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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 of the anti-globalization movement in the late 1990s and taking the lead of the anti-war in Iraq camp 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 has always seemed to be at the forefront of anti-American animosity –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 American involvement in Iraq, the French were surprisingly not standing out from other Europeans in their overall feelings towards 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, Dutch, 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 this volume, even though French sentiments towards the United States have been over time prevalently positive, only Spain and Greece have consistently manifested stronger hostility to the U.S. than France in Western Europe. In particular, the French public, not to mention French politicians, became extremely critical of the perceived trend towards growing American 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 market⁵

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 singular? The introduction to this volume defines anti-Americanism as a very heterogeneous set of attitudes, resting on different sets of beliefs and cognitive schemas. In their chapter on 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 as reasoned criticism may indeed mask real prejudices. This chapter explores the distinctive dynamics of French anti-Americanism,

¹ *The Economist*, 2005.

² Miller and Molesky, 2004.

³ Kuisel, 1993.

⁴ See chapter by Chiozza in this volume. For recent polls, see Pew Report, 2005a and 2005b; Program on International Policy Attitudes, 2005; German Marshall Fund, 2004.

⁵ Gordon and Meunier, 2001; Kuisel, 2004; Abdelal, 2005.

showing in the first section that France harbors an enduring distrust of America centered in the past decade on the related issues of unilateralism and globalization. Section 2 explains why French distrust of the United States is so deeply institutionalized, arguing that the deep reservoir of anti-American arguments sedimented over the centuries and the simultaneous coexistence of all types of anti-Americanism have made anti-American rhetoric a tool that can be used for political benefit at no cost. In a third section, this chapter focuses on the potential consequences of French anti-Americanism on economic relations and the war on terrorism.

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

France exhibits an enduring distrust of America, 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,⁶ the most important source of French distrust of the U.S. is the deep national opposition to unilateralism and American-style globalization. It is crucial to note that the deterioration of the image of the U.S. in France preceded the Franco-American clash over Iraq --even though it skyrocketed after 2002.⁷ The chronology of a France less prone to anti-American demonstrations at the height of the Euromissiles crisis in the 1980s but more prone to poignant criticisms of the United States in the late 1990s suggests that unregulated globalization was a bigger trigger of negative reactions than American 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 U.S. became one of a domineering ally, unbearable to France because it was increasingly acting as a triumphant, self-centered, hegemonic “hyperpower” --from trade, to the environment, to culture, to foreign policy.⁹ In France the denunciation of these

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

⁷ Kuisel, 2004.

⁸ Kuisel notes that in 1984 more French (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 US. In their majority, they 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 Vedrine, even if though the French word “hyperpuissance” did not have the pejorative connotations associated with the term “hyper” in English -- hyper meaning only the next size up from “super.” Vedrine, 2001. See also Melandri and Vaisse, 2001.

hypocritical, unilateral American actions became enmeshed in a virulent French critique of globalization often equated with Americanization.¹⁰

This section analyses the content of French discussions in three examples that are most likely cases of anti-Americanism at play. As in the papers on the Arab world by Marc Lynch and China by A. I. Johnston and Danie Stockman, 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, it seems that negative French opinions of the United States can be explained more by heightened concerns about unilateralism than anti-American bias.

1. Iraq

The Iraq conflict is often presented as a poster child of French anti-Americanism in action --with French leaders, bowing to their public opinion enraged by the media, having acted 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 had been steadily rising throughout the late 1990s and early years of the Bush presidency.¹² But if anti-Americanism is a primary driver of French foreign policy, French actions should have been opposed to the United States then as they were later on Iraq. Instead, France enthusiastically backed the U.S. in Afghanistan and was the only country whose fighter pilots joined American forces and struck targets 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 France's interests in the world. First, France had long disagreed with the U.S. over the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and over what to do about it, seeing him as dangerous above all for 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

¹⁰ Meunier, 2000; Gordon and Meunier, 2001; Abdelal, 2005.

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

¹² Kuisel, 2004.

¹³ Starobin, 2003; Gordon and Shapiro, 2004.

¹⁴ *The New York Times*, 2002.

mandated by the UN. The consistent strands of this policy reflect more distrust of American unilateralist temptations than bias and hatred directed to sabotage U.S. policy.

French foreign policy was also shaped by the specificities of French history and experiences. French intelligence was convinced that the Iraqi regime and Al Qaeda had had no significant contact. Moreover, the recent lessons learned by France in fighting Islamic terrorism suggested that the war proposed by the United States was not the right approach. Most importantly, 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 predicted more frustration, anger and bitterness in the Arab and Muslim world.¹⁵

If not 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. foreign policy strategy. But the deeper the rift between the French and American positions, the stronger the anti-American prejudices that appeared in the French media –and the stronger the stereotypical French-bashing that surged in the U.S. The French even gave mixed signals about whether they really wanted America 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. In order 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 suffered in legitimacy from the conditions in which he had been elected in 2002 – the 80% of the votes he received in the second round of the election, in defense against National Front’s candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen, hardly masked the paltry 19% 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 receive more political legitimacy, both domestically and internationally. Indeed, whereas Prime Minister Raffarin had reminded the French population that Saddam Hussein, not the United States, was the enemy, Chirac had done no such thing.

Anti-Americanism was certainly not the primary cause of France’s initial decision to refuse to give a blank check to American 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. Most other European countries had public opinions deeply opposed to the American war in Iraq, and their press was as outraged at the U.S. as was France’s. And some in the U.S. had for their own administration words as harsh, if not harsher, than the French. What happened in France is that the escalating war of words with the U.S. 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

¹⁵ Howorth, 2003; Starobin, 2003.

¹⁶ Timmerman 2004.

process shifted from reasoned opinion to gut bias. But, as this analysis has shown, even this poster child case is not as clear cut as it seems in proving France as a European outcast in its anti-Americanism.

2. The Google Print Project

Culture is the other policy area, alongside foreign affairs, where French behavior is often interpreted as 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 against the onslaught of Hollywood. Culture is an area particularly susceptible to anti-Americanism. First, because anti-American arguments in France have mostly been developed by intellectuals, who have a vested interest in preserving their cultural turf. Second, because 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, it is not clear that the course of action taken is motivated more by a willingness to hurt the United States than from a desire to shield France from the perverse effects of unregulated globalization.¹⁷

The latest instance in the culture “wars” between France and the U.S. is about the search-engine company Google’s December 2004 decision to scan 15 million books in the next ten years and make them available online. The California-based company made agreements with 5 major Anglo-Saxon libraries to digitize all or part of their collections: Stanford, University of Michigan, Harvard, Oxford, and the New York Public Library. Google’s project barely made news initially, neither in the United States, nor in France, where initial reactions were rather positive.¹⁸

Nevertheless, the controversy soon arose with a roar. In January 2005, Jean-Noel Jeanneney, a noted historian presently head of the French National Library (BNF), wrote a long editorial in *Le Monde* entitled “When Google Challenges Europe.” He argued that Google’s plans to digitize books and make their contents available on the internet represented a threat to France because this would, in the long run, reflect a unipolar world view with a strong bias towards English works and American culture. While in the U.S. this project was portrayed as the long dream of humankind to have a universal library, in France it was presented as “omnigooglization” –“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 Anglo-Saxon literature typically focuses on the plight of Aristocrats and the dark side of the guillotine and the terreur, rather than on the declaration of the rights of man and the institutional innovations of the Convention. In

¹⁷ Gordon and Meunier, 2001; Abdelal, 2005.

¹⁸ Saint-Martin, 2005.

¹⁹ Jeanneney, 2005.

response, Jeanneney proposed that the EU counterbalance the American project by creating its own program of digitization to make European literature available on the web, build a super European library, as well as a new search engine with its own way of controlling the page rankings of responses to searches.

President Chirac took up the fight with speed. 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. For Chirac, France and Europe must play a determining role in the large digitization program, and in this project France should be the central player, in part because of its special responsibility towards the Francophone world. In April 2005, at the initiative of France supported by 19 national libraries in Europe, six European countries (France, Poland, Germany, Italy, Spain and Hungary) asked the EU to launch a “European digital library” to coordinate the actions of national libraries.²⁰

The American and British media presented this as another clear evidence of French anti-Americanism, and they often derided the French as being paranoid. “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 indeed brushed off Jeanneney’s comments as those of an incorrigible anti-American, reflecting the national mood: “Clearly, Paris sees Google as a cultural aggressor whose advance must be checked. 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 English is one of the levers through which the U.S. dominates the world, and 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 Anglo-Saxons: 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 (fostered by a private company, not by the U.S. administration). Another country concerned by the project may have begged 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

²⁰ Del and Cala, 2005; *Libération*, 2005.

²¹ Castle, 2005.

²² Kipling, 2005.

impression is reinforced by Jeanneney's various writings and interviews, which suggest that he actually 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 don't like: 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, institutionalized in the policy of "cultural exception." If the Google project is successful, it will indeed be a powerful tool to 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, then they will become more influential and 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 13 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 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 lack of efforts to digitize French books as it was to Google and the evil Americans. His criticisms were probably intended as a fundraising effort and a wake-up call to the French government to invest more cash in the digitization of books timidly started with the Gallica project, which so far had a budget for digitization of \$1.35 million (vs. \$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-Americanist bias. Should a multinational company control the digital literary heritage of humankind? As a French journalist asked, "can we accept that Stendhal stand side-by-side with commercials for everything and anything?"²⁶ France has long argued in multilateral trade negotiations that culture is not a merchandise, and therefore cannot be left to the law of the market. In order 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. Google users can look forward to finding non-English speaking literature as well," a spokesman says. "But it is only

²³ *The Economist*, 2005.

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.

²⁵ Riding, 2005.

²⁶ Roussel, 2005.

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.

3. The tsunami relief effort

French responses to the U.S. tsunami relief effort, especially when compared to the Arab and Chinese responses studied by Johnston and Stockman and Lynch in this volume, provide an opportunity to analyze whether anti-Americanism “bleeds” from the highly political to the less political arenas. The disaster of December 2004 occurred amidst 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 --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 in this case, their criticisms of the U.S. tsunami relief effort reflected more distrust than bias.

The first French criticism was about the U.S.’ initial inaction. The French media reported that President Bush, who stayed in his Texas ranch to continue 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 sense of lack of urgency.²⁹ But the French press only echoed the fierce criticisms of vigorous editorials in the American 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 U.S. and the budget for the festivities for the second Bush inauguration.³⁰

The main controversy over the U.S. tsunami relief effort came from the United Nations. Jan Egeland, the UN emergency relief coordinator, called Western nations “stingy” when it comes to foreign aid –a comment particularly addressed to the United States, who had then promised only \$35 million for the tsunami relief.³¹ Interestingly, it is not France who used the anti-Americanism potentially raised by the tsunami relief effort for political purposes, but the U.S. who appealed to France-bashing in order 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 Aid, 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

²⁷ Tiesenhausen Cave, 2005.

²⁸ Katzenstein and Keohane, Chapter 1.

²⁹ For instance Agence France Presse 2005; Sabatier 2005.

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

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

“do not tend to be dominant figures in aid”.³² This blame-shifting to France led to immediate response by the French ambassador to the U.S., Jean-David Levitte, who questioned the reasons for “misguidedly impugning France” and showed that French development aid indeed exceeded that of any G8 countries as a proportion of a country’s economic output.³³ Indeed, according to the 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 Britain.³⁴ Following the Natsios comments about French generosity, France doubled its aid pledge for tsunami victims on December 30th, 2004 –thereby briefly claiming the role as leading donor nations (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 1,000 soldiers to clear the debris and rebuild schools.³⁵

The second criticism focused on the possible ulterior motives of U.S. aid. The French press commented at length on the statement by 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 strategic interests, in particular by improving ties with the Indonesian military and restoring its damaged image in the Indonesian public after Iraq. Some in the French military criticized the American 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 also 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 American press was similarly dissecting which type of relief effort would best serve American foreign policy interests. And third, because many French analysts commented that it does not matter what are the ultimate motives of aid, as long as aid is given.³⁹ The French media reported about the generosity of private donations in the U.S.⁴⁰ And Bernard Kouchner, the most respected

³² Leicester, 2004.

³³ Knowlton, 2005.

³⁴ Leicester, 2004.

³⁵ Casey, 2005.

³⁶ See for instance Amalric 2005a and 2005 b.

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*, 2005.

French political figure, 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, which seems distinctly French. The U.S. 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 U.S. assembled in order to invade Iraq without the UN’s approval. French diplomacy was concerned that U.S. tsunami aid operation had deliberately sidestepped traditional UN channels and was trying to compete with the international organization.⁴²

President Jacques 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 UN must therefore be strengthened.”⁴³

Several EU members discussed ways to improve intra-European disaster cooperation in the future. France took the lead in suggesting the need to create a rapid-response civil defense group in the EU, reacting to the non-cooperative tone taken by U.S. relief efforts in the early days of the tsunami catastrophe.⁴⁴ But this distrust of the unilateralist tendencies of the U.S. is not evidence of hard-core anti-Americanism. This suggestion was based less on prejudice and stereotypes than on the practical realization that, should France wish to continue to play a role in world affairs, it 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 U.S. relief effort was inadequate, as highlighted by Katzenstein

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. *The Economist*, 2005a.

⁴³ Cited in Knowlton, 2005.

⁴⁴ Quatremer, 2005.

and Keohane in their chapter on the varieties of anti-Americanism, but when asked the more specific question of whether it was appropriate to deploy the U.S. military for help in the relief effort, 77% 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.

This section analyzed 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. In all three cases, French actions can always be accounted for by alternative explanations --whether geopolitical interests, economic interests, or cultural competition. There is pronounced French opposition, supported by considerable distrust of the U.S., but it is on the whole better explained by French policy principles, overall wariness of unilateralism and defense of French culture in the face of globalization, than by anti-American bias.

2. 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. This section explores all three factors in turn.

1. Length and depth of sedimentation

France is the country with the deepest, most sedimented reservoir of anti-American arguments. French distrust of America is as old as, if not older than the country of 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, best and most recently by Philippe Roger, who argues that its building blocs were constructed long before Gaullism.⁴⁵ Anti-Americanism in France seems to have proceeded in cycles 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 the occasion of criticizing the U.S. would arise in France, opinion-makers could use these arguments and adapt them to the current situation.

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

French animosity and contempt towards America (where degenerate dogs supposedly did not bark) first built up in the 18th century during the time when France was an American power.⁴⁶ In spite of the mythology of Lafayette, American passiveness during the French Revolution and the 1798-1800 “Quasi War” comforted 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 for the nascent formidable power of the United States. A major layer of the French anti-American apparatus was added after World War I, in a period of disappointment in over postwar U.S. isolationism and perceived biased indifference to France in the matter of war debts and reparations, 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 U.S. as an imperialistic, expansionist, out-of-control superpower representing 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 the American “hyperpower” associated with the onslaught of globalization in the 1990s, a time during which France had to undergo a more profound overhaul of its society than most of its European partners.⁴⁹ These growing French fears of American unilateralism were confirmed by the rejection of the Kyoto Treaty as soon as the Bush administration came into office. After the initial sympathy expressed to the American people after September 11 and the decision to support the U.S. in Afghanistan, France started to drift rapidly apart from the views of the American administration on 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 U.S.⁵⁰

France has entertained one of the longest, sustained relationships with the United States throughout history, and the length of the interaction explains in part why the French were able to build up such a vast repertoire of anti-American arguments over time. But other countries, such as Spain and England, have also a shared American history predating the independence of the United States, without as deep a reservoir of negative stereotypes. What singularizes France is not so much the length and depth of its

⁴⁶ Duroselle, 1978; Roger, 2002. See also Kennedy in this volume.

⁴⁷ Duhamel and Thompson, 1931; Kuisel, 1993.

⁴⁸ Roger, 2002.

⁴⁹ Schmidt, 1996; Gordon and Meunier, 2001; Abdelal, 2005.

⁵⁰ Vaisse, 2003.

historical relationship with the U.S., but the consistency with which its intellectuals have developed anti-American arguments which 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 contemporary revolutions lent legitimacy to the universalist claims of both the United States and France. The legitimacy of American 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 chic 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 fabricate anti-American arguments, especially at a time when French imperialism was on the wane and American imperialism 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. The 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 American imperialism.

These sedimented 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 America. This also explains why there often seems to be a disconnect between the harsh tone of the public critique and the generally more positive view of America by French public opinion. Indeed, the sedimentation has relatively little impact on mass publics, which are only slightly more negative towards the U.S. than publics elsewhere in Europe, as shown by Chiozza and Isernia in this volume. However, in times of crises, the tropes bleed from the intellectual to the general public, as they are readily available in the “background” of the national consciousness.

2. 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 all varieties of anti-Americanisms --thereby giving the impression that the whole country is anti-American. Anti-Americanism is not a unitary phenomenon, and French anti-Americanism is indeed quite heterogeneous, so much so that it would be more correct to refer to “anti-Americanisms.”⁵³ And, yes, the list of French grievances towards the U.S. is long and varied. But these grievances are not simultaneously shared by all French men and women, thereby explaining some paradoxes --such as individuals disliking some aspects of American society while aspiring to others at once. In the following typology, following the one developed by Katzenstein and Keohane in this volume, I distinguish

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

⁵² Bourdieu, 1992.

⁵³ The same way that Marc Lynch, in this volume, argues for the existence of Arab anti-Americanisms.

among 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 feed his/her anti-Americanism from several sources simultaneously. Neither do they suggest that an individual sharing one type of anti-American arguments can necessarily be classified as “anti-American.”

Liberal anti-Americanism: Like many other Europeans, who share America’s ideals but not its actions, the French offer a “liberal” critique of America as not living up to its principles. The charge is one of hypocrisy: hypocrisy of demanding of others virtues that it does not uphold itself (in the case of Abu Ghraib or Guantanamo, for instance),⁵⁴ and 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 that it pretends to be promoting. For instance, the U.S. posits itself as a champion of free trade, but does not hesitate to impose tariffs on steel or provide tax loopholes to its companies to give them a competitive edge. Similarly, the U.S. preaches environmental conservation and aid to international development, but its international policies speak otherwise. American politicians have emphatically denounced Saddam Hussein’s regime, while other dictators and nuclear powers go free, and successive American administrations have turned a blind eye on the human rights violations of many of U.S. allies in the Middle East. Another example of American hypocrisy, often used in Europe especially by the left, is the United States’ unconditional support for Israel at the detriment of the Palestinian people, the American media’s unbalanced representation of pain and suffering, and the U.S.’s biased insistence on respect of some United Nations resolutions and not others –charges all leveled with increasing frequency under the Bush administration. The main behavioral implication of this type of anti-Americanism is that the United States is not considered to have the high moral ground. If the U.S. 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 American observers to judge France as incorrigibly anti-Semitic.

Social anti-Americanism: One of the most prevalent and widespread denunciations of America in France focuses on the social order in the United States. 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, America is often portrayed as a fundamentally unequal society. The absence of universal healthcare, the weakness of social protection, the lack of good public education, and the numerous policies favoring the rich over the poor are further evidence for the Europeans of the superiority of their model of society over American capitalism and liberalism run amok. Second, the French like to indict America as a violent and hypocritical society –one where abortion is a highly divisive issue but where guns and crime are rampant and where the state condones and conduct violence through death penalty. Finally, many in Europe disapprove of the excessive religiosity and bigotry of American society. This is particularly true in France, which observes a strict separation between politics and religion –and where an overwhelming majority

⁵⁴ Agence France Presse, 2005c.

claims that it is not necessary to believe in God to be moral.⁵⁵ And the current popularity of creationist theories in the U.S. is simply mind-boggling to the French. The main behavioral implication of this type of anti-Americanism is domestic support for public policies that contrast with the American model. Interestingly, all of these social indictments of America come more from an idealized vision of what France should be (just, equal, caring, prejudice-free) 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 indeed 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 made a lasting impression on France, as indicated by many surveys showing that the French have often led the way in Europe in disapproving of American foreign policy. On the right as on the left, many politicians 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. Indeed, this critique of the U.S. as a domineering, self-interested nation that uses its immense power to establish global hegemony may stem as much from a genuine concern over its consequences on world peace as it does from envy and resentment. The result is a predisposition towards a fear of American power, only reinforced by series of unilateral U.S. actions since the end of the Cold War. The behavioral implications are a series of foreign policy actions designed to quell the excessive power of the U.S. –from insistence on building a common foreign and security policy in Europe, to an open challenge to American 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 have become religiously radicalized, in a society in which they have not “integrated.” They consider the United States as the Great Satan, whose goal it is to lead the Jews and the Western world in destroying Islam, and they believe in Jihad against an American nation involved in a crusade against Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. Therefore the U.S. needs to be weakened or even ultimately eliminated.⁵⁶ Of all the anti-Americanisms found in France, this is the only one that calls for actual 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, instead of policy actions, the oldest and most visible form of anti-Americanism in France has been a patronizing elitist critique of America. This is the anti-Americanism with the longest history and greatest virulence in France. The haughty anti-American discourse of 18th

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 Report 2005b.

⁵⁶ Kepel, 2004; Roy, 2004.

century French intellectuals looked down on the New World, not only because of the paucity of its historical richness and tradition, but also because of the lack of education and taste of its citizens. Survey data, as well as consumption patterns, suggest a large discrepancy in contemporary France between elites and the rest of the nation on American culture –whether with respect to fast food consumption or Hollywood blockbusters. The same distinction between elites and masses is found, to a lesser extent, in other Western European countries. What distinguishes France in this respect is the particular role of intellectuals in society. As a result of this special role, this constant elitist contempt towards American culture bleeds into the popular psyche, and the feeling of French superiority over the United States is well engrained, even by those who have wholeheartedly adopted American popular culture. The main behavioral implication is a constant bashing of American culture (with the exception of American counter-culture which is, on the contrary, highly lauded), but no real effects on 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 U.S., built up over decades if not centuries, transpires episodically into a critique 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 non-involvement in French affairs: American isolationism during World War II until Pearl Harbor; a U.S. administration which recognized Vichy France until 1942; the heavy bombardments that accompanied the Normandy invasion and the liberation of France from the Nazis; the American “treason” in Dien Bien Phu and later Suez; the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, in spite of French pleas; etc. A particularly vivid legacy of anti-Americanism comes from the Cold War period, whose ideological divisions left a lasting imprint on French views of America. In the countries where Communist parties were a non-negligible political force (such as France and Italy), the U.S. was often presented as the embodiment of what the left was against: an imperialistic, capitalist, profit-oriented society. From the Rosenbergs to the Bay of Pigs, from McCarthyism to the Vietnam War, the United States with its actions indeed provided its critics with plenty of ammunition. Even though the Cold War has now been over for fifteen years and Communism has lost its appeal in France, the repertoire of anti-American thought developed over several decades of Cold War politics has become engrained in the vocabulary and the mindframe of many French intellectuals –some of whom are still alive and active today. Whether coming from the left or from the right, “legacy anti-Americanism” manifests itself as a predisposition towards believing that what the U.S. did in the past, in addition to what the U.S. does today, suggests that it is a partner that cannot be trusted. And such a predisposition suggests that even if U.S. policy changes, attitudes will not change as quickly since bad feelings linger. The main behavioral implication is that France needs to take its national security into its own hands instead of being at the mercy of the vagaries of American foreign policy –meaning, for instance, building an independent European security policy and fostering the rise of 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 things 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 beliefs that their country used to be a better place before the United States (and its figleaf, globalization) transformed it, dehumanized it, and cut it off from its traditional roots. The current complaints in France about how McDonald’s has eliminated traditional bistros recalls complaints in the 1950s about the “coca-colonization” of France at the expense of traditional wines, themselves reminiscent of earlier complaints about the deleterious effects of American mass-production on French traditions.⁵⁷ These complaints are not particular to France --Belgian, Dutch and Austrian politicians, for instance, have (sometimes successfully) mobilized 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 to accept the international decline of the French language to the benefit 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 cultural production unable to compete with Hollywood, 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 nurture all of them at once. Some of these types may indeed be mutually exclusive, such as “Radical Muslim anti-Americanism” which is at loggerheads with “Liberal anti-Americanism”, itself 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 sedimented 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.

3. Costless use of anti-Americanism in the political process

The third factor explaining why 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 U.S. 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 anti-American message in France.

⁵⁷ Kuisel, 1993.

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 points in time, 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 –when the two have not blended into the frequently used French concept of “Anglo-Saxons.” Anti-Americanism can serve a useful purpose by redefining national identity by contrast to the perceived American model --what John Bowen in this volume refers to as the “diacritic use” of anti-American schemas. For instance, at a time when France is challenged by the reality of its Muslim 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 reflect 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 35-hour workweek have been elaborated against widely criticized American practices, partly in order to reinforce the distinctiveness of the French identity against the backdrop of a globalized, converging, capitalist world.

The idealized (and demonized) American model is also used as a reflection against which to define European identity –an elusive concept over 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 none existed. This is not to say that a European identity can only construct itself against the American foil. Many prominent European thinkers and politicians, from Derrida and Habermas to Fischer and Vedrine, have thought about building 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 when 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 at resorting to anti-Americanism to try to lend legitimacy to status quo policies. In order 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 immediately invoke the American model to ensure rejection of the new policy. Another example can be found in the economic domain where, according to Jean-Francois 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

⁵⁸ Derrida and Habermas, 2003; Levy, 2005.

⁵⁹ Revel, 2003.

Conversely, another political role of anti-Americanism is to enable national politicians to scapegoat the United States. In borrowing from the “background” reservoir of anti-American arguments, French politicians can make unpopular policies by blaming them instead on the U.S. This scapegoating shifts the blame and exonerates them of wrongdoing. Globalization has often been used similarly in the late 1990s as a bogeyman—readily available to be blamed for unpopular structural reforms.⁶⁰ The U.S. (often synonymous with American multinational companies) becomes the villain who forces industrial restructurations, outsourcing, and the whittling down of the state down the throats of unwilling French men and women.

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 ideas that can unite broadly across the French political spectrum. One can indeed interpret the firm stance taken by President Chirac on Iraq in early 2003 as an attempt to “wag the dog” and stir the public focus away from domestic trouble by instead 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 stir up fledgling 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 trumpcard, arguing that only by being part of a united EU can France have a chance to stand up to the United States, and only Europe can 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 cleavage. 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 serve to rally support for one’s own 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 exploit popular concerns about America for domestic political gain relatively 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 later, he tried out many different arguments in favor of the referendum—not one of them related to the U.S. this time.⁶³

⁶⁰ Gordon and Meunier, 2001; Meunier, 2003.

⁶¹ The strategy of Chirac seemed different from the strategy of Schroeder, who appealed more to pacifism than to anti-Americanism to win the election.

⁶² Lorentzen, 2005.

⁶³ Gurrey, 2005.

The four uses of anti-Americanism analyzed above 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 explaining why French politicians have overall incurred so few costs in using anti-Americanism has been the particular geopolitical situation of France in the 20th century. During the Cold War, France was not subject to the same geopolitical constraints as Germany, for instance. Because of their lesser dependence on the U.S. for their security and economic well-being, because of the country being a nuclear power, and because of the status of France in the United Nations, 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 –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 WWII, such as Germany and Japan, France did not fear to claim cultural superiority in the postwar period. And unlike Great Britain, France had a national language to defend from the assaults of English.

3. 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 impacting individual and collective actions? The influence of “background” anti-Americanism on French foreign policy is indeed lesser than usually portrayed in the American media. As the Iraq example showed, anti-Americanism is secondary to self-interest when 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 Serbia than any European nation and placed them under US command. Paris strongly supported the 2001 operation in Afghanistan, where French troops are still present today. And France and the U.S. have cooperated on the Syrian-Lebanese question

⁶⁴ A few intellectuals are known for their pro-American views (such as Jean-Francois Revel, Guy Sorman, Alain Minc, Bernard-Henry Levy, 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.

⁶⁵ Chazelle, 2004.

in the wake of Rafiq Hariri's assassination in 2005. Even the 2005 French policy of lifting the Chinese arms embargo, 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 This section explores two areas in which the institutionalized French distrust of the United States can indeed be more consequential and prejudicial than in foreign policy: consumer behavior and intelligence cooperation.

1. 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 sheepfarmer who had organized the destruction of a McDonald's, became a national hero and *Le Monde's* man of the year in 1999.⁶⁷ Beyond anecdotes, however, there is not hard evidence that French people prejudiced against the U.S. stop consuming American products as a way to demonstrate their hostility. This confirms Katzenstein and Keohane's findings in Chapter 10, which greatly temper the boycott notion. Many French individuals declare that they will boycott American products as a form of symbolic politics, but in effect they don't, and so far the declaratory grandstanding has failed to affect sales of American products in France.⁶⁸ Indeed, a 2004 Harvard Business School study found that "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. In Paris, the capital of fashion, there are currently 12 GAP stores and 35 throughout France (none exist in Germany or Italy for now). In this culture of cafés, Starbucks opened its first store in September 2003, still at the height of the clash between France and the United States over Iraq. By May 2005, the Seattle-based chain had 10 outlets in Paris. As for cinema, the number one movie at the box office in 2003, year of the Iraq invasion, was *Finding Nemo*, and 7 out of the top ten movies were American, in a country known for its

⁶⁶ Bernstein, 2005; Peel, 2005; Weisman, 2005.

⁶⁷ Meunier, 2000.

⁶⁸ A GMI poll, taken in early 2005 after the tsunami relief effort, found that the three countries with the highest percentage of consumers who indicate an intention 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>, last accessed August 11, 2005.

⁶⁹ Holt, Quelch, and Taylor, 2004.

protection of home-grown cinematographic production.⁷⁰ In 2004, three out of the five top-grossing movies were American.⁷¹ If there is evidence of consumer boycott, it is negligible for now.

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 years. In 2004, the sales growth of McDonald's France was 5.5%, among the best recorded worldwide, achieved against a background of a 3% decline in the French fast food market.⁷² The number of McDonald's restaurants in France doubled between 1996 and 2004, to 1,035 in December 2004 (out of about 6,200 total in Europe), and the company is planning 35 more openings in 2005. Present in 750 French cities, McDonald's France currently serves on average more than one million customers daily. In spite of José Bové and the Franco-American fallout 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 redress 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 onto the investment side either. In 2003, year of the fallout between France and the U.S., corporate France invested \$4.2 billion in the American economy –confirming the place of France as one of the largest investors and largest foreign sources of jobs in the United States.⁷³ Why is the trade and investment relationship robust in spite of the political tensions? Why is there no backlash from the apparent anti-Americanism when it comes to making purchasing decisions? A host of reasons explain why, so far, consumption has been insulated 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,

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 Ring: 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, last accessed August 11, 2005. Note that France protects 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, last accessed August 11, 2005.

⁷² *Le Monde*, 2005; Palierse, 2005.

⁷³ Quinlan and Hamilton, 2004.

when U.S. brands are so ubiquitous.⁷⁴ And the very concept of an “American” or “European” company is getting increasingly out of date with globalization (except for the iconic American brands).⁷⁵

Yet the negligible impact of anti-Americanism on consumer behavior in France today does not mean that anti-Americanism will never have an impact.⁷⁶ 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.”⁷⁷ The “bleeding” may not occur yet because of a 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 have not suffered overall from boycott, specific sectors and specific companies can suffer from the political strains more than the economy as a whole.

2. War on terrorism

French anti-Americanism could also have consequences on the United States by impacting the war on terrorism. First, the anti-American prejudices embedded in the collective discourse could provide a fertile ground for the emergence of terrorism directed against U.S. interests. After all, the constant pounding in the press and elsewhere of negative comments against the United States may prompt some individuals to organize and act. Indeed, the actions of José Bové and his anti-globalization fellows against McDonald’s and genetically modified crops, among others, have been interpreted by some as acts of economic terrorism. Some analysts have suggested that members of the anti-globalization movement may organize into Red Brigades-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. First, because 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, America. Moreover, the French anti-globalization movement has been careful, so far, not to hurt individuals on purpose through its protest acts.

Even if France does not produce anti-American Red Brigades-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.

⁷⁴ Woodnutt and Burnside, 2004.

⁷⁵ Gordon, 2005.

⁷⁶ Even though Fourcade and Schofer, 2004, show why consumer boycotts are not a form of protest widely used in France.

⁷⁷ *Corporate Citizen*, 2004. See also <http://www.businessfordiplomaticaction.org/index.php>.

And indeed 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.⁷⁸ But this does not answer positively the question of whether the “background” French anti-Americanism has a mobilizing effect, motivating these individuals to act against American interests. First, the hatred which underlies these acts is not solely turned towards 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.⁷⁹

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 –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.⁸⁰ Can the anti-American sentiments currently channeled through the media and the political process hinder the efforts of the French government to organize 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 what the international political climate or the domestic political pressures. For the past two decades, France has been among the European nations the most affected by terrorism. Counterterrorism is therefore one of its top policy priorities. In this domain, its interests seem to be converging with those of the United States. After all, Al Qaeda has also attacked France since 9/11, even if these events have made few headlines in the American media –for instance the suicide bombing which 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 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

⁷⁸ Agence France Presse, 2005; Sciolino, 2005.

⁷⁹ Roy, 2004; Kepel, 2004; Kepel, 1997.

⁸⁰ Bruguière, 2003.

French anti-Americanism and American Francophobia.⁸¹ A good example is provided by 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 Qaeda 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.⁸² Heeding the warnings of American intelligence, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin ordered Air France to cancel these flights. This was critically portrayed in the media as France ceding to American paranoia and ridiculed in the next few days when the press revealed that the C.I.A. had mistaken infants and old ladies for members of Al Qaeda 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, grounding flights again on January 31, 2004, acting on information provided by American intelligence that Al Qaeda might use the planes for a terrorist attack.⁸³

A July 2005 Washington Post article disclosed that Franco-American cooperation in matters of counterterrorism has even become institutionalized –notwithstanding the political acrimony between the two countries.⁸⁴ Since 2002, the CIA and the French secret services (DGSE) have operated jointly a top secret center in Paris, code-named Alliance Base, headed by a French general. This multinational center has already planned twelve special operations.

There may be a potential impact of anti-Americanism on 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 pressures (in addition to French law) would be strong for not cooperating, especially in a case that would include some of the arguments precisely used to feed anti-Americanism --for instance a case of extradition of a French prisoner to the U.S. where he might be subjected to prisoner abuse or incur the death penalty. Another serious potential impact of French anti-Americanism on intelligence cooperation could be with respect to 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. In order to be able to continue playing this counterterrorism role, France must be confident that its population will be willing to come forward with tips, instead of holding onto information on grounds of anti-Americanism –and so must the United States.

Overall, “background” French anti-Americanism has not produced openly confrontational policies, contrary to what is commonly believed. Nevertheless, it could

⁸¹ Interview with Robert Hutchings, Chairman of the National Intelligence Council, 2002-2004, May 16, 2005. See also Bruguière, 2003; Priest, 2005.

⁸² Locy et al., 2004; Savage, 2003.

⁸³ Lichtblau, 2004.

⁸⁴ Priest, 2005.

still affect the United States, because it could lead to stronger demands for global governance. The more prevalent anti-Americanism 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 U.S., whether at the UN or in functional institutions such as the WTO and the IMF.⁸⁵ Distrust of the U.S. could also shift French policy towards increased European integration and a stronger Europe able to assert its independence from the United States. Indeed, in the years preceding the Iraq conflict, the Europeans engaged in a series of joint defense initiatives and committed the EU, through 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 wish for a stronger Europe able to counter the overwhelming domination of the American 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 U.S. Indeed, this policy finds great resonance in 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 percentage than the Italians, the Germans, the Dutch, the British and the Poles.⁸⁶ A sizeable French minority even hoped that the EU would compete with, or counterbalance, the U.S.⁸⁷ Parties with “social anti-Americanist” tendencies also wish for 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 in order for France to aspire to playing any counterweight role to the United States, all roads lead to Europe. Nevertheless, as the divisive French debate on the referendum over the EU Constitution showed, anti-Americanism does not seem to be weighing much in people’s minds –otherwise they would have voted massively in favor of the “yes” in May 2005.

If the French distrust of the U.S. does not generate defiant policies or individual behavior, it can still raise the costs of American 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 for isolationist positions or on the contrary greater international involvement, and whether it strengthens domestically those who promote greater unilateralism or multilateralism.

⁸⁵ Gordon and Meunier, 2001; Abdelal, 2005.

⁸⁶ According to the 2005 Pew Global Attitudes Project, 73% of the French (by far the highest number in Europe) wish for Europe to be more independent from the U.S. in its security and diplomatic affairs. Pew 2005b.

⁸⁷ Kuisel, 2004.

Conclusion

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 a wholesale anti-American nation. To be sure, an irreducible fraction of French public opinion is viscerally anti-American and exhibits a dispositional bias towards interpreting negatively the actions of the United States, irrespectively of reality. These are the people whose phobic hatred of the U.S. made a bestseller out of Thierry Meyssan's *L'Effroyable Imposture*, a book which argued that it was an American missile that crashed on purpose into the Pentagon on 9/11.⁸⁸ The prejudice they 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 the Germans and other West Europeans, and there is little evidence that French policy opposition to the United States is motivated by bias instead of policy disagreements or clash of interests. French anti-Americanism stands out because over the years intellectuals and politicians have developed a common corpus of biases against the United States, which has become embedded in the national policy discourse and has been exploited politically. Anti-Americanism often takes the form of institutionalized distrust, at times bordering on bias, but these biases are hardly affecting the behavior of most French citizens.

This common corpus has spread out into at least seven different 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."⁸⁹ 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 artists); and even in the world of food (where French restaurateurs relish the working conditions of their American counterparts, whose professional teams consistently win international competitions).⁹⁰ 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.

⁸⁸ Meyssan, 2002.

⁸⁹ "We are all Americans" was the title of *Le Monde's* front page editorial on September 12, 2001.

⁹⁰ When asked in a multi-nation 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 2005b.

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 Gaul Asterix who was able to resist the powerful Roman empire. The United States does not have the exclusivity of being the 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 to oppose –no matter whether the object in question is the United States, the European Constitution, or globalization. Indeed, surveys such as the World Values Survey⁹¹ consistently show that the French are very distrustful in general –of each other, of their government, of politicians, of America, etc. 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 this side of the Atlantic, is nothing personal.

⁹¹ See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>, last accessed August 11, 2005.

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