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Europe - a Challenge to the Social Sciences

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Towards an Institutional Infrastructure for European Social Science

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Europe - a Challenge to the Social Sciences

Overview

In this paper, some ideas are developed about the meaning for the social sciences of a newly emerging European society. It is organized in four sections: In section 1, I briefly recall some of the major trends towards one European society. The process is indeed unique and deserves to be recognized as such by the social sciences. Section 2 deals with the global context of the European process and, which is the focus of the paper's argument, with some of its economic, political, social, and intellectual implications. In all these respects the European process gives us reason enough to rethink traditional approaches and theories. Section three proposes to look at German unification as sort of blueprint for European integration. A thorough and unbiased analysis of what happened and still happens in Germany may reveal many of the severe problems and difficulties inherent in a large-scale integration process and may teach us lessons about what could be improved in integrating Europe. Section 4, finally, discusses the role and potential contribution of the social sciences in helping to design European integration for a more peaceful, just, and sustainable society.

1. The Process of Europe: Europe becoming one society

Europe is moving. The last few months of 1989 have brought about profound changes absolutely unexpected only one year ago. The opening of the Berlin wall on November 9, 1989 marked the end of the Cold War period. But the developments in Poland, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, the Soviet Union, and finally in Yugoslavia and Albania also positively indicate a new vision of Europe, of a new European society which will not simply echo the idea of the nation-state on a higher level but be of a new quality. Everybody is excited about a new vision of this emerging European society - only the social sciences seem to remain relatively stoic, as if the emergence of a new society would not be the dominant event, the unique process, the major challenge to them.

This "Process of Europe" does not proceed without tensions and contradictions, and only future generations will detect its underlying logic in retrospective. For
the time being it seems more adequate to think about at least three different processes relatively independent of each other: (1) continuous integration in the West, were the European Communities (EEC) are the moving force, (2) continuing disintegration in the East (the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance CMEA and the Warsaw Treaty Organization WTO), and (3) the Helsinki-process following the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) final act of 1975. They all are only loosely connected among each other and even use different definitions for Europe (as do, e.g., the European Free Trade Association EFTA or the Council of Europe). It is more by intuition that one may feel these different path interconnecting, aiming towards a common logic, and uniting in one broad stream.

In the EEC, the Single European Market is right ahead of us. It promises to liberate the mobility of people, goods, services, capital, and information from physical and administrative restrictions. This is, in addition to the deep institutional consequences, a condition of prime importance to let people feel that they live in one, the European society. The next steps towards the United States of Europe are at least roughly programmed: the introduction of a Common External Policy beyond the existing cooperation in external affairs, the Economic and Monetary Union, and the Political Union have the consensus of member states at least in principle. There seems also to be a general agreement among the twelve that a good part of this way should be gone before further extensions of the Communities may be seriously envisaged. This does not prevent, together with the Single European Market, a close association of EFTA with the EEC in the European Economic Space nor bilateral associative agreements between the EEC and individual East European nations.

While the dramatic changes within the Eastern European societies started in Poland in the late 1970s, it was the reform faction in the Soviet Communist Party which brought forward a new understanding of international relations based on a common global responsibility. Soviet propositions for disarmament paved the way for gradually developing a new quality in East-West relations, but also gave room for increasingly self-determined choices in the Eastern European countries. Not only did the Brezhnev doctrine tumble without much noise; WTO members set the practical pace in disarmament without consultations among each other and even without bargaining, and the end of CMEA and WTO became clear already in the late 1980s. Glasnost and democratic reforms were quite successful as readers of, e.g., Moscow News could easily detect. Perestroika, however, is much more difficult to achieve not only because of an adversary bureaucratic apparatus in the political and economic system, the rise of neo-conservative and chauvinistic movements or the emergence of organized crime, but also because of the reluctance of the West to support the reform movement with efficient economic aide and more reconciliation in the disarmament negotiations. New Thinking, emphasized among other occasions at an international conference on New Thinking and Military Policy (Moscow 1989), has especially affected Soviet foreign policy towards the WTO allies; its repercussions, however, were quickly felt in the USSR itself where independence movements rose in almost all the republics.

It is fascinating to see how non-violent revolutions in some of the Eastern countries succeeded in depriving seemingly well-established political elites from their power, and how poorly organized social movements imposed their will on governments – especially surprising in the case of the German Democratic Republic. It is here, however, where unification bears clear signs of, and is felt by many in the old GDR as, colonization of the East by the West. The reality of today’s unification process is much more than we admit ourselves to realize connected with ruthless expropriation, a kind of unfriendly take-over far from any respect for the people, their human dignity, their achievements, their jobs, their identification.

Developments since summer 1989 could not have been predicted, so a widespread conviction, and in fact, they were not. Every participant observer will, however, agree that this is wrong. There was gradual liberalization together with gradually increasing tensions and economic decline, all aiming towards profound changes; those who regularly visited Eastern European countries have felt the increasing unrest – only the date of the revolution was unclear. The reason seems much more to be that simple ignorance (the GDR was the strangest of all countries for most West-Germans!), ideological bias, continuous manipulation by the media and lack of empathy did not allow to admit that Eastern societies may be something else than a static empire of the evil, the permanent enemy. Our own perceptions, and especially those diffused by the media, were systematically distorted, not so much because the respective individual events were not properly reported but rather because they were rarely drawn before an adequate background. This was of course to protect the ideological hegemony and integration in our own societies. It did not fit our understanding that there had been dissident movements in these societies for years, outside and inside the political machines, and even inside the secret services, and that the political systems were much more differentiated than we liked to believe. The ideological functions of the East-West conflict for our Western societies have long been underestimated. In the silent revolutions of 1989, however, East-West interdependency has changed its character and acquired a new quality.

Eastern European countries have to cope with similar problems, although to different degrees: foreign debts (especially pressing for Poland, while relatively unimportant for Czechoslovakia), deficiencies in infrastructure and logistics, weak productivity (at least according to Western criteria), and poor supply with
consumer goods. If this situation does not change considerably and rapidly, then political reform will be at risk, with neo-conservative or chauvinist forces coming to power (this seems the case in the Soviet Union where the autonomy movements deliver an easy pretext for intervention). The economic crisis, the end of CMEA and WTO, the increasing importance of bilateral relations especially with Germany and the EEC, and the deliberate integration into the capitalist world economy, go together with the mighty eagerness of Western politicians and businesspeople to overrun present discussions, timid as they are, about socialist alternatives or Third Ways. The Eastern European Empire is dead; the agenda for Eastern Europe will be determined by economization, decentralization, and democratization in the Western sense on the one hand, exposure to the global economy on the other. Economic degradation, under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and of the EEC, and some kind of Third World status seems to be in inevitable first phase. For the middle range, some kind of re-integration of Eastern Europe may be prerequisite before closer association with and eventually full membership in the EEC can be envisaged, or Eastern Europe will decline to the status of a developing region and a sales market where only the Soviet Union (or its independent republics) has the resources to become a major supplier of raw materials. Political fragmentation resulting from the resignation of the communist parties from leadership (or from, as in Poland, the breaking apart of the national opposition as it has lost its enemy), the foreign debt problem allowing the IMF to interfere and the rise of a multiplicity of political organizations will contribute to open these countries to foreign influence and may produce a longer period of political and, what is worse, economic instability where all major decisions are imposed from outside. The pattern will, as time goes by, become more differentiated and patchwork. There is now a strong tendency towards news nationalism and unilateralism, but at the same time some signs indicating new forms of cooperation. The major common element is the hope of the peoples to quickly raise their consumer standards, a goal towards which copying earlier Western experiences and joining the EEC are supposed to be instrumental. This may bring the reluctant elements together, assisted by some help or pressure from the EEC to further develop Eastern European cooperation.

CSCE, originating from Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik in the early 1970s and several earlier Soviet propositions for the establishment of a European security system, is the first and most important attempt to bridge the gap between the two hostile blocks. Under the CSCE umbrella, a great number of East-West activities developed, some formally agreed, some not, below the level of formal negotiations which helped to shatter hostile images and build confidence in the intentions of the other side. But everything remained more or less in the shadow of the official conference calendar and its ups and downs. The Paris summit of November 1990 brought a new quality. Not only did the participant governments sign an agreement on conventional forces reduction (still to be ratified), but also they agreed to establish first institutional mechanisms as, e.g., annual meetings, a permanent secretariat, a Centre for Conflict Prevention etc. CSCE may thus develop into an institutional nucleus and as a model for practical cooperation in view of a vision of paneuropean unity. The Paris Charter for a New Europe is a most remarkable document in this respect. At the same time, CSCE shows that Europe will not become just another nation-state. The European process brings about a new quality in political organization, as Maurice Bertrand has convincingly argued. We must accept that this new quality demands also a new quality in our analytical understanding. CSCE might draw the frame within which a peaceful integration between East and West could become possible.

The end of the East-West conflict has certainly taken away a most dangerous and costly source of uncertainty in the international system. We tend to forget, however, that our self-definition as Western democratic and capitalist societies was very deeply depending on our image of “really existing socialism” (which, in the ideological war, was of course always biased). Socialism as a practicable concept was, despite all its deficiencies, a permanent question to ourselves about the degree of humanism, of social justice, of equality, of the coincidence of our own democratic ideologies with social reality. As this challenge no longer exists, it is the West who will turn out having lost a powerful mechanism for social reform and for identity. Exchange value seems to become the last word in history.
2. Global Context and Implications for the Process of Europe

2.1 The Global Context

As some scholars have realized immediately, the events of fall 1989 indicated the end of the East-West conflict which had dominated the scene of international politics since the end of World War II. The focus of attention shifted quickly to the not only continuing, but in fact aggravating disparities between North and South. The Gulf War was the first time for West and East to join and use the UN as legitimation to interfere violently in a Third World country. The victims are not yet counted as we can see hundreds of thousands of Kurd refugees moving north, under the most miserable conditions one can imagine. Only very slowly, and only under the pressure of public opinion, did international help come into effect this time.

This is only the peak of an iceberg. Wars and violent conflicts, poverty, insanity and malnutrition, debt crisis, IMF impositions, decay of commodity prices and environmental catastrophes cause millions of people to leave their homes and migrate elsewhere. For by far most of them the prosperous countries of the North are the region of destination. Some ten million illegal immigrants are reported for the United States alone. Estimates for the Soviet Union are in the range of between six and twenty million people ready to emigrate to Western Europe or North America as soon as the restrictions for travelling become abolished, which has now been promised for 1993. The potential migrants of the other East European societies have not yet been estimated. North America and the prosperous Western European region are in the focus of two enormous and increasing migration streams, one from the East, and one from the South. As a rule of thumb, migration is a direct consequence of economic disparities - which makes it relatively easy for social scientists to forecast what is ahead of us. Insofar it seems also correct to say that the failure of Western development policies hitherto to narrow the welfare gap is directly responsible for the coming migrations.

At the same time we do our best to destroy, on a global scale, the natural basis of our existence: Every second, one thousand tons of fertile soil are carried off; every second, we blow one thousand tons of green house gases in the air; every second, some four thousand square meters of forests are destroyed; every day, we extinguish between ten and fifty biological species. Climate change in consequence of the greenhouse effect, the gradual destruction of the ozone layer and the permanent pollution with toxic and radioactive wastes are widely discussed issues with a global dimension.

It is not only that Europe gained global dominance since the age of the great discoveries and colonialism and thus was able to impose borderlines, eradicate local cultures and traditions, shape the perceptions and attitudes of local elites and exploit global resources in its own interest. In the economic metabolism the people in the rich nations eat up the wealth of the earth and burden the rest of the world with our discard. We propagate the ideology of reckless selfishness, though in the euphemistic form of market economy, we set the rules of the economic game at the World Economic Summits and in the Bretton Woods institutions, and we give no doubt that we do abuse violence to defend our privileges and interests.

Peace, development, and the protection of the natural environment form the triangle of global problems, and only global solidarity can secure the survival of humanity. Environmental risks, migration streams, and global violence will not leave Europeans unaffected. There is no Fortress of Europe sufficiently keeping climate change off its borders. We must understand that a new world order must, first of all, be built on new principles of global responsibility and solidarity. It is on the rich to pay our tribute to sustainability, and if we don't - there will be no escape from a global reaction. This is certainly the best of all reasons to make us change our attitudes.

While all this is not new, the changes in Europe bring about a new situation where such questions become more urgent than ever before. It is therefore important to think about some of the implications the European process has - this will help us to define more clearly the possible contribution of the social sciences.

2.2 Economic Implications of the Process of Europe

It seems that Europe, and especially the EEC, is first of all business. The major effects of integration are rising scales in decision-making, effective especially in economic policies, the extension of markets by standardization, increasing concentration into huge monopolies (on the national level), or oligopolies (on the European or global level). The driving force behind this are transnational corporations, and therefore there is very limited interest in other aspects of the integration process, social, cultural, educational, environmental, or the democratization of institutions. The prime goal is economic growth which, of course, is only a euphemism for profit.

There is a number of strange things about the economic growth debate. Since more than twenty years every social scientist is well aware of the fact that annual growth in GNP has little or nothing to do with the developments of real income in a population. Not only do we value positively all the damages we do to nature
and to ourselves, as well as the overexploitation of resources, but also does GNP give no indication of income distribution. The Social Costs of Private Enterprise are widely neglected, despite all debates about internalization. While it may be understandable that private firms have an enormous interest in growth rates, it is not acceptable that national governments take GNP growth as their most important criterion for political success. A favorite argument (which can even be found in the Brundtland-Report!) is that only by economic growth is it possible to afford social security, development, environmental protection. The argument seems convincing at first glance. It is based, however, on the undisputed premise that the existing distribution of wealth and income is taken for sacrament. In other words, the growth argument is only valid in favor of the rich and affluent.

The debate has a more technical (nontheless difficult) aspect, i.e. how to include the neglected issues in an economic accounting system, and a theoretical and normative aspect, i.e. economic growth versus sustainability. For the first it may suffice here to say that we are still far from a practicable operationalization of social costs and benefits, despite all systems of social indicators. For the second and more important aspect it is clear that Western middle-class consumerism and lifestyle (a) cannot be extended to the rest of the world without very rapidly exhausting all available resources, and (b) not even can go on the same way in the West. While this became almost general knowledge, practical consequences are still lacking. Especially in the East the change towards capitalism is being made in the trust for consumerism Western style, and the West does not little to poke such hope. Populations of the Third World, together with future generations, pay for Western affluence.

Sustainability has been coined as a notion alternative to economic growth. Nebulous as the concept may still be, it certainly associates with concepts as no-growth economy, steady-state economy, and the like which all mean that the consumption of natural resources must be balanced with their renewability in a long-term perspective and on a global scale. Sustainability means, in other words, that humankind renounces the attitude of mastering and exploiting nature but instead integrates into the web of life with care and respect for all other species. The ethical value of social justice and the empirically evident interdependence between poverty and overutilization of the environment help to make sustainability an almost workable concept and indicate which flows must be redirected to allow human survival. Ernst von Weizsäcker is absolutely right in saying that if the 19th century was the age of the economy, the 20th century must become the age of the environment. To help achieve this goal, a new economic accounting system which operationalizes also non-monetary costs and benefits and which could be used on a global scale would be deeply needed. This means at the same time that we have to re-design our economies to serve long-range social interests instead of providing short-term profits for a few. Weizsäcker sketches the idea of an affluent yet sustainable society where cultural participation becomes more important than consumerism. As abstract as this claim might be in the face of increasing anonymization and amoralization of capital, there will be no other path for survival.

The same holds true, of course, for the economic and financial institutions built to guarantee the privileges and superiority of the Group of Ten, i.e. especially the International Monetary Fund. It can no longer be acceptable that IMF imposed duties have hunger, riots, poverty, misery and even epidemic diseases (like the cholera in Peru) as their consequences, and it can no longer be that the IMF deprives nations from their self-determination with respect to the distribution of wealth and income, or the degree of exposure to foreign capital. While almost all UN member states agreed theoretically on such principles in signing the Declaration for the Erection of a New World Economic Order as well as the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties in 1974, little or nothing has been done in practice since. The result is that with the international debt crisis and the decay of terms of trade the exploitation of the Third World increases and the welfare gap widens. The negative role of transnational corporations in this game cannot be ignored. It seems that little has changed since Barnett and Muller's important book, which should be a "must" reading for economists, politicians and the public in the Eastern European countries.

Polarization of wealth and income, however, does not only happen on the global scale, but also inside the affluent societies, and will be further accentuated by immigration. Beyond all statistical tricks, unemployment in the EEC may have reached some fifteen per cent, which means fifteen per cent of the potential workforce and their dependents deprived of normal life chances, of self-esteem and of much of social contact and responsibility. Shadow economies, some criminal but most not, gained in importance. Despite the problems they cause for our social security systems, it might be interesting to think about what we could learn from the Second and Third Worlds which have much more experience with informal sectors than we have. The very nature of work is changing as automatization and robotization go on, and there is no way to come to grips with unemployment following the traditional recipes.

2.3 Political Implications of the Process of Europe

In the political sphere, the process of Europe seems to indicate a fundamental re-organization of the global society: There is not only an end to the great powers, but also an end to the nation-state. Maurice Bertrand has noted many important arguments from the perspective of a "World Organization, Third Generation" .
He is certainly right in saying that the extreme heterogeneity between todays nation-states is one of the major obstacles against a democratic world organization and that such heterogeneity can only be overcome by the creation of new and more equal units. The United States’ draw-back from UNESCO was not the only but certainly the most spectacular attempt of a superpower to gain control over the UN system and leave behind the “one nation-one vote” rule introduced in times when its power was unchallenged. Only in a re-organized world can the United Nations and their institutions function in a new and desirable way. After Europe and North America (the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement), and after the end of apartheid, Africa would certainly be a candidate for large-scale integration, as would be Latin America. From this point of view, the European process must be of highest interest for social scientists throughout the world, a laboratory where others can try to learn what might be their tasks of tomorrow.

Continuing European integration means that member nation-states gradually transfer parts of their sovereignty to some supranational institution. This is the case in the EEC (but interestingly never was in CMEA) in many respects and will continue as it is the declared intention of member states to build the political union, the United States of Europe. The United States of Europe will be a strong economic and political power. Despite the fact that the USA have been instrumental in furthering European integration after World War II and despite common cultural roots, Europe will gradually dissociate from the USA. The two sides will realize that their interests, goals and strategies do not necessarily coincide and that other coalitions may sometimes be more advantageous. There are good reasons to believe that the new supranational units emerging will be of a different nature than that of today’s superpowers, viz. federal and rather heterogeneous, loosely organized units none of which would have the power, or would be allowed by the others, to play a world police role. European integration must not be allowed to become the pretext for the rich parts of global society to build fortresses and exclude others from our abundance. Extreme differences in wealth are the major source of violence, conflict, crime and war. The South will no longer accept to serve as the battlefield and the backyard of hunger, poverty, prostitution and corruption for the rich. Our future is inextricably tied together with the future of the South. The earlier we recognize and accept global interdependence the better will the chances be for solidarity and positive development for all.

The nation-state, product of the 18th and 19th centuries and established for quite different purposes, slowly erodes. Although it is much too early to declare the end of the nation-state, it is not too early to ask questions about the nature of possible new forms of political organization. The number one question could be what kinds of tasks citizens in a democratic system might wish to assign to the state, and to which level. Surprisingly enough, state tasks seem not to have received much attention in recent political theory although this is one of the most fundamental problems. The impression is widely spread in Western capitalist societies, although with different arguments and different consequences in neo-conservative or in radical and green circles, that the state of today is overburdened. But there is no positive consensus on what the state should accomplish and what not. The number two question, then, is what the appropriate territorial unit would be to fulfill such tasks with a maximum of efficiency and, at the same time, a maximum of democratic controllability. Here the governability problem comes in which has been dealt with on all levels, international, national, state-province, or city. The number three question must be about the means and the organizational characteristics such territorial units would need. If the nation-state deliberately abandons many traditional tasks in favor of a supranational institution, then what remains its raison d’être? Most public services and infrastructures can be supplied on levels much lower than that of the nation-state though under some standardizing jurisdiction. If we call this fictional unit a region, what could a region be in terms of political organization and constitutional law? How can it be delimited, and of which units would it be composed? How far would it allow to reflect ethnic or cultural diversity? Could it help solve some minority problems? How would revenue sharing systems have to be designed to prevent increasing socio-economic disparities? Would social segregation on a small scale be helpful for the large-scale integration of a multicultural society? Under which conditions would institutional completeness and self-government be possible? How would regions be politically represented on higher levels? Would the introduction of relatively autonomous regions on the lower level, and the centralization of power at the supranational level, mean that some degree of disassociation between the two levels might be advisable? These and many other relating questions need scientific rigour together with creative phantasy to find answers which go beyond the current conventional discussion of a Europe of Regions.

There are more tasks for political and administrative re-organization. Our administrative structures are characterized by departments having more or less exclusive jurisdiction and responsibility over a certain set of tasks, but no competence in any other. Only the administration head’s department fulfills cross-cutting functions. Hierarchy, division of responsibility, official channels, fixed careers and ancienürité, i.e. all those features used by Max Weber to describe “rational” Prussian bureaucracy, still govern most of our political administrations despite the fact that the tasks of the public service have enormously changed. Thus it happens that questions of security come under the almost exclusive rule of the department of defense, and problems of agriculture under the rule of the department of agriculture. In doing so, we not only ignore the fundamental interconnectedness of all aspects of society which is especially important as planning
functions outweigh purely conditional programmes in public administration, but we also allow organized pressure groups and lobbies to influence decisions in their interest without sufficient democratic control (the two departments mentioned, defense and agriculture, are perfect though not the only examples). Public administration has become isolated from the citizen, and is in itself highly tenuous and conflictious, where departments compete with each other for political influence and resources, block each other up in denying information or cooperation, prevent or manipulate democratic control and contribute to make governments unmanageable, societies ungovernable. This must not necessarily be seen as negative but it is at least extremely costly and resource consuming. In short, public administrations do not only tend to become inefficient but also undemocratic.

It seems to me that many of the tasks of public administration are conceived in a wrong way. Instead of enabling people to decide and accomplish by themselves what needs to be done, and provide for the necessary support and incentives, public administration tends to monopolize responsibilities and continuously overburdens its own capacity. This is not a plea for Thatcherist deregulation which only wanted to liberate private enterprise from state control for the sake of profits. It is rather an argument rooting in the idea of liberal democracy, taking into account the debate about and experiences with citizen participation, and an attempt to liberate the democratic citizen from the rule of experts.

European integration seems to add just another (though even bigger and more intransparent) bureaucracy to those already existing. The effect is that the average European shows no sign of euphoria for Europe, as electoral campaigns for the European Parliament easily show. While European integration inseparably has centralizing and standardizing effects and economies of scale in mass production, this should be complemented by increasing the margins for regional individualization, autonomy and regional self-government, where the place of today’s nation-state needs to be re-assessed. While the process of scaling up seize private enterprise, pressure groups and lobbies, political parties, and many organizations, it should be accompanied by a process of scaling down where individuals and families are directly concerned. This is the case in energy and water supply, waste recycling and disposal, with kindergartens, schools and care for the elderly, with a good number of social services which might be organized on the neighborhood level, with parks and cemeteries. Real self-determinantion is impossible beyond levels where things become too abstract, too complex and too distant for the individual to be understood. In each case, it should be carefully considered where central standards and implementation are necessary, where centrally set standards are to be implemented by regional or local institutions, and where local autonomy should not be restricted (i.e. the principle of Subsidiarität). Thus, it might well be that standardizing effects of European integration become paralleled with a considerable increase in diversity on the regional and local level. Due to the new information and communication technologies and increasing interdependence in many respects, this will not lead to parochialism. And the regional/local level will be highly participatory in a sense we can find today in, e.g., Switzerland.

Regions will most probably be something between the municipalities and the provinces/states of today. They will not be uniform in size or population; urban areas which are integrated functional units may form regions (Greater London or Metro Toronto are examples) as well as relatively wide rural areas, remote and sparsely settled. Wherever possible, the region should develop from a bottom-up approach instead of being imposed from above. For such an approach to become effective, however, incentives will be necessary. It is the citizens of municipalities which should decide whether or not they want to organize with others to form a region, and a positive decision should result in certain benefits. In the long run, regions may replace municipalities as well as provinces.

In this situation, the role of the nation-state of today is undermined from both top and bottom at the same time. One of its major tasks may remain to take provisions so that increasing regional diversity will not result in severe socio-economic disparities, and regional autonomy does not become self-governed poverty. Trade inspection, environmental control, the supervision of health related services and few other tasks may be added. This changing role of the nation-state might also be reflected in the specific type of democratic control mechanisms. In any instance the European process means a redistribution of power away from the nation-state, and a democratic society must subject such important changes to public debate and decision.

With the gradual decline of the nation-state, it might well be that nationalisms tend to disappear and be no longer a source of conflict. In their place, regionalisms may play a certain role. But as regions have no military forces, such conflicts may take the form of peaceful sporting competitions. In the age of multiple overkill capacities the logic of military means for conflict resolution have reached absurdity level (in my view, the Gulf War does by no means contradict, but rather supports this position). In the future, the monopoly of legitimate physical violence should be transferred to, and exclusively rest with, supranational governmental institutions; regions may maintain their own small police forces, though unarmed. Peace should assume a new understanding, from the negative conception of absence of violence to a positive conception of solidarity, justice, and cooperation. In terms of the social sciences this means that our understanding of the reasons for conflict and the causes of war must be enhanced. Peace research has produced most helpful insights of which practical consequences are yet to be drawn.
Migration will be the effect directly accompanying integration. In general, migratory movements tend to reflect regional differences in socio-economic welfare: The greater the disparity between two regions, the greater the migration stream from the poor to the affluent region will be. With respect to intra-West-European migration there will be no more restrictions from 1993 on and therefore this mechanism will work. Migration may have considerable impact on population composition. Usually, the inclination to migrate is highest in younger, independent adults with relatively high levels of education. They must be mobile, they have to collect information on their target area, they must be willing to bear the costs and consider them investments into their future. Therefore, affluent regions with relatively old populations will be the most attractive target areas, while declining regions with high unemployment rates and relatively young populations are the preferential areas of emigration. Insofar, migration will, on the one hand, help to level out welfare disparities for the migrants and imbalances in population composition and thus help to secure the social welfare systems. On the other hand, however, selective migration causes a vicious circle for the poor regions from where the most active parts of the population emigrate and where the chances for recovery decrease. Thirdly, intra-European migration will result in ethnically and culturally mixed, or multicultural populations. To find out the integrative capacity of a population, especially under conditions of unemployment, it would be extremely useful to study carefully the experiences made in immigration societies like, e.g., Canada or Australia. This could help to design integration policies and, hopefully, to avoid discrimination and right-wing radicalisms.

The situation is different with respect to immigration into Europe from outside. Here, Europe has a certain possibility of control by means of an immigration policy. Again, the experiences made in immigration societies have to be carefully studied and compared with different systems which already exist in European countries. An absolutely open immigration policy is unrealistic because of the political and popular opposition it will provoke. There will rather be some quota system; here again, the Canadian experience is enlightening. Such quota must be accompanied by investments of Europeans in the regions of emigration to reduce the number of emigrants. In no case, however, should political asylum be disputed which is the heart of a liberal, open society.

In education, we have two opposing philosophies. One takes education as a prerequisite for gainful employment; the publicly financed school system, then, is a hidden subvention for the economy, and education is evaluated in terms of how it conveys into money. This is the more prominent, although outdated, approach. The other philosophy takes education as means to integrate the individual into a given culture and allow him or her to become part of and participate in the heritage of a given society, its creativity and its openness for other cultures. Educational systems based on this second approach will be quite different: Most likely, they will give greatest weight to a very broad basic formation combining analytical, artistic, handcraft, and social skills on which, in a process of lifelong learning, consecutive specializations (largely on the job) may be built. Basic formation can, given the uncertainties of future job markets, no longer serve to channel young individuals into the class structure of their society but rather permit them to develop as widely as possible their talents and possibilities. Empathy, universalism and tolerance would be among the important goals of this basic formation. This seems to be the only way to release societies already groaning under the burden of unemployment compensation.

Another area where two opposing approaches can be detected is social welfare. The common approach is based on the idea of risk protection. From an organizational point of view, this is a insurance system dependent on income related dues. Strictly speaking it does not protect against the risks of illness, poverty, unemployment, old age, or accident, but rather against the loss of a certain standard of living. The opposing view would be based on the idea of basic maintenance for all. This basic maintenance approach becomes more and more important as increasing proportions of the GNP are produced by automatic machines, robots etc. with only a minimum of human labor. In this situation, purchasing power must be maintained by subventions to keep the economy going, which means a guaranteed minimum income for all. This approach does not prevent income inequality, but it prevents massive pauperization. In addition, it is one of the most promising ways to achieve women’s full emancipation.

European society inevitably will be a multicultural society. Multiculturalism can only flourish and develop if safeguarded and supported by appropriate institutional provisions - bi- or multilingualism, a relatively transparent judicial system, active support for the different cultural heritages, a public opinion which positively esteems every foreign element as enriching and discourages all forms of discrimination, and an economic and political system which encourages the preservation of cultural roots, languages, religions, problem-solving strategies, and folkways as irreplaceable resources (i.e. the mosaic approach as opposed to the melting-pot approach). Many of our existing institutions will have to be reconsidered and adapted to this new task, especially in the bigger and relatively homogeneous nation-states.

2.5 Intellectual Implications for European Social Sciences

Europe was the seedbed for our widely shared conceptions of rationality, huma-
nism, and progress. European rationality gets its impetus from the idea that human beings are able to govern nature by discovering the laws of how nature functions. Nature was something which exists outside ourselves, and its exclusive purpose was to serve for the benefit of humans. The consumability of nature was principally thought to be unlimited. It was the Club of Rome who, in the early 1970s, demonstrated the consequences of this paradigm and brought it to an end. European rationality went well together with the ideals of humanism and human rights. The basic element of humanism was the individual, and it was pretended that these individuals, isolated from their surrounding social context and structure, would by their very nature have the same chances for self-fulfillment and the same rights. This allowed us to make distinctions between the normal and the deviant, and to enclose the deviant in hospitals, jails, or brothels. Liberal humanism became the ideology of the ruling classes which ignored that equality is not a biological concept but rather relates the individual to the structure of society. It is not biology which makes us unequal but rather where we grow up, by whom and in which environment we are raised, which contacts we have, which norms and standards we internalize in socialization, which skills we acquire. According to liberalism, "enrichissez-vous" is the maxim for those with the best starting conditions to exploit their social and natural environment. It is not and must not be allowed to become the maxim for a just and sustainable society. European humanism was always highly selective and far away from treating all human beings alike: It survived slavery and colonialism, political oppression and pauperization, exploitation and aggressiveness, nationalism and Fascism as well as ongoing systematic deprivation of large proportions of the population, e.g., women, without considerable modification.

Quite often was the idea of progress used to justify the unequal treatment of humans. Some were not fit enough for survival, others not Aryan, nor white, nor progressive, not western, not capitalist, or not socialist enough to enjoy the same life chances as the successful. Progress was a technocratic conception closely tied to a machine-paradigm of society. Growth was its predominant goal, and in the narrow form of economic growth it became the major target and the golden calf of all economies and governments, irrespective of its negative externalities, and irrespective of their ideology. Increasing control over nature (including our own social and physical nature) and increasing consumption were progressive. The entire world was to be subjected to this model, the Third World as well as reluctant areas in our own societies, and we did not hesitate to use coercive means to convince them of such benefits.

New Thinking for the future of Europe and of the global society will have to review the ideas of progress, of humanism, of rationality, and of individual human rights with a view to become universalistic, tolerant, and responsible for the whole of mankind. Such revision is, of course, necessary in all times in human history. In our specific historical situation the corner-stones of a new ideology must be global economic and ecological sustainability, global security and non-violence, positive peace, and social justice.

As may have become obvious from the preceding discussion, the Process of Europe is far too complex and has too many theoretical and practical implications as to be adequately analyzable from a unidisciplinary perspective. If we accept the challenge to contribute to the design of this emerging society, then the perspective must be holistic, and the approach problem-oriented. It will probably turn out that the European challenge allows us to understand that the two opposing approaches, holistic and positivist, are not contradictory as Karl Popper believed, but rather complementary. A great, comprehensive theory of society does not develop in a process of combining small pieces of middle-range theories (as Robert Merton advised us) to a mosaic picture but rather as a grid which becomes more and more densely filled with files of knowledge. It is only in a broad holistic understanding that questions of social relevancy and of ethical responsibility can be answered and that theoretical frames of reference can be constructed.

The hypotheses derived from such frames of reference is where positivism may, and sometimes must, come in. The interpretation of empirical results must again be rooted in the holistic perspective. The point where we are is where this holistic frame of reference needs to be discussed, and this discussion may allow us to find back to the ultimate unity of all social sciences. It is only here where tasks for positivist empirical research, i.e. testing fruitful and relevant hypotheses, can be specified.

Besides other differences between the natural and the social sciences, one is of special importance here: While the natural sciences produce and provide a type of knowledge helping us to dispose of the non-human nature which they enable us to control and govern in our human interest ("Verfügungswissen"), the social sciences produce and provide a type of knowledge allowing us to understand how we interact and organize as humans and how we find orientation for our own future ("Orientierungswissen"). We have, in many respects, by far enough Verfügungswissen, but we are deeply lacking in Orientierungswissen. It seems easier for us to imagine how the social sciences can be used as Verfügungswissen to manipulate and govern society than to imagine that the social sciences as Orientierungswissen may help us find decisions on where and how far we should go in producing Verfügungswissen.

Orientierungswissen, however, can never be value-free. The basic ethical value is the survival of mankind. This means that we are indeed in a position to define the most important world problems, i.e. peace, development, and protection of the environment. From here it is possible to set priorities in social science research agendas, priorities on which not everybody may or must agree but which
certainly give a guideline for many. Non-violent conflict resolution, social justice and equality, and a sustainable global society are the cornerstones for the social sciences, or better: for all sciences, of whatever discipline.

Not only our ethical foundations and epistemologies, but also our social science methodologies are affected and challenged by the Process of Europe. Thus, in a recent debate the descriptive comparative cross-sectional methodology in the analysis of European society was objected and an evolutionary approach advocated. One of the arguments was that it is only by thinking about possible alternative futures that we can find meaningful and socially relevant questions and hypotheses. A second argument was that comparing nations-states simply does not allow us to recognize what is specific about the emerging European society, i.e. its supranational institutions, consciousness, or solidarity. Even worse: in comparing nation-states we pretend that the nation-state defines a society. The interesting question in the case of European society, however, is: what is it what makes a society? Inherent in this question is already the utopian element that something like a European society may exist.

Building a holistic frame of reference for the understanding of the process of Europe means that proponents of different social science disciplines (historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists, geographers etc.) and of different schools of thought (reductionists, dialectics, positivists etc.) and of different national traditions should get together to argue what is important in the Process of Europe and what is not, and why, and what the contribution of the social sciences could be. It is not the immediate result, or the intersect of these different views, which are important here but rather the initiation of a process which may take quite a while to come to conclusions. The result could be a catalogue of research questions which social scientists feel important and urgent to deal with. This catalogue may be consulted with decision-makers, on the European and national levels, with professional associations and other NGOs, with funding institutions and the like to enrich it and make it more comprehensive. The point is here that plurality and diversity in this intellectual process are an absolutely indispensable basis. With the decay of the socialist systems, however, this plurality is in danger as an important source of intellectual stimulation, and Western, capitalist, liberal views tend to dominate and suppress all others.

3. German Unification as a Blueprint for European Integration

It is not for parochial or chauvinistic reasons that I propose to look at the process of German unification as a blueprint for European integration. If we expand our view beyond the EEC and think about the future of East-West relations, it becomes clear that German unification involves a great number of problems which are still far in front of us on the European scene. The differences between the two processes are unignorable: the breath-taking tempo and the common cultural foundations in the German case have no parallel in Europe. But possible similarities which do exist might be more inspiring and more fruitful for the understanding of the European case.

It is correct to say that East Germans overran their government in a nonviolent revolution and voted for the West German political and economic system. It is, however, as correct to say that (1) East Germans did not have any reliable and precise information on how the Western system really works, and there was not enough time to consider carefully what unification might mean for both sides, and that (2) West German politicians, political parties, business people and institutions of all sort took the East over in surprise. No sober reflection was possible on what should be preserved from the old socialist system and rescued into the new situation, no discussion about possible third ways, about a thorough revision of the West German Grundgesetz, or about an entirely new constitution was admitted, and no objections could be raised against the behavior of the many profiteers and speculators.

The uncertainty was and is complete, at least in subjective terms, with respect to jobs and income, housing and property, social welfare and retirement pensions, schools and universities, local and provincial administration. Within only a few months, the political, economic and cultural elites became replaced; decision-making was no longer the same; the old political culture is destroyed but a new one not in sight; local and provincial authorities are completely lost; law enforcement agencies did hardly dare to interfere; crime and street accidents skyrocket; the old concepts of justice, productivity, performance, and solidarity collapsed. Some took advantage of this Wild East situation, but by far most were intimidated and helpless. All this happened in the short period of only a few months, and the uncertainty has increased since rather than decreased. There is immense migration and commuting from East to West although official statistics are not published. Hundreds of Western advisors, many with disputable reputation and expertise, but all with their proper interests, travel up and down the country and sell their propositions for high prices to unsuspecting people. The new (West German) government caught itself in dubious promises which it finds now difficult to finance. Confirming repeatedly that everything is under control, it added to public insecurity because its palliative consolations did and do not
coincide with everyday experience. The arrogance of (Western) power has many facets and is painfully felt by many in the East.

In the experience of most people in the East, contrary to most media, unification is far from being a pleasant or promising process. The word colonization is not mistaken. This is not only a question of appropriate timing but rather of respect. The deeper problem -- and this refers to Europe -- is how a transition process could be designed and implemented giving the people an informed choice between alternatives, treating them with respect and dignity, and understanding their real and practical difficulties. In European integration, this is an assignment of highest priority, and an extremely important task for social scientists. It seems that in the German case we fail to achieve this goal, all the more so it is important that we carefully study this example and think about its positive and negative aspects with European East-West integration in mind. In addition, problems of political integration are not only on the European agenda; social scientists from other regions should be encouraged to come and do research, together with Europeans, on such processes which might affect their own societies one day.

East-West integration must be accompanied and prepared by contacts not only between ministers of foreign affairs and their staff, but between people on all levels of society. Information and technical transfer from West to East are of utmost importance. But it would be insufficient, despite all existing inclination, to try to copy the Western way in the East. There must be a new practical synthesis where the Western experience is carefully evaluated and selectively adopted for the solution of Eastern problems. Only the most advanced of all Western experiences are to be seriously considered by the East. Therefore, it is not as inappropriate as it may seem at first glance that some Western advisors project their utopias to the Eastern situation and see there a huge field for social experiment; such utopian thinking, however, must go together with real down-to-earth experience to become fruitful (notwithstanding that many in the East have enough of utopian thinking). Urban renewal, to take one important example, must not be allowed to follow only economic criteria but must rather be conceived in a triangle between economy, ecology, and citizen participation.

4. The Role of the Social Sciences

Seen from retrospective, the role of all sciences since the enlightenment has been ambivalent; it is rather a simplification to see the “loss of innocence” of the sciences only with the invention of nuclear weapons. It would be naive to believe that the sciences are, or have ever been, better than the encompassing society or its ruling classes which instruct and finance the sciences. By no means are scientists more socially responsible, less selfish, more respectable, or more noble characters than other people. They have, however, better access to the media and to public opinion and therefore their chances are better to influence their image in society.

It can be argued that the sciences create as many new problems as they solve. Nuclear power is only the most widely discussed case, but genetic manipulation, high tech medicine, arms technologies, dietetics -- there is no branch of scientific endeavour where this ambiguity could not be demonstrated. One problem is the misuse of knowledge for other than the intended purposes. The other lies in the specialization and fragmentation of all scientific disciplines and in their isolation from the social context to which they inextricably belong.

Scientific endeavour is neither self-sufficient nor self-determined. The origin and end of all sciences is society: It is in social processes where problems are defined and submitted to scientific analysis, and it is in societies that answers to such problems are found, accepted or rejected, and solutions implemented. Science itself is a social process, with division of labor, hierarchies, official beliefs and heretics, a certain distribution of power, masters and men (and rarely women), organized cliques, claims, and connections. Therefore we have no reasons to look at the social organization “science” in a way different from any other social organization. Some of the basic questions would be (a) What does science contribute to the quality of a given society? (b) How does science work as a social system, and what are the consequences for society? (c) How is scientific thinking organized, and what follows from there for society?

The positivist approach, still prominent in all disciplines, relies on some fundamental principles: that the subject and object of research are different and independent of each other; that we shall only accept to be real what we can detect by means of empirical research; that hypotheses can never be positively affirmed but only negatively falsified; that specialization on the one hand and the isolation of increasingly smaller parts of reality for the purpose of analysis on the other contribute to our understanding of the real world; that scientific work should be free of values and personal preferences and interests. It is interesting to see how such principles became questioned in recent years. The social and human sciences which, under the positivist influence, hoped to become as exact as they per-
ceived the natural sciences to be (which means in reality as socially acknowledged and economically successful as they perceived the natural sciences to be), forget that their most important heritage lies in precisely the opposite principles': For the social sciences, subject and object of research are inseparable; reality is a fragile consensus which has permanently to be reaffirmed; all areas of reality are incredibly complex and it is only by force that we can isolate certain phenomena for analysis; causality is dubious; the unintended outcome of intentional action is the norm and not the exception, self-destroying or self-fulfilling prophecies, cognitive dissonance and similar phenomena do not allow us to trust in our perception and logic, sophisticated as they may be in terms of methodology; the freedom of values does not exist. Positivism has, besides other aspects, also the function of a professional ideology at least insofar as it prevents scientists from accepting responsibility for the social consequences of their work. Perfect and undisputed functioning is more the source of reputation and income than anything else. The paradox becomes obvious when research for the sake of economic growth or for technical peak performance (i.e. Verfügungswissen) is accepted as value-free and richly funded while research for the sake of social justice, peace, environment and related areas (i.e. Orientierungswissen) are widely neglected and often discriminated against.

It is time now to recapitulate the essence of the argument and draw some conclusions. Essentially, my central point is that the process of European integration, seen as the emergence of a new society, introduces a new quality and therefore requires a thorough revision of many aspects of the social sciences. The traditional approach - positivist, retrospecutive, cross-sectional, unidisciplinary, (pretended) value-free - is not adequate for the understanding of this process, and not even of its important aspects. At the same time, the social sciences have an enormous task to fulfill, i.e. they are called to contribute to the shaping of this new society and of a humane process of transition, especially in the East. Consequently, the options for the social sciences are (1) either to continue along traditional lines and remain relatively unimportant and meaningless for the European process, or (2) to make a severe effort towards revision of traditional routines and engage in the tasks ahead from a new perspective.

Traditional academic structures favor option number one and discourage option number two. The fragmentation into increasingly narrow defined fields of specialization works for the production of relatively manipulable Verfügungswissen, the positivist approach isolates ideosyncratic elements from the totality of society, vision and utopia have no place and therefore cannot be used to guide the direction of our research efforts, and we seem to care more about "explaining" a negligible portion of variance in a meaningless variable than about the problems inherent in this exciting phase of social change.

The next tasks for the social sciences seem relatively clear, although neither easy nor quickly accomplishable:

(1) a broad discussion should be initiated about the major research problems, priorities, and approaches as seen from different schools of thought and different disciplines; ideally, the outcome of such a discussion would be a research agenda for which proposals have been made in sections 2 and 3 of this paper;

(2) the major obstacles working against cooperative and coordinated European social science research, viz. language, time, money, and institutional insufficiencies, do not allow to organize effective research on such an agenda;

(3) such a research agenda will need an institutional infrastructure for European social science cooperation. A European Social Science Council (ESSC)™ may be the place where broader projects out of the research programme could be defined and advertised. Networks of universities and research institutions would be eligible to work on such projects and use all ways of scientific cooperation, including interdisciplinary research teams, specific tasks assigned to individuals, coordinated dissertations, etc. These institutions may decide to build a European Social Science Association for cooperation and for dissemination of the idea of European social sciences;

(4) in the field of academic teaching, a kind of interdisciplinary studium integrare with a focus on the emergence of European society may be developed and implemented in a Network of Associated Universities - a proposal submitted to UNESCO's 25th General Conference in 1989 by the Federal Republic of Germany;

(5) a European Social Science Foundation might be necessary designed to provide funding for consecutive research programmes.

All institutional provisions should be so designed as to stimulate and facilitate European social science research. This is a pretentious, resource-consuming, and uncommon task which will certainly need a phase for experiment and encouragement. Therefore incentives must be given in the form not necessarily of personal income but rather in the form of minimum bureaucratic expenditures in the application, reporting and evaluation procedures. The European Social Science Conference to be held in Spain in June 1991 is exactly thought to initiate this process.
In this issue

In my view, this would be a more interesting interpretation of the "end of history"-thesis put forward by

see, e.g., D. Senghaas: Europa 2000 - ein Friedensplan. Frankfurt 1990

see recently F. Nuscheler: Wettweisen Massenflucht - Gefahr für unseren Wohltand, Dritte Welt Presse 7, 1990, 1


Our Common Future - Report of the Brundtland-Commission on Environment and Development,

H. H. Nolte, in this issue, deals with this process

It is especially the Club of Rome who has tirelessly pointed to such issues, since the first report on The Limits to Growth, New York 1972

This is not only the impression Europeans get of how and why the machinery is working, it is also an important part of the perception of others on Europe; see, e.g., M. Silva and B. Siögren: Europe 1992 and the New World Power Game, New York 1990


W. Kapp 1950

see, among many others, W. H. Clive Simmonds: Is Sustainability the Key to Professionalism in Futures? Futures Research Quarterly 7, 1991, 85-95

Erdepokal, Darmstadt 1990, p. 9

Global Reach - The Power of the Multinational Corporations, New York 1974

M. Bertrand: Für eine Weltorganisation der dritten Generation, Bonn 1988

For the American perception of European integration, see John van Oudenaren's paper in this issue

Paul Kennedy's argument fits well into this context; see The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, London 1986

J. Blaschke (ed.): Handbuch der westeuropäischen Regionalbewegungen, Frankfurt 1980


Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, Tübingen 1976, pp. 124-30 and 551-579

Some additional arguments for this thesis may be found in the UN Secretary General's Report on the Activity of the United Nations as delivered to the 45th General Assembly on September 16, 1990

Imagine that only the chemical weapons drawn back by the United States from the FRG in summer 1990 were sufficient to kill the world population by 18 times! (see, among many others, R. Steanweig (ed.): Kriegsursachen, Frankfurt 1987 or, most recently, International Conflict Research, International Social Science Journal 43 (1991) 1


For an extension of this argument, see Von der DDR leben? in Das Ende eines Experiments, ed. by R. Reissig and G.-J. Glaesmer, Berlin 1991, and the other contributions in this volume

It is fascinating to consider in this context the argument put forward by P. Kennedy: The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, London 1988, and even more so if we relate it to the situation in the US: see the paper by A. G. Frank in this issue

see the argument put forward by R. Lawcnzak in this issue

One of these interesting signs is the foundation of the Central European University (CEU), initiated by George Soros, with chapters in Prague and Budapest, and later possibly in Warsaw: CEU would, however, not be possible without strong inputs, intellectual, managerial and financial, from the West

Many discussions and helpful comments made by Ulla Peters, Gerti Zimmer, Michael Marien and the friends and colleagues at the Berlin Institute for Social Research and the Institute of Sociology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague, on earlier versions of this paper, as well as the support provided by Dieter Janson, are gratefully acknowledged

Developments which have only become possible due to Mikhail Gorbachev's Perestroika and New Thinking - which themselves have only become possible and necessary due to the deep structural crisis of "really existing socialism", see M. Gorbachev: Perestroika, Leningrad 1987, and also M. Gorbachev: Selected Speeches and Articles, Moscow 1987 (2nd ed.)

Hartmut Kaelble was among the first to recognize this process towards a European society the social history of which he described in his Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Gesellschaft - eine Sozialgeschichte Westeuropas 1880-1980, München 1987

For a most interesting indicator, we have checked five prominent German professional journals as to the scholarly papers on European issues they have published during the last twenty years, i.e. 1970 till 1990 (short remarks, notices and book reviews excluded). The result is revealing: Politische Vierteljahresschrift 18, Zeitschrift für Soziologie 6, Leviathan 9, Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 4, Soziale Welt 2 - i.e. less than two per year on the average, taken all five journals together. The numbers include papers which are comparative, though not truly dealing with issues of the emergence of a European society - these would be significantly less. I would expect that Europe might be somewhat more prominent in journals in economics and history, but I doubt if we would get other evidence from other European countries

Among the historical descriptions of Europe I especially like Gordon A. Craig: Europe since 1815, New York 1974, or better the German edition in one volume with a last chapter updated until the end of the 1970's, i.e. Geschichte Europas 1815-1980, München 1983


see the paper written by Ryszard Lawcnzak in this issue

It may well be that the West is a large extent responsible for the final failure of perestroika; at least since 1988 there could be no doubt that perestroika can only be successful if the daily consumer needs of the population were rapidly and efficiently met. The West, and above all the US, claimed political reform first, knowing well that help would be a prerequisite for such reform. Despite recent Bush-Kohl declarations, the US position remains unchanged; an unworthy accent was added in the public discussion about whether or not Gorbachev should be invited to the World Economic Summit of the G-7

see, among many others, F. von der DDR leben? in Das Ende eines Experiments, ed. by R. Reissig and G.-J. Glaesmer, Berlin 1991, and the other contributions in this volume

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Before 1978, immigration to Canada was based on national/regional quota with a strong preference for Europeans. The new immigration law of 1978 replaced national quotas by a point system where functional criteria are decisive.

Among the many books and articles published on guaranteed minimum income concepts (which, by the way, date back to Milton Friedman and others), I found very stimulating A. Gorz: Le chemin du paradis, Paris 1983

Meadows, D.: The Limits to Growth, New York 1972

Here I am sharply opposing all attempts made by bio-sociologists to re-introduce vulgar Darwinism as ideology of social inequality

for a radically opposing view see M. Bookchin: The Ecology of Freedom, Palo Alto 1982

It seems worthwhile, in this connection, to re-read Der Positivismusstreit der deutschen Soziologie, ed. by T.W. Adorno, Neuwied 1969, with its most sophisticated and still valid discussion of holism versus positivism

The Poverty of Historicism, London 1990


1 use the term from UNESCO's Second Medium Term Plan where Major Programme 1 was entitled: Reflection on World Problems and Future-oriented Studies; the organization's Third Medium Term Plan enumerates these world problems as peace, development and protection of the environment


see the article by Alexander King in this issue


This interesting point was brought up in a meeting of social scientists from East and West Germany in January 1991

see, for a first account, Das Ende eines Experiments, ed. by R. Reissig and G.-J. Glaessner, Berlin 1991

EUROGRAD XXI, a Leningrad based project organizing knowledge transfer from Western to Eastern cities, goes along these lines, as does the Bauhaus Dessau in the former GDR

A. Hermann: Wie die Wissenschaft ihre Unschuld verlor - Macht und Missbrauch der Forscher, Frankfurt 1984

For a great introduction see N. Elias: Was ist Sotsiologie? München 1970

T.W. Adorno (ed.): Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie, Neuwied 1969

B. Hamm: Towards an Institutional Infrastructure for European Social Science, paper presented to the European Conference on Social Sciences, Santander, June 24-28, 1991

in analogy to the International Social Science Council
Towards an Institutional Infrastructure for European Social Science

1. Purpose of Paper

The emerging European society is a challenge of first order to the social sciences. It may be true that continuing integration in the European Communities 1993 and beyond is first of all the goal of big business which profits most from an open and widely standardized market. But this is where social scientists have to stand up and emphasize that this is not enough for building a society which is just, democratic, peaceful, and sustainable. Such a society is still vision. The European process, however, makes us aware that we need vision to ask relevant questions. The traditional positivist approach and its strategy of continuously developing and adding together middle-range theories gained from retrospective empirical research proves inadequate in view of the tasks assigned to us by Europeans. European society is a new process of unprecedented scope and scale and with enormous impacts on the global as well as on national societies. The social sciences should contribute to the design of this process and bring in the knowledge they have accumulated over the past two hundred years. Their contribution to society, however, seems relatively poor and disappointing not only because decision-makers do not really care much about books but also because there is no consensus between social scientists about what is relevant and necessary and what is of minor importance for society, and whether or not this is an important problem to them. My own diagnosis of social science performance in terms of social relevance is rather pessimistic. To become more relevant for European society, the social sciences must change in scope and scale and methodology, in their modes of cooperation and in their approaches. European social science will and must be of a different kind than what we have known hitherto. The task of building a truly European social science is pretentious and difficult and needs new ideas, approaches, and procedures.

The present paper develops some ideas and proposals on how the shaping of a European social science might be stimulated and what kinds of infrastructural provisions may be helpful.

The argument develops in four steps: (1) some outlines of the tasks European social science would have to accomplish are sketched, (2) the present situation of European social science is characterized, (3) some ideas about an “ideal” institutional infrastructure for European social science are proposed, and (4) some conclusions are drawn on how we can come from here to there, taking into account the deliberations of the First European Social Science Conference held in Santander, Spain, June 24-28, 1991.
2. Europe - Challenge to the Social Sciences

What is new, what is specific about European society? What follows from there as consequences for European social sciences?

European society does not yet exist - or does it? Which are our precise criteria to define a given conglomerate of people as society? What is Europe? It is, of course, the European Communities, the driving force of which is the economy. Twelve nation-states, some of which had been in bitter hatred against each other since centuries, decided to build the United States of Europe. It is also the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), seven nations different from the EC member states (although also capitalist in their economic and democratic in their political system) which are supposed to build, together with the EC, the European Economic Space in early 1993. There is the former Council of Mutual Economic Assistance which disintegrated gradually since Perestroika and New Thinking, overtly since the revolutions of 1989 and fell apart recently. There is the Council of Europe, the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the concept of the European House from the Atlantic to the Ural, the West European Union, the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe -- short: there are many different notions of Europe, all with their own definition, membership, and institutions. Europe is a continent in re-organization, a process the outcome of which cannot yet be described by means of empirical social research.

The major components of Europe, and actors in the European integration process, are transnational corporations and nation-states. Nation-states transfer part of their sovereignty to a new European power central. This part becomes increasingly important, gradually involving economic policy in all its aspects, foreign policy, defense, development etc. At the same time when the nation-state is undermined from above, it is also challenged from below, from municipalities and regions which claim additional rights and means on the grounds of cultural identity, social movements and appropriate scale. Many of the remaining responsibilities of today's nation-states, especially the provision of public services and infrastructures, can much better be solved on a local or regional than on a national scale. The very concept of nation-state is therefore changing its character -- but what will the "nation-state", or its substitute of tomorrow, be? What could a Europe of regions be? How could regions be linked with the new European power central? How would democratic rule look in such regions?

The European process is bridging the border between two formerly hostile blocks based on two fundamentally different ideological systems. The case of unifying Germany is a prototype to be carefully studied in this respect. Two types of society with different institutions, different procedures for decision-making, different ways to recruit and reward elites, different conceptions of man, society, justice, equality try to build a new synthesis, where one part is by far more powerful and more attractive than the other. The German example could inform us not only about the changes necessary and the obstacles met but also about a process with reminds more to unfriendly take-over and colonization than to voluntary association. In a way, the German unification process can be seen as a small-scale model of European integration. It would be important to understand if and to what extent the unintended consequences of this process can be avoided or released on the European scale.

The transition into a federal system can be studied in the Soviet Union (other and less spectacular examples are provided by Spain, France, and Italy), and the centrifugal forces which endanger a federalist system have an enlightening though horrifying example in Yugoslavia. Federalism seems to work very well only in Switzerland (where it has a long tradition) and Germany (where it was imposed after World War II). Europe will become a federal system. But which will be its components? By which mechanisms will it be kept together?

Behind these is the more general problem of what integrates multicultural societies, why -- if at all -- they should be kept together and which are the effects of different mechanisms to achieve this goal. Multiculturalism is inevitably the future of European society, not only by the way it is composed but also by immigration across European borders. The Canadian experience, from the Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism until our days, seems especially important to make us understand the delicate balance between integration on the one hand and the preservation of minority groups' cultural heritage on the other.

Immigration into Europe from the East and from the South is not a new phenomenon. It seems, however, to take dimensions and pose problems far beyond anything Europe has ever experienced before. The poor of the world are already knocking on our doors and demand their share of our wealth. A Fortress of Europe, although being against all humanistic tradition, will be claimed by large proportions of the European population. European countries are already on the way to tighten up their legislation pertaining to foreign immigrant populations. Some kind of migration policy, together with some kind of much more effective development policy, will be the necessary concomitant. But how should and could both be conceived?

What will Europe's future position be in the global society? Will its overwhelming economic power be used for continued exploitation of the Third World? Will European political institutions have the legitimate means to gain some control over the concentration, anonymization and amorralization of capital? Or will they use their power, together with North America and Japan, to instrumentalize
the UN system and the Bretton Woods institutions for their own short-term interests? What options do we really have, and what kinds of decisions should be taken by whom and when?

These are only few examples out of an abundance of questions which call for answers, normative and analytical, by social scientists. It seems obvious from the nature and complexity of the European process that traditional, retrospective, positivist research will not be the most prominent approach to address such questions. We need an approach which is holistic, problem-oriented, interdisciplinary, and future-oriented to be able to draw the contour map of European social science research which then may be filled in by a variety of projects following differing approaches. Only then can we hope to contribute significantly to the design of the European process with information which is relevant for decision-making. More than this: European social science must not only become problem-oriented and interdisciplinary, it must also become truly international and make use of the full range of different schools of thought and cultural variety.

This means that we have a large number of important and new problems to address and new modes of doing research and working together which are not familiar to most of us, costly, time-consuming, not in line with the common funding principles and not in line with our own routines. The ideal would be a kind of task force organization where task forces are interdisciplinary and international at the same time, and have opportunity to develop common understandings, approaches, languages and methodologies to make them really productive. Such task forces should not work in isolation but rather stimulate each other and have chances to exchange their views and experiences, i.e. they should be thought of as networks. Spin offs of their research should directly be felt in university education where new forms of training must be found to acquaint new generations of skilled professionals with a broad perspective and a sincere commitment to global responsibility and European society.

3. European Social Science Cooperation

My intention is not to draw a comprehensive picture of existing European social science cooperation. As far as I can see there is no directory or inventory yet which would allow such an undertaking, and mere enumeration would be of little help in the present context. I shall rather recall some of my own experiences in international, and European, social research assuming that these allow, individual as they are, to detect some of the major weaknesses of the present situation. Others may contradict, complement or agree. I need not go into detail, and shall confine my view to some aspects of the problem: language, time, money, institutions.

Insufficient language skill is certainly one of the major obstacles to international and interdisciplinary cooperation. With respect to internationalism things seem relatively easy: We all need one language for international communication in which we need the necessary training. For better or for worse, this language seems to be some empowered, americanized English. This does not only mean that we implicitly accept the cultural foundations on which this type of English is based but also that we accept the relative superiority of eloquent people with English mother tongue. As much as I understand the resistance to such developments especially in France, as much is it correct to say that French colleagues make themselves feel increasingly isolated in the international scientific community. We all need truly bilingual schooling to become European.

Things are much more difficult with respect to interdisciplinarity. Here, specialization and fragmentation within the broad spectrum of social sciences are mirrored in different professional languages to an extent that, e.g., medical sociologists and urban sociologists have considerable difficulties in understanding each other — not to mention communication problems between economists, historians, psychologists, geographers, political scientists, and sociologists, or between structuralists, functionalists, dialectics, conflict theorists, interactionists, neo-classicists etc. The matrix of probable mis- or non-understanding is much wider than the probability of understanding. Both types of difficulties can only be overcome by exposure and training which needs efforts, takes time and costs money.

Time, as a second constraint, or better: our perception of time, is very much determined by our criteria of academic performance, e.g. in career planning. In most European nations, research and teaching abroad and publications in a foreign language are more seen as exotic supplements than as achievements decisive for promotion. It is therefore quite understandable, yet counterproductive, that most social scientists devote the work of their early career phases to rather narrowly defined problems of their own society instead of international pro-
blems. This is not surprising in a situation where faculty members are generally neither multilingual nor multinational in their experience, where it still not general usage to have term papers, theses or dissertations written in a foreign language accepted, and where courses attended in another country are usually not credited. Parochialism is inherited from academic generation to academic generation, and envy and jealousy are often with those who try to change this situation. Therefore, young academics do still better in not wasting much time with going abroad but rather stay in their own country and get acquainted with the people and institutions important for their career. In my country there are still many more opportunities for students to go abroad than are actually being used. It is only recently that programs like ERASMUS or TEMPUS try to overcome such limitations with some success.

Money is, of course, behind much of all this. Funding institutions, including university grant commissions, are very often reluctant to reward projects with international travel and cooperation and are eager to restrict "project tourism" to an extent they feel unavoidable. It seems easier to get funding for some minor and relatively irrelevant research project in one's own society than for longer stays abroad for diving into foreign traditions in social science research without a research project clearly specified in advance. As long as evaluation committees are in power which themselves had little exposition to international cooperation things are not very likely to change.

Finally institutions: The oldest and most prominent institution for social science cooperation in Europe may be the European Centre for Coordination and Documentation in Social Science Research (Vienna Centre), an offspring of the International Social Science Council and therefore, indirectly, of UNESCO. Designed explicitly in times of the Cold War to develop and promote East-West cooperation in the social sciences, the Vienna Centre was for many years extremely important as a meeting place. The way it was organized by its founding fathers and hence by its Board of Directors, however, made it almost exclusively expedient for this specific situation. Now, in a changing world, it is not without questions that the Vienna Centre can continue to fulfill its vocation. At least, some structural adaptations will be indispensable. Small, non-directive in its structure, and relatively poor in resources as the Vienna Centre is, its productivity since its inception in 1963 is surprising. It is, however, also surprising to see how little the number of Western social scientists is (opposite to their colleagues from Eastern Europe) who know about the Vienna Centre and how it works or who have already made use of its services (this, by the way, holds also true with respect to the European Science Foundation and its Standing Committee for Social Sciences). Its broad experience is indispensable for European social science although literally dozens of such Centres would be necessary to accomplish what is needed in this new situation, and many have been founded recently or are in the process of being set up. There are, of course, some other institutions of European social science research and training. But the point I want to make here, i.e. that a clear, powerful and professional orientation towards European society is still missing, does remain valid. Thus, if it is agreed that Europe is a problem of first rank order for the social sciences, and if we further agree that the social sciences are not well prepared to respond to this challenge, we have defined a problem which calls for a solution. It is time, then, to think about possible options which might lead towards a strong and relevant European social science.

4. Institutional Infrastructure

There are good reasons to understand why European social science has difficulties in getting off the ground. Among the measures suitable to change this situation, the development of an appropriate institutional infrastructure might be one of the most efficient. It should serve to interlink the social science communities, decision-makers, funding institutions, and the public at large. The interlinking mechanism is, to a large extent, translation from one language into another, i.e. the translation of a problem as perceived by decision-making bodies into a social science problem, a social science problem into a fundable research project, the results of social science research into the language of the media, and vice versa. To be efficient, an institutional infrastructure must be as transparent, unbur- reaucratic and close to social scientists as possible.

4.1 Professional Organizations, Research Committees

The skeleton of such an institutional infrastructure may be built by professional organizations on a European level, a process which is already under way. We have, e.g., European associations of political scientists, economists, social psychologists, and peace researchers, an initiative to set up a European Sociological Association is under way, and the foundation of a European Futures Studies Association just failed, though only temporarily. Considering the working principles of international or national professional organizations, it is highly probable that European associations, too, will build research committees for specific purposes and, given the experience of existing associations, it is not very difficult to predict of what kind these research committees will be. It seems, however, unlikely that such research committees establish contacts and cooperation across disciplinary borders. They will rather serve exclusively disciplinary purposes. This is, of course, legitimate -- but it is not what seems necessary to
meet the specific needs of the emerging European society, i.e. interdisciplinary, future-oriented networks of social science task force groups.

The ideas developed here are, of course, pure vision. According to the methodology proposed by Robert Jungk with his “future workshops”, i.e. (1) define your problem, (2) criticize the present situation, (3) formulate an utopian vision of how the problem could be solved in some future, and (4) elaborate the concrete measures helpful to go from here to there, I am still in phase 3.

4.2 European Social Science Council

A European Social Science Council (ESSC) may be founded. Just as the International Social Science Council (ISSC) was founded in 1952 “to add to the network of international disciplinary associations (established under UNESCO auspices between 1945 and 1950) a new interdisciplinary body to facilitate the drawing together of the different branches of knowledge, and to accelerate the resumption of intellectual communication between the nations of the world” (ISSC 1987-1989, p.1), a European interdisciplinary organization may be conceived.

Its major tasks could be

(1) to provide the necessary links between decision-making bodies, the social science communities, and funding institutions (the European Social Science Foundation, see below);
(2) to stimulate, encourage and assist in the foundation of interdisciplinary, problem-oriented task-force groups and organize contract research;
(3) to network such groups and research institutions with a Europe-wide scope and provide organizational, coordinative and communicative support for such networks (the European Social Science Association);
(4) to organize European Social Science Conferences;
(5) to develop and regularly update, in a wide and open consultation among the social science community and in contact with decision-making bodies and funding institutions, a European Social Science Research Programme; and
(6) to stimulate, encourage and assist in the foundation of, and to transfer subventions to, European disciplinary associations.

This is, by the way, not far from what the ISSC does with its small staff and modest resources, thus demonstrating that a large new bureaucracy is neither necessary nor advisable. And of course, a European Social Science Research Programme is not thought to impose certain issues on the social science community and exclude others, or to monopolize resources and decision-making in an anonymous body, but rather as an open process and a challenge to this community to engage in critical and constructive discussion about the relevant aspects of the European process. As in other areas, we have to start somewhere in European social science research; so instead of a long and fruitless debate about who may be legitimized to draw up such an agenda, I would prefer to do it as openly as possible and start work.

ESSC may be composed of four categories of members: (1) disciplinary social science associations (i.e. the European analogy to the regular members of the ISSC); (2) institutional members like social science research centres; (3) institutional members with an interest in translating European social science research into practice and policy; and (4) individual members -- all four categories must be European in scope and should be represented in the executive committee. Its aims, organs, and finance may very much resemble those foreseen in the constitution of the ISSC. The ESSC will need, to reach its aims and accomplish its tasks, a permanent and adequately staffed secretariate. The Vienna Centre could accept to play this role.

4.3 The Role of the Vienna Centre

At the moment, the Vienna Centre is, despite all its merits, a relatively weak and fragile institution. It has neither a longer term budget (in fact, its budget is determined by member state subventions on a yearly basis) nor does it have a permanent scientific staff (the scientific secretaries, mostly younger scholars of different social science background, have a three year contract which may be prolonged once for one more three year period). The scientific secretaries are hired by their respective sending institutions in their home country to which they are responsible. Thus, the director’s position is weak in structural terms. It is mostly the scientific secretaries who initiate projects and try to get funding. The Board, however, has to approve such projects. If the director came from the East (what was mostly the case), then the president of the board was supposed to come from the West. Very often, for lack of hard currency, the Eastern countries were unable to send scientific secretaries. In short, the construction of the Vienna Centre reflects to some extent the cold war situation in which it was established: every member state who was, for whatever (political) reason, not satisfied with the Centre’s work could easily and without problems draw back its scientific secretory as well as cut its subvention. This might have been a rationale useful for many in the days of East-West tensions, and indeed it proved to be a workable solution. Under new conditions and with new tasks for the social science community, however, this construction seems too fragile to provide for the backbone, i.e. the secretariate, of European social sciences.
If the Vienna Centre would be willing to serve as a secretariat of the European Social Science Council, it would need a permanent staff able to accomplish the assignments indicated above. As these tasks are new, important and pioneer, this staff must be permanent, of high quality, committed, hired by the ESSC executive board and report to the director of the Centre. In addition, I would suggest to keep the old concept of scientific secretaries also alive with a view of training younger social scientists in the conception and management of European social science, i.e. in a sort of associated experts scheme, with a term of not more than three years total. There must also be a longer term budget. The substantial frame of reference for the Centre’s work would be the European Social Science Research Programme -- the Centre would use this as a guiding principle for developing projects and for initiating task forces, and it would submit proposals to the ESSC, after the necessary consultations, of how to update the research programme. It seems, thus, that the proposed ESSC would fulfill similar functions as today’s Vienna Centre Board of Directors or as ESF’s Standing Committee for Social Sciences. It might make sense, then, to think about how such efforts could be combined and duplicate work avoided. This would also be the case if an institution other than the Vienna Centre would accept the function of ESSC secretariat.

4.4 European Social Science Association

The research work along the lines of the European Social Science Research Programme should be done by task forces ideally composed along three criteria: different social science disciplines, different countries of origin, and different schools of thought. I am not sure whether this type of task force is possible at all in reality. However, a reduced version may look, such a task force gathered around a substantial research problem would need sufficient time to find some common basis of understanding, sufficient money to travel in order to work together, and sufficient technical support for communication. Sufficient time, money, and technical support must be available without bureaucracy for a task force, once it is approved by the ESSC. The task forces will submit interim reports which are the basis on which further funding may be decided. A staff member of the secretariat, together with an associated expert, will take care of each task force and do all the organizational and administrative work, including the publication of a newsletter and the information exchange with other task forces.

From ESSC task forces, Europe-oriented research institutions, European studies centres, and interested individuals, an increasingly numerous group of people will develop which follow an interdisciplinary, problem-oriented approach in their work on the European process. They will develop specific needs for exchange and communication and may like to form a wide network called the European Social Science Association (ESSA). Once ESSA has become big enough and fairly representative for the European social science community, it may delegate category 2 members to the ESSC.

4.5 European Network of Associated Universities

Europe does not only need social science research based on a new approach, it also needs people with a broad intellectual horizon, used to future-oriented European and global thinking and trained in international cooperation. In general, university education is far behind such orientations. The average well-trained specialist coming out of traditional university education is not, for reasons described above, prepared for a job in European administration, business, diplomacy, trade unions, associations, schools, networks etc. In addition to disciplinary studies, the European student would need a **studium generale**, with a European focus. This must provide for the broad generalists knowledge indispensable for informed and ethically responsible decision-making. As a major part of this type of education must be exchange of students and faculty and thus the exposure to a foreign language, working environment, intellectual tradition etc., some coordination of the respective curricula would be prerequisite. Thus, a European Network of Associated Universities may gradually evolve (UNESCO’s 25th General Conference adopted the proposal to have a feasibility study done on an international Associated Universities Project which complements the Associated Schools).

4.6 European Social Science Foundation

Much of what has been said relates closely to the experience of the European Science Foundation (ESF) and its work in the social sciences. The Standing Committee for the Social Sciences of ESF seems relatively close to what has been proposed here as the European Social Science Council, and close to the Board of the Vienna Centre; it has launched scientific programmes with an interdisciplinary orientation, and initiated scientific networks which closely resemble the task forces proposed above. It seems worthwile, then, to combine efforts which share the same philosophies and goals.

European social sciences exist up to now in only very few personalities and institutions. To overcome the obstacles mentioned and in order to prosper and
flourish the social sciences need generous stimulation and support. In my opinion, an ideal structure would be a European Social Science Foundation (this could be as part of the ESF) combining funds donated by the national funding agencies specifically for the purpose of getting European social sciences off the ground.

The application and funding procedure could, then, go like this: The European Social Science Council, having been charged with the implementation of a European Social Science Research Programme by the European Conference on Social Sciences, (1) initiates a number of task forces for the different research topics, (2) reviews the research proposals of these task forces, (3) negotiates with the European Social Science Foundation on the amounts and duration of funding, (4) receives and approves interim reports, (5) advises the European Social Science Foundation on continuation or discontinuation of a project or task force as well as on the update of the Research Programme. This may allow an unbureaucratic procedure which would give the task forces, without touching on their accountability, some room for manoeuvre. This structure may be tested in a pilot phase of several years, evaluated, modified and implemented with a longer term perspective.

5. Conclusions, Steps to go

The proceeding has been written on the background of my own research experience; so the views of other social scientists may differ. I insist, however, that the major obstacles against productive European social sciences can only be overcome if we manage to develop an appropriate institutional infrastructure and generous and unbureaucratic funding schemes taking into account the difficulties researchers will necessarily encounter for the simple reason that their research tasks are European.

If there is agreement on the goal of developing practically relevant, problem-oriented, interdisciplinary, forward looking social sciences contributing to the understanding and shaping of a European society, there should also be agreement to initiate first steps in this direction.

The European Social Science Conference did not disperse without having accepted unanimously the following proposal:

"The Conference invites the President of the host National Commission for UNESCO, Professor Luis Ramallo, to set up a European working group of social scientists from different countries, disciplines, and schools of thought in order to prepare a Second European Social Science Conference in 1993. The Working Group's tasks may include the following:

1. Establishing a tentative programme on the contribution of the social sciences to the analysis of the emerging European society.
2. Putting forward proposals in order to promote social science cooperation for Europe, especially between social scientists and appropriate social science institutions and organizations from both Eastern and Western Europe. This should not be detrimental to the cooperation between Europe and the outside world.
3. Appraising the situation of the social sciences in UNESCO, taking into account 27 C/5 DR and reflecting on the social sciences in the framework of the 4th Medium Term Plan."

A proposal has already been made to convene the Second European Social Science Conference in Prague in June 1993, i.e. early enough to have some impact on UNESCO's 27th General Conference. As the Vienna Centre was not in a position to take over the task of a secretariat and co-organizer, the Centre for European Studies, Trier University, offered to serve in this capacity.

Note

This is a revised version of an invited background paper for the First European Social Science Conference, Santander, Spain, June 24-28, 1991. I am grateful for the many helpful comments and criticisms made at this occasion.