

OBAMAMANIA AND ANTI-AMERICANISM AS COMPLEMENTARY CONCEPTS IN CONTEMPORARY GERMAN DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

There is no question that with Barack Obama the United States has a rock star as president who—behooving rock stars—is adored and admired the world over. His being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize nary a year after being elected president and barely ten months into his holding the office, testified to his global popularity rather than his actual accomplishments, which may well turn out to be unique and formidable. And it is equally evident that few—if any—American presidents were more reviled, disdained and distrusted all across the globe than George W. Bush, Obama’s immediate predecessor. Indeed, the contrast between the hatred for the latter and the admiration for the former might lead to the impression that the negative attitudes towards America and Americans that was so prevalent during the Bush years have miraculously morphed into a lovefest towards the United States on the part of the global public. This paper—concentrating solely on the German case but representing a larger research project encompassing much of Western Europe—argues that love for Obama and disdain for America are not only perfectly compatible but that, in fact, the two are merely different empirical manifestations of a conceptually singular view of America. Far from being mutually exclusive, these two strains are highly congruent, indeed complementary and symbiotic with each other.

KEYWORDS

Obama; Obamamania; German and West European anti-Americanism



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Introduction

... [I]n Europe, there is an anti-Americanism that is at once casual but can also be insidious. Instead of recognizing the good that America so often does in the world, there have been times where Europeans choose to blame America for much of what's bad."¹

*I*n his speech in Strasbourg, President Barack Obama surprised his audiences on both sides of the Atlantic by being the very first American president to address in public a European resentment with a long history. To be sure, anti-Americanism—in Europe and worldwide—reached unprecedented proportions during the eight-year reign of the Bush Administration. Especially in the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the war against Iraq two years later, there emerged an unparalleled antipathy towards the United States government as well as American society that reached most social segments in many countries throughout the world.² Ivan Krastev, observing this tendency in 2004, predicted that the twenty-first century may well become known as the “anti-American century.”³ Andrei Markovits previously analyzed the pervasiveness and social acceptability of anti-Americanism in Europe as the continent's de facto “lingua franca,” its most important inter- and intra-societal common discourse.⁴

The massively positive reaction to the appearance of Barack Obama on the international political stage, however, seems to have run directly counter to this massive anti-Americanism. Indeed, Obamamania, as enthusiasm for Obama has been aptly termed, spread rapidly through Europe and the world seemingly negating the previously widely extant anti-Americanism. Thus, his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize nary one year after having been elected President and barely ten months into holding this uniquely important office, testifies to this man's singular popularity among the world's publics, but most notably—and importantly—West (or, actually, in this case North) Europe's political and cultural elites who, after all, comprise the crucial decision makers that choose the recipients of this prestigious prize. Crudely put, had Barack Obama been less beloved by Norwegian, other Scandinavian and West European elites—and had George W. Bush not been as reviled and disdained—Obama would not have won this award so early in his presidential incumbency. This is not to say that Barack Obama is not a worthy recipient of this distinction. We emphatically believe that he is! But, we also argue that were he not to have benefited from such a high degree of affection among West Europe's publics and elites, it is very unlikely that he would have been bestowed this prize at this time.

Indeed, European audiences' love for Obama only has its parallels in their affection for John F. Kennedy with whom the current president has been serially compared.⁵ Indeed, it is not only the president himself that benefits from this Camelot analogy, but his entire family. After all, Michelle Obama is constantly compared to Jacqueline Kennedy in terms of her style, beauty, panache, and composure, and the two Obama girls round out this poster-perfect family just the way Caroline and John-John did almost fifty years ago.

When Obama delivered a public speech in Berlin in July 2008—months before he was to be elected President of the United States—more than 200,000 people came to see him at an odd location that celebrates newly united and Prussia-led Germany's victory over France in 1871.⁶ In contrast, a visit to the same city by George W. Bush in May 2002 witnessed a demonstration by 20,000 people against his presence.⁷ Indeed, that was a relatively small affair when compared to the more than 200,000 demonstrators who brought the city to a complete halt and forced the authorities to convert it into a veritable fortress during the often violent demonstrations against Ronald Reagan's visits to Berlin throughout the 1980s, including his last one in which he implored Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall." In fact, every American president since John F. Kennedy was met with a much larger number of protesters demonstrating against him than audiences welcoming him in Germany and most West European countries (in notable contrast to Eastern Europe where Richard Nixon, for example, was accorded a hero's welcome after being scorned and excoriated in the continent's western part).

But, quite the opposite seems to be operative in Barack Obama's case. Thus, for example, according to opinion polls, 82 percent of the German population, 74 percent of the British, and 72 percent of the Spanish have "confidence in Obama to do the right thing in world affairs."⁸ Obama is often—though neither exclusively nor without reservation—perceived as a source of hope and inspiration, a protagonist of political change. At first sight, this seems to contradict the notion of widespread anti-Americanism; the German print media as well as pundits have been quick to predict that European anti-Americanism will soon or may already have come to an end.⁹ Our purpose in this article is to question such assumptions, rebut such statements, and present them as wishful thinking at best or—more likely—post hoc self-exculpatory statements designed to minimize a continuously extant anti-Americanism.

In this article, our data will hail only from Germany. In a subsequent publication, we fully intend to expand our horizon to include other West

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European countries. In the first section of this paper, we briefly address the entangled relationship between anti-Americanism and anti-Bushism, and gauge whether such positions and opinions are reasonable and fair criticism of American politics. In the next section, we demonstrate the continued presence of anti-Americanism by analyzing three particular instances: the financial crisis, the shooting in Winnenden, and the NATO summit. In the paper's last section, we highlight the compatibility of German Obamamania with continued anti-Americanism. A brief conclusion ends our contribution in which we argue that anti-Americanism in Germany and Europe has not been altered by the amazing changes wrought in virtually every aspect of Europe's existence by the miraculous events that continue to characterize 1989, of which the fall of the Berlin Wall and Germany's subsequent unification was merely one piece of a still awe-inducing puzzle.

Anti-Americanism, Anti-Bushism, or reasonable and fair criticism of American politics?

The view of Obamamania's being the apotheosis of anti-Americanism and its obvious negation rests squarely on the premise that anti-Americanism did not so much exist *sui generis*, but was rather a justly expressed criticism of President George W. Bush's policies on every level, but particularly in foreign affairs, clearly the most salient for Europeans. Since disagreement—indeed disgust—with Bush's policies represented a completely legitimate and fair opposition to the policies enacted by the government of the United States, such sentiments *ipso facto* did not constitute resentment against the American people or things American, but rather a justified criticism of the United States government led by Bush. In countless instances, one would hear all across Europe that one was, of course, not in the least anti-American, merely anti-Bush. Indeed, very few, if any, Europeans declare themselves openly as anti-American. One can barely, if ever, find such people. Nevertheless, one can encounter many more who preface their remarks with the disclaimer that “I am not anti-American” followed by an emphatic “but,” which, in turn, is an opening for an array of invectives against America and Americans that one would have a hard time viewing as anything but profoundly anti-American—ditto with antisemitism, racism, or most prejudices. Few people in this day and age readily admit to being antisemites or racists or misogynists; but many preface their negative opinions by the previously mentioned disclaimer of

not being an anti-Semite, racist, or misogynist, but ... and then commence with their negative views of Jews, blacks and other ethnic minorities, and women.

In order to separate resentment towards American policy and attitudes toward America—in other words to separate government from people—Markovits, in particular, centered his work on observing how Europeans reacted to American matters that were clearly non-political. His work demonstrates that while criticism of the U.S. government is directed against certain concrete political decisions, anti-Americanism is targeted against an imagined “American essence,” an “American nature,” and thus goes much deeper than a disagreement with a political strategy. Indeed, anti-Americanism disapproves of who Americans are and not what they do.¹⁰ It centers on disdaining America’s lifestyle, culture, habits and beliefs, and argues that America in its very essence represents an evil as well as inferior force in the world while at the same time being omnipotent and omniscient. “Anti-Americanism rests on the notion that something associated with the United States, something at the core of American life, is deeply wrong and threatening to the rest of the world.”¹¹ The “core markers” of anti-Americanism, according to Brendon O’Connor, are a “distorted or narrowcast focus, a reflexive dislike, an undifferentiated view of American behavior or politics and a tendency to conflate the nation’s people with their government and its policies.”¹² Pejorative attributions consist of viewing the United States as imperialist by “nature” and striving for world domination; it often includes economic arguments, identifying America with the negative aspects of neoliberalism; but it also focuses on perceiving American culture as artificial and lacking authenticity.¹³ All of these negative views appear either on their own or bundled in a larger context of negativity, disdain, and dislike, if not always outright hatred. Like all powerful prejudices, anti-Americanism, too, resists any verification by empirical means. Prejudices, to those that hold them, are neither testable hypotheses, nor refutable by facts. Above all, they are always antonymous—everything and its opposite pertain in relation to the detested object. Thus, America is at once too powerful, yet also too weak; its soldiers are too Rambo-esque, yet also cowardly; Americans are too nationalistic, yet they do not constitute a proper nation; they are too religious, yet they are also too secular; their culture is pornographic, yet it is also prudish; their women are emasculating, yet they are also too domestic and traditional. Americans are slavish purveyors of Fordism and other methods of mass production and consumption while at the same time unable and unwilling to part with their outdated traditions and old-fash-

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ioned mores that bespeak their provincialism. America stands for unwanted and intrusive cosmopolitanism that destroys other cultures at the same time that it supposedly embodies an exclusive parochialism which is hostile to any influences from abroad. Examples abound. As Markovits has repeatedly pointed out, the nature of anti-Americanism's profound antinomies bear a striking resemblance to those that characterize anti-Semitism.¹⁴ Thus, it is not by chance that historically and empirically speaking European anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism featured a considerable overlap in the essential ingredients of their concepts but also in the political reality of their social carriers.

Robert Singh has offered a detailed analysis pertaining to the crucial issue as to whether the Bush policies might be responsible for increasing anti-Americanism in Europe and the world. He concluded that the phenomenon of anti-Americanism constitutes a different phenomenon from a rational reaction to and critical assessment of U.S. foreign policy. Singh demonstrates that the widely shared criticisms of America's policies have been contradictory and selective. Thus, for example, while in the context of the war against Iraq the engagement of the United States has been denounced as too aggressive, in the context of the long-lasting wars conducted in Lebanon, the American reaction was criticized as being too meek and timid.¹⁵ Once again, we have a fine manifestation of what Markovits has termed the "damned if you do, and damned if you don't" syndrome that is so crucial to the logic of any prejudice, that of anti-Americanism included.¹⁶ Critics regard America as being too cowardly and self-interested by not preventing the genocide in Rwanda, and by rescuing the Bosnian Muslims and their brethren in Kosovo way too late. Yet, at the same time, often the very same critics blame America for being the actual culprit by exhibiting too much aggression even against bullies of the Slobodan Milosevic variety. One even hears criticism of America's passive-aggressive character, meaning that in its very passivity, America exhibits a sort of arrogance that is de facto aggressive. Singh observes this inherent contradiction quite well by stating that "many of those who claim that reasoned criticism of American foreign policy cannot be classified as anti-American nonetheless claim simultaneously that the recent growth of anti-Americanism is precisely attributable to a failed U.S. foreign policy."¹⁷

Bush's policies—as well as his entire being and very existence—have had a catalytic effect regarding the legitimizing of anti-Americanism in Europe and the world. Quite simply, Bush's presence "catapulted global and Western European anti-Americanism into 'overdrive'" in which a legitimate antipathy towards a person and his government's policies conve-

niently bled into a much more general prejudice against America and Americans.¹⁸ After all, any prejudice can be displayed more openly, when it is legitimized by its object, as in the case of the “cowboy” Bush, who was such an ideal-typical target for the popular projection of all extant facets of negative characteristics attributed to America since 1776 that had Bush not been real, one would have had to invent him.¹⁹ Like other forms of group-oriented hostilities, anti-Americanism, too, cannot be explained by attributes of the resentment’s object and target. Instead, one needs to analyze the subject’s disposition and needs to express such resentment in order to best arrive at its roots. Jean-Paul Sartre put it correctly when he argued that anti-Semitism said little, if anything, about Jews but all the more about Christians, the bearers of such anti-Jewish prejudices. Thus, in anti-Americanism’s case, too, we are likely to find its reasons and existence less in America’s being and doing, but rather in this resentment’s role and function in the subject societies, in this case Europe.

Notable in the case of anti-Americanism is, for example, the externalization of problems existing within European societies by projecting them onto the United States.²⁰ Using America as a scapegoat for global troubles, Europeans obscure their own responsibilities regarding social, economic and political problems besetting the world thus being to make America the sole culprit while at the same time establishing Europe’s moral superiority vis-à-vis its American rival. Dan Diner identifies anti-Americanism as a general way of rationalizing complex and misconceived social processes defining all aspects of modern societies. “Resistive reactions to emblems of an incriminated time—modernity—convert into emblems of a denounced place—America.”²¹ Accordingly, anti-Americanism—like all prejudices—facilitates the substitution of a clear-cut explanation for a more nuanced understanding of the intricate structure of modern societies. By so doing, it offers a mindset leaving anti-American attitudes ever more resistant to rational arguments, differentiated interpretations, and empirical facts that point into an opposite direction.

Of course, this does not mean that a profound antipathy towards Bush as a president, a person, and a purveyor of certain policies always needs to be part of a larger resentment towards the United States and things American. Anti-Bushism surely existed widely without the presence of an acute anti-Americanism. And while the obverse was certainly much less prevalent, it is surely conceivable that some Europeans actually did not mind Bush while disliking America and Americans. But our point here is to look at the overlapping—or orthogonal—rather than a purportedly identical nature of the two in which an overt anti-Bushism exacerbated, legiti-

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mated, manifested and articulated an extant anti-Americanism that lay dormant though was never moribund among Europeans. Bush impersonated the very essence of America to millions of Europeans—and the tally was decidedly pejorative and negative.

Anti-Americanism, though a prejudice like any other in terms of its structural characteristics, differs markedly from “classical” prejudices such as anti-Semitism, homophobia, misogyny, and racism, in that in these latter cases where Jews, gays and lesbians, women, and ethnic minorities rarely, if ever, have any actual power in and over the majority of the populations in most countries in which they reside, the real existing United States most certainly does have power and plenty of it. Markovits has argued that it is precisely because of this important (and actually quite unique) difference that—unlike these other prejudices, which, as a fine testimony to progress and tolerance over the past forty-five years, have by and large become publicly illegitimate in accepted discourse of most advanced industrial democracies—anti-Americanism remains not only acceptable in many fine circles, but has become commendable, indeed perhaps even a distinct icon of what constitutes a progressive these days. After all, by being anti-American, one adheres to a prejudice that ipso facto also opposes a truly powerful force in the world. Thus, in the case of anti-Americanism, one’s prejudice partially assumes an antinomian, dissenting, or oppositional purpose, thereby attaining a legitimacy that most other prejudices—thankfully—no longer have. As such, anti-Americanism assumes the role of what one could term a “progressive resentment.” But, since progressives by definition do not admit to having any such foul feelings for anybody and since all resentments are by definition the bailiwicks of reaction, the concept of “progressive resentment”—though for us an apt categorization of much of European anti-Americanism—would be dismissed as oxymoronic and hence nonexistent. Anti-Americanism has become the polite and accepted racism of the European chattering classes. Or, to speak with Mary Fitzgerald:

it seems perverse, then, that anti-Americanism is the only face of xenophobia still broadly accepted in Europe. If, at a dinner party, you imitated the way Chinese people speak, laughed about their stupidity, their “slitty eyes” and their lack of grace, you could safely expect never to be invited back. But no one thinks twice about calling Americans dumb, fat and uncultured. How is it acceptable for one superpower, but not the other, to be the object for such derision?”²²

The answer to Fitzgerald’s question is simple and straightforward. First, Europeans at such dinner parties would never perceive China as having anywhere near the power that they ascribe to the United States, in other

words, Europeans do not regard China as the true “Mr. Big” to use Joseph Joffe’s apt metaphor of the United States. Second, articulating equivalently negative views of China as have become commonplace about America in polite European society would be construed as racist since China is a non-Western and postcolonial power, therefore, ipso facto not nearly as evil or dangerous as the United States. Depicting China in a pejorative manner would be construed as “reactionary resentment” whereas doing the same to America falls under the category of “progressive resentment,” thus, de facto no resentment at all. To most Europeans, Americans are tantamount to white, middle-class, heterosexual males who—as the all-powerful—are subject to attacks that, accorded to any other group, would rightly be gauged to be sexist, racist, classist, hurtful, and discriminatory. But, a group’s perceived power allows its opponents to rail against it in the most prejudicial manner without any worries of incurring any costs in the form of moral sanctions or reprimands.

Indeed, one of Obama’s most powerful a priori reasons for legitimacy in the eyes of Europeans hails precisely from the fact that he is African-American and thus not the stereotypical American in European eyes. The fact that it remains inconceivable for anybody vaguely like Obama—with his name and his racial background—to be elected to a comparable position of head of state and/or government in any European society endears him to Europeans further still since, with their racism and continued de facto ethnic perception of community not permitting anything similar to happen in Europe for many years to come, Europeans experienced the election of a black in America as an overdue corrective to that country’s racist past as well as a vicarious step in their own world that—luckily in their view, though sotto voce—they still do not have to confront.

If anti-Americanism derives primarily from a prejudiced worldview instead of a reasoned criticism of American policies, if it remains anchored primarily in what Americans are instead of what their government does, as we have argued, it is less likely that anti-Americanism will vanish in the context of the Obama presidency from one day to the next. To assess whether anti-Americanism prevails under the new president, two questions have to be asked. First, does America remain the recipient of negative attitudes and feelings despite the overwhelming enthusiasm directed towards Barack Obama by West European publics? And, second, how can the positive identification with Obama in Europe remain congruent with our arguments about anti-Americanism’s continued existence in Western Europe? In this paper, we offer answers for Germany alone. To that end, we analyzed reporting by German daily and weekly newspapers.²³

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The Continuing Presence of Anti-American Patterns in the German Press

To answer the question as to whether anti-Americanism continues to have a presence in German public opinion following Obama's ascendance to the presidency, we found a survey conducted by *The Wall Street Journal* that offers some interesting insights into this matter. Asked about the quality of America's political influence over the past five years, an overwhelming majority of the Germans—73 percent—considered it to be a negative force, while only 7 percent perceived it in a positive light. To be sure, 82 percent of the respondents believed that America's political influence will change for the better under the Obama presidency. Placed into its proper context, this number appears a lot less rosy than a first glance might reveal. Let us not forget the abysmally low baseline which the German public accorded American foreign policy nearly six months prior to this survey and that an expected improvement from such a negative starting point need not mean a genuine embrace of the new. It merely states that compared to the old, things will hopefully improve. No more, no less. It most certainly does not mean that Germans will now come to see the United States as a positive force for them, for Europe or for the world—merely as less negative than under the Bush years.

Turning to the data depicting Germans' views of America's cultural influence, the negative not only exceed the positive but also remain steady and unchanged from the pre-Obama days. Thus, 36 percent view America's cultural influence as negative, only 16 percent as positive. As can be expected, Germans rate America's culinary influence as particularly horrid: 52 percent regard America's export in this realm as the absolute worst U.S. contribution to world culture. Showing yet again the abysmally low regard Germans (and other Europeans for that matter) accord American high-brow culture such as art/architecture and literature, only 3-7 percent believe that this aspect of American culture has any global influence, indicating yet again that there exists little, if any, knowledge of, let alone respect for, American culture beyond its mass aspects which, though disdained and hated by Germans, remains avidly consumed by them.¹²⁴ This patent contradiction, even hypocrisy, has never stopped a large percentage of Germans to express negative attitudes about America and things American without shame and any social sanctions. It has not done so prior to the election of Obama, and will not do so during his incumbency. While this survey demonstrates some changes in German public opinion resulting from the ascendancy of Obama to the presidency of the United

States, it also reveals convincingly the unabated perpetuation of the most common staples of traditional anti-American stereotypes.

In this section of our paper, we focus on press and media coverage of three important relatively recent developments: the global financial crisis, the deadly rampage in Winnenden, and the NATO summit held in Strasbourg in April 2009. Lest our analysis be skewed by data hailing from publications on either end of the German political spectrum—both of which, incidentally, have traditionally and consistently exhibited a rabid anti-Americanism which constitutes one of the very few items that actually unites them—we have confined ourselves exclusively to the mainstream outlets of the German media landscape.

“Made in America”²⁵—The Financial Crisis

As the U.S. stock market crashed in September 2008, the severity of the financial crisis became obvious. Soon there commenced the inevitable search for a culprit. And, sure enough, the German (and European) media found one with alacrity and certainty: the collapse of the financial market was attributed virtually solely to the “acquisitiveness” of Wall Street bankers.²⁶ The bankers—now considered “hoodlums” und “criminals”²⁷—were striving voraciously and ruthlessly for selfish profit maximization.²⁸ But the bankers were soon joined by the American people as the major culprits of this financial crisis since it was they—with their “American way”—that led them to live beyond their means and pursue their happiness with loans they could not pay back. Now, so the schadenfreude, the Americans had to pay the just price for their profligacy. “In America the recession is ending an era of excess that had united the nation so wonderfully beyond entrenched differences.”²⁹ One article actually compared the U.S. president to a grower of narcotic-producing plants and the Wall Street bankers to his drug dealers.³⁰

Much of the German media explained the financial crisis not so much in terms of global economic processes and various structural interdependencies, but rather by personifications that labeled the supposedly guilty persons as criminals and decidedly morally bankrupt. Of course, there occurred a demonization of the “American” economic system³¹ thus implying that it was basically the “American character” that created this crisis.

This corresponds solidly with the centuries-old anti-American stereotypes of Americans’ “materialist nature,” their “egotism” hailing from their overvalued notion of the “individual,” their penchant for an “excessive life

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style” and their profoundly asocial nature which essentially neglects the collective good, excepting those of nationalism and religiosity. Making matters worse still in the eyes of the German media was the fact that the Americans and their inherent profligacy did not only inflict this disaster upon themselves but also upon innocent others, like the Europeans. This notion can be found in a particularly graphic illustration in Germany’s leading intellectual weekly *Die Zeit*, where we witness the American eagle in free fall, with one claw tightly holding onto the European flag, taking it down with it into the abyss.³² Thus, the German press not only associates American behavior, thinking and modus operandi with dishonorable and self-destructive motives, but also considers them dangerous and destructive for the whole world.

To be sure, when the crisis persisted, many voices arose across Germany and Europe that implicated each nation’s financial machinations and economically irresponsible behavior as culprits for the disaster. Nobody could claim clean hands anymore. For a brief moment, this self-reflecting introspection silenced the initially expressed facile attitude that the crisis was solely an “American problem,”³³ and initiated a process of reflection about the capitalist system as a whole. But, even during this more sophisticated phase of the analysis, the United States soon reappeared as the major, if not necessarily sole, culprit by dint of its being *primus inter pares*—or hegemonic—among all capitalist countries. Accompanying the condemnation of America’s “casino capitalism” was an idealization of Germany’s—and Europe’s—“Rhenish capitalism,” a supposedly cozier, more harmless, and certainly more humane form of capitalism that, among many of its virtues, was authentically “German,” but had to succumb to the forces of the stronger and more pervasive “American model.”

Most Germans probably share [Peer] Steinbrück’s [Germany’s Finance Minister, from 2005-2009] loathing of wild Wall Street capitalism. They have long regarded it with suspicion. Earlier, so much seemed certain, things were cozier in Germany. At that time, Rhenish capitalism prevailed ... But then the dream burst: The somewhat fossilized German Model with its low rates of return was Americanized.”³⁴

Apart from the fact that the Rhenish (i.e., German) model of capitalism never disappeared and remained hegemonic in Germany (for very good reasons and in many instances to the country’s advantage) across regimes led by Social as well as Christian Democrats, the demon of its American rival had to be invoked not as a legitimate alternative, a different manner of organizing state, market, and society, but as an unwanted conqueror. The Rhenish model was made to succumb to its American counterpart by America’s pernicious power and unwelcome influence.

This theme has not only become commonly accepted within much of the German media and journalistic circles, but has also come to enjoy considerable legitimacy in academic discourse. Thus, for example, in a free-wheeling dinner lecture on 20 September 2009, to eighteen visiting scholars from all over the world who were guests of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to observe the last week of the campaign for the 2009 Bundestag election, Hans-Peter Burghof, Professor of Banking and Finance at the University of Hohenheim in Stuttgart repeatedly and decidedly blamed the economic crisis solely on America, American banking methods and the irresponsibility inherent to American risk taking and profit obsession.

“The newest trend from America: to run amok”³⁵— The Shooting in Winnenden

A second event in the discussion of which the prevalence of traditional anti-American attitudes became obvious was the tragic shooting rampage in Winnenden. On 11 March 2009, a student shot twelve students and teachers at his school and three other persons before killing himself in the small town of Winnenden in Southern Germany. Even though this happened in a German town and a German student did the killing, the event was rapidly associated with America. This was not directly expressed by journalists or politicians, but articles quoted bystanders who immediately invoked the United States in their first reaction to this horror. Clearly, the associations with America were instantaneously negative: “It is worse than in America—and that here of all places, where everyone could be content.”³⁶ The association is furthermore supported by the idea that a tragic event like this is an everyday occurrence in the United States.³⁷ As though American society were not just as shocked and concerned in the face of such an atrocity befalling it.

In online forums where this event was broadly discussed, many comments, in addition to considering the shooting a “typical American phenomenon,”³⁸ referred to the event as an alleged “Americanization” of German society, thus making its cause not an inherent problem of German society, but solely the result of a harmful foreign import.³⁹ “Americanization” in this context pertains to an alleged loss of values, standards, and decorum in Germany, and a process of alienation within German society. “The rampage in Winnenden shows once more that the Americanization of our society is advancing to a catastrophe.”⁴⁰ Clearly, America, and

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“things American” were solidly considered to be a negative force in the world and direct culprits for tragedies like the shooting in Winnenden.

The German reaction to the Winnenden incident had virtually identical precedents.⁴¹ A similarly tragic shooting spree at an Erfurt secondary school in 2002 immediately led to a discussion about “American conditions” in German schools and blaming the incident on the “Americanization” of German youth, their culture, even the ills of German society in general. Across the political spectrum, the specter of the 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado was pushed into the center of the political debate about the Erfurt incident. Edmund Stoiber, the conservative prime minister of Bavaria, called for a general regulation of Internet content, so that “violent videos” and “killer games” be forbidden: “This is something we have to achieve on a world-wide scale even though, of course, we face the problem that the Americans have a completely different conception of freedom.”⁴² Stoiber’s remarks alluded to the Americans’ purported deification of freedom that others have termed “freedom Bolshevism.” It remains wholly unclear just how this American conception of freedom (too much, too little?) differs from that of the Germans and what this means for the issue at hand. But, to go into details would be too burdensome and completely unnecessary for Stoiber. There was a lot of discussion about the pathological effect of violent games, from the “Power Rangers” to the life-like simulations of war depicted on computer screens. Among the many thousands of games of this genre, one called “America’s Army” was, of course, especially emphasized. And, naturally, Hollywood had to take the blame, starting with cult movies like *Friday the 13th* and Oliver Stone’s *Natural Born Killers*. Otherwise, Stone is held in high esteem by European film critics and the cultural elite as a director who drastically depicts the hypocrisy and brutality of everyday life in America.

Even the German police union issued another warning about “American conditions” at German schools in the aftermath of the Erfurt tragedy. In a press release, it said:

The German Police Union demands more security in German schools. There now exist those ‘American conditions we always warned against,’ said the federal vice-chairman of the union, Wendt ... This also means increasing security standards ‘up to and including uniformed guard personnel.’⁴³

Although the police now wanted to protect its officers, if need be, “by carrying protective vests and, of course, a weapon,” and to allow them (“in order to be able to react quickly”) to handle their weapons outside their holsters and search persons and vehicles with weapons drawn, things

would not be taking a turn for the worst, the police official reassured the German public: “But there will not be rigorously intervening ‘sheriffs’ here at home, because the police will remain public-friendly.”⁴⁴ And public-friendliness is, as we know, as un-American as violence is American. In a long interview, the chair of the police union, Thomas Mohr, issued a reassurance that German police would not try to introduce American conditions under any circumstances.⁴⁵

After the tragedy at Erfurt hardly anyone mentioned the catastrophe that happened in 1996 in the Scottish town of Dunblane, where a youth councilor had murdered sixteen children and a teacher. Not that “record-setting” ought ever to matter in tragedies like this, but the fact is that three more people died in Dunblane than was the case at Columbine. Nobody in Germany mentioned this tragedy, and nobody talked about a “Britishization” of German schools, German violence, or German youth. Conversely, the British media constantly featured the “Americanisation” of British youth culture as the main reason for the terrible incident in Dunblane. The fact that the Columbine incident could not be brought into play, because it happened three years after the Dunblane tragedy, did not prevent anybody discussing the Scottish tragedy from invoking America as a general bogeyman in this case as well.

But, not only in Germany is Dunblane as good as unknown. After a similar incident in the Parisian suburb of Nanterre in March 2002, the media, municipal city administration, and citizens talked exclusively about America, Americanization, and “American conditions.” “‘This isn’t happening here. It’s like America, not France. It’s a pure nightmare,’ said Germaine, a council secretary in her 40s, as police escorted relatives through the underground car-park into the building where the bodies of eight council members still lay in the meeting chamber.”⁴⁶

When it comes to violence and criminality, “Americanization” has played a central role in European discussions and notions since the 1920s. To this day, Chicago is associated with gangsters by Europeans. Europeans regarded leather-jacketed rowdies in the 1950s as wannabe Americans in the same way as the motorcycle gangs of the 1960s and subsequent decades. A documentary about *Kicking for Dunblane* would be totally unthinkable in Europe. *Bowling for Columbine*, however, became an icon of European anti-Americanism.

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“Obama charmiert Europa in die Enge”⁴⁷—“Killing Us Softly with His Song”

NATO-Summit

Under the Bush presidency one of the most vehemently repeated reproaches of the United States voiced by Europeans was America’s alleged unilateralism in global politics. As Federico Romero argues in regard to the disagreements over the “war on terror:”

West Europeans by and large did not dispute the strategic or moral implications of the “war on terror”—at least prior to America’s war against Iraq became this war’s main focus—but its unilateral management by the Americans, the lack of consultation with European governments, and the fact that Washington did not perceive cooperation as a two-way street.⁴⁸

The allegedly arrogant tone of the Americans’ modus operandi was, if anything, an even greater irritant to the Europeans than its content. Nothing has filled the Europeans with greater hopes regarding the Obama presidency than a drastic change in his administration’s tone and substance in the conduct of American foreign policy.⁴⁹ But the requisite skepticisms on the European side have accompanied these high hopes from the very beginning. The danger now perceived by the Europeans is that this president’s charm and charisma will become irresistible thus potentially undermining European strategic interests and policy independence: “It is not so easy with this new President. Because he comes over as so persuasive, it is so hard to formulate German interests against his policies.”⁵⁰

In the context of the G20 and NATO summits in London and Strasbourg in early April 2009, Obama received a lot of positive press for his attentive listening, his general openness and his respect towards the European heads of state and government.⁵¹ But, Obama’s behavior also received negative marks, mainly for his being manipulative, for using his charm and seeming empathy to exact concessions from the Europeans. Of particular concern to the Europeans was Obama’s implicitly demanding increased contributions to the battle against the Taliban and its allies in Afghanistan by saying in Strasbourg that America could not shoulder the problem of terrorism on its own without, however, explicitly requesting any additional help from the Europeans. Sure enough, some interpreted Obama’s behavior as “pressure through charm:” “Without mentioning specific numbers or uttering the word ‘troops’ he [Obama] embellished his words so beautifully that Merkel was only left to smile. Obama’s quiet tones are part of a strategy to which Europe can hardly deny any cooperation.”⁵² Thus, Obama’s novel multilateralism is in this case not considered to be a positive quality and a

welcome change to the arrogant unilateralism of the two Bush terms, but rather as a new, and somewhat devious, method to bamboozle the Europeans and get them to do what Obama and the Americans want via the president's seemingly irresistible charm. So, here we have it again: once more, the Europeans are victims of America's dominant position which, in this case, is exercised by a popular president's charisma instead of a hated president's brutishness. The results, however, appear to vary very little.

This criticism becomes even more contradictory. Obama is criticized for usurping and "Americanizing" the mission in Afghanistan, thereby depriving the European governments of the opportunity to influence the war in Afghanistan, even though the German chancellor and other European leaders have hardly shown any interest in doing so by increasing their commitment in that war.⁵³ Thus, by asking for more European support, Obama is seen as pressuring his allies. Given that the Europeans show little interest in an extension of their efforts, Obama is then blamed for monopolizing the mission. This is an example of how new argumentation schemes directed against the U.S. are evolving in European discourse, adapting to the new circumstances in American politics under the Obama presidency. One could call this "killing us softly with his song:" damned if you do, damned if you don't, damned if you are a bully, damned if you are a charmer.

The Integration of Obamamania into an Anti-American Perception

The effusive praise of Obama by Europeans in no way excludes the antipathies harbored by Europeans towards America, which received unprecedented amplification and legitimacy during the eight years of the Bush presidency. It seems as if the successful slogan of "change" promoted by Obama and the positive identification with Obama in Europe offered yet another pretext to voice once again one's displeasure with America and its ways while at the same time affirming—almost by definition—Europe's moral superiority. To many Europeans, Obama's election served as the first gambit in America's re-entry into the league of "civilized nations." The war against Iraq, as well as against terrorism, Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, the refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol, and many other American deeds and policies became *prima facie* evidence for the publics in Western Europe that Americans were inherently brutal and most assuredly different from Europeans, if not downright inferior. Thus, Oba-

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ma's election was celebrated far and wide among Europe's chattering classes as the first American step in the country's long road towards being a civilized place, the criteria of which were, of course, solely a European prerogative. Obama's ascendance was a welcome sign for Europeans that there was some hope for America to return to its senses. "Welcome, America! For five years, the U.S. has been a stranger—if not an enemy—to us Germans. Now the nation is returning to the West; and to our hearts."⁵⁴

We would be the first to join in the unmitigated condemnation of the illegal, unconstitutional and reprehensible policies and actions perpetrated by the administrations of Bush. Indeed, both of us continue to hope and work for the initiation of legal procedures that would bring the culprits for these errand ways to justice. But, while we see these reprehensible actions as an aberration in America's ways of dealing with the world, including its enemies, anti-Americanism in Europe has come to view them as exemplary and representative of America's very essence which Obama's presence could surely mitigate though not quite eliminate. Furthermore, few of the West European countries lives up to the standards of human rights that they claim to uphold (just think of the treatment of immigrants among other cases) with Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib having made it easy for the Europeans to point their fingers at the United States, claiming moral superiority, instead of dealing with their own problems.⁵⁵ This view of the Obama presidency's having initiated the United States' return to the fold of the civilized club of the Western community has been accompanied by the idea of Obama as a "European."

"Un-American" Barack Obama

One way to integrate enthusiasm for and identification with Obama into an anti-American world view is to consider him an "honorary European."⁵⁶ Many of Obama's characteristics that Europeans value and cherish appear to them as genuinely "European." Seeing Obama as a de facto European constitutes one of the main reasons for his immense popularity in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. "Many in Europe wish for nothing more eagerly than having a European America. In all countries, Germany among them, in which public servants define the tone and content of political discourse, a former social worker from Chicago seems to fit the bill perfectly. This is the modern America we wish for: black, social and gentle."⁵⁷ Craig Kennedy, the president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, reached the same conclusion when he commented on a

2009 Transatlantic Trends survey in which more than 90 percent of the Germans had a favorable view of Obama.⁵⁸ He stated that the viewing of Obama as “more European in his sensibilities than his policies” constituted the primary reason for the remarkable difference to the Europeans’ assessment of Bush a year ago when only 19 percent of them supported Mr. Bush’s foreign policy. “I suspect that as real political decisions have to be made, we will see ‘Obama-Euphoria’ fade as the Europeans begin to see him more as an American and less like themselves.”⁵⁹

The idea of Obama as “European” is ubiquitous in the German and European media, both print and electronic. It is interesting in this context to analyze what attributes are regularly assigned to “Europe” and which ones to “America.” To wit:

Obama is much closer to the Germans; despite his skin color, he seems less alien, you might say he appears so nicely European: not a cowboy from Texas, but a Harvard graduate with an urban background; instead of a ‘straight shooter,’ someone, who relies on dialogue and mutual understanding.⁶⁰

Other articles construct the opposing pair of “bellicose American Mars” and “peaceloving European Venus,”⁶¹ or suggest that Americans are trying to be “Superpowermen.”⁶² Notably, “Americans” are considered to be like cowboys meaning uneducated, aggressive, uncouth, belligerent, and striving for global domination, while to be “European” in this view of the world entails being educated, polite, cultured, and having a multilateral approach to conflicts. Europeans now perceive Obama to share these European qualities which—ipso facto—render him non-American and a virtual European. Thus, the European love for Obama easily fits—indeed corroborates—the conventional anti-Americanism so widely shared as a European lingua franca during the years of the George W. Bush presidency, but also well before, of course.

A solidly common strategy of prejudice pertains here: what does not fit is thus made to fit. If Obama does not represent the “real” America, then his character and his actions do not contradict the idea that the “typical” America still remains deeply objectionable to Europeans and can thus be maintained as a marker of negativity and an object of antipathy. Obama, within this logic, constitutes part of the “other America” that, according to Diner, represents the very own “self” and therefore serves as a vehicle for positive identification.⁶³

What makes the construct of Obama’s being an idealized European truly reprehensible to us is the crucial fact that nobody vaguely similar to Obama in terms of skin color, name, personal history, family background, achievement, optimism, vivaciousness, and verve could come close to

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being elected to a mid-level position in regional politics, let alone to becoming head of state and government.⁶⁴ Europeans' hypocrisy on this issue appears to be boundless. Europeans thus usurp Obama's progressiveness and his very being to create an idealized European self-perception in pronounced contrast to a continued denigration of the "real" America which remains as uncouth as it has ever been despite electing Obama as its president. Far from lifting Europe's antipathy towards America, European Obamamania reinforces a dichotomous view of the world in which "Europe" represents a morally better place than "America." European Obamamania has not overcome the widely held perception in Europe of its being a morally more righteous place and a more benevolent force in the world than America.

The "Post-American Era"

Obama may be vigorously liked in Europe for one additional reason: his being the first president to preside over the so called "post-American era."⁶⁵ Tout court, many among West Europe's chattering classes delight in what they perceive to be a loss in America's global power and a clear weakening of its former reach in the economy, culture, politics and even military affairs. The schadenfreude could hardly be more emphatic. In the German press, for example, there seems little doubt that America is in decline, though there is still no clear consensus as to whether the United States will continue to be a strong and important player or whether it is losing its power while helplessly clinging to the remains of its empire. "After the debacle of the past months [financial crisis] that is in the opinion of many not over yet, American authority is simply no longer accepted."⁶⁶

Clearly, the constellation of global power structures changes constantly with the complex interplay of forces such as China, India, Brazil, Russia, Japan, and the European Union, adding hitherto unparalleled and completely incalculable dimensions, but the summary way in which German and European pundits blithely dismiss American power seems to be more the consequence of a wishful schadenfreude and a superciliousness rather than sober reasoning and the weighing of evidence. To wit: "Learning how to decline—is that possible? Can a superpower that is now longer capable of dominating the world find a new role without falling into a state of depression and anxiety; is there life after the brief moment of Empire?"⁶⁷ Furthermore, the transformation of power constellations is not explained by looking at intricate and multifaceted processes changing cur-

rent global politics, but is attributed precisely to those political decisions which have been the major target of European criticism of the past ten years, namely the wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, Guantánamo and the financial crisis.⁶⁸ Focusing the argument on these American missteps, the European position thus appears to receive solid confirmation by dint of the alleged decline of American power. No matter the national origin of the interlocutor, in this case Andrew J. Bacevich, the noted American foreign policy expert at Boston University, comments such as these remain ubiquitous in Europe and reflect the aforementioned *Schadenfreude* regarding America's decline:

As far as the art of governance is concerned, the Bush era teaches us basically three lessons: overbearing arrogance has shown the limits of American global leadership; carelessness and diletantism revealed the limits of its military strength; and the foolish and immoderate refusal of the Americans not to build their wealth on tick and not to live beyond their means has demonstrated the limits of American prosperity.⁶⁹

Obamamania has no bearing at all on views of America that the sentiment in this quotation expresses and that is widely shared in Europe. Accordingly, the role that Europeans consider appropriate for the United States in the future is no longer “to lead the world”—as Obama has repeatedly claimed—but to assume a more humble position: “The World President has to be in the first place a World Moderator.”⁷⁰ European Obamamania might indeed diminish in the course of Obama's “real existing” presidency if the latter's deeds assume certain paths that will not conform to European preferences and expectations.

Conclusion

We argue in this paper that antipathy towards America accompanied by anti-American language and attitudes have not disappeared in Germany and Europe due to the ascendancy of Obama to the office of the president of the United States. Obamamania has not become a magic wand that would annul overnight the resentment towards America on the part of Germans and other West Europeans. To be sure, Obama's America appears somewhat cleansed to Europeans, if only by dint of the new president's clear rejection of his predecessor's despised ways and means. America seems to be on the road to regaining its senses which, of course, means adopting a “European” approach to things which are not only morally superior to America's preferred *modus operandi* but also embody a more mature—i.e., nuanced—strategy of dealing with the world. None of

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these improved views, however, obviate the Germans' and Europeans' baseline disdain for America as the bastion of consumerism, violence, selfishness, and inauthenticity—in short of embodying an uncouth nation. Perhaps the only sound reason for Europeans' hope concerning America—other than the advent of Barack Obama—pertains to their rejoicing in America's real or alleged loss of power which is welcomed as a boon for Europe and the world. Furthermore, by rendering the popular Obama into a de facto European—sort of as an errand soul that appeared somehow miraculously in the American wasteland—Germans have easily decoupled Obama from the “real” America thereby allowing them to maintain their negative views of America without a moment's interruption and without experiencing any contradiction or dissonance between their love for Obama on the one hand and their disdain for America on the other. Thus, Obamamania offers no prima facie evidence of a changing European perception of the United States. Instead, it merely provides a new veneer of respectability for one's otherwise prominent antipathies towards America. Lastly, the identification with Obama perpetuates an idealized European self-perception, while still casting America as a morally and socially inferior Other. The fall of the Berlin Wall twenty years ago and the subsequent geopolitical earthquake that altered virtually everything in the contemporary post 1989 Europe as compared to its pre 1989 predecessor—from number of countries to political alliances, from economic systems to currencies, from ethnic compositions to migration patterns—seems not to have diminished the historically extant salience of anti-Americanism among this continent's chattering classes. If anything, its potency and immediacy attained a hitherto unknown dimension—that of enhancing Europe's very own identity.

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Notes

1. See http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-President-Obama-at-Strasbourg-Town-Hall/.
2. This observation is reflected in opinion polls as well as in academic research: Opinion Polls: Pew Global Attitudes Project (2002), *What the World Thinks in 2002: How Global Publics View: their Lives, their Countries, the World, America*, available at <http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=165>; accessed 15 November 2007; Pew Global Attitudes Project (2006), *America's Image Slips, But Allies Share U.S. Concerns Over Iran, Hamas*, available at www.pewglobal.org/reports/display.php?ReportID=252; accessed 15 November 2007; Transatlantic Trends (2007), *Wichtigste Ergebnis 2007*, available at <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/trends/index.cfm?id=62>; accessed 15 November 2007. See also Russell A. Berman, *Anti-Americanism in Europe: A Cultural Problem* (Stanford, 2004); Andrei S. Markovits, *Uncouth Nation: Why Europe Dislikes America* (Princeton, 2007); Brendon O'Connor and Martin Griffiths, eds., *Anti-Americanism: History, Causes, and Themes*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 2007); Federico Romero, "The Twilight of American Cultural Hegemony: A Historical Perspective on Western Europe's Distancing from America," in *What They Think of Us: International Perceptions of the United States since 9/11*, ed., David Farber (Princeton, 2007), 153-175.
3. Ivan Krastev, "The Anti-American Century?" *Journal of Democracy*, 15, no. 2 (2004): 5.
4. Andrei S. Markovits, *Amerika, dich haßt sich's besser: Antiamerikanismus und Antisemitismus in Europa* (Hamburg, 2004), 15. See also James W. Ceaser, "A Genealogy of Anti-Americanism," *The Public Interest* 152 (2003): 4.
5. Instantaneously, Obama received the nickname: the "black Kennedy." Peter Gruber, "Barack Obama—Der schwarze Kennedy," *Focus online*, 26 May 2008, available at http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/uswahl/usa-barack-obama-der-schwarze-kennedy_aid_303970.html; accessed 5 September 2008.
6. Corinna Edmundts, "Große Träume eines Weltverbessers," [www.tagesschau.de](http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/obamarede108.html), 25 July 2008, available at <http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/obamarede108.html>; accessed 27 October 2008.
7. Holger Kulick, "Wasserwerfereinsatz gegen Demonstranten," *Spiegel online*, 23 May 2002, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,197314,00.html>; accessed 14 March 2009.
8. Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Obamamania Abroad: The Candidate Can Expect a Warm Welcome in Europe, Not So in the Middle East*, available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/900/obama-trip-abroad>; accessed 5 September 2008.
9. Stefan Kornelius, "Im Dienst Amerikas," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21 January 2009. ZDF Interview with Christoph Bertram, "Das Ende des Antiamerikanismus," www.zdf.de, 5 November 2008, available at <http://uswahl.zdf.de/ZDFheute/inhalt/27/0,3672,7399419,00.html>; accessed 10 November 2008.
10. See Paul Hollander, *Anti-Americanism: Critiques at Home and Abroad 1965-1990* (New York, 1992); Dan Diner, *Feindbild Amerika: Über die Beständigkeit eines Ressentiments* (Munich, 2002); Markovits (see note 2); Barry Rubin and Judith Rubin Colp, *Hating*

America: A History (Oxford, 2004); Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane differentiate between fundamental sources of anti-Americanism referring to what America *is* and ephemeral parts directed against what America *does*. Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca, 2007), 2.

11. Ceaser (see note 4), 4.
12. Brendon O'Connor, "What is Anti-Americanism?," in O'Connor and Griffiths (see note 2), vol. 1, *Causes and Sources*, 2.
13. Peter Lösche, "Anti-amerikanismus in der Bundesrepublik? Stereotype über Ronald Reagan in der deutschen Presse," *Amerikastudien* 31, no. 3 (1986): 355-362. Rob Kroes, "Anti-Americanism and Anti-Modernism in Europe: Old and Recent Versions" in *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: The German Encounter with American Culture after 1945*, ed., Alexander Stephan (New York, 2005), 202; Markovits (see note 4).
14. Markovits (see note 2), especially Chapter 5.
15. Robert Singh, "The Bush Doctrine and Anti-Americanism" in O'Connor and Griffiths (see note 3), vol. 4, *In the 21st Century*, 67-91.
16. Markovits (see note 2).
17. Singh (see note 15).
18. Markovits (see note 2), 4.
19. The projection of traditional stereotypes onto the respective president has already been analyzed in regards to the perception of Ronald Reagan in 1986. See Lösche (see note 13).
20. Philipp Gassert "Amerikanismus, Antiamerikanismus, Amerikanisierung: Neue Literatur zur Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Kulturgeschichte des amerikanischen Einflusses in Deutschland und Europa", *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 39 (1999): 561; Konrad Jarausch, "Missverständnis Amerika. Antiamerikanismus als Projektion," in *Antiamerikanismus im 20. Jahrhundert. Studien zu Ost- und Westeuropa*, eds., Jan C. Behrends, Árpád von Klimó and Patrice G. Poutrus (Bonn, 2005), 34-49.
21. Diner (see note 10), 9. This analogy of anti-Americanism and anti-Modernism can also be found in: Hollander, *Anti-Americanism*; Richard Herzinger and Hannes Stein, eds., *Endzeit-Propheten oder Die Offensive der Antiwesterler: Fundamentalismus, Antiamerikanismus und Neue Rechte* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995); Berman (see note 2); Kroes (see note 13).
22. Mary Fitzgerald, "Love to hate you," *The New Statesman*, 12 February 2007.
23. The analysis has so far been on the basis of examples rather than systematic, but is nonetheless revealing.
24. See Adam Cohen, "How Europe views America," *Wall Street Journal*, 19 June 2009, available at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124534162608828017.html>; accessed 19 June 2009.
25. John Gray, "Sternstunde der Bedeutungslosigkeit," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 April 2009.
26. "The acquisitiveness of the Wall-Street banker pulls down the financial markets at a pace that is making dizzy." Matthias Nass, "Verrat am amerikanischen Traum," *Die Zeit*, 1 October 2009.
27. Kayhan Özgenc, "Nieten in Nadelstreifen? Nein, Ganoven," *Focus online*, 25 September 2008, available at http://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/oezgenic_oekonomie/finanzkrise-nieten-in-nadelstreifen-nein-ganoven_aid_335699.html; accessed 19 October 2008.
28. Needless to say, the noun "Raffgier" appeared, as did its adjectival version "raffgierig" and/or "raffendes" which, of course, have antisemitic overtones since "Jewish," i.e., "financial" and "speculative" capital traditionally was depicted in Germany as "raffendes Kapital" in contrast to its German counterpart of "schaffendes Kapital" that was construed as being constructive and creative.
29. Jörg Häntzschel, "Gierige Bastarde," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30 March 2009.
30. "Wall Street and the banks, the greedy of the financial industry, played an important, but not the decisive role. The bank managers were the dealer, who brought the hot speculation money to the people. But the poppy farmer sits in the White House"—here still referring to George W. Bush. Gabor Steingart, "Der goldene Schuss," *Spiegel Online*,

- 03 April 2009, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/0,1518,617151,00.html>; accessed 12 April 2009.
31. For the “greedy American model” or “Wall Street racketeering” see Wolfgang Koydl, “Der erste unter zwanzig,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2 April 2009. For “Anglo-Saxon turbo-capitalism” see Beat Balzli, et al., “Der Schwarze Herbst,” *Der Spiegel* 42, 13 October 2008, 25.
 32. *Die Zeit*, 1 October 2008.
 33. As it has been voiced by former German minister of finance, Peer Steinbrück. “Peer Steinbrück sieht Finanzkrise als Zeitenwende,” *Welt online*, 25 September 2008, available at <http://www.welt.de/politik/article2490506/Peer-Steinbrueck-sieht-Finanzkrise-als-Zeitenwende.html>; accessed 27 April 2009.
 34. Wienand von Petersdorff, “Früher war es gemütlicher,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 29 March 2009.
 35. Comment of elphy90, available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MM6A6n6NFA>.
 36. An old women, cited by Hans Georg Frank, “Winnenden: eine Stadt trauert,” *Südwest Presse online*, 11 March 2009, available at <http://www.swp.de/Nachrichten/amoklauf/Winnenden+Eine+Stadt+trauert;art4200466>; accessed 17 March 2009.
 37. “In America people are always doing this. But I don’t believe that this is happening at my school.” Diane (fourteen), as quoted in “An unserer Schule passiert das nicht,” Protocoll by Inge Kloepfer and Christine Ritzenhoff, www.faz.net, 17 March 2009, available at <http://www.faz.net/s/RubF44DB96803344C01A48C93EDADCB0551/Doc~E078A616B63ED456D92675F2C5B0CF357~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>; accessed 17 March 2009.
 38. “This morning, I still thought, typical America (the same happened there)!! Now it’s happened here too,” Stephan1, available at <http://www.wohnmobilforum.de/w-t37882.html>.
 39. “Before this, it has been said: such a thing only happens in America. Now it has to be said: America has come to Winnenden,” Condolence of Fam. Wolny from Weiler zum Stein, available at <http://www.kondolenzbuch-online.de/cgibin/2009/books/00172.pl?&action=view&start=1611>.
 40. Comment by Wolfs lady, available at http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/sicherheit-an-schulen-diskussion-um-lehren-aus-dem-amoklauf_aid_379491.html#comment.
 41. Similar discussions took place following the shooting in Erfurt in 2002. See Markovits (see note 2), 123ff.
 42. “Stoiber fordert generelle Reglementierung des Internet,” [www.heise online](http://www.heise.de/newsticker/meldung/27228), 7 May 2002, available at www.heise.de/newsticker/meldung/27228; accessed 18 April 2009.
 43. “27. April: Trauer, Entsetzen und Suche nach Konsequenzen,” MDR, 4 July 2002, available at http://www.mediengewalt.de/_arc/pre/ard/001-7-1.htm; accessed 22 April 2009.
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. “Wir wollen keine amerikanischen Verhältnisse,” *Die Rheinpfalz*, 14 July 2000.
 46. Charles Bremner, “It’s like America not France—a pure nightmare,” *The Times*, 28 March 2002.
 47. Matthias Gebauer, “Obama charmiert Europa in die Enge,” *Spiegel online*, 3 April 2009, available at <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,617359,00.html>; accessed 7 April 2009.
 48. Romero (see note 2), 157.
 49. “Isn’t the whole world watching these weeks, as a new America is emerging? A peaceful, benign, compassionate one? The peoples of Europe, of Asia are waiting for such an America, one that will not always rely on military interventions, that can listen and welcomes his guests, an America, which respects and maybe even supports the United Nations and will strive for multilateralism because of its own interests.” Klaus Brinkbäumer and Marc Huger, “Der Menschenfänger,” *Der Spiegel*, 11 February 2008, 90.

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50. Ralf Beste, et. al., "Neue deutsche Teilung," *Der Spiegel*, 2 February 2009, 23.
51. Daniel Brössler and Paul-Anton Krüger, "Wiedersehen macht Freude," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4/5 April 2009.
52. Gebauer (see note 47).
53. "With the replenishment of the troops in Afghanistan, Obama monopolizes the mission completely, he becomes commander in chief of the war in Afghanistan, the NATO-mission is Americanized ... The Europeans would only have marginal influence on the mission—they could command their own troops, but the USA could do as it pleases." Ibid.
54. Bernd Ulrich, "Willkommen, Amerika!" *Die Zeit*, 6 November 2008.
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