

ECONOMISTS, SOCIOLOGISTS, AND THE TRANSATLANTIC COMMUNITY

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Tampere Seminar “Towards a Post-Western West?”

WHAT IS THE WEST?

- thing-in-the-world (what is Western)
- conceptual equipment (civilizational analysis)
- rhetorical commonplace (civilizational identity)

LEGITIMATION

- public rhetorical strategy
- rendering courses of action acceptable
- foreclosing other options
 - contingent -> necessary
- *identity* key: who are we?

COMMUNITY

- a *form of relation* between actors
 - surrounds and binds actors
 - “nesting”
 - can be an actor in itself...
- *terms of engagement* are central

TWO VIEWS

- economists:
 - individuals *first*, social relations *second*
 - need to explain *coordinated individual acts*
- sociologists:
 - social relations *first*, actors *second*
 - need to explain *living tradition* and its use(s)

THREE SOCIOLOGICAL STEPS

- rhetorical topography
 - “textual ethnography”
- specific history / genealogy
 - past deployments produce conditions of possibility
- deployment in concrete debates about action(s)

STATE OF THE UNION

- American exceptionalism
 - keep America pure
 - enemies are “evil”
- pro-democracy universal crusade...
 - ...but as *tactic* for securing *America's* vision
 - ...and doing so *unilaterally*

IMPLICATIONS

- coalitions of the willing
- decline of multilateral forums / alliances
- *contingent* global commitments
- no West in evidence...
- ...which is a *bad thing*