

How Distrust in Europe Changed American Global Authority EU-Criticism and Anti-Europeanism in United States Foreign Policy, 1989–2003

The PhD project aims at delivering a historical analysis of the causes, forms and consequences of American Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism after the Cold War. Thereby, the study concentrates on three thematic areas: peace and security policy, economic and trade policy, and institutional as well as political-cultural differences between the United States and Europe.

Regarding the necessary realignment of U.S. foreign policy after demise of Soviet threat and important steps of European integration, the long decade from the end of the Cold War to the Iraq War provides an excellent case to study American anti-Europeanism. A decade that brought forth not only greater institutionalized cooperation between the US and the EU, but also showed an increasing number of trade conflicts, debates on burden-sharing, as well as disagreement and disappointment between the US and Europe regarding the conflicts in Kosovo, Bosnia, and the Iraq war.

In the run-up to the Iraq War 2002/3, a wave of anti-Europeanism and Europhobia swept through the United States. It was expressed not only in seemingly mundane acts, such as renaming French fries into *freedom fries*, but manifested itself in the political discourse through articles in leading foreign policy journals and reached the highest echelons of political power. Statements like Donald Rumsfeld's differentiation between *Old* and *New Europe* or Robert Kagan's notion that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus"¹ reveal differences at a more fundamental level that extend to transatlantic relations and the European integration project itself. As one observer noted about the 1990s: "For even in the era of good feeling, serious differences were beginning to undercut transatlantic trust."²

What were the reasons for waning trust in and criticism of Europe? Which actors in the United States raised criticism? How can different types of Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism be identified and distinguished? How did criticisms of Europe impact U.S. foreign policy, and to what extent did they affect the authority of the United States in international politics?

To answer the questions raised, the PhD project combines an evaluation of American policy towards Europe with an analysis of anti-European public intellectual discourses in the United States. Thereby, the analysis is based on the hypothesis that the publicly observable anti-Europeanism in the United States in 2002/3 was neither just a direct reaction to the Iraq War, nor was it a mere re-emergence of a traditional isolationism.³ In contrast, it is assumed that distinctive Euro-critical and anti-European positions emerged during the 1990s as a result of waning trust in Europe, its political institutions, and negative perceptions of European policies, combined with fundamentally different understandings of state authority, power, sovereignty, security, and international institutions.

¹ KAGAN, R. (2002): "Power and Weakness", in: *Policy Review* 113, pp. 3.

² COX, M. (2019): *The Post-Cold War World. Turbulences and Change in World Politics Since the Fall*, London/New York: Routledge, p. 202.

³ A thesis already hinted at in the literature that has not been systematically investigated yet. See CHAMOREL, P. (2004): *Anti-Europeanism and Euroscepticism in the United States*, *EUI Working Papers RSCAS 25* and GARTON ASH, T. (2005): "The New Anti-Europeanism in America", in: Lindberg, T. (ed.): *Beyond Paradise and Power. Europe, America, and the Future of a Troubled Partnership*, New York: Routledge, pp. 121–133.

The study applies concepts of authority and trust,⁴ which promise a better understanding of the dynamics of Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism. Drawing on Marc HETHERINGTON's definition of political trust as "the degree to which people perceive that government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectations"⁵, it begs the question, to what extent Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism were caused by incongruent and unfulfilled expectations of the transatlantic other. The concepts of politicization and domestication provide a framework to understand how waning trust and changing patterns of authority in domestic politics affected U.S. authority on the international level. Accordingly, it shall be examined how Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism in domestic politics were transmitted to international authority relations. Following the dominant, Weberian understanding, authority is distinguished from power insofar, as the former based on trust and legitimacy, while the latter is based on force. Regarding the (neo-)conservative revolution in U.S. foreign policy under George W. Bush, this poses the question if and how Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism were discursive means to increase trust in American 'hyperpower' domestically, while simultaneously undermining the authority of the United States on the international level.

Extending recent research on neoconservative anti-Europeanism,⁶ the study argues that Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism were neither confined to the George W. Bush administration nor the so-called neoconservatives. Rather, it shall be examined to what extent Euro-critical and anti-European positions existed across the political spectrum, and which effects they had on U.S. foreign policy throughout the entire investigation period.

The PhD project aims at filling a substantial gap in the literature, by providing a comprehensive study of causes, forms and consequences of American Euro-criticism and anti-Europeanism between 1989 and 2003. Thereby, it promises not only new insights on the development of transatlantic relations after the Cold War, U.S. perceptions of Europe and how they contributed to American exceptionalism and nationalism, but also a better understanding of trust in (American) foreign policy and the transformation of the international authority of the United States at the turn of the millennium and up until today.

⁴ BERG, M./LEYPOLDT, G. (eds.) (2021): Authority and Trust in US Culture and Society. Interdisciplinary Approaches and Perspectives, Bielefeld: transcript.

⁵ HETHERINGTON, M. (2007): Why Trust Matters. Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism, 2nd ed., Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, p. 9.

⁶ SCHERZER, P. (2022): Neoconservative Images of Europe. Europhobia and Anti-Europeanism in the United States, 1970–2002, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.