

### **Abstract**

The active participation of eastern European lands in European overseas expansion has not been studied properly so far. My presentation will therefore summarise the most important results of my dissertation about the Silesian linen merchants, their main commodity - Silesian linen - and the consequences of their export trade towards Atlantic markets for the rural household linen processing in the province of Silesia. Special attention will be given to the mutual influence of the trade in Silesian linen and the Atlantic slave markets during the long eighteenth century. The English Royal African Company and the Dutch Middelburgsche Commercie Company (c. 1660-1740) will serve as my case studies. The endogenous and exogenous factors that shaped the specific economic development of the Silesian linen region will be highlighted and combined into a novel explanatory (global) framework that goes beyond the conventional one that has been strongly advocated in previous (purely national) historiography.