



On the East/West Slope: Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Eastern Europe

Attila Melegh

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"On the East-West" Slope explores changing cognitive geographies with regard to Eastern Europe during the late 20th century and the turn of the Millennium. While the fundamental poles of East and West remain, both their meaning and their relationship to one another have shifted profoundly since the late 1970s. The book demonstrates the ways in which supposedly liberal characterizations of East and West project a theoretical slope across the map of Europe, oriented as increasingly negative from West to East. Paradoxically, a liberal discourse of Europeanization "turns ugly" in the context of East European politics as it generates polarizing issues, including extreme nationalism and discriminatory racism, as in the case of the Roma. Finally, the book argues that such paradoxes are not paradoxes at all if we recognize that civilizational slope ideas have a major function in maintaining and reproducing hierarchical world economies. The book is also one of the first attempts to create links between the postcolonial analysis of development in the Third World and changes in Eastern Europe. The book seeks to analyze discourses underpinning mental maps of "East" and "West" focusing on individual and institutional actors. In order to understand the East/West positioning and identities of the different actors, the book performs a comprehensive analysis of discourses on population development, of mental maps presented by global corporations and foundations and also a unique hermeneutical analysis of narrative interviews conducted with people crossing East/West borders in the United States, Hungary and Russia. The book will attract a wide international readership. As the book analyzes "empirical" material and reviews a wide range of literature on sociology of knowledge, demography, political science, East European Studies, and postcolonialism, it will prove an essential resource for undergraduate and graduate students and their professors at Western and East European Universities. Readers in recent European nationalism, racism, the history of demographic thought in the 20th century, postcommunism, international political order, globalization and narrative identities are the targeted prime users of the book.

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