

„This is a wonderful time to be a political economist“



Prof. dr. sc. Jonathan Zeitlin poznati je američki profesor međunarodnih političkih odnosa, suvremene sociologije i globalne ekonomije. Ravnatelj je Center for World Affairs and the Global Economy (WAGE) i osnivač Centra za izvrsnost Europske unije. Područja interesa profesora Zeitlina su europske javne politike te njihov odnos sa suvremenim kapitalizmom i državom blagostanja.

¹ Marko Grdešić, M.A., doktorski je kandidat iz područja političke znanosti na University of Wisconsin.

LEVJATAN: *Let's start of by talking about your academic background. You earned your doctorate in history, but your interests and institutional affiliations have ranged widely, from sociology, political science, public affairs to history, law and industrial relations. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of such a career trajectory? Do you think that academia is too compartmentalized? And if we try to straddle the disciplinary divides, how do we go beyond only a superficial familiarity with two or three fields?*

ZEITLIN: I can easily talk about the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of career. It's probably worth recalling that my undergraduate background set the scene for what I would do subsequently. I was an undergraduate at Harvard and majored in something called social studies. It was an interdisciplinary major that focused on social theory, social science and history. In that sense, what I've done since is very much in line with how I started out in academia. It was not an accident, but it was not quite a strategically planned decision that I would wind up with a PhD in history. I got my PhD in the UK. I went to the UK after college on a scholarship from the British government and I had intended to do a PhD either in sociology or in political science back in the US. But once I finished my very quick British PhD I found that I was offered a postdoctoral scholarship at King's College, Cambridge, running an interdisciplinary research project and then I couldn't face being a graduate student in the US.

I think that the great advantage of the kind of career I had is that I have been able to follow my interests and let them evolve so that I've been guided more with what kinds of problems I'm concerned with and much less by the logic of making a career in a discipline. From an intellectual point of view, it's much more creative. Working with all kinds of different people which is how I made these evolutions has been extremely productive.

The disadvantage is purely material. The world is organized in disciplines. If you want to go furthest and fastest there is some benefit in investing narrowly and trying to make your career in a particular discipline. I don't always feel that I have been rewarded compared to my scholarly standing and productivity as I would have been if I had focused on one discipline and invested everything in that. Nonetheless, I have not done too badly. The intellectual payoffs have been great.

In terms of your other questions, yes, I do think that academic disciplines, especially in the social sciences, are too compartmentalized. I think it would be hard to imagine that if these disciplines did not exist in their historic forms that we would reinvent them today. If you look at the fields

of study that are really advancing and are at the forefront of innovation, for example the life sciences, they have been continuously revising and recombining. The humanities are actually doing the same thing and the social sciences are the most backward in that respect.

If you straddle the disciplinary divides, how can you go beyond a superficial familiarity of just a few fields? I think one way is to have a good basis in classical social theory from which many disciplines have evolved, and the other is to work on problem-focused projects which engage multiple disciplines and to work with scholars from several fields. I never found it to be that difficult. I'm always learning new things. That's a way to stay intellectually creative and active.

LEVJATAN: *You have worked and visited at a number of academic institutions such as University of Wisconsin Madison, University of Cambridge, Birkbeck College University of London, Copenhagen Business School, Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labor Studies, European University Florence, École des Hautes Études en Science Sociales, Paris etc. How would you compare the intellectual atmosphere of these places? What do you think are the weaknesses and strengths of European and American academic styles?*

ZEITLIN: You mention a range of different institutions, British institutions, Continental European ones. I'm not sure there is a single European style. Britain is very different from the Netherlands, from France, from the European University Institute in Florence. There is some homogenization taking place across Europe mainly because of the Bologna process. That's bringing them together a little bit more but each system is still distinct.

I think the great strength of the American system is at the undergraduate level. Typical American liberal arts undergraduate programs are less specialized. I don't think people are in a position to choose a field at the age of eighteen. There are many varieties of American undergraduate programs. Some have a rigorous core curricula, others are more pick-and-choose. But provided that the quality of instruction is good, provided that the institution can offer a wide choice, and provided that there is some reasonable guidance to students on how to put together a more or less coherent program, a good American college education gives students a chance to experiment and find out what their interests are in a way that is more difficult for European undergraduates.

The benefit of American graduate programs is their relative length. They combine quite extensive coursework with opportunities for research.

In European universities, and Britain is the most extreme case, people would originally just do a post-graduate degree and might not receive any teaching. They would be expected to develop their own research topic. European degree programs now typically do try to combine some methods instruction and some grounding in particular literatures with funding for research but the whole thing is quite compressed. Students are expected to develop their own projects at the same time that they are trying to take methods courses and being introduced to all kinds of new literatures. They tend to have some trouble bringing it all together.

Nonetheless, my sense is that the disadvantage of American graduate programs is the disciplinary over-concentration and specialization. We see it here in political science where there is a big effort to professionalize, a big emphasis on taking far too many methods courses, encouraging students to publish at a very early stage. There is much more emphasis on the canons of the discipline and much less on the substance of the student projects. Many American social science PhD programs are becoming overly professionalized and disciplinary in their orientations.

I should say that I have an offer at the moment for a chair in public policy and governance in the political science department at the University of Amsterdam which I am very seriously contemplating. I have been studying how they organize their graduate instruction compared to how we do it. And I would say that what is quite interesting is that they have a graduate school of social science research that funds PhD research. Although the building blocks are the academic departments, political science, sociology, anthropology, geography and so on, the whole structure is much more interdisciplinary and there seems to be much more collaboration across disciplines in mixing and matching different modules to put together topic-focused areas of instruction. I think I find that more attractive than what we do.

LEVIATAN: *Perhaps your earliest interest is with workers, the division of labor and shop-floor bargaining. Why was looking into the internal lives of firms and factories attractive to you? What do you think you learned from this research and how has it informed your subsequent work?*

ZEITLIN: I began this kind of work in the mid 1970s. It was connected to the radical politics of the period. It was also a period of very extensive industrial upheavals in the US and Europe. I was interested in Marxism which gave a very significant place to these types of workplace struggles. I was also personally attracted to the issue of autonomy and self-

determination at work to which I could connect personally as a kind of rebellious young man with a healthy disrespect for established authority. I got into it through a mixture of labor history, industrial sociology, comparative political economy. So I studied it both historically and in a much more contemporary oriented way. I found it intellectually very stimulating. It allowed me to learn a lot at a fine grained level about how things really work. What is the interaction between institutions, social groups, individuals, how that plays out in different industrial and national settings. The kinds of things that I learned and the methods that I learned to use, which range from archival documentary research to doing field interviews, have stood me in very good stead ever since. Although it is not the primary focus of my current research, I still use the knowledge and approaches that I gained at that stage. For example, this semester I am teaching a course on the sociology of work and employment and I'm working on the restructuring of manufacturing and supply chains on a global scale. I frequently still visit factories in the US, Europe, China and I build on what I learned then.

LEVIATAN: *A lot of your work has been on industrial restructuring after the decline of "fordism", the mode of production that characterized the middle part of the twentieth century. Much has been written about eclipse of fordist "mass production" and the rise of "flexible specialization." What do you think are the most valuable insights of this body of scholarship?*

ZEITLIN: One can answer that question on several different levels. One level would be to say that at its best, this kind of scholarship provides us with a good understanding of the contingent ways that different domains or levels of analysis fit together. If we are interested in how work is organized, how is it changing, how has the organization of production been changing, which has been one of core focuses of this type of scholarship, we have to look at a number of things. We have to look at the way product markets are organized. The difference between stable and standardized product markets versus more fragmented and volatile markets and then we see how that affects the choice of technology, dedicated equipment and unskilled workers versus an alternative of more skilled workers and more universal adaptable equipment. We can also see how that is connected to the organization of the firm, how far it's coordinated in a vertical way by managerial hierarchies, how integrated it is, to what extent the firm brings inside itself all the phases of production and distribution. We can also see how that is connected to the external environment, national and international macroeconomic policies and institutions that stabilize and destabilize markets. We can see how it fits together with other micro regulatory in-

situations. Understanding how these different aspects of political economy are linked together and seeing how changes in one area ramify into changes into another is a key insight. The other central insight is the idea of strategic choices, historical alternatives, how depending on contingent historical developments and the choices of the actors concerned, the world can change in very macroscopic ways. But even on very microscopic level there may be alternative ways of organizing things with significant social and political consequences. That remains a very durable insight of this body of work.

LEVJATAN: *Your more recent research has been on the strategic constitution of the multinational corporation and the interaction of the local and the global. How is the structure of the multinational corporation changing in the contemporary global economy and how is this impacting the terms of competitiveness for businesses?*

ZEITLIN: It used to be that multinationals took one of two forms. Either they were based in their home country and they had some technological or organizational advantages and they tried to roll them out in other national markets. This was the so-called ethnocentric multinational. Or they tried to be highly adaptable, to franchise themselves. They were a sort of federation of national subsidiaries without very much central coordination. Sometimes they tried to be an integrated, unified, global firm which operating in a variety of environments and directed from the center, trying to combine the advantages of different localities and commercialize them.

Increasingly, it is recognized even by multinationals themselves and certainly by the people who study them that the capacity to share and diffuse knowledge generated at different localities across borders is a central source of competitive advantage. Just as at the national level, the world has become too volatile and uncertain for everything to be directed by a central managerial apex, this is true a fortiori at the global level. So multinationals have been experimenting with all kinds of organizational forms which are meant to build synergies with their subsidiaries at different localities, to draw on and cross-fertilize knowledge and innovation generated in a bottom-up way. So far they are not very successful in doing this. It's very hard to find any actually existing examples of multinationals that do what their own spokesmen and the managerial theorists say should be done.

A lot of the building of multinationals through cross-border mergers and acquisitions has been directed more at market power than innovation. Almost all forms of inter-firm coordination to share markets and fix prices are illegal now and since firms find it very hard to survive in a very com-

petitive and volatile world, in industries like steel for example, mergers are a way of reducing competition and getting more pricing power. We just saw today the judgment of the European Commission against Intel for abuse of its dominant position. The Obama administration appointed a new head of anti-trust in the Justice department who said that she will take an approach similar to the EU. So that may change.

The last thing I would say about multinationals is that they seem to be better at working with their independent suppliers than they are with working with their own subsidiaries. One big trend of the last two decades has been the refocusing of large companies on their own core competencies and out-sourcing many activities to independent suppliers. That in many ways is the most important and in some respects encouraging feature of the development of multinationals.

LEVJATAN: *One interesting issue that you take up is that there should be a multinational public to watch over multinational corporations. Has this public come into being, and if so, has it been successful in pressing for reform? How do you see the interaction between the globalized capitalist economy and democratic principles and procedures? Do they limit or support each other?*

ZEITLIN: In terms of the multinational public, which is something that Peer Hull Kristensen and I talk about in our book *Local Players in Global Games*, we had hoped for a kind of interregional collaboration between representatives of workforces and communities in which multinationals were located. This has not materialized to any very significant extent. We talk a lot about the potential and limitations of European works councils and world company councils built on them, different European projects for territorial employment pacts that could be the building blocks for this kind of approach. So far, there aren't many signs that these workforce representatives and communities have been able to overcome their own parochial interests to become a new transnational public for the corporation. More hopeful signs have to do with NGOs and transnational advocacy networks. In areas like corporate codes of conduct, labor standards, environmental standards, multi-stakeholder campaigns have emerged to try to hold the corporations accountable for how they treat their workforces and how they treat the environment. I think that unions and workforce representatives have a role to play in that, but they don't seem to be taking the leading role that one might have hoped and that we cautiously explore in our book.

In terms of the relationship between multinationals and democracy, capitalism and democracy, I think we have to unpack the term democracy. There is a tendency to assume that democracy at the national level worked historically rather well. When we are dealing with the EU or the global economy, with various kinds of transnational regulation, the problem is essentially one of mismatch between the scale of the problems and the scale of governance, and in particular the scale of democratic governance. If only the institutions of representative government could be projected onto a wider geographic scale or alternatively the economy could be put back into its national bottle (if it ever was in it), then there would be no problem. But my view is that this is a very unrealistic and in some ways a romantic view of how the institutions of representative democracy worked at the national level. The movement towards new forms of governance at the European level provides some opportunity to correct some of the defects of parliamentary democracy at the national level as well as to compensate for their decreased effectiveness at the transnational setting.

LEVJATAN: *What kind of impact do you think the current global economic crisis will have on corporate governance and corporate behavior? And more generally, how do you see the current crisis compared to past crises of the global economic system? It seems as if we are living through a rather special period in time. Can the social sciences and history be any guide in what is happening today in Washington and Wall Street?*

ZEITLIN: These are very interesting questions. Nobody has an answer to them. This is a wonderful time to be a political economist. So many orthodoxies are being thrown into the melting pot. Many very strongly established scholars and policy makers acknowledge that the things they took for granted, like the efficient capital markets hypothesis, simply are not correct and need to be rethought. I find that to be completely remarkable. If you read some of the official reports on the crisis and ways out, especially the ones produced by the EU or the British financial supervision authorities they really go a long way in dethroning the reigning orthodoxies of the preceding decade. I find that very encouraging.

I expect that the current crisis will have a profound effect on corporate governance, corporate behavior and the organization of financial markets. I expect that there will be much less attempt to export the standard Anglo-Saxon liberal model of what a corporation is, who it is for, how it should be governed, how it should be regulated. There will be more attempt to develop accountability. Not only accountability to shareholders but to other stakeholders, the public at large. Some of the key regulatory

tools such as accounting standards, which have had distorting effects on the business models of both financial and non-financial companies, will have to be rethought in a profound way. In general, we are going to see a lot more regulation of financial markets and I hope this will be done in an intelligent way.

If you ask what is new about this crisis, I think it is the globally integrated nature of the economy and the fact that it is widely understood to be a crisis of pre-existing forms of regulation and deregulation. The combination of the two means that public policies and ideas about how the economy works are going to play an important role.

Yes, I do think that the social sciences have a lot to contribute. Many of these issues were hidden in plain view. We can find critiques of financial markets which were written before the crisis. Drawing on that kind of literature, which is also a historical and comparative literature, the social sciences are well placed to contribute to new thinking about the institutional and regulatory structure of the national and global economy. The most important thing is that a whole series of dogmas associated with neoclassical economics and with financial models of the economy have been swept away.

LEVJATAN: *Let's turn to another of your research interests, the European Union. You describe the EU in terms of experimentalist governance. What is it about the modes of governance in the EU that is interesting to you? Do you see such practices as off-setting the democratic deficit of the EU? Can such practices spread to other places around the world?*

ZEITLIN: It's almost unquestionable that the EU is the most significant and creative laboratory of new forms of governance in the world. This has to do with the way in which the EU presents some of the core governance challenges that we find elsewhere around the world. There is diversity of the member states, so uniform standardized rules are inappropriate. There is volatility and complexity in the environment so that fixed rules that are unreviewable in the face of implementation are patently inappropriate. Because of these features and because of the sharing of decision-making authority between the EU institutions and the member states, the EU has stumbled on a new architecture of governance which my co-author Chuck Sabel and I call "experimentalist governance."

The idea is that you set revisable rules, you pursue broad open-ended objectives, you measure progress towards those objectives by a common metric, but you give member states and administrative agencies a great deal

of discretion on how they pursue those objectives. In return for that local discretion they have to report very extensively on their progress towards those broad common objectives and they have to compare themselves to other local units pursuing different means to the same general goal. The result of this system, which we also refer to as a system of learning from difference, is an iterative process of learning in which the rules and goals are regularly revised based on the process of implementing them. I think that this is the first radically novel decision-making architecture to emerge since the rise of parliamentary democracy and the administrative state in the 19th and 20th centuries.

You asked whether this offsets the democratic deficit. Yes, in important respects. Firstly, non-state actors of various kinds, civil society, local and regional authorities play an important part in applying, assessing and revising these rules. And secondly, both within the member states and on the European level, these kinds of actors and also conventional actors like opposition parties and the media can use the comparative information that is generated by these reviews to hold their own governmental authorities accountable for their performance. They can use much richer information on what kind of alternatives are out there and how well they work.

We talked about the romantic myths of representative democratic government at the national level. There are many of them. It's been well known since the emergence of the administrative state that parliaments are not very good at supervising and overseeing complex administrative agencies in highly technical kinds of fields, whether it be welfare programs, food and drug safety or other areas. Not only do the ministries and agencies operate with weak and episodic oversight by the supposed assembly of the people, but they also tend to be the most important source of new legislation. Again, the extent to which parliaments have really been in charge is quite limited. So we have a long standing democratic and rule of law deficit. These new approaches can help overcome them.

More creative and systematic thinking on how to revise and rework the traditional institutions of government, the executive, the parliament, the courts, to make them compatible with emerging systems of experimentalist governance is both necessary and desirable. But we should be careful not to jump to the conclusion that the democratic deficit of the EU is greater than that of its member states.

You asked about exporting experimentalist governance to other places around the world. Yes, very much so. We talked just a moment ago about how approaches to governance and regulation in the EU are spreading to the US in the Obama administration. There are some anticipations of this

already in the US at the local and regional level. The Clinton administration was moving in this direction in environmental policy, for example. We see the EU having a very strong impact both on other countries and on international institutions.

For example, it's probably most clear in environmental policy. The EU is an acknowledged leader in generating new forms of environmental protection and regulation. It's amazing to think that the US has never had any real legal regulation in the area of cosmetics and personal care products. The EU's rules on cosmetics are increasingly being adopted "voluntarily" by US multinationals. You can hear radio advertisements on how firms have adopted stricter EU standards. There are many US personal care products that can't be exported to China because they don't meet Chinese standards which are based on the European ones. Of course, the implementation of these standards in China is another question. But through all sorts of mechanisms, including development aid, agreements with African and other countries, European neighborhood cooperation with countries around the periphery of Europe, or the EU's efforts to develop multi-lateral environmental agreements, the EU is having a big impact on governance and regulation in third countries.

LEVJATAN: *Europe is often contrasted to the United States in the sense that its model of capitalism is more in tune with social considerations, that it is characterized by a more generous welfare state, that it is "Social Europe", in short. Some of your work has compared the European and American systems of work and welfare. What is your view on the evolution of the European social model? In particular, how does the Lisbon strategy as the key strategic document of the EU move this model forward?*

ZEITLIN: The first thing that has to be said is that there really is no single European social model. The whole concept of the European Social Model has more to do with an aspirational political project than with an analytical description of what really exists. It was Jacques Delors who first began to talk about the European Social Model in the 1980s. At a very high level of abstraction, one can point to some common features distinguishing various European countries from the United States. But obviously, the UK, and to a lesser extent Ireland, would be taken to have much in common with the US even if the UK has a national health system which has no parallel in the US.

Having said that, the interesting thing in the EU over the past 15 years has been the emergence of transnational systems of mutual learning, by-

bridization and cross-fertilization such that historical differences between different families of welfare states and employment systems are not as big as they once were. Through the European Employment Strategy and the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion and other mechanisms of that type, there has been a tendency to reform and recalibrate national social and employment institutions in Europe so that they borrow useful things from other countries, sometimes even from the United States.

For instance, several European countries, UK, Ireland, France have learned from the US in terms of so-called in-work welfare benefits, the Earned Income Tax Credit which has inspired the Working Families Tax Credit in the UK. The core idea is that working people should be subsidized through the tax system so that they are not in poverty. There are many other examples of that type. Today, there is an increasing view that it's the universal service-based welfare regimes of the Scandinavian or Social Democratic model that have the most to offer to other European countries in terms of combining high levels of employment, social equality, low levels of poverty, customized services for individual households that cut across different kinds of administrative boundaries and give people the support they need to traverse the contingencies of the labor market and life courses. And also, the Nordic economies seem to combine these features with relatively robust and sustainable public finances and high levels of technological and organizational innovation.

BEVJATAN: *What about the Lisbon Strategy?*

ZEITLIN: The Lisbon Strategy has been a disappointment. The original ideas of the Lisbon Strategy were good ones. One was to achieve a new balance in European integration between competitiveness and economic growth objectives on the one hand, and social and employment objectives on the other hand. From 2001 onwards, environmental sustainability was added as a fourth leg to what was originally called the Lisbon policy triangle. So it became a kind of quadrilateral. I think that the development of the Open Method of Coordination as a new basis for coordinating the policies of the member states in sensitive domestic policy areas where the EU has few competences and where there is a lot of scope for mutual learning was a very innovative idea. I also think it has performed better in the core areas of employment, social protection, and social inclusion than was claimed when it was reviewed by the European Commission in 2004 and 2005.

Later, the Lisbon Strategy was relabeled as a strategy for growth and

jobs, refocusing it around bilateral dialogue between the European Commission and the member states. Although the Barroso Commission has claimed that this was a big success, I myself think that it has failed to deliver both in terms of the so-called national ownership and participation of Lisbon goals, and in terms of developing a mutually supporting interaction between the EU's economic and employment goals on the one hand and its social and environmental goals which have remained outside the core strategy on the other.

I also think that some of the elements of mutual learning and learning-by-monitoring of the original strategy have been diluted by these reforms. I spent a lot of my time over the past five years advocating for the further restructuring of the Lisbon Strategy. Now we're talking about EU policy coordination beyond 2010, the post-Lisbon era. There, I have advocated a new structure for EU policy coordination which would be based on four equal and mutually reinforcing pillars: one focusing on economic growth, the second on employment, the third on social cohesion, the fourth on environmental sustainability. Each of these pillars would have its own objectives, guidelines, indicators, reporting and evaluation processes and they would be coordinated in a light-touch way at the European and national level. There would be various mechanisms for ensuring mutual compatibility and the pursuit of cross-cutting objectives. We can see this already with the development of joined-up thematic strategies such as flexibility and active inclusion. We can think of similar ones which would include the environment. There has been a lot of debate about this kind of approach. Austria and Finland are quite interested. Some EU institutions have discussed it, such as the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament, even the Commission has discussed it, as have European networks of NGOs like the Platform of European Social NGOs. Whether this turns out to influence the future direction of the EU we'll have to wait and see. A lot will depend on whether Barroso is re-appointed as president of the Commission and what kind of commitments he has to make to get reappointed.

BEVJATAN: *Turning to the more current troubles in the EU, how do you see the unfolding of the constitutional crisis in the EU, after the Dutch, French and Irish referenda? And, since our journal is based in Eastern Europe, we would especially like to hear your thoughts on the recent Eastern enlargement, what the inclusion of new member states means for the EU and whether the EU can overcome enlargement fatigue to admit countries like Croatia and Turkey.*

ZEITLIN: There are a lot of questions bundled together here. In terms of the constitutional crisis of the EU, the underlying problem was the attempt to legitimate the EU as a new form of polity using devices and symbols which were based on national parliamentary democracy. As the EU has acquired more power and influence in the fields of policy-making and governance, European elites have increasingly felt that it requires some more explicit form of legitimation, and understandably so.

However, what they have always reached for are very conventional forms of legitimation. The most important one has been the progressive expansion of the powers of the European parliament as the elected assembly representing the European people. The problem there is that national electorates don't recognize the European Parliament as performing that role. The Parliament has really become much more powerful through time. There are few laws and regularities in political science but one of them is that as authority migrates to a particular institution so does the attention of electorates and lobbyists. It's certainly true that lobbyists have discovered the power of the European Parliament. But national electorates have become less and less interested as can be seen by the falling level of participation in European elections.

Creating a European constitution was another form of trying to borrow traditional forms of democratic legitimation from the national level to legitimate a European polity. The idea was that this was a form of white magic. You take the aura of a national constitution and extend it to the European constitution. The problem was that when this was presented to national electorates it looked very different from a traditional national constitution. This then delegitimized the EU. Jan-Werner Mueller has written some interesting papers on this, and he says that white magic turned to black magic as the borrowed legitimacy turned out to have a boomerang effect. The problem was that the debates at the national level about the constitution were very much out of line with the real significance of the document in the sense that electorates chose to debate things that were not at issue in the constitution. Perhaps it's fair to say that this was the first time that anybody had asked them what they thought about the EU. And they chose to answer that question rather than the question about the treaty. So in France, for example, people complained that the EU was not social enough. But on many dimensions, the Constitution and now the Lisbon Treaty would be significant improvements socially over what existed before. Again, the kinds of things people in the Netherlands and Ireland complained about had nothing to do with the Constitution. It was symbolic politics which I think is very unfortunate.

In terms of eastern enlargement, let me say a few things. Most scholars argue that enlargement has not made a big difference. The institutions of the EU continue to function much as they had before, despite the problems of having 27 member states instead of 15. The new member states don't form a homogeneous block. Even on social issues there are very different views among the new member states. The representatives of the new member states are being well socialized into European institutions such as the Employment and Social Protection Committees.

The one place where I have some concern about the impact of the new member states is on the European Court of Justice. If we look at the recent cases on the free movement of labor and national employment systems, the so-called Laval and Viking cases and their sequels Ruffert and Luxembourg, these are fairly problematic cases. In particular, they tend to throw out long developed, complex, carefully balanced relationships between the so-called four freedoms – freedom for goods, services, people and capital in the internal market – and fundamental rights, including the right to strike, and the national organization of labor markets and employment systems.

There are rights and wrongs on both sides. But what is disturbing is that in these key cases, the opinions of the Advocates General who present the preliminary guidance were overturned. It seems that they were overturned on political grounds by justices from the new member states whose grasp of the nuances of European law is a bit questionable. Also, it seems that their commitment to the four freedoms – the benefits that the new member states were supposed to derive from joining – are fairly fundamentalist. The European Court of Justice has been something very different from the American Supreme Court. It has not put itself above the member states but in a horizontal dialogue with them. And we can see in some of these opinions that the justices are increasingly substituting their own judgments for those of member states, European legislators and private actors such as trade unions or employers associations. That would be a very damaging direction for the EU. I hope that, as in the past, when the European Court has gone down false paths, it will find its way back to a more balanced approach. More relevant in how it relates the social and economic and how it relates its own role to national courts and national actors.

Finally, you ask about enlargement fatigue. I am pretty confident that the states of the Western Balkans, starting with Croatia, will be admitted to the EU. The entire logic of the EU's approach to the Balkans mitigates in that direction. Croatia is certainly not the most difficult case. There are more difficult cases to address: Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania. In Bosnia and

Kosovo, the EU is effectively running a military protectorate, trying to build up domestic political authorities to the point that they can fulfill the criteria for accession. But I think the whole logic of what the EU is doing in the region will pull in that direction.

Turkey is another question. Nobody can be sure what will happen. It's a very large and very poor country. There's the dispute between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus. There's the question of taking the boundaries of the EU deep into the Middle East so that it would border on Iraq and Syria. If Turkey were not already a candidate nobody would propose it today. It will be very difficult to convince European publics to accept Turkey as a member. On the other hand, given the commitments that have already been made and given the very large Muslim population in the EU today, I think there would be a very high cost to eventually saying to Turkey: No, you can't be a member. So I think it's a very difficult situation that the EU finds itself in and I don't think anybody can predict how it's going to turn out in the future.

BEVJATAI: *And finally, if you had one piece of advice for students in the social sciences, what would it be?*

ZEITLIN: Usually it's hard to come up with a simple and sloganistic piece of advice but I do have one for you. Students in the social sciences should focus on problems, not theories, and still less on methods.

BEVJATAI: *On that note, thank you very much, Professor Zeitlin.*

ZEITLIN: You're welcome.