

Beyond the North/South and East/West Divides: Understanding Global Inequalities and Diversity

14th January 2014

**Venue: The Mirror Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech
Republic**

Opening:

Petr Kratochvil:

Mr. Kratochvil opened the conference by declaring that this conference marks the end of the RESAREAS project in the field of theory, methodology and reflection on non-European territories. It is a multilateral project with many partners, which is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic, and it produced a number of results.

The task of the Institute for International Relations was to focus on questions about theory and methodology, so it was not so interested in empirical studies in a particular region. One important question was whether we could produce a comprehensive framework for the study of non-European areas and the answer is obviously no, but there is a number of different methods to be applied depending of the context. The project itself constituted of conferences, international seminars, courses and lectures given by the researchers from IIR. A number of students were also involved and they will hopefully put this new information in good use. All in all the project was quite successful and will hopefully have some repercussions in the future.

From IIR's perspective the conclusion is that in addition to the two main areas the Institute has been involved in, European studies and Security studies, it will try to focus on a third subject with a global dimension, the study of the Global South in particular.

Panel I: The outcomes of the RESAREAS project in the field of theory, methodology and reflection on non-European territories

Ondřej Horký-Hlucháň, Head of Research Department, Institute of International Relations, Prague: Theory

Vít Beneš, Research Fellow, Institute of International Relations, Prague: Methodology

Petr Drulák, Professor, Charles University, and former Director of the Institute of International Relations, Prague: Reflection

Ondřej Horký-Hlucháň:

Mr. Horký-Hlucháň explained that the way we conduct research in non-European countries and territories is related to our own identities and to the way we perceive the diversity in the North, South, East and the West, therefore this project is also very much a reflection of our everyday practices. The two-year project was divided into three parts and working groups, which were in charge of analysing how to conduct research in different countries and how to represent the “others”. The three working groups each focused on a separate task: theory, methodology and reflection on non-Western political thought. Mr. Horký-Hlucháň coordinated the group on theory together with Mr. Tomáš Profant. All the results from the project are organised around a book, *Beyond the North and South – Understanding the Global Inequalities and Diversity*, which will be published this year.

One purpose of the project was to create a network, reaching beyond IIR and the Czech Republic. When thinking about the context, this topic is relevant everywhere, as the inequalities within and between different countries are severe. Because of the past, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have often embraced the Western models and particularly the Anglo-Saxon ways of thinking in their academic environment. However, both have often merely focused on the mainstream theories and therefore some important aspects and alternative theories are totally absent from the Czech and Slovak thinking. This is why a “decolonisation” of the Czech and the Slovak social sciences is necessary. There is also the question of what to do next now that both countries have joined the EU and there is a strong tendency to lean back towards the West. The Czechs and the Slovaks are lacking a vision for their own societies now that EU as a goal has been reached. Times are very different now than in the 1990s and a good example of why we have approached this North/South and East/West question is Václav Havel’s acceptance speech in 1994, which marked a period of optimism and an anticipation of what globalisation could bring to the world. Now this sheer optimism and dream of a peaceful and multicultural world of the 90s is gone and people have come to realise that inequalities persist. The heritage of the East/West divide is still alive.

The position of our societies towards the South is not really reflected in the academic thinking. For example the position of the Czech Republic was quite ambiguous argues Mr. Horký-Hlucháň. The Czech Republic was a colonised coloniser: although the country never had any colonies, it still shared the legacy and participated in the inequalities caused in the North/South divide. The representation of the Global South like Africa as a backward region, close to nature and without a

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culture started already in the 19th century and even before. There is also strong proof that many Czech intellectuals and public servants saw colonisation of for example Slovakia as a civilising mission of a backward area. There is a fantasy about the Czech colonial history even in the popular culture. Some thinkers, mostly from the Baltic states, consider the occupation and the influence of the Soviet Union as a form of colonisation.

In terms of this project, we are interested in the inequalities occurring in cultural representations. The global income inequalities in the North and the South are also an obvious starting point for our work. *Beyond the North and South – Understanding the Global Inequalities and Diversity* uses the following questions for its structure:

1. How was the South perceived by the North?
2. What are the political consequences of the Northern view of the South?
3. What are the Southern theoretical counter-currents against the mainstream Northern theories?
4. How is the application of the Southern theories in the North? How does it question the North/South divide?

Vít Beneš:

Mr. Beneš was the coordinator of the working group focusing on methodology. It was rather difficult to come up with some substantive conclusions but here are the three highlights of the group's activities and achievements:

- creating a network of methodology-oriented scholars in the Czech Republic and beyond. The group was quite successful in this, because it was able to bring together a group of scholars from various universities and research institutes.
- holding two workshops on methodology: one on participatory research and the other on qualitative comparative analysis.
- producing a manuscript for a book to be published early this year in Czech language.

The first workshop, “The Challenges of Participatory Research” led by Professor Joanne Sharp was divided into a lecture and a workshop. The first part dealt with participatory research in general and the second part gave the opportunity to discuss more practical issues. The group was presenting Professor Sharp's paper on Upper Egypt on gender and power: “Doing gender and development: Understanding empowerment and local gender relations”. The aim was to find out why some women in the region are resisting the Western attempts of empowering them and what made it particularly interesting was hearing her comments on entering the communities, getting engaged with the local population and doing a different kind of research than most researchers are used to doing from their desks. The second workshop, “The Challenge of Qualitative Comparative Analysis”, was held by Professor Carsten Q. Schneider. It focused on a different methodology, which is qualitative in the general approach to the subject under study, but quantitative in the research techniques employed. Similarly to the first workshop, it was also divided into a lecture and a workshop. Professor Schneider presented his paper on capitalism and the qualities of democracies. This conference is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic within the project The Cooperation Network for Research of the Non-European Areas ([RESAREAS](#)), Reg. No. CZ 1.07/2.4.00/31.0027.

A general assumption of the working group was that it is difficult to single out a specific methodology for the research of non-European countries. The group assumed that the same methodology can be used when conducting research on European and non-European countries. The main focus of the group was to produce a manuscript for a book, *Methodology of Political Science Research*, which will provide a manual for scholars in various fields and make the research more accessible. It is relevant not only from a scientific point of view, but it also aims to inform the public of what researchers are doing and why. That is what methodology is all about. Therefore the focus is on research design that makes sense and on practical applicability of the methods, in order to justify the research and the methodology to the reader. These research methods such as participatory research are not limited to non-European territories, but can also be applied to European countries. The book offers a menu of different methods gathered by various authors, from which the researcher can choose from. It tries to provide practical suggestions and guidelines on how to choose the cases and questions and how to conduct research effectively.

Petr Drulák:

Professor Petr Drulák introduced the book “Non-Western Reflection on Politics” which he had edited together with Šárka Moravcová. This publication was also financed by the project RESAREAS. This book has two major goals. Firstly, it tries to reflect the rise of non-western actors. It should stress the influence of China and the Far East in general. Their importance is truly significant here in Europe, therefore it would be beneficial to understand these actors. Secondly, we should realise that by reflecting others we reflect ourselves. By discovering others, we can better understand ourselves and realise what is part of our culture and what is not. The book was written by prominent Czech authors, but also by some non-Western authors, bringing new views to this process.

The book is about a dialogue, which tries to avoid the extremes, westernisation as well as culturalism. On one hand, it means that we cannot expect the rest of the world to become like us – the Westerners. On the other hand, we cannot see the world divided into several separate cultures the way Samuel Huntington explained it. The world is not full of different cultures, which cannot communicate with each other or change themselves. It is possible to have a dialogue between them and to agree on a consensus. The authors selected important Western concepts such as human rights, equality and emancipation among others, and tried to find out how they work outside the Western system; if they work the same way and how they are understood. We still have our Western biases we cannot avoid. As a matter of fact, no one can change themselves completely, therefore the authors tried to remain non-biased. They had to face two major groups of biases – bias about politics and bias about concepts. The first question was to figure out what is still politics and what is not. Here in Central Europe, we cannot easily translate the English words policy/polity/politics, so for us it is easier to imagine this bias. In Western culture, there is the original Aristotelian tradition of concepts. In China they have other elaborated concepts in pictures and they do not use conceptual knowledge.

During the debate, the phenomena concerning biases and concepts were discussed. It was pointed out that the communicative language between scholars is English, although it is possible that some

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words may change their meaning when translating them. In addition it was stressed that in the Philippines there is a bigger concept of consensus, more than in the Western world, where the concept of majority is held during voting processes.

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Panel II: Case studies on the North/South and East/West divides

Chair: Tomáš Profant, Institute of International Relations, Prague

Vladan Hodulák, Department of International Relations and European Studies, Masaryk University, Brno: The balance of payments crises in the light of North-South and West-East divide

Martina Varkočková, Metropolitan University Prague and Institute of International Relations, Prague: Agnotology: The legacy of Soviet orientology and puzzles of contemporary post-soviet Central Asia

Nad'a Johanisová, Department of Environmental Studies, Masaryk University, Brno: Co-operatives in post-socialist Central Europe as a contested concept

The second panel was opened by Tomáš Profant. The panel's aim was to mainly focus on the phenomenon of development. This topic leads to several questions even here in our Western environment. The main question should be: what does it really mean to be developed? And at this very moment when we need to learn from others (as we do right now in the Western world), are we still able to call ourselves developed?

The following three case studies were presented:

1. **Martina Varkočková** started with her presentation on Agnotology: The legacy of Soviet orientology and puzzles of contemporary post-soviet Central Asia.

Working in Western social sciences would be nearly impossible without concepts. Therefore Ms. Varkočková decided to criticise the Western sciences with Western ways – by using concepts. She tried to show the concept of non-knowledge in the case of Central Asia, in the soviet and post-soviet areas. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union used to be perceived like a homogenous unit, it was still consisting of several republics. Central Asia used to be composed of five of today's following sovereign republics; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These countries are different from the rest of the Soviet Union. They belong to the nomadic culture, while the other countries belong to the Slavic culture. The dominant religion is not Protestantism, but Islam.

This area was very specific for the Soviet Union itself and it was really hard to predict the development after the end of the Soviet Union and the independence in the beginning of the 90's, especially because of the situation, which before 1991 was similar to the situation of DPRK today. There was almost no chance for foreigners to go there and foreign influence was minimal. As a result, these republics had to rely on Russia, a call that was strongly influenced by their ideology. Sometimes even researchers were chosen more because of their ideological profile rather than their academic and research skills. Nonetheless, there also existed the intention to clear out the Russian influence, especially by Western scholars. In order to deal with the ideological bias, which might have sometimes been overestimated, the following strategies were chosen: extrapolation from

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history, reading between the lines and reverse reading. From Western scholars' perspective, there was still a distorted perception of the region. Republics were seen like colonies. On one hand, the Muslim and non-Slavic resistance against Soviets was overestimated. On the other, the impact of sovietisation was underestimated.

The possible fragmentations of the region after the Cold War have not been optimistic. These countries are adepts of “failed states” and there is still a danger of civil ethnic conflicts as well as a danger of Islamist revolution or terrorism. Scholars focusing on this area consider the study of ignorance/study of knowledge. Knowledge is perceived as power and the lack of it is taken as negative. However, ignorance may also be a complement to knowledge, because there are many types of ignorance and knowledge. As a result, scholars are focusing on the importance of the study of ignorance, its origins and consequences. New knowledge comes hand in hand with new ignorance. We may be facing two kinds of ignorance – nescience and non-knowledge. Nescience is perceived as “unknown unknowns”, i.e. unrecognised lack of knowledge. The non-knowledge is “known unknowns”, i.e. recognised limits of knowledge. In this case, ignorance can be a native state or a result of a selective choice. The examples could be related to military secrecy. As a consequence, the problem of ignorance was that Western scholars gained biased information, but aware of their non-knowledge they claimed this information true and published it. The rest (scholars, academics, politicians) just accepted it and didn't question its trustworthiness. The newly modified knowledge was adopted by practitioners unaware of non-knowledge and it then became nescience. What's more, in the post Cold War era nescience endured in the relations between the West and Central Asia, which then resulted in incapacity and ineffectiveness.

To finish her presentation, Ms. Varkočková made briefly some suggestions for the study of international relations: the study of power, the study of power as a source of knowledge, the study of unintended consequences and the study of individual political decisions and the impact of ignorance.

2. The second speaker, **Vladan Hodulák**, presented his research about the Balance of Payments Crises in the Light of North-South and West-East Divide.

The economic and payment crises used to be quite common before the Second World War, but since then and until the 1980s serious crises became an exception. However since 1982, the world has been experiencing even more serious crises, which have taken a global perspective (from East to West, from North to South), with different kinds of solutions.

During the balance of payment crises, also called a currency crisis, nations are not able to pay for essential imports and debt repayments, which leads to a currency depreciation, economic recession and political instability. Therefore these crises have both national and international impacts. Saying that countries are living creatures is really appropriate in this case. It often leads to serious long-term changes in the whole socioeconomic system and international environment. Sometimes countries tend to “live beyond their means”. When the balance of import/export is negative, it leads to a build-up of foreign debt. The United States is the only country that can afford this kind of

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economic activity without serious problems. A distinguishment should be made between budget deficits and public debt. For example, Japan has the largest public debt (over 100% of GDP), but the country does not have a problem with the payment. The Northern countries have tried to avoid a large balance of payment crises, so they came up with a number of plans on how to do this. The large cooperation between them already exists since 1945 and we should mention Bretton-Woods system (1948-1971), GATT, Marshall plan, European funds etc. There are also plans on how to cope with a crisis once it has already hit a country. In short-term plans we can include currency swaps, and in the long-term plans we should mention deficit spending, money creation or financial transfers. For instance the Greek crisis was saved by these means. Nevertheless, Northern countries still have problems with the payments; this includes the USA (although they can print currency without major obstacles), the UK, Southern Europe and France (with a crisis taking place in France there will also be a crucial moment of survival for the Eurozone as a whole).

Crises in the South have a different development, because they are characterized by indebtedness of the South to the North. The main interest of the Northern countries is the repayment of the southern debt. The most current solution remains through their financial institutions. The Southern countries never negotiate like the other groups of states. Most countries in the South were forced to join the world economy on Western terms, but most of them still comply with IMF proposals. Sometimes we can talk about Southern or Eastern resistance if a country refuses to submit to the Western conditions and tries to determinate their own independent state. Among these strong and monetary sovereign states we can count Argentina (after the crises of 2002), the states of East Asia or Hungary (Victor Orban after 2008).

3. **Nad'a Johanisová** introduced the book she edited together with Ondřej Horký-Hlucháň about Commons, in which she introduces the phenomenon of Cooperatives as an organisation. This type of arrangement existed already in the 18th and 19th century in Europe, though unfortunately it suffered major changes during the Communist era. Cooperatives are umbrella groups. These groups of people come together to satisfy the common means. Moreover, the cooperatives are part of the market, but they are different from classic commercial enterprises. Regarding the decision-making process, they are based on a democratic government where people hold elections and where one voter gets one vote. Their aim is not profit, but rather the service and activities of its members, e.g. investors, clients, workers, who are not isolated from each other compared to a regular company. This system is more interesting and more attractive for those who do not appreciate the classical system and it is also more valuable for the future economy.

The situation in the Czech Republic differs from the model shown in Western countries. The Czech understanding of cooperatives is different and negative due to the communist past, especially regarding collectivisation and socialism. This feature of the market is still suppressed because of Communism and a vast majority of the population who ignore it. After 1989 there was a really strong fascination with capitalism and private possession, which is still present nowadays. There are already small groups who attempt to reach this kind of market step by step. Even though these groups are still a minority, we can already witness their presence here. Another case where

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cooperatives do not work very well is the case of African countries, where cooperatives were established by force.

Debate:

During the debate there was a remark that cooperatives are nothing new in the market system, but in fact it is a really old system. This model works well in the Philippines because of its democratic principles where decisions are taken collectively. This concept is rarely applied by the European Union although it exists under a different name – Social enterprise, but the system is still the same.

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Keynote speech by Attila Melegh on the East/West slope and discussion

Chair: *Pavel Barša, Professor, Charles University, and Institute of International Relations, Prague*
Attila Melegh, Senior Advisor, Central Statistical Office, Budapest and an Associate Professor, Institute of Sociology and Social Policy, Corvinus University, Budapest: *What is happening to the East/West slope*

During the third part of the conference, Mr. Barša presented the last speaker, Mr. Attila Melegh, researcher at the Demographic Research Institute, lecturer at the Corvinus University in Budapest and author of the book *On the East-West Slope – Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe*, published in 2006.

Mr. Barša was pleased to end the conference with this subject, because it connects some topics and concepts of post-colonial theory dealing with the East/West and North/South divide.

Attila Melegh:

Mr. Melegh thanked the organisers for the kind invitation. When preparing his speech, Mr. Melegh thought about how to present the East/West slope and its new developments. He decided that the best approach would be to first explain the concept before “killing” it. The East/West slope is not a new idea since it has existed for about 300 years and many historians and thinkers have written about it. One historian in particular, Larry Wolff, argued that the whole concept of Eastern Europe was built on an idea of a slope. The idea of a slope is that from the West towards the East and in particular towards the South-East there is a descending scale of merit, less and less civilisation. This idea came into existence during the Enlightenment and Larry Wolff argues that this is actually how Eastern Europe was invented, saying that it was a semi-civilised and semi-barbaric region. Another intellectual inspiration and relevant author is Maria Todorova, a Bulgarian historian, who published several books and wrote extensively on the Balkans, but without the idea of the slope. In her works she describes the Balkans as a special type of “othering” within Europe and applies Edward Said’s notion of “orientalism” to the region. With the slope it is important to understand that it is not only the West orientalising the East or the Middle East, but also the East orientalising the East.

After reading these authors Mr. Melegh started to think what kind of perspectives can be identified and analysed if we look at the slope in a systematic manner. The post-colonial thinking is basically about how the West handled the inferior and colonised other. The idea of Eastern Europe was not only invented in the past, but it was actually taken over by East Europeans and this is why it was hegemonic. These are some of the ideas that Mr. Melegh was working on when he wrote *On the East-West Slope – Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe*. In the book he argued that especially in the 1990s and early 2000s the slope was a hegemonic discourse. Today he says that this hegemony is crumbling, meaning that this discourse is still present, but it will not be able to achieve hegemony.

The slope is under reconstruction and it is impossible to predict its future. It has seen some development as it is no longer working towards the Asian societies, but within Eastern Europe

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which seems to be the only place where the slope is still prevalent. However, even the East Europeans are not content with the idea that a given population or country is inferior to the West, but superior to those farther East. In a classical sociological sense, when looking at the global political economy, the period of the slope was characterised by dramatic unequal development, but now the unequal development is decreasing in terms of regional inequality, says Mr. Melegh. This is going to have a dramatic impact, because these inequalities have had a key role in maintaining such a hierarchical and imaginary structure as the East/West slope.

Why did we have a slope for almost 300 years? According to Mr. Melegh, the answer is colonial capitalism and not simply capitalism alone. If we look at recent economic history, for example China was just as capitalist as Europe in the 18th century, the only big difference was the colonisation. Colonialism and capitalism appeared at the same time and were actually part of the same process. Another important point is that Europe used to be a minor player, which could not even question entities such as China or India in terms of global influence. The key problem of Western Europe was how to control the others when you are small? Thus a network of the small ones was set up in order to control the big ones, including their territories, a phenomenon also called the Gulliver effect. However, there is no such thing as political economy on its own, you need to have cognitive techniques, such as population control. Back in the 18th century, many thinkers agreed that the bigger the population, the better it was in terms of power and superiority. However, a British scholar Thomas Robert Malthus disagreed as his theory suggested a more civilised technique of population control: marrying later and having no sex before marriage, in order to decrease the number of children. According to him controlling the population development was the only way forward. It can be said that he invented birth control for this purpose! Following his line of reasoning, the slope was a technique of controlling through inferiority. How is Eastern Europe related to this? The key technique for these countries was the following: they were fighting for independence and trying to achieve a similar position to the West. Local nationalism as well as the idea of superiority and “the other” persisted; even in the Hungarian peace treaty signed in 1920, the Count Apponyi wrote how due to unfortunate historical events, Hungarians are more civilised than some other nations and therefore superior and entitled to control them. This is a good example of the slope.

According to Mr. Melegh, the colonial capitalist system lasted until the end of the 2nd World War, followed by two brutal decades of collapsing colonial structures. While Western Europe ended up in a dramatic situation by fighting for political and economic hegemony, the USA emerged as the winner. Not only did the colonial system collapse, but a new system emerged as a socialist block. The Soviet Union controlled one third of the world's surface and one sixth of its population. Yet somehow the slope survived even these drastic events, but not without some notable changes. The anti-communist Western discourses were of course using the previous techniques of the slope, but at the same time they had to acknowledge that a viable competitor came to the surface. This viable competitor was capable of two things: rapid industrial development and efficient military technology. Within and outside the West the slope was changed from a civilising model into some sort of competing modern systems, which were different in quantifiable terms. From then on the East was competing with the West in terms of modernisation, therefore the slope was still present.

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East Europeans would never challenge the slope, because they accepted the euro-centric vision of the previous system.

In the early 1980s, there was a dramatic shift in the discourses when the idea of competitions between modern systems collapsed and the idea of Europe emerged as the guiding principle. There was again some kind of colonial or slope discourse, which was institutionalised in discourses such as the enlargement of the European Union. If we look at the so-called Copenhagen criteria, it is basically the slope, because it imposes a certain criteria for countries wishing to join the EU. It is a hierarchical colonial discourse. The global economy was also changing rapidly and the new international division of labour created a real global market, which had never existed before. In the colonial capitalist system, there was no such thing as a global market, because certain key players were able to control the whole system. Another thing which was very important and which is leading us to the new period: during the collapse of the state socialism, the East/West slope was efficient locally, though it was merely a short-term victory. The local elite wanted to finish state socialism, because they were saying that it wasn't a real Western economy. However, they were doing this while wishing to have some local political hegemony. At the time the European Union was a useful ally in this sort of local debate and helped these local actors to really get into power. This led to a rather dramatic restructuring of the economies and problems, which could not be solved easily.

Mr. Melegh is saying that the East/West slope is under great stress and crumbling. Such hierarchical systems cause more nationalism and racism, when a nation is led to believe that it has to revitalize itself, because it doesn't have the position in the hierarchy that it feels entitled to. We can see that today the slope-technique is present and it is being used, though not very efficiently, for example when dealing with the problem of immigrants such as Romanians in Italy after the murder scandal in 2007. However it wasn't just about Romanians, but more specifically the Romani population from Romania. The slope was present in this situation, because Romanians declared that the Romani are ruining their reputation and image in Europe. As a result, Romania wanted to send all its Romani population to Egypt. Ironically, despite all the anti-immigration propaganda, immigration in Italy went up dramatically. In the UK, David Cameron delivered a speech on immigration saying that Britain now wanted "good migration, not mass migration". However, immigration towards the UK is not likely to slow down anytime soon. Because of the changes in political economy, immigrants are desperately needed in the West as this is the only way for these countries to maintain their global position. This is why Mr. Melegh is saying that the East/West discourse does not work. With its hierarchical techniques the slope does not work as a hegemonic discourse, because people are already starting to reverse the argument and fight against this European-led idea.

Until the early 2000s the East/West slope was the dominant discourse and after that it has still been used. Mr. Melegh believes that cultural patterns are very persistent and that the slope is not gone and can still cause a lot of trouble. The problem is that it is crumbling because of the dramatic changes in the political economy and he is afraid that in the case of Europe's geo-political decline, there will be a feeling of superiority, which might give ideas to revitalise and regain previous

positions. There could be a risk of entering major conflicts because of some hierarchical belief systems.

Debate:

Question: I would like to have a clarification: how is it East/West slope not working regarding the immigrants in Italy? You meant that they are basically changing the population as put together or what exactly did you mean with that?

Mr. Melegh: This entire immigrant discourse is using the slope by all means. This is a political discourse, which in a political speech is exaggerated to please the public. The only thing I'm saying is that it is unable to achieve real institutional changes. So whatever the Western politicians say, the European Union itself is destroying the slope because it says there cannot be discriminatory rules, however this is not simply out of good will, but because the EU knows how badly these migrants are needed as new labour force. This is a complex situation, but it is not powerful enough to get institutionalised.

Question: You mention Malthus and the inferiority complex, which drove him to reverse the theory according which a bigger population equals strength. He said that a smaller population is better, because then you can distribute the wealth of the nation to a fewer citizens, which means higher welfare. You also mentioned the West/East slope, where in the West they have this idea that they are on top, and the slope goes down towards the East and there is a divide between those who think that one culture is civilised and there are those who are less developed culturally. The idea in the past was to give them education and promote certain values, which may work. The truth is that many of the developing countries have benefited from Western concepts. I'd like to look at how you thought inferiority complex in your Malthus example and the East/West slope were viewed in the Western notion. When you look at this the argument there is a feeling that we are superior to the rest, which as you say is crumbling, because if this continues in the debate about migration, then there will be no structural improvement in trying to assure the protection of migrants in a particular host country. I just need some clarification on this.

Mr. Melegh: Let me explain Malthus a little bit. His way of thinking was a real change, not because he was such a genius, but in terms of democratic thinking it was really a big turning point. Malthus was a political economist and what changed his mind about demography was something he learned from Physiocrats who introduced this problem of diminishing returns in agriculture. Diminishing return is an interesting point, because it is basically saying that if the population is growing, then it is going to lead to diminishing returns. That gave the impetus for Malthus to change ideas. At the same time we should not forget how it was possible that almost everybody was saying the opposite. I think partly it was the colonial system itself. Colonial administration system always used Malthus. In India there were two famines, the British decided not to offer relief to the poor and starving, to prevent them from reproducing. Malthus was not only controlling globally but locally as well. The last thing England wanted to see was that population size matters and means real power. This led to the slope technique, which was fantastic as it could be used by small

populations to control the world without feeling inferior. It was a superiority complex to counterbalance this inferior position. That was my argument.

Question: Is contraception used as a tool in granting and giving aid? For example the US will give aid but it is tied with selling artificial contraceptives. It sounds like they are using aid as means of controlling the population in certain countries.

Mr. Melegh: Global population policy is still a massive industry even today for two reasons: First, the true belief that it is better to have less children and secondly, there is a common worry about the ratio of the Westerners in the global population. In reality fertility is declining everywhere, but not because of Westerners explaining contraception to these people, but because of the education of women. A good example is Iran: despite a lack in women's rights, girls receive a good education and this has lowered the number of children in just two decades.

Question: Sometimes as part of a racist discourse it is being said that the Romani come from India for example, and that they should go back there. Otherwise I am not sure if this kind of internal "othering" of the internal minorities within the countries is subject to the East/West slope. Could you see any elements that make the "othering" of the Romani, which are on the territory as a part of the East/West slope?

Mr. Melegh: The Roma are victims of an unfortunate situation. In a region, which sees itself as inferiorised, the Roma are seen as inferior. Therefore it is some sort of double inferiority they get immediately.

Question: On the issue concerning the Roma we could argue that some aspects of the slope are really crumbling, especially those aspects which are to be seen on an ideological level between the West and Central Europe during the process of accession. Here in Eastern Europe the politicians are still ruder than in the West, where politicians rarely speak openly racist comments. Romaphobia is also more prevalent here, but one could say that there seems to be a mainstreaming of Islamophobia in the West. They wouldn't say anything bad out loud, but they might think it or use coded language. This is the only difference, so I do not feel that we have to catch up with the West.

Mr. Melegh: I partly agree with this argument. In the West they are much better in political communication: they do not say what they think! I would say that the Westerners are still doing what they always have. Ideas spread; people read and learn about each other. The only thing I would add to your comment is that East European liberals tend to forget about the global history of colonialism.

Question: I wanted to add something to a previous comment regarding Malthus not giving food during the famines in India. It is important to remember that these famines were actually induced by the British who raised taxes and pushed the Indians into not growing their own food. As for the education of women, today it can be an important tool for women's emancipation and in enabling them to have fewer children, but it can also be a tool for oppression and westernisation, if children lose touch with their own culture.

Mr. Melegh: I agree with both comments.

This conference is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic within the project The Cooperation Network for Research of the Non-European Areas ([RESAREAS](#)), Reg. No. CZ 1.07/2.4.00/31.0027.

A toast by Vlastimil Fiala, Head of the RESAREAS project, University of Hradec Králové, on the occasion of the conclusion of the RESAREAS project.

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