

International politics

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Abstrak

This text is a summary of my farewell lecture as a university professor, which I gave on 5 July 2005 as the holder of the professorship for Political Sciences and Contemporary History in Mannheim, and which I later elaborated.

The analysis of unique historic events, as well as permanent structures and process patterns, requires the use of a range of different methods used in the historical and social sciences, which take into account the uniqueness of events and the regulatory character of structures. The history of society and historical social science are two not entirely compatible research approaches, which attempt to link the analysis of events and structures in their own different ways. Their common feature can be described as being a socio-historical research approach.

In the age of the sovereignty of the people, strong tendencies can be observed towards a lasting world peace, as well as towards legal and illegal acts of mass annihilation, particularly in the form of war and of mass murder. A useful concept of peace cannot aim to achieve structural conflict resolution and conflict termination, but merely a dynamic of regulated conflict, which involves cooperation and which entails a low degree of violence.

In European policy, the geographical and socio-political dimensions of the concept of Europe are conjoined in different ways. Historically, a shift in the image of a north-south Europe towards a west-central-east Europe and then towards an east-west Europe can be observed.