Buzalka & Andrea Figulová (29 Nov 2023): Post-peasant progressivism as a kind of populism, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/14782804.2023.2288243), providing students with additional reading on how green transformation can be promoted and implemented in Slovakia, considering the social and historical context of the country's society and culture. Parallel to the project POSTGREEN has been the publication and promotion of best-selling book by the PI, *Postsedliaci* (Postpeasants, Mamaš: Bratislava 2023) that has built upon the knowledge basis of the project. The publication of the book acquired an impressive public resonance in Slovakia and included dozens of meetings with readers across Slovakia and several in Czech Republic. The book success can be considered to be the major unintentional side effect of the POSTGREEN project.

Research seminars and international conference

There have been seven research seminars planned for the duration of the project (six of them planned originally, seventh included during the project). These all have been following the core

idea of the project, involving leading experts in the field from Slovakia and from abroad. All the topics have been discussed with guests in advance, the seminars have been promoted via social media and via email databases and touched upon three major areas of research/teaching: legacies of transformation, alternative innovations, and European demos/. The seminar was promoted for 16. 12. 2024. It must have been cancelled due to the decision of the university to move teaching online /quarantine due to the infectious disease detected in the premises of the faculty/. The total number of seminars has remained to be as planned. The international conference was organised towards the end of project (3rd year, April 2025). The event took place in the countryside (south-central Slovakia, one of the severely underdeveloped regions of the country with a high potential for tailored local/regional green transformation projects). The conference included leading experts in the field of anthropology of transformation from Slovakia and abroad. The conference included the excursions to the sites with sustainable small-scale production that can serve as pivotal examples of adaptive strategies in the times of ecological crisis (the heritage folk architecture tourist site, the ecological production of wine, and the small-scale pressing plant of ecological eatable oils). The discussion at the conference also included the possible role of anthropology in designing sustainable public policies.

The widespread dissemination of the ideas and effects of green transformation has been taking place via the active presence of the PI in the serious media and podcast platforms. The sample of media dissemination, including articles, public discussions and interviews, that directly and indirectly benefited from the project POSTGREEN in 2022 – 2025 has been attached to the electronic system.