

Fundamentals of unconventional social sciences

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Fundamentals of unconventional social sciences

The series hosts volumes of research in the social field, the contents of which are characterized by “transdisciplinarity”, which includes but goes beyond:

- multidisciplinary, which implies cooperation between different disciplines, keeping their mutual distances at the same time and avoiding contamination between them;
- interdisciplinarity, centered on niche themes defined by interactions of limited sections of multiple disciplines.

Transdisciplinarity implies wider and deeper bonds, and integration between disciplines: metaphorically, it is a “contamination” expanded between different orthodoxies and mainstream scientific thoughts.

QUO VADIS EUROPE?

**WHERE ARE EUROPE AND THE WESTERN
COMMUNITY GOING SEVEN DECADES AFTER
THE START OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION
AND THE CREATION OF THE
ATLANTIC ALLIANCE?**

Editor and Principal Author

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INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGINAL IDEA AND BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT PUBLICATION

OTTO HIERONYMI

The original idea of the present publication was based on an international conference organized by Webster University Geneva with the support of the Permanent Delegation of Italy to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva and of the Permanent Delegation of the European Union in Geneva in the autumn of 2017.

The background of this volume, however, covers a broader spectrum of events, research and sources. In most cases these are connected with work carried out in the International Relations Department of Webster University Geneva since the mid-1990s.

The current situation and the outlook for Europe and for all the Western democracies are in many respects the most important issues in politics and international relations in our time.

There are many specific issues that may capture the attention of scholars and of the general public at a given moment, today or in the more recent past. Most of the time the answer or the outcome is closely linked to the questions: “where is Europe, where is the Community of Western democracies going?” This was true with long-lasting challenges like the Cold War, as well as with more recent conflicts or tragedies such as the Balkan wars and the other so-called “internal conflicts” and “humanitarian crises” of the 1990s and of the first decade of the 21st century, or with the numerous “international financial and monetary crises” which plagued the world economy since the 1970s and which

culminated in the 2008 world-wide financial crisis, bringing the entire world monetary system close to a general meltdown. It is the conclusion of the present volume that ultimately close cooperation among the Western democracies is indispensable for dealing with the consequences of major crises, as was the case with the pandemic caused by the coronavirus and is today with the challenge to freedom and international peace and order represented by the current populist (and often authoritarian) leaders and regimes such as China, Putin's Russia or Trumpism in the United States for that matter.

Key concepts in research and teaching

This study is based on a series of key theoretical concepts and analytical tools that we have been using over the years in teaching and research and in trying to identify, to distinguish and to understand the constants and the changes in the world in which we live. These concepts are fairly straightforward and do not require an elaborate methodological apparatus or an abstract mathematical approach.

At the top of the list of these concepts we find the term "Western Community" – an expression rarely used today either by "experts" or general "observers" and political leaders. Yet, the emergence and the existence of the "Western Community" since the end of the Second World War (and its persistence after the end of the Cold War) have been the most important developments of the last 100 years. Also, the future of the Western Community is the single most important factor that has shaped and will continue to shape for better or worse not only the development of the individual members of this "virtual community", but also of the world as a whole.

Beside the term "Western Community", the list of key concepts includes: (1) community creation and community destruction; (2) the two main streams of the "European and Western tradition; (3) the "paradox of the 20th century"; (4) the close links between domestic and international order; (5) the critique of the theory of the "clash of civilizations; (6) the challenge and reality of "multiple identities" throughout history; (7) the important role of "small countries"; (8) the link between freedom, human rights and peace and security; (9) the domestic

and external limits of sovereignty; and (10) the realization of “perpetual peace” among the members of the Western Community.

The September 20, 2017 Webster Conference

On September 20, 2017, the International Relations Program of Webster University Geneva, with the support and participation of the Permanent Mission of Italy in Geneva and the EU Delegation to the UN and Other International Organizations in Geneva, organized a conference on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Rome Treaty creating the European Community under the title *Quo Vadis Europe? Where is Europe Heading Sixty Years after the Signature of the Rome Treaty on the European Community?* The conference venue was the Seat of the Permanent Mission of the European Union in Geneva. The principal questions addressed by the speakers were: where Europe is and ought to be going in the future in order to maintain the results achieved so far, and what is required to assure the peace, freedom and prosperity of its peoples in the decades to come. The conference was open to the diplomatic community, international organizations, students and the general public.

This event was part of the numerous international conferences and seminars organized by Webster University since 1996 with the active support and participation of the Geneva-based international organizations and diplomatic community on major international political, economic and humanitarian issues. From the first conference 25 years ago to the one on *Quo Vadis Europe?* it was the dedication of the Webster Student Organizing Committees that has allowed these events to take place and to continue, has given them a special flavor and has secured the support and interest of the international Geneva community.

From the Rome Treaty to Joschka Fischer’s Historic Humboldt University Speech

The signing of the Rome Treaty was one of the principal stages and one of the most far-sighted acts in the history of European integration. Together with the development and consolidation of the Western Community, it has been one of the most impressive and successful

examples of institutional innovation and community building among free and sovereign nations. This process that started in the second half of the 1940s has continued over the decades well into the 21st century.

On May 12, 2000, Joschka Fischer, Vice-chancellor and Foreign Minister of the German Coalition Government, gave a historic speech at Humboldt University in Berlin under the title “Vom Staatenverbund zur Föderation: Gedanken über die Finalität der europäischen Integration” (“From Confederacy to Federation: Thoughts on the Finality of European Integration”).

This speech allows us to situate the Green politician and former self-confessed rebel in the gallery of the founding fathers of the European Union as we know it today. His reflections on the “finality of European integration” led to the European Constitutional Convention presided by the former French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, to the draft European Constitution (not ratified) and to the less ambitious “Lisbon Treaty” that is the current basis of the objectives, rules and institutions of the European Union.

Like so many others, from my first reading of Fischer’s speech I was and have remained until the present day deeply impressed by the depth of the understanding and sweeping vision of its author. This does not mean that as in the case of other great statesmen, one has to share every aspect of his views or approve every suggestion he made. Thus, when comparing Fischer’s speech for example with public pronouncements of some of the other “great Europeans” with bold proposals of his generation, such as for example Jacques Delors, the scope of Fischer’s analysis appears to be much broader and historically correct. One brief quote from the Humboldt University speech can serve as an illustration: “Two historic decisions in the middle of last century fundamentally altered Europe’s fate for the better: Firstly, the USA’s decision to stay in Europe, and Secondly, France’s and Germany’s commitment to the principle of integration, beginning with economic links.” This compares with the performance of Jacques Delors who, in 1997, on the occasion of receiving the prestigious Prize of the Latsis International Foundation in the Aula of the University of Geneva, managed to hold a one hour detailed speech on “L’Union Européenne entre l’Unité et la Diversité” without mentioning a single time the

United States and its essential contribution to the origins and support of European integration.

At a personal level, I would like to mention that it was only when re-reading the Joschka Fischer speech during the preparation of the manuscript of the present volume that I discovered another passage (that I must have read many times before): “*Quo vadis Europa?* is the question posed once again by the history of our continent” (italics in the original). Thus, subconsciously, when selecting the title of the 2017 Webster University Conference and of the present book, I was quoting Joschka Fischer from his seminal speech at the start of the 21st Century.

In what direction is Europe heading? What is the future of the Western Community of which democratic Europe is an integral part? The first and most important conclusion of the present volume is that the outlook for Europe and for the Western Community is closely connected.

These questions have been raised time and again since the second half of the 1940s and in particular since the signature of the Rome Treaty in 1957. Asking these questions is not just a routine way to commemorate on the occasion of a “round number” one or several historic events that are receding into an increasingly distant past.

Usually these questions turned around domestic and external crises, and the need to strengthen and renew Europe and the Western Community in response to these challenges. A constantly recurring issue has been the question of whether there is a need for more institutional ties and, if so, whether these would reduce the autonomy and the sovereignty of the member states. Overcoming the various crises would usually involve a definition and redefinition of who belonged to Europe and the Western Community, what were the basic rules that members were expected to follow and what was the extent of solidarity that the members could count on if they followed these explicit or implicit rules.

In the last several years, Europe and the Western Community were hit by a series of “political tsunamis”, which according to many observers could threaten their long-term survival. As in the past, the crises in both Europe and the Western Community have major new common features compared with earlier challenges. These crises include the

Brexit vote, the flirting in Eastern Europe with nationalism and anti-Western propaganda, the election of Donald Trump to the presidency and as a longer-term phenomenon, the theory and practice and the consequences of globalization on the social conditions and coherence of the Western liberal democracies.

The most worrisome aspects of the current and recent crises are that they include frontal attacks on the basic values and principles of both European integration and of the Western Community by governments from the core of the West as well as from East-Central Europe, in countries that had been hoping after long periods of Communism, and before that right-wing authoritarianism, to be able to join the group of free liberal democracies. Orbanism, Brexit and Trumpism represent greater dangers for Western and European cohesion and identity than Islam and the terrorism carried out in its name.

Where is the old consensus?

Where is Europe going? Where should it be going? These are questions that have been raised time and again since the end of the Second World War, and especially since the “construction of a new Europe” began. This new Europe was to be built on a new set of values and interests that are still today the foundations of our freedom, peace and prosperity.

As in the past, the debate – within individual states and nations and across borders – turns about the interpretation and the validity of these values and interests, how should they be implemented and ultimately whether they should be adapted to changing circumstances or abolished altogether and replaced by different and even outright opposing views. The content and the intensity of the debate have shown ups and downs also in the past. However, there has been a consistent majority upholding a common core interpretation of the core values and interests that were not negotiable.

There is concern that the old consensus that used to help overcome previous crises may have weakened over the years. In other words, the sharp attacks against our values and interests are not coming only from the opposition, from “outside” the wide circle of responsible citizens and leaders, but also from “inside”. This seems to be the result of two

converging trends: the success of the traditional radical opponents to gain support and thus get closer to the levers of power, and a radical change of mind of the earlier supporters of the consensus. The challenge for experts and leaders is to find out to what extent these shifts can have dramatic consequences and lasting and irreversible changes in the values and interests that the great majority of people used to believe in.

The importance and at the same time the complexity of these interrogations can be illustrated with four widely discussed examples: illiberal democracy, non-European Britain, protectionist, and isolationist and racist America, and anti-humanitarian Europe and United States. A fifth example, usually perceived and debated under a different heading, is the attempt to deal with real or perceived crisis of the European project by systematically trying to reinforce the “state-like” characteristics of the European Union, without realizing the risks of creating a fragile centralized super state.

Are these developments temporary? Like the 1968 student revolts had been a phenomenon limited in the time? The answer may be yes, they are also temporary but if they are similar to the “1968” upheavals, the consequence may turn out to be profound and long-lasting, even if the results will be different from the objectives and expectations of their promoters. The outlook for Europe and the European Union as well as for the Western Community as a whole will depend on what happens to the three key sets of factors – democracy, collective security and social market economy – that have been responsible for the unprecedented success of community building and political institutional innovation during the last 70 years.

Renewing the Western Community: the Challenge for the United States, Europe and Japan – the 2009 Annual Fall Conference of Webster University, Geneva

Among the inspirations for the 2017 Quo Vadis Europe Conference and for the present volume I would like to mention the work I carried out on the Western Community and its three main pillars, the United States, Europe and Japan. The concept of the “Western Community” has been one of my central themes of interest since well before I joined

the Webster-Geneva faculty as the Head of the International Relations Program in 1995. This interest was also reflected in our 2009 Annual Fall Conference and in the multi-year research program that I had started under the same heading more than 10 years ago. The conference was part of the research program, as well as the well over one hundred in-depth interviews I carried out in the framework of this research in Geneva, Rome, Brussels, London, Paris, Berlin, Washington, New York, and Tokyo.

The list of speakers and other participants brought together a group of experts, political leaders, officials and researchers from national and international governmental and non-governmental bodies, including the European Union, NATO, and various US and Japanese organizations, as well as from universities and other research groups. The 2009 conference addressed one of the key issues of international relations, the importance of which has gained recognition since then, and especially during the destructive four years of the Trump presidency. It is to be hoped that positive attention will be paid to strengthening this “virtual community” in the years ahead by all the leaders of the West. The Western Community’s future cohesion and its ability to redefine its objectives and to reach out to the rest of world will affect not only its future security and prosperity, but also the quality of international order in general.

Political and societal evolution (the German term “Gesellschaft” does not have a direct equivalent in French and English) can be perceived and analyzed (as well as predicted) from the point of view of numerous overlapping categories and approaches: those of “political communities” and different levels of communities, domestic and international political orders, theories, ideologies, as well as structures, actors, policies, institutions and events.

In fact, the “Western Community” has been the broadest and most successful experience of democratic community building of nations and states based on liberal political principles. In a sense the term “Western” is a misnomer. This Community is neither a geographic concept, nor does it refer to the historic concept of “Western” or “European” civilization. From the beginning in the post-war period to the present day it has been an open-ended community based on shared and convergent

values (the most important of which are freedom, tolerance and the respect for human rights and dignity) and interests in peace, international cooperation and stable democratic political order. The “Western Community” has been characterized from the start by pluralism and diversity, competition and solidarity. One of its main organizing principles has been the reconciliation of the respect for national identity and independence, and the rejection of extreme forms of nationalism within and outside this community.

The achievements of the “Western Community” have been impressive indeed. Three of the most important ones should be mentioned here: (1) the unprecedented prosperity and social progress through the process of economic integration; (2) the development and consolidation of free, democratic political regimes across the entire Western Community, and (3) last, but not least, the realization of the centuries old “utopia” of “perpetual peace” – today, war or the use of force between small or large countries belonging to this Community has become simply unimaginable.

Despite, or perhaps because of this success, over the years one heard relatively little about the concept of the Western Community among “experts” or the general public. In fact, for some not only the term but the very concept appeared to be outdated or obsolete, at least since the end of the Cold War. Others have taken its accomplishments for granted and as a result have tended to neglect the tasks of maintaining the awareness of its importance among political leaders and among the citizens of its member countries, and the task of renewal and adaptation to changing circumstances and challenges. Yet, without such awareness and regular renewal, all communities are subject to centrifugal forces and become vulnerable to internal and external threats. Even more preoccupying is the fact that some openly express doubts about the very concept of the “Western community”, its relevance, its basic values and interests and its contribution to peace, prosperity and freedom and respect for human rights in the world. Donald Trump emerged as the most prominent among them, but this group also includes Viktor Orban, Vladimir Putin, the Chinese leader Xi as well as a series of other more or less influential neo-populist leaders.

Hungary, Central Europe and the Future of the Western Community: the April 21, 2016 Webster Geneva – Corvinus University Conference in Budapest

Among the other Webster events relevant for this book I would like to mention first a conference that was jointly organized by Webster Geneva and Corvinus University of Budapest under the title *Hungary, Central Europe and the Future of the Western Community*. The presentations and the discussions covered the following major themes: (1) The achievements, the role and the future of the Western Community; (2) The relevance of the Western Community for small countries in general and for Hungary in particular; and (3) What can small countries in general, and Hungary in particular, do to strengthen the Western Community?

This meeting was especially timely and topical for two main reasons.

The first one was the paradoxical position of Hungary with respect to the Western Community. On the positive side one should point out the historic contribution of the 1956 Hungarian uprising to the worldwide cause of freedom and to the ultimate unravelling of the Communist rule in Europe. It is also important to remember the merits of the first freely elected post-Communist Prime Minister, Jozsef Antall, in the birth and consolidation of a new, dynamic liberal parliamentary democracy, faced with the legacy of two totalitarian regimes and in guiding Hungary into the “Euro-Atlantic Community” (his term). On the negative side, by the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, it became increasingly clear that the democratic achievements of the regime change of the Antall years were being gradually eroded from the Left and from the Right (the former Communists Horn and Gyurcsany, on the one hand and the Jobbik and the Fidesz parties, on the other hand). Thus, gradually, Hungary was threatening to turn from an asset into a liability both for Europe and for the Western Community.

The second reason was that by April 2016 dark clouds were gathering over Europe and the West. The inability and/or the unwillingness to deal in an adequate manner with the migration and refugee crisis were both a cause and a consequence of the “crisis” and of a weakening consensus among the political leaders of the West. The clouds over the

horizon included the threat of the acceptance of Brexit by the British voters and at a greater distance the possibility of a Trump presidency. Frankly, at the time of the Corvinus conference, both of these potential storms were expected to dissolve and few “serious people” predicted that they could gain momentum and turn into devastating political tsunamis.

Other Webster-Geneva Conferences Relevant for the General Theme of the Present Book

Beside the events discussed in the preceding paragraphs, the topics and conclusions of many of the other Annual International Humanitarian Conferences and of the Annual International Fall Conferences (both series were started in the mid-1990s) are relevant for the subject of the present volume. The proceedings of most of these events were published in book form.

The list of relevant events includes: The Spirit of Geneva in a Globalized World, The Future of the Responsibility to Protect, Success and Failure of Regime Change since the End of the Cold War, International Organizations and the Role of Small States, Globalization and the Reform of the International Banking and Monetary System, International Debt: Economic, Financial, Monetary and Regulatory Aspects, Global Challenges, the Atlantic Community and the Outlook for International Order, Migrants and Refugees: the Challenge of Identity and Integration, National Energy Policies and International Cooperation.

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Foppiani, co-organizer of this event as well as to the other speakers and participants at this conference. I also want to thank the members of the September 2017 Student Organizing Committee who, like their predecessors over the years have played an essential role in the success of the conference. Special thanks are also due to Aracne Editrice of Rome for having accepted this book for publication in the series of *Foundations of non-conventional social science* and for their patience, as well as to Martino Lo Cascio and Mauro Aliano for their support and help with the editorial work. (I am also happy about the Italian connection that I have found intellectually and personally very stimulating throughout my professional life.) I am also grateful to Webster University Geneva for their financial contribution to the publishing costs of this book and at an earlier date to the travel expenses involved in the research on the *Renewal of the Western Community*.

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Chapter Overviews

The second half of this Introduction contains an overview of the Prologue and of the individual chapters.

Most of the texts in the present volume were written before the outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic and except for small corrections and additions there was no systematic attempt to take into account the political, social and economic impact of the Corona virus. The principal exception is the *Prologue*, which carries the title *Coronavirus: Europe and the Western Community*. It was written during the confinement between 20 March and 30 April 2020. The starting point of the analysis was twofold: (1) the coronavirus, within a relatively short time created a worldwide health, social and economic crisis; and (2) there is a high degree of uncertainty (or even ignorance) about the way to stop the pandemic and how to prevent its recurrence and about its long-term consequences. The Prologue is structured around three themes: (1) positive and negative factors before the outbreak of the crisis; (2) the most relevant features of the crisis and how unique they are; (3) reflections on what to do and how to deal correctly with the current and future consequences. The issues considered under the first heading include the health system, globalization and our evolving values.

Among the most relevant features of the current health crisis is the reality that we are in “uncharted waters” and the inability or unwillingness to learn from the lessons from the past can be mentioned in this summary. As for the question about the future it must be remembered that future developments do not depend on a single event or a single trend. Forecasts have to take into account the complexity not only of the possible futures, but also of the present and the past. In the context of the present volume the main question about the future is whether the coronavirus crisis will reinforce the centrifugal forces that have been weakening the process of European integration and the Western Community, or if a more positive scenario could develop with a weakening of these centrifugal forces and a strengthening of international cooperation and solidarity.

Following the preliminary reflections on the nature and consequences of the coronavirus crisis, Chapter I deals with the question *Where are we now?* This chapter addresses essentially two sets of issues: (1) the nature and achievements of European integration and of the Western Community; and (2) the current crisis of the liberal order with special emphasis on the two political tsunamis that hit Europe, the West and