



ANTI-AMERICANISM IN DIFFERENT SOCIETIES

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The Distinctiveness of French Anti-Americanism

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“The French president has no rivals as global spokesman on anti-Americanism,” the *Economist* recently wrote.¹ Between taking the lead in the anti-globalization movement in the late 1990s and in the movement against a war in Iraq in 2003, France confirmed its image as the “oldest enemy” among America’s friends.² After all, even before the days of Chirac and De Gaulle, France had always seemed to be at the forefront of animosity toward the United States—from eighteenth-century theories about the degeneration of species in the New World to twentieth-century denunciations of the Coca-Colonization of the Old World.³

In recent years, in a context of international public opinion highly critical of U.S. involvement in Iraq, the French surprisingly did not stand out from other Europeans in their overall feelings toward the United States.⁴ Whether assessing American Middle East policy, the big threats facing their respective societies, or even American culture, French public opinion was very much in line with German, Spanish,

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1. *Economist* 2005d.

2. Miller and Molesky 2004.

3. Kuisel 1993.

4. See chapter 4 by Chiozza. For recent polls, see Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005a and 2005d; PIPA 2005; German Marshall Fund 2004.

Dutch, and even British opinion. But polling data confirms that over time the French have been systematically more critical of the United States than most other European publics. As shown by Isernia in chapter 3, even though French sentiments toward the United States have been prevalently positive over time, only Spain and Greece in western Europe have consistently manifested stronger hostility toward the United States than France. In particular, the French public, along with French politicians, became extremely critical of the perceived trend toward U.S. unilateralism in world affairs throughout the 1990s, many years before their European counterparts. It is also during this period that French politicians and intellectuals articulated the concept of “managed globalization”—a series of multilateral regulations and initiatives designed to shield Europe from the negative effects of the global law of the market.⁵ Is the lesser French enthusiasm for the United States over time evidence that France is anti-American, as common wisdom usually assumes? What makes French anti-Americanism a singular phenomenon? The introduction to this book defines anti-Americanism as a very heterogeneous set of attitudes, resting on different sets of beliefs and cognitive schemas. In chapter 1 on the varieties of anti-Americanism, Katzenstein and Keohane show that one must distinguish opinion from distrust from bias, although it is often difficult to do so. What is often portrayed in shorthand as anti-Americanism may actually be reasoned criticism, and what is passed off as reasoned criticism may mask real prejudices. In this chapter I explore the distinctive dynamics of French anti-Americanism, by first demonstrating that France harbors an enduring distrust of America centered in the past decade on the related issues of unilateralism and globalization. I then explain why French distrust of the United States is so deeply institutionalized, arguing that the deep reservoir of anti-American arguments that have accumulated over the centuries and the simultaneous coexistence of all types of anti-Americanism have made anti-American rhetoric a tool that can be used at no cost for political benefit. Finally, I focus on the potential consequences of French anti-Americanism for economic relations and the war on terror.

Is French Opposition to the United States Driven by Anti-Americanism?

France exhibits an enduring distrust of the United States, which sometimes shades into bias, especially among the elites. But contrary to the assertions of many American French-bashers who have made a cottage-industry of denouncing innate French biases, the most important source of French distrust of the United States is the deep national opposition to unilateralism and American-style globalization.⁶ The deterioration of the image of the United States in France preceded the Franco-American clash over Iraq—even though it skyrocketed after 2002.⁷ That France was less prone

5. Gordon and Meunier 2001, Kuisel 2004, Abdelal 2006.

6. Chesnoff 2005, Boyles 2005, Miller and Molesky 2004.

7. Kuisel 2004.

to anti-American demonstrations at the height of the Euromissiles crisis in the 1980s than it was to criticism of the United States in the late 1990s suggests that unregulated globalization has been at least as big a trigger of negative reactions than U.S. military bullying.⁸ The dominant French anti-American critique that emerged during the 1990s centered on the increasingly unilateral actions of the United States, whose international power was now unchecked as a result of the end of the cold war. The image of the United States became one of a domineering ally, unbearable to France because it was increasingly acting as a triumphant, self-centered, hegemonic “hyperpower”—in everything from trade to the environment, from culture to foreign policy.⁹ In France the denunciation of these hypocritical, unilateral U.S. actions became enmeshed in a virulent French critique of the globalization that is often equated with Americanization.¹⁰

I analyze the content of French discussions in three examples that are most likely cases of anti-Americanism at work. As in the chapters on the Arab world by Lynch and on China by Johnston and Stockmann, these examples have been chosen, in consultation with the editors, to range from foreign policy to apparently less political areas of activity. In all three cases, however, negative French opinions of the United States can be explained more by heightened concerns about unilateralism than by anti-American bias.

Iraq

The Iraq conflict is often presented as a poster child of French anti-Americanism in action, with French leaders bowing to public opinion, which has been stirred up by the media, and acting more out of genuine subversion than legitimate dissent.¹¹ Most likely, however, the anti-war position of France was motivated by a rational assessment of its interests in the post-cold war, post-9/11 geopolitical environment, as well as by a distrust of unconstrained unilateralism.

For anti-American bias to be the cause of French actions, one would have to establish a correlation between levels of anti-Americanism and adoption of French policies in direct conflict with the interests of the United States. Opinion polls suggest that negative French views of U.S. unilateralism were steadily rising throughout the late 1990s and early years of the George W. Bush presidency.¹² But if anti-

8. Kuisel notes that in 1984 more French citizens (44%) than Germans or British declared themselves pro-American. In a 1988 survey, the French men and women polled rated “power,” “dynamism,” “wealth,” and “liberty” as the words they most commonly associated with the United States. The majority thought that America set a good example for political institutions, the media, and free enterprise. By 1996, however, the French polled said that “violence,” “power,” “inequalities,” and “racism” first came to their mind when describing America. Kuisel 2004.

9. The term was coined by French foreign minister Hubert Védrine, even though the French word “hyperpuissance” does not have the pejorative connotations associated with “hyper” in English—“hyper” in French means only the next size up from “super.” Védrine and Moisi 2001. See also Mélandri and Vaisse 2001.

10. Meunier 2000, Gordon and Meunier 2001, Abdelal 2006.

11. See, for instance, Chesnoff 2005, Miller and Molesky 2004, Timmerman 2004, Friedman 2003b.

12. Kuisel 2004.

Americanism is a primary driver of French foreign policy, French actions should have been as opposed to the United States at that time as they were later in regard to Iraq. Instead, France enthusiastically backed the United States in Afghanistan and was the only country whose fighter pilots joined U.S. forces and struck targets in Afghanistan during Operation Anaconda in March 2002.¹³

French policy on Iraq was motivated primarily by a very different understanding of the threats facing the world, as well as of France's interests in the world. First, France had long disagreed with the United States over the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and over what to do about it, seeing him as dangerous primarily to his own people.¹⁴ Moreover, France had expressed strong reservations and concerns over the new American doctrine of preemption if not supported by the United Nations. Finally, for French foreign policy, the only legitimate objective in Iraq was to destroy any existing weapons of mass destruction, which would be done through inspections and, if they failed, through the use of force mandated by the UN. The consistent strands of this policy reflect distrust of U.S. unilateralist temptations and support for multilateralism rather than bias and hatred directed at U.S. policy.

French foreign policy is also shaped by the specificities of French history and experience. French intelligence was convinced that the Iraqi regime and al-Qaida had had no significant contact. Moreover, the lessons learned by France in fighting Islamic terrorism since the 1980s suggested that the war proposed by the United States was not the right approach. Most important, many French analyses of the Iraq situation, including those of President Chirac, were informed by their own experiences in Algeria, the main prism through which they understood what might happen in Iraq, and they predicted more frustration, anger, and bitterness in the Arab and Muslim world if Iraq was invaded.¹⁵

Rather than being the cause of the Franco-American crisis over Iraq, anti-Americanism may instead have been a by-product of the crisis. In the aftermath of 9/11, French public opinion had initially given the benefit of the doubt to the U.S. strategy. But the deeper the rift between the French and American positions became, the stronger were the anti-American prejudices that appeared in the French media, and the stronger the stereotypical French-bashing that surged in the United States. The French even gave mixed signals about whether they really wanted the United States to succeed in Iraq, so much so that French prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin had to remind public opinion that "the Americans are not the enemies. Our camp is the camp of democracy."¹⁶

Anti-Americanism was also used during the crisis as a political tool. To justify his positions, it was useful for Chirac to showcase the overwhelming support he had at home. Like Bush, whose first election had been tainted by the ballot mishaps, Chirac's legitimacy suffered from the conditions under which he had been elected in 2002: the 80 percent of the votes he received in the second round of the election,

13. Starobin 2003, Gordon and Shapiro 2004.

14. *New York Times* 2002.

15. Howorth 2003, Starobin 2003.

16. Timmerman 2004.

in defense against National Front candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen, hardly masked the paltry 19 percent he had received in the first one. Stirring up anti-American sentiment during the Franco-American clash over Iraq was a way for Chirac to increase his political legitimacy, both domestically and internationally. Indeed, whereas Prime Minister Raffarin reminded the French population that Saddam Hussein, not the United States, was the enemy, Chirac did no such thing.

Anti-Americanism was certainly not the primary cause of France's initial decision to refuse to give a blank check to U.S. foreign policy in Iraq. Viewing the invasion of Iraq as a major error is not a reflection of a prejudicial bias against the United States. In most other European countries public opinion was deeply opposed to the American war in Iraq, and their media was as outraged at the United States as was France's. And some in the United States had words as harsh for their own administration, if not harsher, than those of the French. What happened in France is that the escalating war of words with the United States triggered atavistic reflexes of distrust. Even if French hostility was initially motivated by a fundamental opposition to the policy, it quickly turned to age-old anti-American clichés—and in the process shifted from reasoned opinion to gut bias. But, as I have shown, even this poster-child case is not as clear-cut as it initially seems in proving France a European outcast in its anti-Americanism.

The Google Print Project

Cultural policy is the other area, along with foreign affairs, in which French behavior is often interpreted as being motivated by anti-Americanism. Examples of actions to protect French culture from American invasion abound over the years, from the fight to preserve the French language from Anglicisms to proactive policies subsidizing French movie production to resist the onslaught of Hollywood. Culture is an area particularly susceptible to anti-Americanism. First, this is so because anti-American arguments in France have mostly been developed by intellectuals, who have a vested interest in preserving their cultural turf. Second, Americanization has truly disrupted traditional national cultural patterns. The stronger the disruption, the more intense the resistance and the suspicions about American intentions. Yet, even in the case of culture, the course of action taken is not motivated by a willingness to hurt the United States but rather by a desire to shield France from the perverse effects of unregulated globalization.¹⁷

The latest instance in the “culture wars” between France and the United States concerns the search-engine company Google's December 2004 decision to scan fifteen million books in the next ten years and make them available online. The California-based company made agreements with five major “Anglo-Saxon” (U.S. and British) libraries to digitize all or part of their collections: Stanford, the University of Michigan, Harvard, Oxford, and the New York Public Library. Google's project

17. Gordon and Meunier 2001, Abdelal 2006.

barely made the news at first, either in the United States or in France, where initial reactions were rather positive.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the controversy soon arose with a roar. In January 2005, Jean-Noël Jeanneney, a noted historian and head of the French National Library (BNF), wrote a long op-ed in *Le Monde* titled “When Google Challenges Europe.” He argued that Google’s plans to digitize books and make their contents available on the Internet were a threat to France because this would, in the long run, create a unipolar world-view with a strong bias toward English works and American culture. Although this project was portrayed in the United States as a fulfillment of the long dream of humankind to have a universal library, in France it was presented as “omni-googolization”—“a crushing domination by America on future generations’ understanding of the world.”¹⁹ In particular, Jeanneney emphasized the problem of history seen through English and American eyes by giving the example of the French Revolution, where English historiography typically focuses on the plight of the aristocrats and the guillotine and the Terror, rather than on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the institutional innovations of the Convention. In response, Jeanneney proposed that the European Union counterbalance the American project by creating its own digitization program to make European literature available on the Internet, build a super-European library, and create a new search engine with its own way of controlling the page rankings of responses to searches.

President Chirac took up the fight with dispatch. He ordered the culture minister, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, to find the quickest way to put French and European library collections online. He also mounted a campaign to persuade other European countries to join France in a \$128-million project to counteract the dominance of Google as a search engine. For Chirac, Europe must play a determining role in the large digitization program for the sake of humankind, and in this project France should be the central player, in part because of its special responsibility toward the Francophone world. In April 2005, at the initiative of France and supported by nineteen national libraries in Europe, six European countries (France, Poland, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Hungary) asked the European Union to launch a “European digital library” to coordinate the digitization actions of national libraries.²⁰ This library is now taking shape, and the European commission expects 2 million books to be accessible through its portal by 2008.

The U.S. and British media presented this as more evidence of French anti-Americanism, and they often derided the French as being paranoid. As Stephen Castle wrote in the *Independent*, “France has identified a new enemy in its battle to protect the language of Molière: the search engine Google, which French critics say is bent on an act of Anglophone cultural imperialism.”²¹ Many commentators brushed off Jeanneney’s comments as those of an incorrigible anti-American, as

18. Saint-Martin 2005.

19. Jeanneney 2005.

20. *Libération* 2005.

21. Castle 2005.

reflecting the national mood. “Clearly, Paris sees Google as a cultural aggressor whose advance must be checked,” a Canadian journalist wrote. “Washington, by contrast, will be hard-pressed to understand the commotion and, at most, will shrug off Mr. Jeanneney as an anti-American pest.”²²

It is possible to see French actions as motivated by hints of anti-Americanism. The line of argument followed by Jeanneney and his numerous supporters is that the English language is one of the levers through which the United States dominates the world and that Google’s initiative will enhance the hyperpower of the United States by giving English works primacy. This could lead to world brainwashing, especially if Google (read: America) is left alone to make unilateral choices about what becomes part of the collective cultural heritage of humankind. Therefore it needs to be checked or counterbalanced. It could be objected that English is more than the language of the British and Americans: it is the new lingua franca of the world. The French cannot see this reality because they are blinded by their prejudices and resentment of the United States. Jeanneney’s call to arms to the Europeans to build a parallel system is further evidence that France cannot simply admire a great American initiative (emanating from a private company, not the U.S. government). Another country concerned about the project might have asked to join the Google bandwagon and volunteer its own libraries. But the prism of anti-Americanism that colors the views of many French intellectuals favors instead the creation of an alternative project. This impression is reinforced by Jeanneney’s various writings and interviews, which suggest that he likes the project very much, but resents that it is being done by an American company: “I have nothing in particular against Google. I simply note that this commercial company is the expression of the American system, in which the law of the market is king.”²³

The French see Google Print as propagating the globalization they dislike: unilateral, unconstrained, unregulated, a natural outcome of the market and of a non-hierarchical democracy. But this is not a clear-cut case of anti-American bias. The French reaction to Google was primarily motivated by a legitimate desire to fight for French cultural interests, already adversely affected by globalization, that has been institutionalized in the EU-wide policy of “cultural exception,” which preserves homegrown culture that is unable to compete with Hollywood. If the Google project is successful, it will strengthen English even further as the dominant world language and American thought as the dominant cultural influence. If works in English are the only ones searchable this way, they will become more influential and this might lead to the overwhelming world preponderance of a single culture, with the power to unilaterally set the global cultural agenda.²⁴ As Jeanneney, custodian of thirteen million titles in the French National Library, said in an interview about the controversy: “I am not anti-American, far from it. But what I don’t want is everything

22. Kipling 2005.

23. *Economist* 2005c.

24. “The worry is that the ‘Google Print’ project would rank sources in order of popularity, thereby giving prominence to Anglophone texts above those written in other languages.” Castle 2005.

reflected in an American mirror. When it comes to presenting digitized books on the Web, we want to make our choice with our own criteria."²⁵

Moreover, Jeanneney's attack was directed as much at France's lackluster effort to digitize French books as it was at Google and the evil Americans. His criticisms were probably intended as a fund-raising effort and a wake-up call to the French government to invest more in the digitization of books timidly started with the Gallica project, which then had a budget for digitization of \$1.35 million (versus \$200 million for Google).

Finally, the various French critics of the Google project raised a legitimate question, which can be asked without holding an anti-American bias: Should a multinational company control the digital literary heritage of humankind? As a French journalist asked, "Can we accept Stendhal standing side by side with commercials for anything and everything?"²⁶ France has long argued in multilateral trade negotiations that culture is not merchandise and that therefore it cannot be left to the laws of the market. To assuage French fears, Google officials declared that page rankings on Google Print will be defined by public demand and not by political, cultural, or monetary variables. "We never planned only to scan English books," a spokesman said. "Google users can look forward to finding non-English speaking literature as well. . . . But it is only logical that we would start the scanning project with English-language books. We are, after all, an American firm."²⁷ Maybe French fears about Google are not unfounded, after all.

The Tsunami Relief Effort

French responses to the U.S. tsunami relief effort, especially when compared to the Chinese responses studied by Johnston and Stockmann in chapter 6 and the Arab ones reported by Lynch in chapter 7, provide an opportunity to analyze whether anti-Americanism "bleeds" from highly political to less political arenas. The disaster of December 2004 occurred amid still-tense Franco-American relations and against a backdrop of highly negative French public opinion of the United States, especially after the reelection of President Bush. Katzenstein and Keohane find in their analysis of the tsunami survey data that French public opinion was biased against the U.S. performance, with a large majority (73%) finding the U.S. response to the tragedy inadequate.²⁸ Yet a content analysis of the French media during the period following the disaster suggests that even though the French singularly emphasized American unilateralism, their criticisms of the U.S. tsunami relief effort reflected distrust more than bias.

The first French criticism was about the initial inaction of the United States. The French media reported that President Bush, who stayed at his Texas ranch to con-

25. Riding 2005.

26. Roussel 2005.

27. Tiesenhausen Cave 2005.

28. Katzenstein and Keohane, chapter 1.

tinue his Christmas vacation even after the disaster had struck, was being insensitive to a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions and communicated, through his words and deeds, a lack of urgency.²⁹ But the French press was only echoing the fierce criticisms of editorials in the U.S. press, above all the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, including their comparison of the tsunami relief aid promised by the United States and the budget for the festivities at the second Bush inauguration.³⁰

The main controversy over the U.S. tsunami relief effort was initiated by the United Nations. Jan Egeland, the UN emergency relief coordinator, called Western nations “stingy” in their foreign aid—a comment particularly addressed to the United States, which had promised only \$35 million for tsunami relief.³¹ Interestingly, France did not use the anti-Americanism potentially raised by the tsunami relief effort for political purposes, but the United States resorted to France-bashing to deflect criticism of its own (in)action. A few days after the Egeland comment about stinginess, which had sent the American press into a frenzy, Andrew Natsios, the head of the U.S. Agency for International Development, said in a Fox television interview about the U.S. tsunami relief effort that “the aid program in France is not that big” and that the French “do not tend to be dominant figures in aid.”³² This blame-shifting to France led the French ambassador to the United States, Jean-David Levitte, to question the reasons for “misguidedly impugning France” and to show that French development aid exceeded that of any of the G8 countries as a proportion of a country’s economic output.³³ According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), France allotted 0.41 percent of its gross national income to development aid in 2003, compared to 0.15 percent in the United States, 0.28 percent in Germany, and 0.34 percent in Great Britain.³⁴ Following the Natsios comments about French generosity, France doubled its aid pledge for tsunami victims on December 30, 2004—thereby briefly claiming the role as leading donor nation (before Britain quickly surpassed France). France also conducted extensive relief operations in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives—sending warships, a helicopter carrier, teams of doctors, and about a thousand soldiers to clear debris and rebuild schools.³⁵

The second criticism focused on possible ulterior motives of U.S. aid. The French press commented at length on the statement by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in her Senate confirmation hearings, that the tsunami had provided a “wonderful opportunity” for the United States to reap “great dividends” in the region.³⁶ Critics said that Washington was seizing on the disaster to advance its

29. For instance, Agence France Presse 2005a, Sabatier 2005.

30. Harris and Wright 2004, *New York Times* 2004, Efron 2004.

31. See, for instance, Efron 2004, *New York Times* 2004.

32. Leicester 2004.

33. Knowlton 2005. The G8 (Group of Eight) is made up of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Russian Federation.

34. Leicester 2004.

35. Casey 2005.

36. See, for instance, Amalric 2005a and 2005b.

strategic interests, in particular by improving ties with the Indonesian military and repairing its image, which was damaged in Indonesia by the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Some in the French military criticized the U.S. relief effort: “How can you really boast of doing something from this tragedy? People were saying, ‘They are doing it again. They are showing off.’”³⁷ Yet it is difficult to interpret this criticism as evidence of anti-American bias. First, because the French press looked at the ulterior motives of all the countries engaged in the tsunami relief competition, including Japan, China, India, and, yes, France.³⁸ Second, because the U.S. press was similarly dissecting which type of relief effort would best serve U.S. foreign policy interests. And third, because many French analysts commented that the ultimate motives for providing aid do not matter as long as aid is given.³⁹ The French media reported on the generosity of private donations in the United States.⁴⁰ And Bernard Kouchner, the most respected French political figure, the former health minister and founder of Doctors without Borders, said publicly that the competition between donors was healthy.⁴¹

It is the third criticism of the tsunami relief effort, about the U.S. approach to the management of the crisis, that seems distinctly French. The United States announced in the early days after the disaster that it would form a separate aid coalition with Australia, Japan, and India. This decision, including the use of the word “coalition,” reminded France of the controversial international alliance that the United States had assembled in order to invade Iraq without the approval of the United Nations. French diplomacy was concerned that the U.S. tsunami aid operation had deliberately sidestepped traditional UN channels and was trying to compete with the international organization.⁴²

President Chirac was reportedly increasingly concerned about the unilateral tone of U.S. aid efforts. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote that Chirac, without openly criticizing the Bush administration, feared “that Washington is deliberately circumventing the United Nations and wants to compete with the international organization.” The report also said that “President Chirac wants to hinder America from using its ad hoc—organized aid operation to set a precedent that will lastingly weaken the role of the United Nations” and quoted him as having said publicly that the tsunami had provided proof that the fate of all people “cannot be separated from that of our planet” and that global organizations like the United Nations must therefore be strengthened.⁴³

37. Casey 2005.

38. Sabatier 2004, Dupont 2005, Amalric 2005a and 2005b, Leser 2005, Delhommais and Le Boucher 2005.

39. Sabatier 2005.

40. *Le Monde* 2005a.

41. Nathan 2004.

42. Knowlton 2005. On January 6, 2005, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that this coalition would be disbanded and its assets put under UN direction. *Economist* 2005c.

43. Cited in Knowlton 2005.

Several members of the European Union discussed ways to improve future intra-European disaster cooperation. France took the lead by suggesting the creation of a rapid-response civil defense group in the European Union, in response to the non-cooperative tone taken by the United States in the early days after the catastrophe.⁴⁴ But this distrust of the unilateralist tendencies of the United States is not evidence of hard-core anti-Americanism. This suggestion was based less on prejudice and stereotypes than on the practical realization that France, if it wished to continue to play a role in world affairs, had better organize with its neighbors and European partners first. It was also highly consistent with the multilateralist, “managed globalization” line of French foreign policy in the past decade.

Overall, there is little evidence that anti-Americanism determined either French foreign policy or French interpretations of the tsunami relief effort. The mainstream French press was critical of the United States in the days following the catastrophe, but it was very critical of France as well and was, overall, quite restrained in analyzing the U.S. effort. Anti-Americanism may have “bled” into public opinion, explaining the overwhelming view that the U.S. relief effort was inadequate, as highlighted by Katzenstein and Keohane in chapter 1, but when asked the more specific question of whether it was appropriate to deploy the U.S. military to help in the relief effort, 77 percent of the French agreed—one of the highest percentages in Europe. Once again, the tsunami example shows that a detailed examination of bias versus distrust and opinion tempers claims of anti-Americanism as suggested by opinion polls.

The analysis of these three cases where one might expect to find anti-Americanism, from the most to the least political, in precisely the policy areas always highlighted by those who accuse France of rampant, insidious anti-American prejudices, shows that the French actions were accounted for by alternative explanations—whether geopolitical interests, economic interests, or cultural competition. There is pronounced French opposition, supported by considerable distrust of the United States, but it is on the whole better explained by French policy principles, overall wariness of unilateralism, and by a defense of French culture in the face of globalization, than by anti-American bias.

Explaining French Distrust of the United States

Specific historical and institutional conditions can explain the sometimes latent, sometimes salient distrust of the United States in France. Three related factors account for the institutionalization of this distrust: the deep reservoir of anti-American arguments accumulated by French intellectuals over the centuries; the simultaneous coexistence of all types of anti-Americanisms in the collective national background; and the low cost to French politicians and elites of using anti-Americanism for political benefit. I will explore all three factors in turn.

44. Quatremer 2005.

The Reservoir of Accumulated Intellectual Arguments

France has the deepest reservoir of intellectual argumentation against America of any country in Europe. French distrust of America is as old as, if not older than, the United States itself, since it began as an extension of the centuries-old antagonism between France and England. Its long genealogy has been well documented over the years, most clearly by Philippe Roger, who argues that its building blocks were constructed long before Gaullism.⁴⁵ Anti-Americanism in France seems to have proceeded in cycles that have been triggered, though not exclusively, by conflicts in the Franco-American relationship. Each period in this long relationship saw the development of a new set of anti-American arguments, which over time accumulated into a vast repertoire, often based on the belief that France and the United States represented two competing universalisms. As a result, each time there has been an occasion for criticizing the United States, French opinion makers could use these arguments and adapt them to the current situation.

French animosity and contempt toward America (where degenerate dogs supposedly did not bark) first built up in the eighteenth century when France was also an American power.⁴⁶ In spite of the mythology of Lafayette, American passiveness during the French Revolution and the 1798–1800 Quasi-War confirmed this image of a self-serving, hypocritical American nation. The victory of the North in the Civil War and the end of France's Mexican adventure contributed to the next layer of anti-Americanism, composed of accusations of materialism and resentment of the nascent formidable power of the United States. A major layer of French anti-Americanism was added after World War I, in a period of disappointment over postwar U.S. isolationism and perceived biased indifference to France in the matter of war debts and reparations from Germany, when French intellectuals first reported that America's consumer and profit-oriented culture threatened to spread to France and affect its own traditions negatively.⁴⁷ The word "anti-Americanism" entered the French language in the late 1940s, when opposite sides of the political spectrum—Left Bank, Communist intellectuals, and General de Gaulle and his followers—focused on the need to counter the domineering presence of the United States.⁴⁸ The Vietnam War further reinforced this image of the United States as an imperialistic, expansionist, out-of-control superpower that represented a threat to world order.

By the end of the cold war, therefore, French rhetoric had accumulated a variety of anti-American arguments, some building on arguments articulated in an earlier historical period, others rooted in previous discourse but adapted to modern conditions. These arguments triumphantly resurfaced in the denunciation of American hyperpower associated with the onslaught of globalization in the 1990s, a time when France was undergoing a more profound overhaul of its society than most of its

45. Roger 2005. See also Mathy 1993 and Lacorne, Rupnik, and Toinet 1990.

46. Duroselle 1978, Roger 2005. See also Kennedy, chapter 2.

47. Duhamel and Thompson 1931, Kuisel 1993.

48. Roger 2005.

European partners.⁴⁹ Growing fears in France of U.S. unilateralism were confirmed when the new Bush administration rejected the Kyoto Treaty. After initial sympathy expressed to the American people after September 11 and the decision to support the United States in Afghanistan, France started to drift rapidly apart from the Bush administration on the issue of Iraq, especially after the passage of UN Resolution 1441 in November 2002, the collapse of French efforts to avoid the war in early 2003, and the simultaneous outpouring of Francophobia in the United States.⁵⁰

France has had one of the longest sustained relationships with the United States of any nation, and the length of the interaction partly explains why the French have been able to build up such a vast repertoire of anti-American arguments. But other countries, such as Spain and England, also have a shared American history that predates the independence of the United States, without as deep a reservoir of negative stereotypes. What makes France unique is not so much the length and depth of its historical relationship with the United States but the consistency with which its intellectuals have developed anti-American arguments that have become part of national, collective references. The most plausible explanation for this is the thesis of the two universalisms, developed most recently by Pierre Bourdieu and Stanley Hoffmann.⁵¹ Their contemporaneous revolutions lent legitimacy to the universalist claims of both the United States and France. The legitimacy of U.S. political universalism came from its constitution and its plural political system, and today its cultural universalism comes as much from Hollywood as it does from its most prestigious universities. The legitimacy of French political universalism came from its Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, and its cultural universalism from its long monopoly over style and good taste, which it tried to export through the “civilizing mission” of its colonial enterprise.⁵² The perceived competition between these two universalisms led many French intellectuals to fashion anti-American arguments, especially when French imperialism was on the wane and American “imperialism” was on the rise. In this sense, anti-Americanism is as much a statement about France as it is about America—a resentful longing for a power that France no longer has. French efforts to constrain globalization through multilateral rules in the past decade, of which the French position on Iraq was the logical consequence, are a way to curb U.S. hegemony.

These entrenched arguments have been mostly developed and used by French intellectual elites. This explains what seems to be France’s peculiar focus on cultural issues in its negative stereotyping of the United States. This also explains why there often seems to be a disconnection between the harsh tone of the public critique and the generally more positive view of America expressed by the French public. Indeed, this repertoire of anti-Americanisms has relatively little impact on the French public, which is only slightly more negative toward the United States than publics elsewhere in Europe, as shown by Chiozza and Isernia in this book. However, in times of crises

49. Schmidt 1996, Gordon and Meunier 2001, Abdelal 2006.

50. Vaisse 2003.

51. Bourdieu 1992, Hoffmann 2000. See also Mathy 1993.

52. Bourdieu 1992.

the tropes bleed from the intellectual to the general public, as they are readily available in the “background” of the national consciousness.

Breadth of Types of Anti-Americanism

This deep reservoir of anti-American arguments accumulated by French intellectuals over the centuries has resulted in the simultaneous coexistence of many varieties of anti-Americanism, thereby giving the impression that the whole country is anti-American. But anti-Americanism is not a unitary phenomenon, and French anti-Americanisms are quite heterogeneous.⁵³ And, yes, the list of French grievances toward the United States is long and varied. But these grievances are not simultaneously shared by all French men and women, which explains some paradoxes, such as individuals disliking some aspects of American society while aspiring to others at the same time. Following the typology developed by Katzenstein and Keohane in chapter 1, I distinguish seven types of anti-Americanism(s) found in contemporary France and explore briefly their behavioral implications. These types are not mutually exclusive, as one individual or group may draw his or her anti-Americanism from several sources simultaneously. Neither do they suggest that an individual who puts forward one type of anti-American argument can necessarily be classified as “anti-American.”

Liberal Anti-Americanism Like many other Europeans, who share America’s ideals but do not support its actions, the French offer a “liberal” critique of America as not living up to its principles. The charge is one of hypocrisy: the hypocrisy of demanding of others virtues that it does not uphold itself (in the case of Abu Ghraib or Guantánamo, for instance),⁵⁴ and the hypocrisy of displaying selective outrage (in the case of Middle East policy, for instance). As a result of this hypocrisy, the United States becomes a danger to the very cause it pretends to be promoting. For instance, the United States posits itself as a champion of free trade, but it does not hesitate to impose tariffs on steel or provide tax loopholes to U.S. companies to give them a competitive edge. Similarly, the United States preaches environmental conservation and aid to international development, but its international policies speak otherwise. U.S. intervention brought down Saddam Hussein’s regime, while other dictators and nuclear powers go unchallenged, and successive U.S. administrations have turned a blind eye to the human rights violations of many of its allies in the Middle East. Another example of American hypocrisy, often advanced in Europe, especially by the Left, is U.S. unconditional support for Israel to the detriment of the Palestinian people, the U.S. media’s unbalanced representation of the pain and suffering of Israelis and Palestinians, and the U.S.’s biased insistence on respecting some United Nations resolutions and not others—charges leveled with increasing frequency at the Bush administration. The main behavioral implication of this type of anti-

53. In the same way, Lynch, in chapter 7, argues for the existence of Arab anti-Americanisms.

54. Agence France Presse 2005b.

Americanism is that the United States is not considered to have the high moral ground. If the United States does not do what it preaches, then it should either be held accountable or else not be trusted. Note that this is the anti-American critique that leads many U.S. observers to judge France as incorrigibly anti-Semitic.

Social Anti-Americanism One of the most widespread denunciations of America in France focuses on the social order in the United States—a critique widely shared by other European countries. This social critique has three main components, each reflecting deep national differences over the definition of a good society—equal and protective for the French, offering opportunity and risk for the Americans. First, the United States is often portrayed as a fundamentally unequal society. For Europeans, the absence of universal health care, the weak social protections, the lack of good public education, and the numerous policies favoring the rich over the poor are evidence of the inferiority of the American capitalist system and the superiority of the European system. Second, the French like to indict the United States as a violent and hypocritical society—one where abortion is a highly divisive issue while guns and crime are rampant and the state condones the violence of the death penalty. Finally, many in Europe disapprove of the excessive religiosity and the bigotry of American society. This is particularly true in France, which observes a strict separation between government and religion—and where an overwhelming majority claim that it is not necessary to believe in God to be moral.⁵⁵ The popularity of creationist theories in the United States is simply mind boggling to the French. The main behavioral result of this type of anti-Americanism is domestic support for public policies that contrast with the U.S. model. Interestingly, all of these social indictments of the United States come more from an idealized vision of what France should be (just, equal, caring, free from prejudice) than from what it really is.

“Sovereignist” Anti-Americanism A frequent French critique of the United States focuses on its power in the international system and is often associated with Gaullism (“souverainisme” is a French term coined to designate those concerned with the primacy of national sovereignty, although it is typically used in reference to European integration). The foreign policy of General de Gaulle had a lasting effect on France, as indicated by many surveys showing that the French have often led the rest of Europe in disapproving of U.S. foreign policy. Many politicians on both the right and the left, have insisted on the importance of not losing control over the country’s sovereignty and destiny, even if this means getting in the way of the United States. This anti-Americanism is rooted in a sensitive national ego and in a national bitterness over the loss of great power status. In fact, this critique of the United States as a domineering, self-interested nation that uses its immense power to establish global hegemony may stem as much from genuine concern about world peace as from envy

55. The French stood out dramatically from other Europeans in a survey question asking about America’s religiosity, with 61% responding that Americans were “too religious” (versus 39% of the British and the Germans). Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005a.

and resentment. The result is a predisposition to fear U.S. power, which has been reinforced by the series of unilateral actions the United States has taken since the end of the cold war. This has led to a series of foreign policy actions designed to quell the excessive power of the United States—from insistence on building a common foreign and security policy in Europe to an open challenge to U.S. policy at the United Nations.

Radical Muslim Anti-Americanism A more recent type of anti-Americanism in France comes from some Muslims who subscribe to the “clash of civilizations” idea. Over the years, some disenfranchised youths of North African origin who have not been “integrated” in French society have become religiously radicalized. They consider the United States to be the Great Satan, whose goal is to lead the Jews and the Western world in destroying Islam; they believe in jihad to weaken or even eliminate this nation that is involved in a crusade against Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine.⁵⁶ Of all the anti-Americanisms found in France, this is the only one that calls for violence against the United States and the American people. It is also the only one directly linked to anti-Semitism.

Elitist Anti-Americanism Driven mostly by cultural arguments, rather than policy actions, the most stereotypical form of anti-Americanism in France has been a patronizing elitist critique of the United States. This is the anti-Americanism with the longest history and greatest virulence in France. In the eighteenth century haughty French intellectuals looked down on the New World for its paucity of historical richness and tradition and the lack of education and taste of its citizens. Survey data, as well as consumption patterns, suggest a large discrepancy in attitudes in contemporary France between elites and the rest of the nation in relation to American culture, from fast food to Hollywood blockbusters. The same differences between elites and masses are found, to a lesser extent, in other western European countries. What distinguishes France is the particular role of intellectuals in society. As a result, this chronic elitist contempt for American culture bleeds into the popular psyche; the feeling of French superiority over the United States is well ingrained, even in those who have wholeheartedly adopted American popular culture. The main consequence is a constant bashing of American culture (with the exception of the American counterculture, which is highly lauded) without any lessening in the consumption of American culture.

Legacy Anti-Americanism A related type of anti-Americanism comes from the legacy of a sometimes tense Franco-American history. Resentment of the United States, built up over decades if not centuries, breaks out episodically in critiques of the self-centeredness of America. The individuals articulating this critique focus on the half-empty glass of Franco-American relations and the bad memories left from instances of U.S. involvement or noninvolvement in French affairs: U.S. isolationism

56. Kepel 2004, Roy 2004.

during World War II until Pearl Harbor; a U.S. administration that recognized Vichy France until 1942; the heavy bombardments that accompanied the Normandy invasion and the liberation of France from the Nazis; the American “treason” at Dien Bien Phu and later Suez; the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, despite French pleas against it; and so forth. A particularly vivid legacy of anti-Americanism comes from the cold war period, whose ideological divisions left a lasting imprint on French views of the United States. In the countries where Communist parties were a nonnegligible political force (such as France and Italy), the United States was often presented as the embodiment of what the Left was against: an imperialistic, capitalist, profit-oriented society. From the execution of the Rosenbergs to the invasion of the Bay of Pigs, from McCarthyism to the Vietnam War, the United States provided its critics with plenty of ammunition. Even though the cold war ended over fifteen years ago and Communism has lost its appeal in France, the repertoire of anti-American thought developed over the decades of cold war politics has become ingrained in the vocabulary and the mind-set of many French intellectuals. Some of those who were active during the cold war period are still alive and active today. Whether coming from the Left or the Right, “legacy anti-Americanism” manifests itself as a predisposition toward believing that what the United States did in the past, as well as what it does today, means that it is a partner that cannot be trusted. Such a predisposition suggests that even if U.S. policy changes, attitudes will not change as quickly because bad feelings linger. The main behavioral implication of this predisposition is that France needs to take its national security into its own hands instead of being at the mercy of the vagaries of U.S. foreign policy—meaning, for instance, building an independent European security policy and promoting potentially balancing alliances.

Nostalgic Anti-Americanism The six types of anti-Americanisms highlighted by Katzenstein and Keohane do not entirely capture the French experience, which has developed in addition a “nostalgic” kind, caused by a longing for times past and a resistance to change. Unlike elitist anti-Americanism, the negative sentiments about American culture and society are, in this case, shared by individuals from all walks of life, united in their belief that their country used to be a better place before the United States (and its contemporary fig leaf, globalization) transformed it, dehumanized it, and cut it off from its traditional roots. The complaints in France about how McDonald’s has eliminated traditional bistros recall complaints in the 1950s about how Coca-Colonization hurt traditional French wines; and those complaints were reminiscent of earlier complaints about the deleterious effects of U.S. mass production of goods.⁵⁷ These complaints are not particular to France—Belgian, Dutch, and Austrian politicians, for instance, have tried, sometimes successfully, to mobilize support by claiming that national traditions were under attack by the joint forces of modernization, globalization, and Americanization. Nevertheless, nostalgic anti-Americanism has particular resonance in France where it also feeds on a reluctance

57. Kuisel 1993.

to accept the international decline of the French language in favor of English as the global *lingua franca*. This is a defensive anti-Americanism, one that calls for protectionist actions and proactive policies, from the EU-wide policy of “cultural exception” to preserve homegrown culture to rules about preserving the French language from the invasion of American words and the worldwide promotion of “Francophonie.”

The distinctiveness of French anti-Americanism in Europe appears to be its breadth: all seven types are present simultaneously, even if few individuals harbor all of them at once. Some of these types may indeed be mutually exclusive, for example, “radical Muslim anti-Americanism,” which is at loggerheads with “liberal anti-Americanism,” which is itself mostly incompatible with “social anti-Americanism.” Other types might be compatible, however, and may even “bleed” into each other, notably through political processes. Overall, the vast repertoire of anti-American arguments and their broad variety have contributed to creating a collective national “background” of distrust of the United States, which has become institutionalized through the political process.

Costless Use of Anti-Americanism in the Political Process

The third reason French anti-Americanism stands out in Europe is political. Anti-Americanism has been embedded in the French political discourse in a singular way. It has been able to endure and propagate in France because it has been exploited politically and because the costs associated with using anti-American rhetoric in France have been far smaller than the benefits derived from it, which is not the case in most other European countries. French politicians have few incentives to defend the United States or criticize anti-American pronouncements. At the same time, anti-Americanism can be mobilized as a political resource to support many different policy agendas. Indeed, the absence of pro-American voices can serve as a proxy measure of the strength of the anti-American message in France.

Over time, anti-Americanism seems to have fulfilled a structural role by helping to create a national and supranational identity. A negative discourse against the United States has been at various times a rhetoric produced in order to positively construct French identity. To some extent, the United States has replaced England as the inimical friend against whom to forge a French national identity; the two have often blended in the frequently used French concept “Anglo-Saxon.” Anti-Americanism has served a useful purpose by redefining national identity in contrast to the perceived American model—what John Bowen in chapter 8 refers to as the “diacritic use” of anti-American schemas. For instance, at a time that France is challenged by the reality of the Muslim component of its identity and struggles to update its guiding principles over the separation of church and state, the French critique of the failures and hypocrisies of American multiculturalism reflects back on the idealized French republican model based on assimilation, integration, and equality. The same can be said of the economic and social model: policies such as the thirty-five-hour workweek have been elaborated against widely criticized American practices,

partly to reinforce the distinctiveness of the French identity against the backdrop of a globalized, converging, capitalist world.

The demonized (and idealized) American model is also used as a mirror to define European identity—something that has been an elusive concept for many centuries. It is in this sense that anti-Americanism has such an important role to play in the contemporary period: it can create, by negative refraction, a European identity where little previously existed. This is not to say that a European identity can only construct itself against an American foil. Many prominent European thinkers and politicians, from Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas to Joschka Fischer and Hubert Védrine, have explored how to build a new Europe whose collective identity would be more in contrast to the old days of European nationalism than to threats represented by Americanism.⁵⁸ Yet at a time that Europe hardly seems to be a cohesive entity, anti-Americanism can easily serve as one of the glues that can bind together very disparate entities.

Anti-Americanism can also play an important role by legitimizing (and delegitimizing) specific policies. Political entrepreneurs are particularly apt to resort to anti-Americanism as a way to lend legitimacy to status quo policies. To ensure the absence of reform, politicians can highlight the similarities between the proposed reformist policy and the American model, in the hope that anti-American sentiments will trigger opposition to the reform. For instance, when French politicians discuss implementing affirmative action (anathema to the French model of integration and equality) or rules on sexual harassment (a far cry from the flirtatious, libertine national culture), opponents of the reform invoke the American model to ensure rejection of the new policy. Another example can be found in the realm of economic reform where, according to Jean-François Revel, one of the few openly anti-anti-American intellectuals in France, “the principal function of anti-Americanism has always been, and still is, to discredit liberalism by discrediting its supreme incarnation.”⁵⁹

Conversely, another political role of anti-Americanism is to enable national politicians to scapegoat the United States. In borrowing from the background repertoire of anti-American arguments, French politicians can undertake unpopular policies by blaming them on the United States. This scapegoating shifts the blame and exonerates them of wrongdoing. Globalization was used in a similar way in the late 1990s as a readily available bogeyman that was to blame for unpopular structural reforms.⁶⁰ The United States (often seen as synonymous with American multinational corporations) becomes the villain that forces unpopular industrial restructuring, outsourcing, and the whittling down of the state.

Finally, political entrepreneurs can mobilize anti-Americanism as a focal point around which to rally their troops. When domestic support is failing, an appeal to anti-American sentiments can reinvigorate support, since anti-Americanism is one of the few things that can unite people across the political spectrum. One can

58. Derrida and Habermas 2003, Levy et al. 2005.

59. Revel 2003.

60. Gordon and Meunier 2001, Meunier 2003.

interpret the firm stance taken by President Chirac on Iraq in early 2003 as an ironic attempt to “wag the dog” and take the public focus away from domestic trouble by mobilizing on this consensual issue.⁶¹ The same can be said of President Chirac’s performance on French national television in April 2005 in order to arouse support for the French referendum on the European Constitution and reinvigorate his discontented political base. When pressed for arguments in favor of European integration, he kept playing the anti-American card, arguing that only by being part of a united European Union could France have a chance to stand up to the United States and that only a united Europe could protect France from the “Anglo-Saxon” socio-economic model.⁶²

Nevertheless, even though anti-Americanism can be and has been exploited for clear domestic purposes, there are limits to its use for political gain. In contemporary France, the image of the United States is not really a divisive element. On the contrary, it is used more for establishing consensus than for fostering divisions and controversies, which explains why it is costless. A well-timed, well-delivered anti-American critique can rally support for anyone’s agenda. But because of its consensual nature and the fact that citizens across the political spectrum hold some type of anti-American views (though not necessarily the same type), it is difficult for political leaders to exploit popular concern about America for domestic political gain relative to their opponents. And it does not even always work. Chirac’s appeal to anti-Americanism to rescue the European referendum was hardly a success. In a televised interview two weeks after that address, he tried out many different arguments in favor of the referendum, this time not one of them related to the United States.⁶³

The four uses of anti-Americanism I have analyzed do exist in other countries, and politicians elsewhere in Europe have resorted to anti-American appeals with more or less success. What distinguishes France is the seeming lack of costs associated with using anti-Americanism for political purposes. This is because France possesses singular characteristics, both internally and internationally. Internally, anti-Americanism has often been exploited because its benefits have typically far outweighed its costs: it spreads all across the French political spectrum, including the moderate Right, which in most other European countries has traditionally been pro-American.⁶⁴ Externally, one specific feature that explains why French politicians have incurred so few costs in using anti-Americanism was the particular geopolitical situation of France in the twentieth century. During the cold war, France was not subject to the same geopolitical constraints as Germany, for instance. Because it was less dependent on the United States for its security and economic well-being, because it was a nuclear power, and because of the status of France in the United Nations,

61. Chirac’s strategy seemed different from that of Gerhard Schröder in Germany, who appealed more to pacifism than to anti-Americanism to win his election.

62. Lorentzen 2005.

63. Gurrey 2005.

64. A few intellectuals are known for their pro-American views (such as Jean-François Revel, Guy Sorman, Alain Minc, Bernard-Henry Lévy, and Pascal Bruckner). But there is so far no institutionalized pro-American grouping of any real stature in French politics, although this may change in the future as the generation of Nicolas Sarkozy reaches the helm of the old Gaullist party.

French policymakers were able to use anti-American arguments without too much fear of retribution. Similarly, the end of the cold war had a different impact on France than on other European countries, leading it to look for a new niche in international politics, which it found partly in the anti-globalization movement and in the insistence on the recourse to multilateral institutions. This geopolitical situation also explains another peculiarity of France—its distinctive, obsessive focus on culture: unlike the countries defeated in World War II, such as Germany and Japan, France was not afraid to claim cultural superiority in the postwar period. And unlike Great Britain, France had a national language to defend from the assaults of English.

Consequences of French Anti-Americanism

A French analyst recently remarked that “anti-Americanism barks more than it bites.”⁶⁵ Is it indeed a gratuitous discourse on the part of frustrated elites in search of legitimacy or a worrisome political force that affects individual and collective actions? Background anti-Americanism has less of an influence on French foreign policy than is usually portrayed in the American media. As the Iraq example showed, anti-Americanism is secondary to self-interest in guiding French foreign policy, and only a fraction of French actions in the past decade appear confrontational. France was a major member of the U.S.-led coalition in the Gulf War. In 1999 France sent more military aircraft to bomb Yugoslavia than any European nation and placed them under U.S. command. The French government strongly supported the 2001 operation in Afghanistan, and French troops were still present in 2006. And France and the United States have cooperated on the Syrian-Lebanese question in the wake of Rafiq Hariri’s assassination in 2005. Even France’s 2005 proposal to lift its arms embargo on China, which was interpreted in many Washington circles as a blatant case of a French policy motivated by anti-Americanism, may be more about commercial greed than grand geopolitical ambitions.⁶⁶ There are two areas in which institutionalized French distrust of the United States might indeed be more consequential and prejudicial than in foreign policy: consumer behavior and intelligence cooperation.

Consumer Boycotts

Before the Franco-American rift over Iraq, the main perceived impact of French anti-Americanism was on consumer behavior. After all, France is the country where José Bové, a sheep farmer who organized the destruction of a McDonald’s restaurant, became a national hero and *Le Monde*’s man of the year in 1999.⁶⁷ Beyond anecdotes, however, there is no hard evidence that French people prejudiced against the

65. Chazelle 2004.

66. Bernstein 2005, Peel 2005, Weisman 2005.

67. Meunier 2000.

United States stop consuming American products as a way to demonstrate their hostility. This confirms Keohane and Katzenstein's findings in chapter 10. Many French individuals declare that they will boycott American products as a form of symbolic politics, but in fact they do not, and so far the declaratory grandstanding has failed to affect sales of American products in France.⁶⁸ Indeed, a 2004 Harvard Business School study concluded:

It simply didn't matter to consumers whether the global brands they bought were American. To be sure, many people *said* they cared. A French panelist called American brands "imperialistic threats that undermine French culture." A German told us that Americans "want to impose their way on everybody." But the rhetoric belied the reality. When we measured the extent to which consumers' purchase decisions were influenced by products' American roots, we discovered that the impact was negligible.⁶⁹

On the contrary, American businesses seem to be flourishing in France. There are twelve GAP stores in Paris, the capital of fashion, and thirty-five throughout France (with none in Germany or Italy). In this culture of cafés, Starbucks opened its first coffehouse in September 2003, at the height of the clash between France and the United States over Iraq, while the United States Congress was renaming french fries "freedom fries" in its cafeteria menu. By January 2006, the Seattle-based chain had seventeen outlets in the Paris area. As for cinema, the number-one box office attraction in 2003, the year of the Iraq invasion, was *Finding Nemo*, and seven out of the top-ten movies were from the United States, in a country known for its protection of homegrown film production.⁷⁰ In 2004, three out of the five top-grossing movies were American.⁷¹ If there is a consumer boycott, it is a negligible one. In 2005, nine out of the ten top grossing movies were produced in the United States.⁷²

With respect to McDonald's, the paradox is the greatest. Of all the European countries, it is in France that McDonald's has been performing best for the past three

68. A Global Market Insite poll, taken in early 2005 after the tsunami relief effort, found that the three countries with the highest percentage of consumers who intended to boycott iconic American brands as a way of displaying their discontent over recent American foreign policies and military action are South Korea 45%, Greece 40%, and France 25%. See <http://www.gmipoll.com> (accessed August 11, 2005).

69. Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004.

70. The top ten movies of 2003 were, in order, (1) *Finding Nemo* (U.S.); (2) *Taxi 3* (France); (3) *Matrix Reloaded* (U.S.); (4) *Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (New Zealand); (5) *Chouchou* (France); (6) *Pirates of the Caribbean* (U.S.); (7) *Catch Me if You Can* (U.S.); (8) *The Jungle Book 2* (U.S.); (9) *Matrix Revolutions* (U.S.); (10) *Terminator 3* (U.S.). Source: Centre National de la Cinématographie, http://www.cnc.fr/d_stat/fr_d.htm (accessed August 11, 2005). Note that France subsidizes the production of national movies, not their distribution—unlike on television, where at least 40% of the broadcast must be in French, and on the radio, where at least 40% of pop music broadcast must be in French.

71. The top five movies of 2004 were, in order, (1) *Les Choristes* (France); (2) *Shrek 2* (U.S.); (3) *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (U.K.); (4) *Spiderman 2* (U.S.); (5) *The Incredibles* (U.S.). Source: Centre National de la Cinématographie, http://www.cnc.fr/d_stat/bilan2004/pdf/1-filmsensalles.pdf (accessed August 11, 2005).

72. In 2005, the top five movies were: (1) *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (U.S.); (2) *Star Wars Episode 3* (U.S.); (3) *The Chronicle of Narnia* (U.S.); (4) *Brice de Nice* (France); (5) *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (U.S.). Source: <http://www.cbo-boxoffice.com> (accessed March 14, 2006).

years. In 2004, the sales growth of McDonald's France was 5.5 percent, among the best recorded worldwide, achieved against a background of a 3 percent decline in the French fast food market.⁷³ The number of McDonald's restaurants in France doubled between 1996 and 2004, with 1,035 in December 2004 (out of about sixty-two hundred in Europe), and the company was planning thirty-five more openings in 2005. Present in 750 French cities, McDonald's France serves on average more than one million customers daily. In spite of José Bové and the Franco-American falling out over Iraq, McDonald's France has been doing so well that in 2004 its president, Denis Hennequin, was named McDonald's vice president for all of Europe, in the hope that he could turn around the slumping markets of England and Germany.

The paradoxical state of the Franco-American economic relationship is not limited to consumer behavior. There is no evidence of the "bleeding" of political tensions into the investment side either. In 2003, the year of the falling out between France and the United States, corporate France invested \$4.2 billion in the U.S. economy, confirming the place of France as one of the largest investors and largest foreign sources of jobs in the United States.⁷⁴ Why is the trade and investment relationship robust in spite of political tensions? Why is there no anti-American backlash in purchasing decisions? There are a host of reasons that consumption has been insulated, so far at least, from the contagion of political sentiments. Individuals are contradictory: they are willing to condemn something in one situation and then consume it in another, especially when self-interest prevails. For most consumers, getting quality products at good prices trumps political prejudices. Moreover, boycotting is often seen as futile when U.S. brands are so ubiquitous.⁷⁵ And the very concept of an "American" or a "European" company is becoming increasingly out of date with globalization (except for the iconic American brands, which are often made in China and other countries ironically).⁷⁶

Yet the negligible impact of anti-Americanism on consumer behavior in France does not mean that anti-Americanism will never have an impact.⁷⁷ As Keith Reinhardt, founder of the group Business for Diplomatic Action, explains, "Research across much of the globe shows that consumers are cooling toward American culture and American brands, but there is still no hard evidence showing direct impact on bottom lines. In marketing, we know that attitude precedes behavior, and the warning signs are there."⁷⁸ The "bleeding" may not have occurred yet because of the time lag between attitudes and behaviors, but it may (or not) happen in the future, depending on how long anti-Americanism is sustained by current events and on the availability of non-American alternatives. It should also be noted that even if U.S. firms

73. *Le Monde* 2005a, Paliere 2005.

74. Quinlan and Hamilton 2004.

75. Woodnutt and Burnside 2004.

76. Gordon 2005.

77. Even though Fourcade and Schofer (2004) show why consumer boycotts are not a form of protest widely used in France.

78. *Corporate Citizen* 2004. See also <http://www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org/index.php>.

have not suffered overall from boycotts, specific sectors and specific companies can suffer from the political strains more than the economy as a whole.

The War on Terror

French anti-Americanism could also have consequences for the United States by affecting the war on terror. First, the anti-American prejudices embedded in the French collective discourse could provide a fertile ground for the emergence of terrorist acts directed against U.S. interests. After all, the constant pounding in the press and elsewhere with negative comments about the United States might prompt some to organize and act. Indeed, the actions of José Bové and other antiglobalization activists against McDonald's and genetically modified crops have been interpreted by some as acts of economic terrorism. Some analysts have suggested that members of the antiglobalization movement may organize into Red Brigade-like "groupuscules." But it would be a major intellectual leap to equate their actions with the type of terrorism that is really trying to hurt the United States. Most of these actions have not been directed at the United States *per se* but at globalization as an alienating, homogenizing, destructive force related to, but distinct from, the United States. Moreover, the French antiglobalization movement has been careful, so far, not to hurt individuals on purpose through its protest actions.

Even if France does not produce anti-American Red Brigade-type activists intent on hurting Americans, anti-Americanism may still provide a fertile breeding ground for another type of terrorism—radical Islamist. France has a very large Muslim community, with some individuals less integrated into mainstream French society than the majority. Several Islamist terrorists with a hatred of the United States have come from France—from 9/11 suspect Zacarias Moussaoui to French citizens arrested in Iraq among the insurgents, which led to the discovery and breakup of a network in France that was attempting to funnel French citizens to Iraq.⁷⁹ But this does not answer positively the question of whether background French anti-Americanism has a mobilizing effect, motivating these individuals to act against American interests. First, the hatred that underlies these acts is not solely turned against the United States. Some deadly acts of Islamist terrorism were committed in France prior to 9/11, such as the 1986 Paris bombings, the 1994 hijacking of an Air France plane, and the 1995 multiple Paris bombings. It is more a hatred of Western civilization and religions than a hatred of the United States. And second, this hatred of Muslim extremists is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the mainstream anti-American discourse of French politicians. Moreover, these extremists typically have weak links to French society and are not well integrated into the local culture, so the chances that their actions are motivated by the musings of Left Bank intellectuals are pretty slim while the chances that they are motivated by broader currents of Islamic radicalism are very great.⁸⁰

79. Agence France Presse 2005a, Sciolino 2005a.

80. Roy 2004, Kepel 2004, Kepel 1997.

Second, the ambient French distrust of the United States could potentially jeopardize Franco-American cooperation on intelligence. France has long cooperated very effectively with the United States in counterterrorism efforts—a matter the French think they understand better than the Americans. For instance, it is thanks to French intelligence that the “millennium bomber” was arrested in Seattle in December 1999 with a truck full of explosives intended for attacks in the United States.⁸¹ Can the anti-American sentiments currently channeled through the media and the political process hinder the efforts of the French government in organizing joint actions with the United States to combat terrorism?

As long as it is in the self-interest of France to cooperate with the United States, it will do so, no matter the international political climate or domestic political pressures. For the past two decades, France has been among the European nations most affected by terrorism. Counterterrorism is one of its top policy priorities. In this domain, its interests seem to be converging with those of the United States. Al-Qaida has also attacked France since 9/11, even if these events have made few headlines in the U.S. media; there was, for instance, the suicide bombing that killed French naval construction workers in Karachi in June 2002, the attack against the French oil tanker *Limbourg* in Yemen in October 2002, and the kidnapping of French journalists in Iraq in 2004 and 2005. Cooperation at the official level should not be affected drastically by anti-American rhetoric, as long as the interests of the two countries converge. It also helps that a lot of this cooperation takes place out of the limelight.

Indeed, according to many directly involved, the degree of cooperation between France and the United States on counterterrorism is better than ever, insulated from French anti-Americanism and American Francophobia.⁸² A good example is the December 2003 cancellation of six Air France flights during the busy holiday season at the request of the U.S. government. American intelligence had gathered information that al-Qaida might be using flights between Paris and Los Angeles on Christmas Day or New Year’s Eve to commit terrorist acts in the United States.⁸³ Heeding the warnings of American intelligence, Prime Minister Raffarin ordered Air France to cancel these flights. This was critically portrayed in the French media as France acceding to American paranoia and ridiculed in the next few days when the press revealed that the CIA had mistaken infants and old ladies for members of al-Qaida with similar-sounding names. What is remarkable is that France did it anyway, and the criticisms did not prevent Air France, following orders from the French government, from grounding flights again on January 31, 2004, acting on information provided by U.S. intelligence that al-Qaida might use the planes for a terrorist attack.⁸⁴

A July 3, 2005, *Washington Post* article disclosed that Franco-American cooperation in counterterrorism had even become institutionalized, notwithstanding the political

81. Bruguière 2003.

82. Interview with Robert Hutchings, chairman of the National Intelligence Council, 2002–4, May 16, 2005. See also Bruguière 2003, Priest 2005.

83. Locy et al. 2004, Savage 2003.

84. Lichtblau 2004.

acrimony between the two countries.⁸⁵ Since 2002, the CIA and the French secret services (DGSE) have operated jointly a top-secret center in Paris, code-named Alliance Base, that is headed by a French general. This multinational center has already planned twelve special operations.

Anti-Americanism may affect intelligence cooperation, though, if the domestic costs of cooperating on intelligence get higher because of domestic political pressure, and if the costs of cooperating become higher than the costs of not cooperating. One can think of instances in which public pressure (in addition to French law) would be strongly for not cooperating, especially in a case that would include some of the arguments used to feed anti-Americanism, for instance, the extradition of a French prisoner to the United States where he might be subjected to abuse or incur the death penalty. Another serious potential impact of French anti-Americanism on intelligence cooperation could be in information gathering. The large Muslim population in France makes it a particularly valuable asset in that respect. So far French intelligence has been able to infiltrate terrorist networks and gather useful tips. To continue to play this counterterrorism role, France must be confident that its population will be willing to come forward with tips, instead of holding on to information because of anti-American sentiment—and so must the United States.

Overall, background French anti-Americanism has not produced openly confrontational policies, contrary to what is commonly believed in the United States. Nevertheless, it could still affect the United States, because it could lead to stronger demands for global governance. The more prevalent anti-Americanism is in Europe, the more likely European leaders—the French chief among them—are to ask for a world system governed by a multitude of rules in order to curb the almightiness of the United States, whether by the United Nations or in functional institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund.⁸⁶ Distrust of the United States could also shift French policy toward increased European integration and a stronger Europe, able to assert its independence from the United States. Indeed, in the years preceding the Iraq conflict, Europeans engaged in a series of joint defense initiatives and committed the European Union, though the ambitious Lisbon process, to becoming the world's most competitive and dynamic economic area by 2010. However, the consequences of anti-Americanism on the future of European integration depend on which type of anti-Americanism is at play. Parties with sovereignist anti-Americanist tendencies desire a stronger Europe able to counter the overwhelming domination of their U.S. ally. This is why Chirac supported the creation of the European single currency, justifying the euro as a means to curb the power of the dollar. This is also why he is now proposing a stronger European foreign policy, independent of the United States. Indeed, this policy finds great resonance with French public opinion. By 2003, the French overwhelmingly (91%) said they wanted the European Union to become a “superpower like the US”—a much greater

85. Priest 2005.

86. Gordon and Meunier 2001, Abdelal 2006.

percentage than the Italians, Germans, Dutch, British, and Poles surveyed.⁸⁷ A sizeable French minority even hoped that the European Union would compete with, or counterbalance, the United States.⁸⁸ Parties with social anti-Americanist tendencies also desire a stronger Europe, but one that will offer an alternative social and economic model on a continental scale. Overall, the case seems pretty clear that if France is to play a counterweight role to the United States, it must be through Europe. Nevertheless, as the divisive French debate on the referendum over the EU Constitution showed, anti-Americanism does not seem to be weighing heavily on people's minds—otherwise they would have voted massively yes in May 2005.

If French distrust of the United States does not generate defiant public policies or individual behaviors, it can still raise the costs of U.S. foreign policy in the long run. It remains to be seen how French and European anti-Americanism affects the course of U.S. foreign policy, whether anti-Americanism promotes greater support in the United States for isolationist positions or, on the contrary, greater international involvement, and whether it strengthens domestically those who promote greater unilateralism or multilateralism.

“We Are All Anti-American”

Anti-Americanism spans the whole political spectrum in France, from the far left Trotskyist parties to the far right National Front. Yet in spite of its long history and the existence of a vast reservoir of anti-American arguments, it would be unfair to characterize France as an anti-American nation. To be sure, an irreducible fraction of French public opinion is viscerally anti-American and exhibits a dispositional bias that negatively interprets the actions of the United States irrespective of reality. These are the people whose hatred of the United States made a bestseller out of Thierry Meyssan's *L'effroyable imposture*, a book that argued that it was an American missile that crashed on purpose into the Pentagon on 9/11 and that the September 11 attacks were carried out by the U.S. government.⁸⁹ The prejudice such people display is referred to in French as “anti-américanisme primaire” (primal anti-Americanism).

Nevertheless, public opinion polls show that most French people have consistently been no more anti-American than Spaniards and Greeks and only marginally more so than Germans and other western Europeans, and there is little evidence that French policy opposition to the United States is motivated by bias rather than by policy disagreements or a clash of interests. French anti-Americanism stands out because over the years intellectuals and politicians have developed a common corpus

87. According to the 2005 Pew Global Attitudes Project, 73% of the French (by far the highest number in Europe) want Europe to be more independent from the United States in its security and diplomatic affairs. Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005a.

88. Kuisel 2004.

89. Meyssan 2002.

of biases against the United States, which have become embedded in the national policy discourse and have been exploited politically. Anti-Americanism often takes the form of institutionalized distrust, at times bordering on bias, but these biases hardly affect the behavior of most French citizens, even if they periodically affect their attitudes.

This common corpus is made up of at least seven types of anti-American arguments. That French society would nurture simultaneously these seven types, however, does not imply that, to paraphrase *Le Monde's* Jean-Marie Colombani, “we are all anti-Americans.”⁹⁰ For all these manifestations of anti-Americanism, there are also daily manifestations of pro-Americanism, even if not in daily newspaper columns: in the world of business (which admires and imports many American methods of management); in the world of higher education (which envies and aspires to American-style universities); in the world of entertainment (which emulates some aspects of American popular culture and lionizes many American cultural figures); and even in the world of food (where French chefs admire the working conditions of their American counterparts, whose professional teams consistently win international competitions).⁹¹ In a way, the French “are all Americans,” that is, they have integrated America into their daily lives, from television to food, from business practices to rap music. This Americanization is taken for granted and does not make the headlines, but it explains the complexities and contradictions of French views of the United States.

Perhaps the United States grants too much importance to the negative perceptions of the French. And perhaps this stems from a misunderstanding of French national political culture, which prides itself on its rebellious nature and counts as one of its heroes the fictitious indomitable little Gaul Asterix, who was able to resist the powerful Roman Empire. The United States is not the exclusive object of French antagonism. If there is anything like a collective national psyche, in France it would be a rebellious, grumpy character, and a high propensity for opposition—no matter whether the object in question is the United States, the European Constitution, or globalization. Indeed, surveys such as the World Values Survey consistently show that the French are very distrustful in general—of each other, of their government, of politicians, of America, and so on.⁹² The French just like to be “anti,” especially when the disruption of French society created by the phenomenon in question is strong. Maybe anti-Americanism, or at least what is perceived as anti-Americanism on the U.S. side of the Atlantic, is nothing personal.

90. “We Are All Americans” was the title of *Le Monde's* front-page editorial on September 12, 2001.

91. When asked in a multinational survey to assess the positive characteristics of Americans, the French were at the top or close to the top in judging Americans as “hardworking,” “inventive,” and “honest.” Pew Global Attitudes Project 2005a.

92. See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/> (accessed August 11, 2005).