

From Excitement to Burnout in 80 Years

The Americanization of Europe (1919-1999)

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1.1

Introduction:

The United States and Europe have had a close relationship since European colonization of North America began in the 16th century. Since the early settlement of the North American continent, waves of Europeans left their homeland in search of a better life, in effect Europeanizing North America. Simultaneously, “America” became a mythical place in the European mind—a place of endless possibilities and a new beginning. Later this sympathetic feeling toward America would benefit U.S. foreign policy’s aim to extend its influence over Europe, in the process Americanizing the Europeans.

The United States started out as thirteen colonies under the British Crown, which supplied the British Empire with much needed raw materials.¹ After breaking free from English rule with the Declaration of Independence and Revolution in 1776,² the new independent nation started to expand geographically. The widespread belief in “Manifest Destiny,”³ the idea that the United States was destined to encompass the North American continent from East to West, forged a continues westward expansion. Apart from the Native American and Mexican losses,⁴ European colonial powers also lost many of their claims in the process. The westward expansion opened up new land for increasing numbers of newcomers from Europe, thus fuelling further the economic growth. From its meagre beginnings in 17th century as English outposts, the United States had by the 20th century, began to outpace Europe economically.

When Europe was ravaged by two world wars, the United States surfaced as the new world leader. As the United States became more and more powerful in comparison to Europe, it increasingly set the agenda. Europe, which had once Europeanized the Americas, was now subjected to Americanization.

Americanization can be understood in several ways, e.g. of Americanization of new immigrants to the United States, or Americanization of other nations. This thesis is concerned with the latter. Americanization is said to be happening all over the world, as American films

¹ Merrill Jensen. *The Founding of a Nation: a History of the American Revolution, 1763-1776* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 1968), 13-19

² Jensen, 667

³ Julius W. Pratt. “The Origins of “Manifest Destiny””, *The American Historical Review* 32. 4 (July 1927): 795-798

⁴ Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin, *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal.*(Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press), 3

and consumer goods have become familiar in almost every part of the world. This thesis analyzes the Americanization of Europe between 1919 and 1999. It was in the 20th century that the United States surpassed Europe and got involved in a special cultural relationship that made Americanization of Europe possible. During the 20th century, the United States became increasingly aware of its power. Besides its “hard,” military power Americans began to understand how its civic ideals, its economic system, and culture were useful instruments in increasing the United States influence in Europe.

This thesis follows the path of the American influence in Europe as it has effectively made use of American soft and hard power to accomplish an official goal of extending American power in Europe. It deals with the European response: from resistance to appropriation. It suggests that, a recent decline in American soft power is the result of a confusing American focus in their foreign policy.

1.2

Outline:

In this thesis, I have identified three waves of Americanization. It is an attempt to describe a relationship between two continents from 1919 to 1999; the first part describes the era between 1919 and 1939 as the first wave of Americanization. The main focus in this period is on how President Wilson, inspired by liberal ideas wanted to create peace in Europe by installing American values.

The second part discusses the era from 1940 to 1989, as the second wave. It began with the American occupation of parts of Germany after the Second World War. By military expansion into Western Europe, the United States reorganized the world order, challenged only by the Soviet Union.

The third part deals with the post Cold War era from 1989-1999. This was considered the beginning of a new era for the United States that many believed would be the start of the second American century. Contrary to the idea of a new American century, I argue that the Americanization process has been blurred by other trends and is marked by the loss of meaning of what is “American.” European cultures have picked what ever they felt suitable and transformed, and appropriated, incorporated, and left out cultural influences in such a way that what Europeans originally understood as “American” has ceased to exist.

This discussion of the causes and effects of Americanization evokes several questions about the relationship between the United States and Europe. This relationship consists of

several layers that are sometimes difficult to describe, often based on emotions and myths. “America” is not only a mythical place for Europeans but surprisingly also for the people who live there. Besides this mythical place, there is the “real world” in which the United States of America operates. The difference between the real and the mythical America is sometimes hard to define, however the mythical America becomes tangible as a Hollywood creation. Hollywood has used images in American culture to create myths about the “American way” that consists of classlessness, individuality, and freedom.⁵ The combination of the mythical and real has been the strength of the United States in its relations to others. It is therefore interesting to look at how and why the United States has used its mythical and real powers to boost its influence. To help the flow of the thesis I have consciously decided to use the term “Europe” although this constitutes a range of different nations, cultures, and languages. The concept of soft power⁶ is another central notion in my thesis. I will reflect on how the United States obtains soft power, how is it used, and how other nations respond to American soft power over time.

1.3

Purpose/ Process:

My initial point of departure was to discuss whether-or-not America is an empire. I soon realized that this was not exactly what I was after. First, allegations of an American empire—understood either as, a result of cultural imperialism or as a military empire that controlled a large portion of the world—had been around for as long as I can remember. Secondly, I started to question my own interest in the subject; did it matter practically and politically whether or not the USA was an empire? After considering my earlier writings, I decided that that this abstract issue did not concern me: I am more interested in the real existing relation between the United States and Europe. I could of course have narrowed it down to the relationship between Norway and the United States, although that really did not seem to cover what I wanted to. My interest was about how Americanization works, why some features of American culture are practically speaking neglected in Europe while other features have almost completely been implemented in European culture. Many describe Americanization of Europe, as a process where there seem to be no free will on the part of Europeans, almost

⁵ Lary May. *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)

⁶ Nye, Joseph S. *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).

threatening and invading. Important features of American culture that have not been incorporated into European national cultures contradict this view, and I wanted to find out if this was only because the process of Americanization has not yet culminated, or whether there are other factors involved. Moreover, there is a question of how this Americanization could come about.

Is it detached from the idea of a Western Civilization or can we say that the United States and Europe share some common cultural features that makes it easy to translate “America” in Europe? Finally, there is the idea of Americanization as a support for soft power. To what extent was the United States able to use its own soft powers to convey its ideology onto Europe? Although I did not want to make the whole thesis on the matter of soft power, I wanted it to be an important issue in my thesis. In the end, I feel as this thesis encompasses the essential questions that I have dealt with over the years at the University.

1.4

Literature:

Writing this thesis demanded many sources, some only as factual sources on events or dates. Other sources helped me to get a grasp of the historical frame around the issues, while some I used to build the arguments.

To help me with historical events and developing my arguments especially in the first two chapters I used Victoria De Grazia’s book *Irresistible Empire*.⁷ She describes how American business introduced American consumer culture to Europe. She links this with an official American aim to convert the European continent to become more receptive to American ideology and commerce. Behind her description of the relationship is the notion of America as the centre of an empire. Europe is in this context somewhat of a colony that has little or no power to resist. The notion of a powerless and weak European culture being subjected to a grand American plan is arguably correct considering the effects of the two world wars, although I have tried to balance this by using Geir Lundestad’s ideas of an invitational relationship as he formulates it in his book *The United States and Western Europe since 1945*.⁸

⁷ Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance Through 20th-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts – London, England: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005).

⁸ Geir Lundestad. *The United States and Western Europe since 1945: From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Contrary to De Grazia who is mostly concerned with American culture and business, Lundestad describes the political relationship between Western Europe and the United States. He looks at how Europe invited the American leadership because it was beneficial for Europe, first because of the Soviet threat, but also because it strengthened the European position. The European position was strengthened because it enabled the Europeans to restructure and reform without having to pay the burden of its actual defence needs.

I would also like to mention two other sources on American cultural impact; the first is Richard Pells *Not like US*,⁹ and Steinar Bryn *Norske Amerika-bilete*.¹⁰ Pells deals with the cultural influence America has had on Europe, at the same time as he tries to explain how and why Europeans resisted Americanization. Appropriation, which is a central theme in Steinar Bryn's book, is something I found important in some of my last arguments in chapter 3 where I look at how Americanization worked after the Cold War had ended. What interested me with his book was his idea of how Americanization was mirrored in Norwegian culture and came to say more about Norwegian culture than about American culture itself. This is also interesting in relation to the mythical "America" that is often in itself a projection of other cultures own myths. This suggests that means that we can better understand ourselves through a better understanding of the myths we have about America. Richard Pells describes how Europeans have inserted a multi levelled meaning in "America" where it has become a symbol of "fears and fantasies; a state of mind, rather than a real country."¹¹ This makes the relationship difficult; the mere mention of America sparks off so many prejudiced associations in the European mind that it makes it hard to distinguish facts from fiction in the discourse.

In dealing with the economic issues concerning the relationship I found Harm Schroter's book *Americanization of the European Economy*¹² especially helpful. The economic side of Americanization is a key ingredient in understanding the process. The liberal capitalist system is embedded in American ideology and an economic perspective is therefore is indispensable.

Last, I must mention Joseph S. Nye's theory of Soft Power.¹³ The idea of soft power was in the back of my mind since before I started working on this thesis. I considered building

⁹ Richard Pells. *Not Like US: How Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American Culture since World War II*. (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

¹⁰ Steinar Bryn. *Norske Amerika-bilete: Om amerikanisering av norsk kultur*. (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1992).

¹¹ Pells, 2.

¹² Harm G Schroter. *Americanization of the European Economy: A compact survey of American influence in Europe since the 1880s* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

¹³ Nye.

my whole thesis on his idea but choose to incorporate it into a broader discourse of Americanization instead. Nye's essay on soft power was one of the first pieces I read when I started to work on my bachelor degree. For me it was troublesome to accept the premises of this idea, as I had problems accepting the aim of soft power – to make others want to do what you want them to do. Although, when soft power is coming from a liberal democracy, it should in theory, work for the common good. However, the beneficiary of soft power is most likely to be the source of it, not the receptor. The receptor will change its behaviour in such a way that the source can benefit from it. This is at least that is how I understand the goal of soft power. Nonetheless, for me it was eye opening for my understanding of the world of foreign policy.

2.1

The Early Stage of Americanization; 1919-1939

Within the United States, the term “Americanization” has most often been used to describe the process of acculturation immigrants underwent, i.e. the process of learning the customs, manners, values, and language of “mainstream Americans”. It was “something the middle class did to immigrants”, and it is associated most strongly with the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when immigration reached unprecedented levels and nativists were keen to assert their cultural authority. In Europe, and throughout much of the 20th century, the term also referred to the exercise of American influences. Here, too, it was customs, manners, values, and language that were at stake, but in European contexts these influences were not sanctioned by cultural authority figures. Instead, they rose “from below” and specifically from the proliferation of American popular culture among working-class communities.
Mark Glancy¹⁴

Introduction:

At the beginning of the 1920`s Europe was recovering from World War I that had ravaged the economies of much of the continent. At the same time, the United States had already emerged as a great power economically and culturally, something that was beginning to be felt across Europe.

While the European states where preoccupied with rebuilding of its industry lost in the war, reorganization, and coping with the enormous loss of workers in the war, the United States was reaching a new level of economic and cultural development. During the same period, the American economy transformed to encompass a broader spectrum of the population furthermore based on new ideas like Fordism. Henry Ford developed Fordism during the first decade of the 20th century; he introduced the assembly line where he could mass-produce his Model T car with lower prices than any of his competitors, furthermore he raised wages in order for workers to increase their buying power initiating an upwardly spiral of consumption. The result was the creation of the world’s first mass consumption economy. Besides America’s economic growth, it had begun to produce a significant body of culture in which the motion picture industry became a leading force in shaping America’s cultural identity at home and abroad. The American motion picture had a different flair than the European cinema. Its critics said it was childish and uncultured; nevertheless, the audience loved it and cued up at their local cinema.

¹⁴ Mark Glancy. “Temporary American Citizens? British Audiences, Hollywood Films and the Threat of Americanization in the 1920s,” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 26.4 (October 2006):461-484

A few years into the 1920s many European countries had started to get their economy going thus experiencing an economic boom that narrowed the gap with the United States. Even though it is important to note that Europe's progress was far more fragmented than that of the United States, exemplified with the German hyper inflation in the 1920s that later would fuel the rise of the National Socialists. However, it is also noteworthy to mention the significant competing flows of ideas from Europe to America such as the French Art Deco¹⁵ style that took New York by storm and other parts of the modernist movement that made its mark on both sides of the Atlantic. Aside from some significant cultural contra flows stemming from Europe, the trend was clear; at least economically, the United States had surpassed Europe; culturally it grew strong in Europe not by outdoing its elitist artistry but by offering a sparkling egalitarian culture tuned to the average person. In effect, the WWI meant the beginning-of-the-end of European world economic, political, and cultural domination and United States as the emerging new leader.

2.2

The Interwar Years and American Foreign Policy

The Great War in Europe left a contradictory American foreign policy legacy behind; on one hand, President Woodrow Wilson saw the need to create a world order and cooperation among states while on the other hand a nationalistic response was put forward by powerful forces in the United States. The powerful alliances crated in favour and disfavour of the liberal internationalism that Wilson promoted only served to stalemate American foreign policy in such a way that it lost the United States first hegemonic opportunity in Europe.

In 1919, Wilson rode into Paris hailed as saviour of Europe after the war, and was adamant that by spreading liberal democracy and American civic ideas he could prevent any such war from ever happening again. Emmanuel Kant and his Perpetual Peace,¹⁶ where Kant theorises around how nations can create peace through universal laws and regulations influenced Wilson. Kant's perpetual peace is the foundation of the more recent democratic peace theory that states that democratic nations never or at least rarely go to war against each other. This

¹⁵ Penelope Hunter. "Art Deco: The Last Hurrah." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 30.6(Jun.-Jul.,1972):257-267

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant. *Immanuel Kant 1724-1804: Perpetual Peace, and other essays on politics, history and moral practice* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1983)

idea derives directly from what Kant described as necessary in order for his international system to work, namely that “The Civil Constitution of Every State Should Be Republican.”¹⁷ This is in his mind, not exclusively identified in a democracy rather that the main principle is separation of executive power from the legislative.

Wilson saw the need for international cooperation and law in order to prevent conflicts. His grand plan of creating a *League of Nations* an idea that in large came out of the Perpetual Peace and his proposed *Fourteen Points*¹⁸ would make peace possible. The conference held at Versailles outside Paris was supposed to settle the peace among the European states to draw new borders that would establish balance of power, and not to forget it had to meet popular demands to punish Germany. In 1918, President Wilson drew up The Fourteen Points as an attempt to create sustainable peace however, pressures from other states such as Britain and France steered the peace treaty into more of a correction of German power. The peace treaty redistributed the wealth from German possession to the winning powers. Germany had to give up their entire mercantile fleet “exceeding 1600 tons and half the vessels between 1000 tons and 1600 tons, and one quarter of her trawlers and other fishing boats”¹⁹ effectively putting an end to a vital part of the German economy. Moreover, the treaty gave France ownership over the coalmines in the Saar district, with a clause that the population could after fifteen years vote for a reunion with Germany for a substantial payment, while it gave the region of Upper Silesia (also rich in coal) to Poland.²⁰ On top of this Germany was over a period of ten years to ship a considerably percentage of its remaining coal to France and several other countries as retribution for other destructions it had inflicted upon the country. John Maynard Keynes, the English economist argued that the extensive war compensation that Germany had to pay in natural resources and industry was so great that to reach its pre-war economic situation would be impossible.²¹ He believed that Germany only through its industrialisation had been able to feed such a large population and that as an agrarian society it would merely feed about forty millions; all-in-all he believed that this was true for most of Europe, that in his mind had passed the tipping point of “natural” sustainability. With this in mind, we can probably say that European powers did not only fight

¹⁷ Kant.

¹⁸ Pendleton Herring, “Woodrow Wilson: Then and Now,” *PS* 7.3(summer, 1974), 256-259

¹⁹ John Maynard Keynes. *The Economic Consequence of the Peace* (1920: online edition, Project Gutenberg) <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15776/15776-h/15776-h.htm>>

²⁰ Keynes. *Economic Consequence*

²¹ Keynes. *Economic Consequence*, 91

for glory and increased powers during the Great War. The central nations of Europe were already grossly overpopulated and could not feed their populations without its large industrial output and extensive imports, making the decision to “de industrialize” Germany insane because it would make the co habitual situation ripe for perpetual war, instead of peace. Germany as most other major European nations had acquired colonies or friendly third world nations that provided Europe with the food and raw materials their pre-green revolution agriculture did not manage to provide. In the case of Germany, the treaty of Versailles did in effect bar the country from its imports both because it did take away its merchant fleet and railway transportation but also because the treaty stripped it of coal, Germany’s supply of energy that had fuelled its industrialization. The desire to punish Germany seemed to be goal of the peace treaty, other European nations wanted revenge, however they also wanted assurances that Germany would not become a threat once again, this climate created a rift between the European and the American parts since the Americans did not see the sense in punishing for the sake of punishment. The catastrophic consequences of the peace treaty were therefore mainly a European responsibility.

Wilson’s attempt to “civilize” Europe by get them incorporated into a large new structure of international law under the wings of America failed. His vision of the League of Nations did not fail because of unruly Europeans that in fact were calling for America to take command of the chaotic situation that the redrawing of the map of Europe had left; rather it was at the home front that he met resistance. Within the “American psyche” it was probably perceived as a foreign idea that America should be tied up in such an international organization believed to be the first step to a global parliament thus a threat to Americas independence, and in addition to Americans general distaste of Globalism. Washington would also have to take into consideration the will of a large segment of the population descending from specific European nations who were eager to see to it that their original homeland did not suffer from any policy made by the United States.

It was probably the economic situation; however, that had the final say in America’s response to the Great War. Prior to the war, from the 1890s to be more precise, American economy had started to change from being an exporter of raw materials and capital importer to becoming the world’s leading exporter of capital, powered by the European powers need for capital during the Great War. This shift in the economic position of the United States had many implications for its economy and for how the country would deal with foreign policy issues. On the one hand, a large part of the economy had grown from international trade and finance that in turn had lead to growth in manufacturing and export of manufactured goods

instead of mainly raw materials. On the other side, a significant part of the economy was indifferent to foreign markets because it served the domestic markets without needing to borrow money or sell internationally. According to Jeff Frieden “two major blocs” on foreign economic policy developed out of their different economic needs. It was a divide between “internationalists” and “isolationists” competing against one another over how the United States should act internationally. The main problem as he sees it was that neither of them was powerful enough to push through their agenda; yet each was effective in paralysing the part of the other faction to create a consistent foreign policy. In Frieden’s words the foreign policy of the United States became utterly contradictory when “the same administration encouraged foreign lending and trade protection against the goods of the borrowers, worked for international monetary cooperation and sought to sabotage it, struggled to reinforce European reconstruction and impeded it at crucial junctures.”²² His theory is useful to explain why the United States, which on the one hand had emerged as a real power on the international scene, did not act upon its position at the time and fell back into what seemed to be isolationism. In reality, the United States was merely trying to cater to both the domestic and the internationally directed businesses. If the banks that operated on the international arena got their way, and the United States participated in European reconstruction, they would in effect help create European competitors of American companies. Besides, to take an active role in world affairs would almost certainly put America at risk to be drawn into new wars on the other side of the world.

In 1920 the Senate rejected most of Wilson’s plans for Europe including the League of Nations by 55 votes to 39²³ his predecessor as Democratic Presidential Candidate lost to the Republican Warren G. Harding who agitated isolationism and “return to normalcy”²⁴. Throughout the 1920s and well into the 1930s American foreign policy was about staying out of European disputes, the policy was easy to follow in the first decade after the war, with the economy in the United States for a short while picking up after the initial post war recession the future generally looked bright. The crash of 1929 along with the continued economic decline that followed called on the United States to make difficult decisions about their economic and social system that kept it domestically preoccupied.

In Europe the situation was chaotic and un-resolved after the war, the economy picked up slightly in some of the victorious states, although it never took on pre-war dimensions.

²² Frieden, Jeff. “Sectoral Conflict and Foreign Economic Policy, 1914-1940” *International Organization* 42.1 (winter, 1988): 59-90.

²³ Philip Jenkins. *A History of the United States* (London: Macmillian Press Ltd .1997), 208.

²⁴ Jenkins, 209.

Germany was broken and struggled with hyper-inflation and social unrest. The Russian czar had fallen to the Bolsheviks. By the 1930s serious tensions surfaced between several European states.

The American public demanded assurance that they would not have to send their sons and husbands overseas once again. Washington responded with two neutrality acts in the late thirties in order to assure the public that America would remain neutral in any European conflicts²⁵. Neutrality was of course only temporary. Only a few years later the United States entered a new World War and buried the idea of neutrality after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. President Roosevelt who was elected in 1932 with the promise of getting the United States out of the depression, managed to use the idea of American exceptionalism and American ideals to turn the isolationistic population more amicable to his global aspirations. Roosevelt's argument was that the universal American ideals and ideas were under threat from communism and fascism and in order for America to save itself; it had to intervene against threats outside her borders. America became increasingly militarized during the 1930s, in response to the new threats although American politics would continue to be overwhelmingly about internal issues throughout the 1930s.

Arguably, American foreign policy failed in the interwar era; in hindsight, of course, we know that the treaty at Versailles had serious flaws; moreover, it never secured peace between European states. Wilson who had set out to secure peace and to form a global cooperation between states did not have enough backing in his own country and consequently his international project failed. Due to conflict between international and domestic industry and finance within the United States, the country was unable to make use of the window of opportunity. This window of opportunity had been created after WWI from its new position as financial centre of the world, leading manufacturer, a major military power and the huge arsenal of soft power that derived from its partake in the Great War.

²⁵ Jenkins, 223.

2.3

American Cultural Invasion and All that Jazz

Where as American foreign policy failed to make use of the international opportunities given to it in the years after the Great War, the cultural industry did not make any such mistake. It started to shape American culture. The culture industry branded it, and sold it domestically and internationally as brave, modern, and entertaining. Entertainment became a key word in American culture and the cultural industry especially the motion picture industry, grew strong because of its ability to commercialise art and fuse it with common folklore. It implemented Fordism in the cultural sphere.

Competing against countries coming out of a destructive WWI where production of necessary goods was the number one priority, the American cultural industry had several advantages. First, it had a different view of film than the French had, and to some extent still have. The conception of French film is traditionally that it is art more than business. When the war ended in Europe, it opened up an entirely new market with a population far greater than in the United States except without the same kind of unified culture and language as the United States. Although Europe had a larger population than the United States, it was economically and culturally depleted at the same time as each and every country would be trying to find its own cultural expression making each culture stand alone against a considerably larger American presence.

The promotion of American culture came through several channels and Hollywood became the premier distributor of American culture in Europe in the 1920s. That said; it is important to note that before WWI the picture was different. Before WWI Europe was the centre for cinema, and France was the leading producer in Europe. In France, great technological progress occurred in filmmaking. However, things began to change. Of course, the Great War had a devastating effect on the film industry in Europe. The European filmmakers did not have access to eager investors, though American competitors would probably say that for all its artistic and historical content its real problem was that it had not changed with the times. European films especially the German ones, had a content that related more to men than to women. *The New York Times* described the German films as “gruesome”.²⁶ They lacked the young and beautiful people that had already become idiom of

²⁶ Schröter, 32

American motion picture. In the United States, the entertainment industry had understood the importance of women and their role in what became successful or not. Through extensive market research, the American film industry had found that women usually decided what film couples would go and see,²⁷ and women usually wanted more romance and less violence or war. Hollywood had understood the power of a pretty face in a way that no one else had started to do at the time. Film studios contracted actresses and actors to star in several films, making the actor itself into a brand²⁸ selling the film on the merits of the leading actress or actor instead of content, though the pretty Hollywood actors and actresses should not be given all the credit for the American moves great achievements in the 1920s and 30s.

Victoria de Grazia has identified two waves of American popular entertainment. The first wave, set off by competition in the domestic film market that led to the formation of a few large movie studios, creating the “Studio system.”²⁹ In the 1920s, American film industry created the studio system; it linked the production of films with the distribution and to a chain of movie theatres. This union between production, distribution, and movie theatres lifted the American film into the “golden age of Hollywood”. Consequently, the American film industry got a competitive lead over the European film industry. The American film would pay for its production and then some with its domestic market, and the revenue from international sales became a bonus. Whereas the European film industry was very dependent on international distribution from the start in order to make any money.

In the interwar period, American film had some protection from foreign competition although it is reasonable to say that that was not the only reason for its formidable growth. However, around the turn of the century, there had been a well-organized American response especially to French films, which had fared well with the American audience. It was not very important where the film was made before sound was introduced, and in the United States, masses of immigrants did not mind watching Italian, French or other European films. This was by many believed to be a hindrance of their Americanization and therefore was seen as suspicious in the progressive era where the aim was to “clean house” from drunkenness, corruption and social ills that was at the time, believed to in the immigrant communities. Foreign films was increasingly portrayed as promoters of the kind of moral degeneration that the United States was struggling against, besides they would not be a responsible part in

²⁷ Schröter, 32.

²⁸ De Grazia, Victoria. “Mass Culture and Sovereignty the American Challenge to European Cinemas 1920-1960,” *The Journal of Modern History* 61.1(March 1989), 56.

²⁹ De Grazia, *Mass Culture and Sovereignty*, 56 – 60. (The second wave resulted from the 1960s TV revolution, I deal with that in Chapter 2).

educate the newcomers to American values. American film producers could then capitalize on this and strengthening the notion, that foreign film was suspicious³⁰. During the Great War, film studios in Hollywood began to cooperate with the Creel Committee³¹ or the Committee on Public Information whose goal was to raise public awareness of the war in Europe organized under President Wilson to whip up American enthusiasm for American intervention. The motion picture industry was to play an important role in making American propaganda during the war, at the same time as the motion picture industry could comfortably align itself on the “right side” of morality and meet the criteria demanded by the increased nationalism in America. Whereas nationalism played a role in what film Americans choose, this was not the case in Europe.

The American film represented modernity and depicted classlessness to the European audience tired of elitist and class related abuse. It bore a promise of “the good life” new inventions, fashionable clothes for all, general consumption, and of course it had a great entertainment value. The ideological message of consumerism was also an important part of its allure that ensured success among the European audiences. Already in the interwar years, this image of the modern land that in many ways was seen as a prediction of how Europe’s own future would look like, met heavy counter attacks from European elites. In France, intellectuals had begun to look at the American modernity and classlessness, its consumerism and fashion and for the most part concluded that it was the wrong path for France or Europe to follow. Its modernity was seen as dehumanizing while the consumerism that supported its modernity would eradicate French individualism by forcing people to adjust their tastes to the products of the assembly line not the craftsmen’s or artists creations. French intellectuals keenly targeted American film as they saw it as escapism and a threat to art because of its emphasis on ticket sales not of artistic quality³². It was however, the content and imagery of the films that made them popular among the audience in Europe. The new studio system allocated more money into few producers that enabled the motion picture industry to make use of technological innovations such as the sound film, which in turn presented new challenges to European film (the sound film originally presented at the 1900 World Fair in Paris. However, for technical and economic reasons it was the Americans who managed to commercialize sound film).

³⁰ De Grazia. *Irresistible Empire* pages 295-297

³¹ De Grazia. *Irresistible Empire* Page 298

³² Richard F.Kuisel, *Seducing the French: the Dilemma of Americanization* (Los Angeles-Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 11.

Many in France opposed the sound film looking at it as just another form of cultural imperialism from America, now also in form of language itself. Additionally it would of course also narrow the reach of European film because of language barriers within the European film market, but also undercut European film in the United States. Although many Europeans feared competition from American sound film, it presented a challenge to Hollywood as well, because with sound, the national origin of the film would become more apparent. This could lead to difficulties in selling films to non-English speakers abroad. In France, the audience wanted their native language and was appalled by the thought of listening to English, or even worse American English, leading up to small riots on the streets of Paris in the aftermaths of a new American film that was shown at the Moulin Rouge.³³

In the early years of the sound film, American producers started to make foreign language versions of the original American version by simultaneously produce any film with actors speaking different languages, or they would attempt to make international musicals with songs from several countries included. In the early years of sound film, it begun to look like sound film would strengthen European culture and language more than it would harm it. First, because the language would act as a barrier to foreign films, but also because American film producers begun setting up overseas production facilities aimed at foreign language markets. However after only a few years' studios in Hollywood discovered that dubbing was far more cost effective³⁴ and by dubbing films, they no longer needed to pay that much attention to foreign languages or cultures. In effect dubbing ended the internationalisation of the motion picture industry and the industry could continue producing films in the United States as they did before sound.

In most European countries, the invasion from Hollywood was met with active resistance. The elitist claim of American shallowness was one method, however many European countries attempted to compete on American terms. At the beginning of the 1920s ideas about a unified European film market surfaced. "Film Europe"³⁵ formed to meet the challenges of the American film by unification of forces in Europe. Film Europe became a movement, where film producers especially from Germany tried to form a pan-European market for European made films. Germany had a considerable film industry, but unlike the Americans who flaunted nationalism in their films, Germany had historical reason for trying

³³ Andrew Higson. Richard Maltby. *"Film Europe" and "Film America" Cinema, Commerce and Cultural Exchange 1920-1939* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1999), 231.

³⁴ Gomery, Douglas. "Economic Struggle and Hollywood Imperialism: Europe Converts to Sound" *Yale French Studies*(1980), <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2930006>> (01 May 2008)

³⁵ Higson, 5

to incorporate their film production into a broader platform of European. In France, the film industry saw this as a chance to compete with American film. Moreover, the idea of a unified European film industry fuelled by similar ideas of creating a United States of Europe in order to secure peace among states and to withstand American competition. However, the European film market only half-heartedly cooperated and the idea slowly lost its momentum.

The idea of a unified European film market never managed to leave much of an impression in the history of European counter-measures. However, some states made serious attempts. The fascists in Italy created “Cinecittà” in 1937³⁶ in order to promote and mass-produce Italian film. Through a centralized studio ala Hollywood Italian film was to blossom. Interestingly, even at the pinnacle of Italian fascism the films would often be non-political, created solely for its entertainment value. Other countries made similar attempts although Germany was probably the only European country that seemed to be challenging the American film hegemony in the late interwar period with its own Fordist system of a centralized production and good distribution. Moreover, it was in Germany through the Westi-Film company that the European idea received the strongest support. In 1924, Westi-Film created the European Film Syndicate³⁷ that was going to challenge the dominance of American film by combining the forces of European film producers and to create “outstanding motion pictures of European flavour”. Part of the idea was wholly American, in the sense that they wanted to merge distribution and cinemas: With the backing of a large business consortium Westi-Film and its French ally Cine France³⁸ managed to create a vast pan-European network of cinemas, production companies, and rental companies.

The Westi-Film and its European Film Syndicate soon after met economical challenges and later split up by creditors. The German film industry continued to be a strong contestant to American film dominance throughout the interwar era despite the bankruptcy of the European Film Syndicate. Before the allied forces finally dismantled it, the German film industry had been used by the Nazi party to promote its ideology.

The British responded to competition from American with a quota system and internationalization of the British film industry. The Films Act of 1927 was to ensure that British film did not disappear under the pressure from American film and that a certain number of British-made films were produced and sold to the cinemas. During the 1920s, Britain’s 45 million inhabitants were eager cinemagoers. At its peak 20 million tickets were

³⁶ De Grazia. *Mass Culture and Sovereignty*,74

³⁷ Higson, 163

³⁸ Higson, 163

sold each week. However, despite the 1927 legislation the ratio of American films to British films was 17-1.³⁹ British culture is closer to the American than most other European culture, first because of the language, but also Britain's historical role as colonizer of the North American continent with important implications for the relations between the two nations. Ironically, it was these close relations, which made Britain the premier receptor of American culture in the interwar era. British commentators put the issue of Americanization on the agenda during this time because of claims that Britons were increasingly losing their own identity, as G. A. Atkinson of the *Daily Express* put it "The Plain truth about the British film situation is that the bulk of our picture goers are Americanized to an extent that makes them regard the British film as a foreign film, and an interesting but more frequently irritating interlude in their favourite entertainment. They go to see American stars. They have been brought up on American publicity. They talk America, think America, and dream America. We have several million people, mostly women, who, to all intent and purpose, are temporary American citizens."⁴⁰

If the columnist was right, we must either assume that American film caught on among the people because some other forces than those of film itself had previously americanized them, or we could conclude that American film was Americanizing Europe. In any case, it reflects a disconnection between the public and the national culture itself. If Britons already were Americanized, why then would not the British film industry have changed its imagery in accordance this? Atkinson describes a situation where the population has adopted a new culture but somehow he and the likes of him has not, so he was sitting outside of society an reflected upon the fact that he is no longer part of it, and the culture that he belongs to is no longer in dialogue with the general population. His reflections maybe speaks more about disconnection between the elite and the masses than vice versa, and he has maybe unknowingly explained an important feature of Americanization; namely that of rebellion. It is tempting to believe that the masses rebelled against the cultural elite's nonchalance with ordinary life, disconnection with ordinary problems and a preoccupation with its own self. If this is true, his argument is then wrong because the Britons would not necessarily have become "temporary American citizens" but citizens who responded to a culture who connected with them and who accepted their longings and aspirations. At the same time as by choosing America, people felt empowered as if they spoke out against their local elites by connecting to America and not Britain.

³⁹ Glancy, 465

⁴⁰ Glancy, 466

In “Temporary American Citizens”⁴¹ Richard Maltby and Ruth Vasey describes how the working class audience especially in the northern regions of England and Scotland rejected the British film because of its upper class connotations; as if they identified more with the American language and culture than what was presented as their own British culture. The working class in Britain used the American influence and adopted it as their voice against the ruling classes, allegedly leading to an Americanization of working class language and to questioning of the rigid class system that still was in place in British society at the time. Again, we see that sub classes and groups make use of American imagery in order to protest against the elites by in effect, defecting from their own culture.

Not everyone within the film industry in Britain resorted to an elitist like critique of the common people’s bad American taste. Attempts were made to create an international film production in Britain inspired by the “Film Europe” idea. In the late twenties and early thirties, several agreements between British and German film companies came about. Shortly after the quotas were set, in effect British film industry started to work on internationalization or rather Europeanization. In cooperation with German film studios, they were going to face the American challenges as a unified force. In 1927, one observer said, “The fight with America can only be started if the European countries co-operate among themselves... The national field on our Continent is too small for any single country... We can only achieve what we want to achieve, if sales to neighbouring countries are secured on the basis of reciprocity under all conditions.”⁴²

As the tensions grew stronger between the European powers, British film somehow managed to continue its European internationalism receiving many talents escaping from fascism although it no longer could continue its cooperation with official German film studios. The wave of European cooperation in the era was in reality only a response to American film and to Americanization. The project built on an idea to compete by forming a cultural United States of Europe to emulate the internal market of the United States with the economical advantages that that gave the American film industry. Unfortunately, for political reasons this cultural initiative met the obstacle of international politics and lost, leaving each nation in the end to fend for them self.

While American film played a significant role in the American cultural exchange to Europe, another feature of American culture with the ability to connect with the cultural elite as well as the everyday people surfaced. A multicultural fusion in the Deep South of the

⁴¹ Higson, 50

⁴² *Kinematograph Weekly*. (21July, 1927): 29.

United States had begun to make an impression onto American culture in the late nineteenth century, a mix of musical genres from African-Americans, French creoles, European, and other ethnic groups that came to be known as Jazz. In the 1920s, Jazz had spread to Europe, where it continued to fuse with local musical and cultural traditions⁴³. In Paris Josephine Baker caused chaos with her grand shows where Parisians showed up by the thousands in order to see her dance in her banana skirt, playing on European presumptions of African excessive sexuality, although often outdone by her audience, which would sometimes literally dance their clothes off. Paris opened its arms to African American Jazz players at the same time as new forms such as gipsy Jazz⁴⁴ vested the new American music in with European music. In 1928, Django Reinhardt a native Parisian gypsy surfaced on the club scene having created a European strain of Jazz. Unlike the film industry, Jazz was a wholly American invention shaped by unique historical events such as the slave trade from Africa, and the fusion of cultures in the south that has given so many forms of music to the world. However, its multicultural body was what made it so translatable to other cultures. When Jazz made landfall in Europe minorities such as the gypsies would take on the job to translate jazz into a European idiom, and manage to continue its original credo as the voice of the oppressed. In many ways, Jazz and the film are good examples of how the American culture took hold in Europe. Its main asset was that it came in such a broad spectre, from the most commercial entertainment to the music of poor blacks it provided something for every taste and position.

In Europe, the distinction between a rich and a working class Americans was, and maybe still is blurred. Something that on the one hand strengthened the idea of America as the land of the future where the hardships of congested living in Europe no longer existed and on the other hand, it created needs never before thought of. This image of the wealthy Americans created through American popular culture was crucial to what later has been identified as American soft power. The idea of upward mobility identified with the kind of “only in America” stories of great men that came from “nothing”. Moreover, American popular culture promoted American capitalism through its imagery of consumption and individual freedom as the enabling cause.

⁴³ A passion for Jazz. *Jazz Timeline*. <<http://www.apassion4jazz.net/timeline.html>> (01 May 2008)

⁴⁴ Jazz Roots. <<http://Jass.com/links.html>> (01.May 2008)

2.4

Capitalism and Liberal Democracy:

The American film was actively used in promoting an American ideology and the need for American style commercialism and to open up Europe for American business, the American business culture was to forever change the way Europe did business. American culture and business became two important frontrunners for an American goal of aligning Europe to America despite its official claim of staying out of Europe's business. The motion picture did the promotion revealing for the European audience the marvellous results of American capitalism and American business would follow up by teaching Europeans how to reorganize in order to achieve the same standards that the Americans lived by.

As Europe became more and more infatuated with American culture, American businessmen started to understand that the American cultural export sold more than cinema tickets, it promoted the very lifestyle of America, and to obtain that lifestyle you would need large quantities of American made consumer goods. American popular culture depicted life in America, at the same time as it depicted a vision of life in America. By blurring the lines between rich and poor and between working class and upper class, the barriers that inhibit people from acquiring certain tastes are eliminated and new needs are created among the working class that would not have been there if they "knew their place". In recent times we know that placement of artefacts and opinions is used to sell them to both foreign and domestic audiences, exemplified by kitchen appliances and cars used in films paid for by the manufacturers that can steer products into specific or general segments of consumers.⁴⁵ This was not yet common in the 1920s or 1930s; however, films depict all social layers, and through film, the public could see what the abundance in the life of the rich really meant, the cars, the clothes and the new appliances that they could or wished to afford. In turn this would create a need among people further down the latter to obtain what they see other have.

American business was backed by an official policy stating that free trade and American capitalism was the only way to ensure liberal democracy in Europe. Thus, American businessmen started to cross the Atlantic almost as missionaries for the American capitalist ideology as well as to make more money for their companies. One of the strong supporters for market liberalism in the United States at the time was President Wilson. He took great interest in Europe and a possible peaceful future for the continent and had strong

⁴⁵ L.J. Shrum. *The Psychology of Entertainment Media: Blurring the Lines Between Entertainment and Persuasion* (Mahwah-London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers 2004): 46

ideas of how that could be achieved. Among other things he worked to create the “League of Nations” conversely he believed that there was one foundation that had to be built in a society before any thing else, and that was a functioning business culture, in a functioning capitalist system. Wilson was forthright in his idea of changing the old continent in America’s image. At a business convention in Detroit in the summer of 1916 Wilson addressed more than three thousand executives calling for them to let their “thoughts and imagination run abroad”⁴⁶ and to help the principles of America to prevail. With this in mind, the executives who crossed the Atlantic therefore became a new kind of missionaries for an ideology and Americanization was both their tool and the result of their work. If Europeans succumbed to the ideals of America, they would obtain a more prosperous life at the same time that their new prosperity in turn would help strengthening America’s economy and position in the world.

As discussed earlier, the United States itself never joined the League of Nations. Nonetheless American leaders had started to look outward in a way it had not done before. Much of this internationalist thinking had undertones of American nationalism, aiming for peace in the world modelled by American ideas of individual freedom and a liberal economy. American leaders believed that democracy was the cornerstone of a liberal economy but this formula also worked in reverse; spreading the ideas of liberal economic practices would promote democracy in undemocratic nations as well as strengthen it where it already was in place. American leaders believed that in relation to European colonial powers the United States was less reliant of territory and the future of a nation’s power would increasingly come through the open market.⁴⁷ It was therefore necessary to build this market in Europe leaving it less likely to descend into war over territorial disputes.

In a way, this belief in the benefits of the liberal economy is related to the idea that America should be the exemplar for the world, an idea that dates back to the early European settlement of the country. John Winthrop formulated this idea in his *A Modell of Christian Charity*⁴⁸ where he spoke about the City upon a hill placing America in a biblical context. This idea has been vested in the American culture ever since, and has incorporated messianic thinking into Americanism.

One of the ways that American business culture could be exported to Europe was through organizations like Rotary; a few years before the First World War broke out in

⁴⁶ De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire*, 3

⁴⁷ Neil Smith. *The Endgame of Globalization* (New York-London: Routledge, 2005), 69.

⁴⁸ John Winthrop. “A Modell of Christian Charity.” *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Boston: 1838), 3rd Series 7:31-48

Europe, businessmen in Chicago had started an association in order to make connections within the business community in the city. Chicago was at the time the fastest growing city in the world.⁴⁹ Something was needed to provide newcomers with a way to be introduced to each other and take advantage of their newfound relations.

Well into the 1920s Rotary had become an international organization with several subdivisions in Europe. The Rotary movement would help implement American business culture in the respective European countries. Its ability to connect people made the organization popular among many executives, and spread all over the continent. Its success would be short-lived however, and was more or less effectively put to a halt by the increasing nationalistic regimes in Germany and several other countries that started to see the organization as problematic both because of its internationalist point of view, but also because it could be a conflict of loyalty between the members, nationality and the organization. Both the German and Italian regimes came to believe that the organization was an imperial tool of the United States making it increasingly difficult for members maintain their affiliation with Rotary. While Rotary's purpose was to work for world peace through better understanding between people within the framework of business, other ideas had also crossed the Atlantic.

Somewhat delayed because of the Great War; Fordism and its "team mate" Taylorism had already changed the American industry, and the first American business theorist who got recognized in Europe was Frederick Taylor who in 1911 published the book *Principles of Scientific Management*.⁵⁰ Taylor came out of the progressive era in the United States and had been an important contributor to the Efficiency movement that in turn emerged from the progressive era. His main idea was to study the behavioural patterns of workers and then design tools and work environment to fit the behavioural patterns he saw, believing that this would lead to production that is more efficient. In addition to Taylorism, Henry Ford had created new production methods later known as Fordism, an idea also coming out of the Efficiency Movement followed up with a revolutionary idea that would have great implications for European manufactures. Henry Ford moved the focus from the efficiency of the workers onto how the product itself was produced. In the United States, his new ideas made an impact in the early 1910s resulting in mass produced cars that ordinary workers could afford. He paid his workers at the Ford production plant in Detroit exceptionally well. According to Ford, workers must be paid a decent salary in order for them to be able to partake in the consumer society. If workers were well paid, they would start to demand

⁴⁹ De Grazia. *Irresistible Empire* ,26.

⁵⁰ Schröter,(Information about Taylorism and Fordism is from Chapter 1)

products like the car, eventually the increased sale of cars and other appliances would in the end lead to an upward spiral for the manufacturers. He moved from producing a range of different car models for the upper classes, to produce the Model T that in the beginning would only come in black. This car was manufactured on the assembly line that allowed more cars to be produced to a lower cost. This whole idea was rather foreign to most Europeans that previously had attempted to get the highest price possible for their products with the lowest possible pay for their workers; however, when the mass produced goods started to flow into Europe after the First World War, no industrialist could afford to ignore the new idea.⁵¹

The general reaction in Europe of these new ideas was cautious. The United States had started to pose a serious threat to the different economies around the continent, and to adopt its business ideology would be the same as succumbing to Americanization. However, reluctant leaders in Europe were to the emerging great power to the west, they had to respond to its ability to mass-produce. According to Robert L Frost⁵² Americanization in Europe did not follow a direct line from source to receptors. It was a negotiation that would only take place where needed and would transform the original to fit the local demand. The implications of the new business culture were difficult for French society to swallow, and all layers of society had their own issues with it. For the middle class the Fordist promise of mass produced artefacts seemed less than intriguing since the middle class usually is striving to emulate the upper classes. In France that meant to surround it self with handcrafted and personalized objects. Moreover, the idea of mass production was seen as a dehumanization of the workforce, eradicating the workers personal relationship with the product and any need for his expertise or craftsmanship. In order for Fordism to function it must have mass consumption, and while this did only happen to a certain extent, the French economy did not respond the way it in theory was supposed to. Consequently mass consumption on an American scale never happened in France during the interwar period. An early sign that “America” was not directly translatable to all corners of the world.

At the end of the 1920s, America had become an image of the future for most Europeans. This idyllic view of America was to come to an abrupt end in 1929 when the stock market collapsed in New York City. Capitalism and the free market had seemingly failed miserably throwing millions of Americans out of their relatively comfortable lives into a quagmire of despair made worse by the fact that no public safety net was yet in place. In the

⁵¹ Schröter.(Information about Taylorism and Fordism is from Chapter 1)

⁵² Robert L Frost. “Fordism and the American Dream in France, 1919-1939”. *School of Information University of Michigan* <http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/digitalfordism/fordism_materials/frost.htm>(01 May 2008)

years that followed the United States and Europe were dragged down in what was to be known as the Great Depression. At its low point, one third of workers in Germany and the United States were out of work⁵³ leading to restrictions on trade and protectionism. For a brief moment it seemed like a shift in the exchange of ideas was to come, Roosevelt created state-sponsored work in the hardest hit regions of the United States and increasingly protectionist policies although he never strayed from the ideals of liberal democracy. In Europe, the picture was different; the crisis was met with increasing suspicion towards what was perceived as the American capitalism, and in Germany, the hyperinflation and finally the depression further fuelled the National Socialist Party up to its victory in the election of 1933.

The major states in the world looked away from international free trade, and opted for protectionism and “mercantilist-style policies of concentration on national resources”.⁵⁴ However, Fordism never completely died. In Germany Adolf Hitler admired the productivity capabilities of the United States and though negative to its civic ideals he tried to fit its economic practices in with his Nazi project by removing its link with liberalism and democracy. Hitler emulated Ford’s success by introducing the Volkswagen Beetle, German version of the Model T. Volkswagen was to produce affordable cars to the German worker while the state began building a network of motorways known as autobahn⁵⁵ connecting the population and industrial centres of Germany simultaneously giving thousands of Germans a job. France and Sweden had started to mass produce cars in the late 1920s using Ford’s production method of the assembly line, which by the end of the interwar era had become a familiar ingredient in European industry.

⁵³ Schröter, 33.

⁵⁴ Schröter, 33.

⁵⁵ Schröter, 35.

2.5

Conclusion

American foreign policy promulgated great promises after WWI. It was driven by among other President Wilson that had received a hero's welcome on his trip to Paris, where he proposed a new fourteen-point plan that was to stabilize the European continent along with an even greater plan of creating the League of Nations that was to work for peaceful development of the entire world. This active start for American foreign policy was not to last, because of several reasons.

American foreign policy in Europe failed because of its indecisiveness of what role it should take if any at all. Strong forces within the United States wanted to stay out of Europe's business both economically and politically, if the United States were to support the Europeans in their efforts to rebuild they could be facing stronger competition as result, conflicts between the different European cultures within the United States should also be noted. The consequence of it all was that the United States put their global aspirations somewhat on hold through most of the era. The American foreign policy failed to incorporate its cultural legacy in relations to European nations and thereby the soft power that the American culture created was largely lost.

If the state failed to act on its window of opportunity, the American culture industry seized the opportunity. American culture swamped the European continent with music, film, and a vision of a wealthy lifestyle. The American motion picture industry was the most forceful part of the American cultural export and functioned as a window into what America had to offer in the way of consumer goods, egalitarianism, and entertainment. With its egalitarian ideology, it threatened the cultural elites across Europe and they were completely incapable of providing any sensible resistance to what many of them saw as a cultural invasion. (Fascism and communism would later formulate such a resistance). The American motion picture forced governments in the respective countries to counteract its impact. In large parts these counteractions failed or it, lead to imitation attempts that unconsciously further fuelled the Americanization process.

A grand venture was created between business and culture making American film superior to its European competitors at the same time as it promoted American lifestyle and became a trend setter of new American products that cued up to conquer the European markets. The American cultural industry and American business joined forces sometimes making it hard to distinguish the two from each other. The attempt to change the behaviour

pattern of the European consumer only partly succeeded. First of all local business culture varied greatly throughout Europe. The British were probably the closest relative to American business, besides they were at least partially underway to change its economy similarly to what the Americans had done making the transition easier than that of France and Germany. The French and Germans would out-right reject many of the new ideas and the ones that seeped through were changed quite drastically in order to work within their culture.

The crash of 1929 fragmented the American onslaught onto Europe because it was no longer a unified force combining culture, economy, and ideology deriving soft power from each other. It was no longer possible to argue that in order to make use of one ingredient you needed to take the whole package. The idea that liberal economy needed a liberal democracy failed to prevail as Hitler incorporated Fordist ideas into his perverted project for a new Germanic “Europa”, after that, country after country turned to fascism and totalitarianism to control the chaotic economy. Wilson’s idea of American capitalism as bearer of a liberal democracy had failed and the synergy effect of the combined forces of Americanization was at least temporarily dead.

3.1

The Glorious Era: from Post-War to Cold War

“Once united, the farms and factories of France and Belgium, the foundries of Germany, the rich farmlands of Holland and Denmark, the skilled labor of Italy, will produce miracles for the common good.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower 1951⁵⁶

Introduction:

Not long after the allied victory in Europe before new ideological tensions arose. The Soviet Union had been an ally of the United States and Britain in the war against Nazi Germany, however never a friend. Winston Churchill had early on identified the problems the world was facing. In a speech he made at the Westminster College in Missouri in 1946,⁵⁷ he spoke of an Iron Curtain cutting Europe in two. The relationship with the Soviet Union continued to be problematic. The difficulties began at the Yalta conference⁵⁸ when the Americans and British had had to accept Stalin’s claims on Poland and Eastern Europe. Although attempts were made to ensure democratic elections in Eastern Europe, Britain and the United States had to stand by and watch as Stalin took over Eastern Europe. Few people in Western Europe were optimistic about a future peaceful coexistence with the communist bloc.

In this period, several editorials and essays published in *Life Magazine* portrayed the new situation as a conflict. This example is dated May 1946: “There is no misunderstanding between Russia and the West. There is conflict.”⁵⁹ Growing tensions between the West, and the Soviet bloc demanded increased unity among the western nations. With mixed emotions, the western European states aligned themselves with America. NATO was created ensuring American military aid and support for years to come. Europe was not able to defend itself from the enormous Red Army, which forced the Europeans to find protection elsewhere; however, the west European governments were in most cases in favour of American leadership; even the French accepted as fact that the only power strong enough to protect

⁵⁶ Lundestad, 87

⁵⁷ Steven Kreis “The History Guide”. (May 2004) <<http://www.historyguide.org/europe/churchill.html>>(01 May 2008)

⁵⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers. “Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945”. University of Wisconsin Digital Records. <<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi bin/FRUS/FRUS-idx?id=FRUS.FRUS1945>> (28 Nov.2007)

⁵⁹ John Fousek. *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chappel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 118.

Europe was the United States.⁶⁰ This invitation to leadership continued throughout the Cold War and worked in different forms through culture, business, and politics.

The fact that the United States continued to stay in Europe created an entirely new situation related to the Americanization question. In contrast to the situation after World War I where the United States withdrew its forces from Europe after the fighting had ended, they now found themselves as an occupying force after World War II. Thousands of American soldiers either lived in occupied Germany, or living in bases approved by European powers. The Second World War did not put the conflicts between the United States and Western Europe to rest. To the Americans it became clear that they would have to work harder to keep socialism out of Europe because of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, and because many Western Europeans considered liberalism and the free market an insufficient tool in the rebuilding process.

The Marshall aid is another key ingredient in this new situation. During the war, America developed a large-scale military industrial production. After the war, the industry needed markets, and had to start producing civilian products. It would however be unfair to forget that there was also a good portion of idealism, and sentimentality on the American side. A large segment of the American population was still closely related to Europe, many even had close relatives living there.

American interests in Europe also had an ideological side. This could be considered as part of the fight against communism; nevertheless, it was deeper than anticommunism and linked to the idea that America is destined to spread democracy and its liberal ideology to the rest of the world. In order for Europe to make use of the liberal ideology, Europe had to become Americanized and Washington discovered that its powers extended than that of the gun. Economic prosperity and culture became the cornerstones of America's soft power arsenal early on after World War II, combined with liberal political values, and defence it became a powerful package for American foreign policy.

⁶⁰ Geir Lundestad. "Empire by invitation in the American Century" *Diplomatic History* 23.1(Apr.1999):189-217.

3.2

The Beginning of the Cold War:

With the end of World War II, the USSR and the United States quickly filled the power vacuum in Europe. As America stood victorious after a successful invasion of the western half of the European continent, the Russians claimed the eastern part after having driven back the German forces all the way back to Berlin. The war efforts of the Soviet Union were unparalleled in terms of casualties, with more than twenty million of its own citizens killed during the war. The Soviet Union, had a devastating effect on the German military capability, and was possibly the key reason behind the fall of the Third Reich.⁶¹ The American war effort was important; nevertheless, it was certainly not the sole reason behind the German defeat, which resulted in a situation where it was not obvious where the Europeans would direct their allegiance.

It was this scenario the American strategists faced in 1945; although the Soviet Union was not yet an official enemy of the United States, the communist system was irreconcilable with the American economic system and would soon be looked at as the prime security risk to the United States. It is impossible not to consider this situation when discussing the reasons behind the continued American involvement or its repercussions for Europe. At the same time, it is necessary not to look at the communist threat as the only factor. In the early post war phase, the only certain fact was that the European continent lacked almost everything societies need in order to function. Cities were literally flattened and millions faced starvation as food supplies were cut, millions of dislocated Germans had flocked in from Germany's eastern parts trying to escape the Red Army only to find themselves in a wasteland of destruction and lawlessness that is described by Germans as *Stunde Null*.⁶² With the Red Army already occupying Germany East of Berlin, the outcome of the war was not yet certain and the United States had to make sure that the West European countries were on their side.

Rather immediately after the end of the war the United States and West European leaders began to understand that the USSR would pose an increasing threat to Europe and possibly the United States. While Germany dutifully accepted its role as a bad boy that needed to be controlled, the fear of German aggression diminished as the growing militarization in the Soviet Union shifted the focus westwards. Even though Europe grew

⁶¹ Tor Førde. "Andre verdenskrig" *Europas Historie* (17 May, 2004) <<http://www.europas-historie.net/andreverdenskrig-1d.htm>> (26 Nov. 2007)

⁶² Deutscher Bundestag. "Stunde Null?" <http://www.bundestag.de/geschichte/parlhist/streifzug/g1945/g1945_1.html> (29 Nov. 2007).

stronger and the recovery aided by the massive Marshall aid was well underway, Europe was still almost unprotected against the Soviet army, an army that by this time was standing in the heart of pre-war Europe. However, in 1949 West European countries (excluding Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, and Finland) together with Turkey, the United States and Canada formed NATO⁶³ (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). This treaty would ensure a response from every member if anyone attacked one of its member states. NATO would become the most important feature in European American relations until this day.

The same year as NATO was formed (1949), China fell under communist rule making the leaders in Washington wonder whether it would be possible to contain let alone end the communist expansion in the near future. In 1949, no one knew that the communist in China would act independently from the Soviet Union, everything pointed towards a scenario where China would form a block alongside the Russians. If this was not bad enough, communist North Korea invaded South Korea, and it seemed as the United States was headed toward another world war. There was a mixed response in Europe to the American intervention in Korea, although most European countries welcomed aid to the South they also feared that this would be the spark to a new and grander global war than what they had just survived.⁶⁴ In any case, the developments in Asia showed the Europeans that communism was a serious threat and the idea that the west had to stand united against the aggression. Although Germany had moved in the right direction its neighbours distrusted it deeply at the same time they knew that if Europe was to be able to protect itself from the Soviet Union; they had to let Germany rearm. That had been the American stand all along although especially France resisted it whole-heartedly.

The United States felt that a more unified Europe could calm down the fears over a strong West Germany, and if this more unified Europe⁶⁵ formed a common army, it would hide German participation within this constellation at the same time, as it would not give German rearmament the same significance as it had had in the 1930s. The European nations did understand the importance of community, and continued to work for a more unified Europe. Despite Europe's non-militaristic approach, at least on the surface only working to end toll barriers within the continent and to make trade between the nations more efficient.

Each country dealt differently with its relations with the United States. Some accepted American bases within their borders while others rejected them. Some fully accepted NATO's

⁶³ NATO Homepage. <<http://www.nato.int/home.htm>> (04 May 2008)

⁶⁴ John Taft. *American Power: the Rise and Decline of US Globalism 1918-1988* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 139-141.

⁶⁵ Taft, 156-162.

and the United States nuclear strategy while others did not. Norway did not accept foreign bases within their borders nor did they accept nuclear weapons stationed on their territory. Italy and Britain accepted American bases, while France had trouble accepting any American presence at all except it understood the importance of the American presence. While the Nordic countries first wanted to stay out, most of the western European states immediately wanted to join NATO. In fact, the continental Europeans fought for deeper American involvement in European military affairs after the war, and not vice versa.⁶⁶ The United States could not accept that any European country could declare war on their behalf so article five stated that if any of the member states was attacked all members would see it as an attack on themselves.

3.3

European Unity and the Marshall Plan:

The Norwegian scholar Geir Lundestad has described Europe's attitude towards Americanization and American power in Europe as invitational⁶⁷. In his view, this invitation began before World War II; however, the invitation became more apparent after the war. With the Marshall Plan America provided Europe with aid to restore the continent, and to strengthen its borders against the east, that the Soviet Union had occupied. Alongside this aid came an array of demands that Europe had to adapt. As I have argued for previously, Europe was also open to Americanization. America had a special position in the minds of many Europeans and there was a craving for American products that could make life easier and more pleasant. In addition to this was the fact that America had saved Europe from Nazi Germany and was coming to rescue the continent from the communists, a fact that was appreciated arguably by the majority throughout Europe. Nonetheless, there was an ideological battle fought within many European nations: the question was how the recovery was to be implemented. Should the State be the prime driving force, or should private enterprise manage the task? In several countries, the communist parties were strong and questioned the United States position. Europe was torn between different ideologies, and communism had managed to draw plenty of soft power from its ideals on equality and workers rights, and the fact that they fought back against the Nazis. In places like the northern

⁶⁶ Geir Lundestad *the United States and Western Europe Since 1945: From "Empire" by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift*. (Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 48-53

⁶⁷ Lundestad, "Empire by Invitation in the American Century" 190.

Norway, the only liberators people ever saw were the Red Army. Of course, they did not suffer the same fate as the Polish who saw the same army overstay their invitation; the point is that communism did not have a negative connotation in all places.

Even before the war ended, the United States had a plan to ensure its position as a core nation of the world. At the international finance conference at Bretton Woods in 1944, established the Dollar as the world leading currency, fixing all currencies to the dollar that in turn was tied to gold to ensure stability in financial markets after the war ended.⁶⁸ As World War II ended aided by the enormous Anglo-American invasion of continental Europe, the United States decided seemingly that this time around it was going to be done right. The United States was going to make use of its entire power arsenal to change the world and especially Europe in its own image. Among the problems, the Americans faced was a Europe including its cities and infrastructure in ruins, a Soviet Union that was hostile to international capitalism, and the continued existence of vast empires that remained largely self-enclosed. The war had ruined the financial and industrial capacity of Great Britain and France, and a global economic decline could easily come as a result as conditions in much of Europe were nothing short of horrible in the years after the war.

Apart from the question of residual pro-Soviet parties in the western European countries, there were several, and serious obstacles that the United States had to overcome after the war. Yet the pre-war economic organization was different in Europe from in America. The European countries started their recovery by moving in an opposite direction than what the United States intended. Instead of opening their economies, European governments began to nationalize industries, and railways. Banks, as well as private enterprises were seen as contradictory to communal rebuilding efforts, added with a general suspicion toward the private sector that in many instances had done business as usual under Nazi occupation.⁶⁹ Harm G. Schröter explains the nationalization that took place by a general lack of trust in private enterprise because of the way it had flourished under Nazi occupation. Secondly, because of the sheer scale of needs among the population, it was necessary to create a massive organization in order to provide food, shelter and other necessities and this was believed to be too large of a task for private enterprise.

The European governments nationalized key sectors of society such as aviation, railways, banks and many cornerstone industries after the war and dismissed the idea of private profits. He also points to other reasons such as blatant punishment of industries that

⁶⁸ Schröter, 46

⁶⁹ Schröter, 47

collaborated with the Nazis exemplified by the Renault Company in France. This correlation between necessity and punishment is linked to a more general socialist influence that had taken hold over Europe and the idea that the state must play the role as balancer opposed to free enterprise. The fact of the matter was that the United States itself had a few years earlier acknowledged the need for governmental intervention in times of crisis with the large state run recovery programs developed under Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s.

The Americans however feared that a worldwide economic decline would weaken Europe's resistance to communist expansionism at the same time, and that it would hamper America's plan to liberalize the continent's economy. In order to keep the economy strong President Truman understood the importance of broadening the market. To ensure American companies continuous growth they would have to expand to other markets, but first they had to open these markets. In the spring of 1947, Truman said, "the whole world should adopt the American system."⁷⁰ This was not only because Truman wanted to expand democracy and peace to the world, but also rather because his belief was that capitalism and the American way could not be sustained if the economic system did not spread globally. In this respect, the American perspective resembled the view amongst many communists that their 'ism' needed the whole world in order to work. The work for a global American system was already on top speed at the beginning of the 1950's and the main obstacle had become the Soviet Union and the newly communist Chinese state in addition to Europe's ambitions of finding a third way. The idea of a third way first identified by Pope Pius XI who called for a third way between socialism and capitalism in the 1800s.⁷¹ Later social democracy became a third way model.

The polarization into two camps made the Americanization process of Europe somewhat ambiguous because it increased America's position as protector of Europe forcing the Europeans to accept American interference at the same time as it gave advantage to European states at the bargaining table since consensus among allied nations became crucial throughout the Cold War. This unity was kept throughout the 1950s until in the beginning of the 1960s when France felt it had had enough of American interference in their policies and withdrew its forces from NATO command to become some sort of affiliate member.

Along side military cooperation, the United States decided to restore Europe's economy by granting a large-scale economic package that would continue for years. The United States was to give aid to war ridden countries of Europe in order to help them

⁷⁰Stephen Ambrose. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 19.

⁷¹David Halpern and David Mikosz "Third Way debate". *NEXUS the Policies and Ideas Network* <<http://www.netnexus.org/library/papers/3way.html#history>> (07March.2008)

withstand communist expansion and to encourage Europe adopt the American liberal ideology. The aid programme would be known as the Marshall Plan named after one of its architects, the American Secretary of States George Marshall.⁷² When the Marshall Plan was outlined, the idea was to rebuild all of Europe including the eastern part that was under Soviet control. The eastern European states found themselves unable to accept any aid from the United States because that would provoke Stalin. In response to the Marshall Plan, Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov drew up a similar plan for the eastern countries under their reign. Marshall was adamant that without German industry Europe would never manage to stand up to the increasing threat from Soviet Union and therefore rebuilding Germany was crucial to the economic and strategic recovery of Europe. At home, many Republicans were against paying for the rebuilding of Europe because they feared that this would be money out the window, or even worse, that the Europeans would nationalize the industries that in which the Americans had invested. The results of the Marshall Plan can be disputed, it can be hailed as a proof of how foreign aid can lift whole countries and even a continent out of poverty; or one can down play its effects and look at other reasons for why Europe managed its remarkable recovery after the war.⁷³ Whatever the view of its immediate effects, it was an act in accordance with an American globalist perspective and it had great implications for Europe in terms of business, agriculture, defence, and maybe most importantly it strengthened the bonds between the two continents securely placing the United States in the position as protector of Europe.

In 1948, Congress enacted the Marshall plan.⁷⁴ It was to be a four-year plan to rebuild Europe with American aid and between 1948 and 1952, about \$12 billion⁷⁵ was distributed to west European nations. The United States did not just hand out the aid to the respective governments; it came with several strings attached. First of all the existence of communist parties in Europe was a problem for the leaders in Washington. The recipients of aid had to give information to the American intelligence about communist activities and the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would use this information in order to fight the different parties who affiliated themselves with the Communist International. Two important European countries Italy, and France, had at the time strong communist movements and the CIA started to give financial aid to the parties opposing them. For example, every Italian party

⁷² Pells, 53.

⁷³ Astrid Meland. "Oversvømte Europa med Peanøtter" *dagbladet Magasinet* (23 July 2007) <<http://www.dagbladet.no/magasinet/2007/07/13/506136.html>> (23 July 2007)

⁷⁴ Pells, 53

⁷⁵ Pells, 53

from conservatives to socialists received funding before elections and Italian-American stars like Frank Sinatra were engaged to persuade the population to turn its back on communism.⁷⁶ In the first years after the German capitulation, many Europeans felt that the Soviet Union had played an important role in liberating Europe. Consequently, the communist Soviet Union had a considerable soft power capability in several European states. It portrayed itself as on the workers side, against capitalistic exploitation of common people and argued that it had played a much larger role in ending the Nazi regime than what the western allies. To downplay the Soviet contribution to the liberation of Europe and to neutralize its soft power would be the most important task for the United States and for the leaders in West European countries after the war. It was not only political issues that had to be addressed; business and agriculture was to be shaped after American standards and experts in the different fields were sent from America to Europe to help the process.

Opposition to the plan was widespread in the European bourgeoisies who feared further Americanization of the cultural sphere and submission of Europe into a kind of a client state.⁷⁷ It is important to look at what they had to lose by Americanization of the European culture. Americanization was also democratization of possibilities, “classlessness”, and higher wages for workers seemed threatening to large portions of middle class Europe who still benefited from their birth given positions and a stricter class system. To build a new business culture in Europe without its former mercantilist approach American associations such as the Rotary clubs were once again playing an important role. As we have seen, from its early start in Chicago in 1905.⁷⁸ Rotary eventually spread to Europe, with a distinct American values that included rejecting the idea of old money as better than new or measuring success by pedigree rather than wealth accumulation. While the fascist and Nazi regimes had suppressed the first wave of European Rotarians prior to World War II, they could operate freely throughout Western Europe after the war. The United States implemented the Marshall Plan in order to change Europe’s economy into a liberal economy. Because the local culture in many ways stood in the way of the planned change, the United States organized an enormous propaganda, machinery in order to persuade Europeans to adopt the superior economic practices of the United States, now actively sold as “the land of free enterprise, free unions, free trade, and free spending”.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Pells, 54

⁷⁷ Pells, 56

⁷⁸ De Grazia, 26.

⁷⁹ Pells, 52

Adolf Hitler dreamt like so many “great men” before him of a unified Europe, and tried to make the dream come true with a violent assault on the entire continent. Moreover, although the United States helped save Europe from unification through war, the Americans wished to unify the continent in its own image.⁸⁰ The idea of a unified Europe was wholeheartedly accepted in some European capitals while rejected in others. The formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 came about with strong American support although the further integration through the EEC or European Economic Community towards the European Union (EU) has for the most part been driven forward by Europeans themselves; nonetheless, there is little debate over its initial American involvement.

The fact that what we today know as the EU is strongly vested in a liberal economic tradition is at least in accordance to what one could expect was the American intention. Using Lundestad’s thesis on the “invitational”⁸¹ side of the European response to American involvement is probably important; to unify Europe was an ancient dream that had proven impossible to accomplish before an outside force came in as mediator between the different European nations. In many ways, the United States played the role of an “offshore balancer” between the different nations in Europe not only against the USSR. One could say that America lubricated European integration, seen in some ways as an independent third force in different conflicts. Moreover, the emphasis on the Soviet threat made such an attitude acceptable even to France, historically suspicious to American power.

In his book *the United States and Western Europe since 1945*, Geir Lundestad points out three ways that the Americans promoted European integration. First of all it had openly agitated a more unified Europe to solve its reconstruction work at the same time as it had to face up to the increasingly powerful Soviet Union. Secondly, the United States felt it was necessary for the Europeans to work together before Germany could become fully integrated into Europe. By forming a stronger more unified Europe, it would be possible to control Germany at the same time as the continent could benefit from Germany’s strong industrial ability. Thirdly, America was promoting integration because it could solve major problems between the states if they occurred. At the same time as it gave the Europeans room to reorganize instead of immediately beginning to face up to the soviet threat.

There are many plausible reasons for the American quest for European unity in the early years of the cold war. These include building a stronger bulwark against the Russians

⁸⁰ This is of course not an attempt to compare the United States with Hitler’s Germany, only the basic idea of a more united Europe

⁸¹ Lundestad, *the United States and Western Europe Since 1945*, Chapter 2.

but also a belief in the universality of the American experience and extending it to other parts of the world. In Lundestad's view, it is above all a combination of several reasons, and the position of Germany is central to them all. Germany was maybe seen as a bigger threat than Russia to European security for a brief period after the war. Germany had started two world wars and was to be contained so that it could never do so again. However, because of the increased tensions between the east and the west as well as democratization and the fact that Bonn successfully established a trusting relation to other European capitals, suspicious of Germany faded and by the end of the 1950s, the concern focused on the Soviet Union. With the Cold War increased military spending followed and the United States wanted Europe to "share the burden"⁸² and to share the burdens of mobilizations, European nations had to increase output and become more efficient—goals which could be better achieved through integration or unification—hence the common market.

3.4

Americanization and the Cultural Unity of Europe

Europe has never been a unified entity especially when seen from within. A multitude of languages, the triple division of the Christian faith along with a kind of "tribal" system that has divided the continent into nation states often with genetically related people has always stood in the way for European unity. In this picture, the United States had an overriding effect on many European peculiarities linking different cultures together with one shared experience based on American music and film that in turn makes European integration on the public level possible before real unification has taken place. American culture such as film and music enhanced American soft power because of its depiction of American life; perhaps equally important it gave Europeans from different cultural backgrounds a shared experience that they otherwise never would have gotten.

Americanization in Europe was never forced onto the population. Therefore, it is interesting to look at who did the inviting and why. The European elites were slow to open their doors for America. Moreover, when they finally did, it was as a last resort to defend European civilization from the Soviet Union or the social decay that war leaves behind. The working classes gained power from the Marshall Plan. Often against resistance from the industrial owners who had to follow up on the plans demands of higher wages and better

⁸² Lundestad, "The United States and Western Europe Since 1945", 87-88.

working conditions. Although the middle class has been the first to adopt new American products simply because of its ability to pay for them it was arguably among the working class that the American culture was most broadly accepted. As the working class accepted Americanization, they also discarded the local elite and local culture. Earlier in this thesis I showed is how American films took over Europe, and how the European film industry reacted against it with a condescending tone painting everything American as simplistic and trashy this seemed to backfire as the lower classes revolted against the European elite by choosing American culture instead. This trend continued throughout the post war era, and the cultural and political elites of most European countries experienced a continued loss of power, as their control over the information flow especially through radio and television started to wither towards the end of the Cold War. By the early 1980s, cable had made it impossible for the Scandinavian governments to keep their strict public television policies and intercontinental television was received by more and more households, finally ending the state control over the television media allowing for new voices to surface.⁸³ The end to the media monopoly might have given rise to new voices, and given possibilities for big corporations to promote their products. In many ways, it was the final nail in the coffin for social democratic state regulated culture that was established under the pretence of protecting smaller cultures; among other things against Americanization.

3.5

CIA and promotion of American Culture:

Besides de-Nazification of Germany, the fight against communist influence in Europe was on top of the agenda among decision makers in Washington. Germany divided between four powers. France, Britain, the United States, and the USSR each controlling a quarter of Germany with the capital Berlin sitting in the heart of what had become the soviet part. The city was divided after the same principle leaving a western island behind the Iron Curtain. At the time, West and East Germany had the same culture and had shared the same history for centuries. After it was divided, West Berlin was supposed to be a beckon of western culture or “the outpost of our culture”⁸⁴, inside the occupied Eastern Europe.

In order to win the Cold War and the minds of the Europeans military might was not enough; America had to win the cultural war as well. One can do this in several ways; leaders

⁸³ Asle Rolland. “Statsmakt og mediemakt.” Forskningsrapport 5/2002.(02 May 2008), 33.

⁸⁴ Ambrose,144

in the United States had long been worried about left-leaning European intellectuals, and in order to prevent the Soviets from gaining further support for their ideas a large-scale cultural war was instigated by the CIA. In the late 1940's the CIA established several organizations in order to spread American ideas and culture. One of these was the CCF or Congress for Cultural Freedom based in Paris. The aim was to attract left wing intellectuals who were already sceptical of the USSR; in turn, they were supposed to strengthen the American cultural hegemony in Europe and become buffers against communist ideas. In the late 1940's, intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic drew ideas from the communist Soviet Union. Many artists and writers saw the United States as the biggest threat to world peace and not the USSR, thus diminishing American soft power abroad. The USSR had at the time successfully managed to align itself with culture through a master plan created by the Communist Information Bureau (Cominform)⁸⁵ that sponsored cultural conferences throughout Europe and the United States in the last years of the 1940s. Intellectuals from the United States and Europe had been criticising the American aggressive anti-communist foreign policy fearing it would lead to a new world war and many of them believed the Soviet Union only had peaceful intentions.

Ironically, it was at the Cominform sponsored cultural conferences in New York in 1949, that the Congress for Cultural Freedom was conceived. In the intellectual circles, there had been a rift between communists and socialists for quite some time and some of the anti communists led by philosophy Professor Sydney Hook decided to challenge the ideas put forward on the conference by embarrassing the Russian delegates with difficult questions and holding a rally outside the Waldorf where the conference was held. The loosely linked group got significant attention in the American press at the same time as officials at the CIA and its newfound Office of Policy Coordination (OPC) in Washington took interest. They had begun working to counteract the Russian cultural soft power grab, up until then without much success. The experiences in New York gave them the idea that they too should start working with the left-leaning intellectuals, starting with anti-communists and then use their credibility in their milieu to convert those who had any leanings towards communism. They decided to do this by continuing their cooperation with Hook, and follow his ambitions "to create a

⁸⁵ Central Intelligence Agency. "Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1949-50" (14 March 2007) <<https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/95unclass/Warner.html>> (02 May 2008)

permanent committee of anti-communist intellectuals from Europe and America”.⁸⁶ Although not yet a permanent organization the Congress for Cultural Freedom held its first conference in Berlin in the summer of 1950, with prominent delegates such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Schlesinger Jr alongside Sidney Hook. The conference was a success, prompted by the North Korean invasion of the South the day before it opened. With the success of the conference, the congress was given enough aid to establish itself as a permanent organization by the end of the year, and would continue its work for the next 16 years.

American culture was introduced to the Europeans with displays of innovative American art; they also found it necessary to get credibility by displaying America’s mastering of European culture such as ballet and opera. “We shall present to the European audiences for the first time the Boston Symphony Orchestra... which, in the so-called ‘uncultured’ United States, plays 47 weeks of concerts each year... Also [we will present] the New York City Ballet of George Balanchine (and Lincoln Kirstein), a native American ballet which was born and grew up in the City of New York... [It consists] almost entirely of native American born dancers... We also hope to be able to present the remarkable opera of Virgil Thomas and Gertrude Stein, written here in Paris during their famous collaboration... to be performed here by an all Negro cast- ‘Four Saints in Three Acts’”.⁸⁷ The promoters considered using black artists as essential to calm down European criticism of American racism. African-American singers, apparently carefully picked out by the CIA to represent American cultural freedom, were popular guests in Europe.⁸⁸

In addition to music, painting played an important role in this project. Abstract expressionism⁸⁹ became the symbol of American freedom showing that America protected the avant-garde, and nourished individual expression. Through organizations like CCF abstract expressionism and other “American” modernist trends was presented to the French and European elite as the proof of American superiority. Besides, it delivered art without a social content to a continent with desperation and poverty on every corner, a situation ripe for communist ideas to flourish. Dwight D. Eisenhower described American art as part of the American psychological warfare because it drew attention to the intellectual side, and away from the kitschy image that many European intellectuals had of America. In the historian,

⁸⁶ “Origins of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1949-50”.

⁸⁷ Ian Wellens. *Music on the Frontline Nicolas Nabokov’s Struggle against Communism and Middle Brow Culture* (Ashgate England: Ashgate Publishing, Limited, 2002), 66.

⁸⁸ Wellens, 66

⁸⁹ Pells, 77-79.

Serge Guilbaut's words "the use of culture as a propaganda weapon became blatant and aggressive after 1951."⁹⁰

Although many saw abstract expressionism as a truly American invention, it received a lot of opposition at home as well as abroad. In the United States the new art form was met with concern over its breach with the past, throwing America into unknown territory by cutting its link with Europe. State Senator George Dondero from Michigan⁹¹ began a crusade against modern art, believing it was un-American and linked to communism; in any case in his view modern art could not promote American ideas because of its incomprehensible imagery. The debates around modern art often followed the same patterns in Europe and America. In the United States, the opposition was usually from the Right, and they did not buy the notion that abstract expressionism helped to depict America in a positive light. In essence, the 1950s would show that the United States was not-at-all in agreement over its cultural leap, and many wanted the nation to take a step back, and finding its roots, usually defined by the white majority of European origin. Despite many critics of the art form itself and the decision to use abstract expressionism to brand America there can be little doubt over the fact that abstract expressionism and modern art had a profound impact on both the American and European society.

Abstract expressionism emphasised the belief in progress and individual expressions. Abstract expressionism was to be the end of the American subservience to Paris; it was a new and American style with no European links, a notion not entirely accurate since European painters had been moving in the same directions for quite some time. The term abstract expressionism was even pinned on a Russian (later French) artist in 1929 by Alfred Barr⁹² who described the works of Kandinsky as abstract expressionist. It might not be very important whether the art form was genuinely new or not, or whether it was detached from any European influence. The art scene in the United States had for years been searching for a genuine American form, and with abstract expressionism, many believed they had finally broken with the Parisian art hegemony. By 1948 and onward abstract expressionism was used as proof that New York had taken over from Paris as the world's art capital, important for the self-image of the United States. Equally importantly, the art scene in New York had already

⁹⁰ Serge Guilbaut. *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and Cold War* (Chicago London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 204.

⁹¹ Pells, 78-80.

⁹² Helen A Harrison. "Arthur G. Dove and the Origins of Abstract Expressionism," *American Art* 12.1 (Spring 1998), 71.

been cleansed of communist ideas for years and would therefore be a better hub of liberalism and democracy than Paris would.

3.6

Beyond the Cultural Cold War: Americanization as a Process

Counterculture,⁹³ first identified in the United States as youth rebelled against the rigid moral codes of the 1950s. It spread to Europe and was adopted and adjusted by local variations. Later, disenfranchised groups claimed their emancipation, it led to a multi-fractioned front against society never before seen in the United States or in Europe. Women's rights, gay rights, anti-war, anti-establishment, civil rights, free drugs and student uprisings were ideas and occurrences that drew power from each other finalizing the rock and roll revolution that had started in the nineteen fifties but successfully suppressed. Although the CIA and different state agents were eager to introduce and promote American culture in Europe after Second World War and during the Cold War, governmental officials did not directly organize the main source of Americanization. Usually this was unnecessary because of the American culture's ability to draw attention to itself.

Europeans were waiting for American popular culture, and could not get enough. When the movie "Rock Around the Clock" was shown in Oslo's "Sentrum Kino" in 1956,⁹⁴ it aroused such emotions among the teenage crowd that the whole thing turned into a riot as if the film gave the teenagers the final go ahead to start an already planned revolt. Already popular; American culture communicated with people and was wanted as if it was anticipated especially among the young who loved the idea of a youth culture with freedom from authorities and the stagnant social order.

After World War II, the United States had achieved an economic level of development light years ahead of Europe, with an array of products like nylon stockings, freezers, Coca Cola, Chewing gum, and washing machines available for ordinary people. Besides there was the growing youth culture based on music and mass produced fashion craved by youth all over the war torn Europe. It was among the youth that the signs of Americanization had started to show in the years between the two world wars, and it was among the young it exploded after the Second World War. To say that it was an assault on a weak culture would

⁹³ F.X. Shea "Reason and the Religion of the Counter-Culture," *Harvard Theological Review* 66.1 (January, 1973), 95.

⁹⁴ NRK Norsk Rikskringkasting. "Drømmen om Norge." (27. March 2005)
<http://www.nrk.no/programmer/tv_arkiv/drommen_om_norge/4699195.html> (08 March 2008)

be unfair, because it was also eagerly awaited. At the same time, the spread of American popular culture was also part of a well-orchestrated plan to change the world in America's image. The American culture had become more independent and had branded itself with the seal of modernity, positivism and youth by an unequivocal look that spelled "America". The American cultural imagery was depicting life in America, and by the 1950s, life in America had taken a different turn than the traditional European lifestyle. Drive-inns and diners swapped the Parisian style café culture; Americans were moving out of the inner cities creating a new form of suburban living all accompanied with the new youth culture that thrived on rock and roll and carefree living. Art, music and lifestyle changed dramatically after The Second World War largely in tune with American imagery.

If Americanization in the interwar era came through the cinema, by the late 1950s it had moved to television in many European countries. As the industry evolved, it moved towards producing television series and recorded programming away from the live television shows that was familiar to the American audience in the 1950s. By doing so, the networks could sell their programming to European television stations that needed to fill their programming schedules. In the early years of television in Europe, the television stations were in large part public and state run.⁹⁵ They were few and promoted themselves as operating in the "public interest." The world's first television broadcasts started up in London in 1936.⁹⁶ It spread slowly throughout the European continent with its late arrival in Norway in 1954 when the NRK started its first test broadcasting although not opening its regular broadcasts before 1960.

Young people in America as well as in Europe eagerly adopted the youth culture that had been created; however, the new proprietors of the culture made different use of it as time went by. By the 1960s, youth culture on both sides of the Atlantic became more and more about dissent from the mainstream, promoting values that often worked against the American credo. As young people in the 1950s started to wear blue jeans and drinking coca cola, they often used the same ingredients in the 1960s to oppose American leadership. It was not that Europeans just adopted American life. They chose what to adapt to and what not to adopt. Since the working classes often leaned towards socialism and forces seen as oppositional to American ideas, the influence was not complete or equally distributed in different areas of society. Maybe more interesting was the amalgamated version of the two ideologies identified

⁹⁵ Birth of Television Archive. "Governments influence in the first era of television." <<http://www.birth-of-tv.org/birth/simpleSearch.do?query=type:Article%20AND%20category:Government+influence+in+the+first+era+of+television&type=Article>> (08.March 2008)

⁹⁶ NRK "Historie." <http://www.nrk.no/informasjon/nrks_historie/221493.html> (02.March 2008)

by Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960s calling the young Europeans who were brought up with Americanization and social battle, the “children of Marx and Coca Cola.”⁹⁷ In this respect, “America” was transformed by European youth to signify revolt against just about everything, particularly against parents or grandparents (who had gained importance in many European countries because so many fathers were killed in the war).⁹⁸ The older generations were eager to raise the young in a conservative manner installing them with their own cultural experience. On both sides of the Atlantic, a revolt took place against elitism and old structures. However, in Europe the young could have a Coke and revolt at the same time. American iconography and language had been successfully incorporated in European public life by the 1960s to such extent that it often changed values and meanings. As Goddard points out Coca Cola was fused with Marx making Coke truly un-American at the same time as it turns Marx into just about everything he was not. Rob Kroes has described this development as creolization. The creolization of the Americanization process has made “America” into a European product in many ways detached from its source and unrecognizable to most Americans. Important to his discussion is the reception of Americanization. How Europeans has received Americanization has created this new form that is illustrated when the image of America became tarnished by its war in Vietnam; yet the youths in Europe still responded in the manner of “Coca Cola and Marx”⁹⁹ and continued to use American images in their protest. Often youths in Europe drew direct influence by the anti-war movement in the United States itself. The American counterculture became an intricate part of America’s soft power, as it made it possible to love the idea of “America” regardless of ones political views. Moreover, American counterculture showed how free America really was, that America embraced the idea of dissent. Anti-authoritarianism was one out of many explanations behind the revolt that took place in the decade; another important reason was the American involvement in Vietnam. Towards the end of the 1950s, the United States became increasingly entangled in Vietnam initiating a general questioning of the chosen path of the United States.

⁹⁷ Pells, 243

⁹⁸ Pells, 236

⁹⁹ Axel Schild and Detlef Siegfried, *Between Marx and Coca Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960-1980*. (New York-Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006)

3.7 Vietnam and the Irony of American Soft Power

*All across the nation, Such a strange vibration ~ People in motion There's a whole generation
With a new explanation People in motion, people in motion
For those who come to San Francisco, Be sure to wear some flowers in your hair ~ If you come
to San Francisco, Summertime will be a love-in there*

Scott McKenzie 1967¹⁰⁰

With the development of NATO, the security of the Western Europe was ensured, and boundaries stabilized. Elsewhere the United States would get involved in a myriad of smaller proxy wars where the real enemy was the Soviet Union. Some of these wars had implications for their relations with Europe. For the most part, they never really inflicted any harm to the relationship since the assumption was that the West was at war with the Soviet Union, and that containment of communism was crucial to the survival of the democratic world. However, one war had implications not only for the Euro-American relationship but also for Americas own self-image. The war in Vietnam begun as the French had been forced to sign a peace treaty with the rebellious North Vietnamese in 1954.¹⁰¹ The Americans believed that the peace accord was too favourable to the communist party in North Vietnam, and wanted to perpetuate the division ratified at Geneva in 1954¹⁰² between a communist north and non-communist south long enough for the South to gain in strength. Throughout the nineteenth fifties America got more and more involved in the escalating conflict that included both the Soviet Union and China. As in Korea Vietnam became a war between the United States and Soviet Union played out in a third country that in itself had no real strategic interest for any of them. In Washington the domino theory had been accepted as a reality, meaning that any communist take over was seen as a Soviet aggression towards the United States that in should be met with countermeasures. This strategy based on the belief that if “one go all others will follow” like a row of dominoes had implications for Southeast Asia and other regions.

In Europe, the counter-cultural revolt struck against the United States and American Foreign policy, and incorporated anti-Americanism. The war in Vietnam was to many a proof of American imperial aspirations, and the anti-war movement in Europe was in many ways

¹⁰⁰ Scott McKenzie. “San Francisco”, *Songfact* (1967). <<http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=4413>> (08.March 2008)

¹⁰¹ Brigham, Robert K. “Battlefield”. *Public Broadcasting System*, <<http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/history/index.html>> (02. March 2008)

¹⁰² Richard H. Immerman “The United States and the Geneva Conference of 1954: A New Look*” *Diplomatic History* 14.1(1990): 43-66.

taken over by radical left-wingers who wanted to pin the idea of war onto the American foreign policy. As the call for ‘flowers in the hair’ from San Francisco faded out, the movement became increasingly political on both sides of the Atlantic. Especially in west European countries where it culminated with actual terror organizations such as Baader-Meinhof¹⁰³ (later the Red Army Faction) which was behind a series of terror attacks in West Germany. Although the rebellion changed it continued to draw influence from American culture, American music was still the important influence and the dress code was influenced thereof. Anti Americanism in Europe therefore, was in a way brought forward by American iconography. This development has riddled many social analysts; how can it be that the ones that oppose the United States themselves use American imagery? It is contradictory in many senses it is also a consequence of the development of a “pick and choose” attitude towards Americanization. In every step of Americanization there has been some parts of “America” that was chosen whereas other parts left out. This contrasts with the 1950s Americanization in which the image of America and the adoption of an American way of life was consistent with American foreign policy.

The resistance to American influence would never become that of an issue in defence circles around Europe, a somewhat obvious conclusion since they first handily saw the necessity of an American presence consequently acted favourably to it. It was the Europeans who was most eager to form institutions like NATO, that would ensure American protection in decades to come subsequently opening up for a much faster civilian economic recovery that seem impossible if each European country should have taken on the task of defending themselves against the Soviet Union. Besides the United States was providing military aid to its European allies for several decades after WWII.

3.8

Conclusion

The end of WWII positioned the United States as one out of two superpowers. It had to share the position with the Soviet Union sometimes into the 1950s although only because of the Soviet Unions growing military might and its intercontinental nuclear capability. In all other fields, particularly the United States outperformed its communist rival. Economically that is in the improvement of living standards. American soft power was strong, even in the face of

¹⁰³Charles A. Russell “Profile of a Terrorist” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 1.1 (1977): 17 – 34.

convincing competition from the Soviet Union and its communist ideology – an ideology well received in poor agrarian countries, although also among sectors of the public in many European nations. The gap between the two increased dramatically throughout the decades of the Cold War in all areas except militarily, although the United States would always be one-step ahead technologically. The United States had saved Europe from itself twice in one century. After the second time, the United States used the window of opportunity to change Europeans into becoming more like Americans.

Now, why would a rising world power bother to do this and what would the benefits for the United States be? The United States covers a considerable part of the North American continent, with all the natural resources a nation could dream of having. Protected by vast oceans on both sides, could easily have decided to shut the door to the rest of the world and live happily ever after leaving the rest of the world with its endless fights over scarce resources and landmasses. It was certainly, what many Americans felt they should do, although they did not. Some would explain this fact through a belief that Americans and the United States in general are burning to spread the gospel of America to the world. Dating back to its Puritan origin, we can explain America's behaviour because of an almost religious belief in America and her ability to create light in all dark corners of the world. Political realists would maybe argue that this is what nations do when given a chance and the United States found itself in a position to change another continent twice in one century after Europe was depleted after destructive wars. Most likely, a combination of political realism and mythological idealism is behind America's actions. At the same time over emphasising America's spiritual overtones might lead us into a kind of caricatured version of events. Wilson who was one of the strong agitators of American cultural and economic expansion in Europe after the First World War was open about his messianic side; and after the Second World War such ideas were also important. Even though American policy was probably more an ideological battle for America's own survival against other world ideologies such as Nazism, socialism and communism were seen as threatening to America in the end if it was given the chance to root themselves. Therefore, what we saw after the Second World War was that America acted out against other ideologies and the first battleground was Europe, later South East Asia and so on. In fighting socialism and communism American values such as individualism, consumerism, and a liberal economic practice strongly based in the capitalist system were thought to be a key ingredient. In this context Americanism both after the first and the Second World War was a preventive measure above all. What was new about the process after WWII was the idea that all parts of society were to be changed in order to

implement immunity to totalitarian ideologies in Europe. Culture and the arts were deliberately used to enhance America's soft power. The American government or its newfound organizations such as the CIA directly paid for numerous publications. Different states were told how to deal with its communists and how to prevent them to take power, as the American military presence on the continent continuously reminded people of who protected them from the evils that threatened them. Finally, there is the fact that Europe asked America to stay, invited American companies to invest, and craved for the entertainment and lifestyle provided by Hollywood and American capitalism. The relationship between the United States and Europe flourished throughout the Cold War, while Europe adapted to the new world leader by accepting its culture, business, and ideology. Often lost in the heated debates over Americanization is the fact that the "American" culture, to a large degree was a European product. Although less so at the turn of the millennium than was the case at the end of World War Two, it is still based on European values and traditions that has survived or integrated into a new culture that stands on its own. At the beginning of the 1950s, America was often seen as a modern version of Europe. When the United States de-crowned Europe as the most powerful cultural entity in the world, it had recreated and reformed its European ancestry although still highly understandable to most Europeans which looked to America to see their own future often using their own mythical image of America as a looking glass. The process of Americanization therefore became more of a discussion over what to choose and not to choose interconnected with progress and modernization, than an American commando. The relative successful Americanization process of Europe after WWII became therefore a truly European phenomenon not convertible to any other context.

4.1

Signs of Trouble: Globalization, Environmentalism, and Loss of Soft Power: 1989-1999

As the world saw almost unimaginable changes in East-West relations towards the end of the 20th century, the relationship between the West European states and the United States faced an uncertain future. In the late fall of 1989 the Berlin Wall was demolished by euphoric Germans while the whole world was watching. The events building up to the final fall of the Soviet Empire in 1991 took Europeans on a two-year joyride of continuous news from the East European non-violent emancipation from Soviet oppression, ending with the fall of the Soviet Empire in 1991. (Arguably, they are still an empire, albeit a much diminished one)

The changes lead to a new geopolitical reality, where old alliances and friendships needed reevaluation. What would happen to the European/American relationship? Would NATO survive? Would or should Germany reunify? In 1992 there were no longer conflict between NATO and the Warsaw pact in fact the Warsaw Pact no longer existed, at the Kremlin a red white and blue tricolour symbolized the new Russian nation that had lost direct control over the Baltic states, as well as Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. Soon after the break-up it became clear that most of the Eastern European states wanted membership in the European Union and NATO, while some remained more closely linked with Russia, such as the Ukraine and Belarus. As the Russian state struggled with essentials such as paying pensions and salary to its army and public sector the United States tied closer bonds with many of the Central Asian republics at the same time as many of the European nations was accepted into NATO. Furthermore, a new cooperation between Russia and the West forged through the Partnership for Peace (PFP) project where all former members of the Warsaw Pact could cooperate with NATO countries.¹⁰⁴ Begun in 1994 PFP has lost its importance as many of its members have joined NATO. The fall of the Soviet Union was hailed by the West as liberalism's victory over communism. At the same time as the discussion over whom and what had caused this victory. President Reagan was president in the United States as the Soviet control over the Warsaw Pact countries was crumbling, and was consequently given much of the credit for the fall of communism. He had been steadfast on meeting the Soviet

¹⁰⁴ Ronald D. Asmus, and F. Stephen Larrabee. "NATO and the Have-Nots: Reassurance after Enlargement." *Foreign Affairs* 75.6 (November/December 1996).

threat by building new and better military technology in an unprecedented arms race.¹⁰⁵ The economic strain this put on the Soviet economy might be the crucial factor that toppled the communist system. After the Soviet Union collapsed, a completely new part of Europe was open for change. Russia had never before been accessible for American economic expansion since it had been communist under both previous Americanization waves in Europe. The liberalization of the Russian economy was much more abrupt and brutal than that of the West European countries after the Second World War; seen in hindsight it was also less successful.

In this essay, I am describing the Americanization of Europe in three waves paralleling the end of three world wars: The First World War, the Second World War, and the Cold War. Americanization did not accomplish its mission after the First World War. However, it came back with-a-vengeance after the Second. Triumph in the Cold War brought a mix of success and failure for American foreign policy. The end of the communist era spelled triumph for the American liberal system. Yet the Americans failed to convert Americanization into power; the Americanization process has not succeeded as a role model and what was left of the American soft power was countered by an ever-increasing European identity and self-confidence.

It is increasingly difficult to identify authentic American cultural entities in European cultures. This could be understood as the completion of Americanization. European cultures have been converted into an Americanized version of themselves making “America” invisible, thereby distorting the original message. This in turn undermines the soft power value of Americanization for the United States foreign policy.

¹⁰⁵ Lundestad. *The United States and Western Europe*, 210-123.

4.2

Hard Power Changes:

It is time to stop pretending that Europeans and Americans share a common view of the world, or even that they occupy the same world. On the all-important question of power- the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power – American and European perspectives are diverging. Europe is turning away from power, or to put a little differently, it is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and trans-national negotiation of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Immanuel Kant's "perpetual peace". Meanwhile, the United States remains mired in history, exercising power in an anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable, and where true security and the defence and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession and use of military might¹⁰⁶.

Robert Kagan

The cold war would continue to shape the relationship between the United States and Europe until its abrupt end in 1991 with the dismantling of the Soviet Union. One could argue that the Cold War possibly ended before the actual fall of the Soviet Union and that the new regime in Moscow under Gorbachev already elected head of the communist party in 1985. The conflict was by all means over when the Soviet Union no longer existed, and the end of the Cold War was the beginning of what Geir Lundestad describes as "Transatlantic Drift".¹⁰⁷

The last decade of the Cold War was signified with a strongly rightward political turn in both Europe and the United States, including Margaret Thatcher's election in (1979), the inauguration of Ronald Reagan (1981), Helmut Kohl's victory in West Germany (1982) all were identified with neo-liberalism and a hard line attitude towards the east. The détente of the 1970s was replaced by a more aggressive tone. Ronald Reagan created a doctrine of rollback,¹⁰⁸ where the west would actively support all those who fought the Soviet system leaving behind the more passive doctrine of containment. The American military aid to the Afghan Mujahideen's under the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was one example of Reagan's doctrine of rollback. Many have hailed the turn to hard line policies by the West from the beginning of the 1980s fuelled by Ronald Reagan's return to a massive arms race resulting in his visions of Star Wars (SDI) that he believed one day would protect America from soviet intercontinental missiles, as the final nail in the coffin of the Soviet Empire. The

¹⁰⁶ Robert Kagan. *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), 3.

¹⁰⁷ Lundestad, *The United States and Europe*, 269

¹⁰⁸ Norman Podhoretz. "The First Term: The Reagan Road to Détente." *Foreign Affairs* 63.3 (1984).

idea is that the arms race that escalated under Reagan was putting such strain on the Soviet economy that it finally broke under its own weight.

Ronald Reagan was met with unease in many European capitals, his cowboy image lead many to believe that he could jeopardize the stalemate peace by irrational actions. To some extent these reactions were countered by his actual actions, and his emphasis on protecting Europe¹⁰⁹. In addition, much of Western Europe had already seen a rightward shift, identified with Britain's Margaret Thatcher that would become one of Reagan's closest personal and political confidant. The liberal idea was already incorporated in Europe when the walls between east and the west fell, almost as a mark of the completion of the American project in Europe.

The end of the Cold War had different implications for the United States and Europe. In the United States, this was a victorious moment, a proof that American liberalism was the right path, not only for the United States but also for the rest of the world. Besides this it strengthened the belief in hard line policies against enemies, and the collapse of the Soviet Union strengthened both positions. This was the beginning of what Charles Krauthammer described as America's "unipolar moment". For the United States, the end of the Cold War meant that it was unchallenged and would most likely continue to be so for decades to come, for exactly how long nobody knew.

America's unipolar moment would have great implications for its later actions on the world stage. If the Soviet Union would not be, there to correct it there were no other foreseeable power that could and the world would have to accept American leadership. The United States chose to continue its hard power advantage over other countries in spite of peaceful progress being made all over the world¹¹⁰. Robert Kagan later wrote about Europeans being from Venus and Americans being from Mars describing the Europeans as peace loving dreamers who had ascended to a new and "higher" level, made possible by the hard power of the United States which like a protective father shielded its child from the ills of the world. As protector of Europe, the United States has had to do the dirty work, and lots of it, because in his view the world has not yet reached Europe's level. Consequently, Europe would be harmed if left alone. Moreover, he argues, Europe responds in the way it does because of its weakness, while the United States acts as it does because of its strength. The allegory was that a man in the forest armed with only a knife would react differently faced

¹⁰⁹ Wesley M Bagby. *America's International Relations Since World War I*. (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 335.

¹¹⁰ Charles William Maynes, "Squandering Triumph: The West Botched the Post-Cold War World", *Foreign Affairs* 78.1 (January/February 1999).

with a bear than a man with a rifle. It was clear that the new situation was perceived differently in America than in Europe, as Europeans to a larger extent saw this as the end of conflict, the Americans saw the beginning of a new conflict.

The United States was entangled in a series of conflicts in the decade after the end of the Cold War, maybe the two most important ones being the Gulf War or “Operation Desert Storm”¹¹¹ which began in 1991, and the NATO attack on Serbia in 1999, named “Operation Allied Force.”¹¹² Two conflicts, both assumingly fought for freedom, against an oppressor. In the “Operation Desert Storm,” it was against Iraq, then lead by Saddam Hussein who had previously invaded Kuwait. Iraq was not only threatening to take over the small country of Kuwait. Iraq came too close to Saudi Arabia, the single largest oil producer in the world. The fact that Iraq invaded a neighboring country created an atmosphere of cooperation among the rest of the world. The UN declared the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to be illegal and made the American lead war in accordance with the UN. European leaders overwhelmingly supported the war, as Europe was even more dependent on Saudi oil than the United States.¹¹³ Nevertheless claims of imperialism and “war over oil” were made by many who doubted the American intentions. In any case, the American lead liberation of Kuwait gave the United States the opportunity to show the rest of the world, its unparalleled powers, by moving its war machinery to the Gulf and wiping out any Iraqi resistance with few American casualties. The operation became a showcase for the American lead new world order.

Later on in the 1990s addressing ethnic tensions in the Balkans became the second American success story. This time the United States had to come to the European Union’s rescue, since their efforts on the Balkans had failed. Originally, Europe wanted to handle the situation alone. Leaders in the EU wanted to highlight European diplomacy by creating peace without violence. The plan failed miserably as Europe never managed to come to any unified opinion on how to solve the crisis.¹¹⁴ Serbia was the villain in a European conflict that had could have grave implications for how the future map of Europe would look. Besides the conflict was a reminder of the explosive ethnicity still buried under the surface of modern Europe. The American resolve was in many ways a confirmation of what Robert Kagan later formulated in his Mars/Venus allegory about the United States and Europe. Europe’s belief in international law and peace did not hold when faced with “evil”, its lack of hard powers

¹¹¹ Jeffrey T. Richelson, “Operation Desert Storm: Ten Years After.” *The National Security Archive* (17Jan. 2001). <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/>> (02 May 2008)

¹¹² House of Commons Library. “Kosovo: Operation “Allied Force”” (29 April 1999) <<http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp99/rp99-048.pdf>>(02 March 2008)

¹¹³ Lundestad, 239

¹¹⁴ Lundestad, 240

disabled it to fix the problem in its own back yard so to speak. The American lead “Operation Allied Force” prevented further atrocities on the Balkans and it strengthened the American position as world policeman.

In Europe this new world, order changed the Europeans relationship with America and its relationship with each other. During the 1990s profound changes was made by the Europeans to speed up its own integration process resulting in a stronger bound between the European states on the continent, above all within the European Union. Only a few years after the end of the Cold War, the Maastricht Treaty establishing the European Union and increasing the co-operation on a common foreign policy, security, justice, and home affairs.¹¹⁵ In 1999, the European Central Bank launched the Euro, first as an electronic currency only to be used by banks, foreign exchange dealers, stock markets, and big companies however equally important it gave the Central Bank the power to set interest rates throughout the Euro zone. The launch of the Euro was an attempt to strengthen European unity and independence from the American economy. Alongside closer integration of the European nations, new member states continued to apply for membership making the union even larger.

The expansion of the European Union was perhaps not a direct response to the American unipolar moment. It could be said to be only a natural continuation of the integration process of Europe that had started with the formation of the Coal and Steel union in the late fifties. Others could describe it as part of a joint European/American operation in order to increase western influence on former soviet satellites and republics. As the EU started talks with former Soviet satellite states, American led, NATO did the same. In turn, this would blur the picture with different connotations according to which side you would see it. From an American and European point of view, EU enlargement is seen as increasing European power and independence, while from the Russian point it would still be seen as an American led western power grab into Russia’s sphere of influence. Finally the increased European integration was yet again in it self a proof of a profound American presence on the continent. As earlier stages of American and European relations had shown, the American presence enabled a peaceful growth in Europe. Instead of directing its economic gains into its defence, Europe could continue its economic, cultural, and political integration. This tendency makes the American efforts in Europe contradictory. Because as the United States continued to influence and protect, it also enabled a formulation of European independence.

¹¹⁵ Foreign and Commonwealth Office. “Britain in the EU”
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1139991780390> (28 March 2008).

4.3

Loss of American Soft Power:

The spread of western consumer goods is not the spread of western culture. Drinking Coca Cola makes a Russian no more western than eating sushi makes American Japanese. The essence of the west is the Magna Carta, not the Magna Mac
*Samuel P. Huntington*¹¹⁶

Professor Joseph S Nye coined the term “Soft power” in 1990. It concerns the ability a state has to influence others through its own culture and ideology. In his own words: “What about soft power? The basic concept of power is the ability to influence others to get them to do what you want. There are three major ways to do that: one is to threaten them with sticks; the second is to pay them with carrots; the third is to attract them or co-opt them, so that they want what you want. If you can get others to be attracted, to want what you want, it costs you much less in carrots and sticks”.¹¹⁷ Attraction comes from various sources, such as your culture, ideology, and civic ideals. These cultural and ideological powers of persuasion had been important features of America’s foreign policy for decades throughout the world, and they were believed to be playing an even more important role after the United States became the only superpower in a unipolar world after the Soviet collapse.

The Unipolar moment¹¹⁸ was an excellent opportunity for the United States to influence the world. Everything was in place for the finalization of the Americanization project of the world, a project that had started after World War I; however, the unipolar moment was rather quickly lost. Much of what used to be part of American soft power had become so entrenched in European culture that it was no longer identifiable as American. Americanization in itself had ceased to be a soft power resource because it was no longer linked to America in the eyes of the public; rather had fused with European culture. Even when American soft power could be identified, many had started to doubt its ability to persuade others. A columnist in the New York Times said, “**Soft power does not necessarily increase the world's love for America. It is still power, and it can still make**

¹¹⁶ Samuel P Huntington. “The West: Unique, Not Universal”, *Foreign Affairs* 75.6 (November/December 1996).

¹¹⁷ Carnegie Council. “Transcript of an interview with Nye.” (13 April 2003).
<<http://www.cceia.org/resources/transcripts/4466.html>> (09 April 2008).

¹¹⁸ Charles Krauthammer. “The Unipolar Moment” *Foreign Affairs* 70.1 (1990-91).

enemies”.¹¹⁹ The old criticism still lingered about that the American cultural domination was an intricate part of American imperialism.

There is no question that the United States has used its arsenal of soft power in order to increase its influence in Europe and across the world. During the Cold War, soft power became important but primarily as a secondary approach if the hard power fails. When Joseph S. Nye wrote about soft power, he argued that the importance of hard power was slowly declining, and that a nation’s technology, education, and economic growth was taking much of its place as the world moved into a new phase. During the Cold War the United States had to be sure of its hard power; that was measured by its ability to strike back at the Soviet Union with an nuclear force at least equal to that posed by the USSR’s targeting of the United States with its ICBM force. It also had to scare off the Soviet Union from any form of conflicts with Western Europe or other allies by having a conventional army powerful enough to fight back. The chief problem for the United States and its allies was that although technologically and economically inferior, the Soviet Union managed to challenge and in some cases exceeds them when it came to hard power. Therefore, it was then necessary for the United States to make use of its other forms of power that came in form of its attractive qualities (culture, political system, individual freedom, and economy). Soft power worked wonders in all of Europe, including the countries behind the Iron Curtain. While what was on offer was at first to come by, as Western Europe developed and rebuilt these valuables became accessible for all, which ironically diminishing their value. In the 1990s, Samuel Huntington questioned the idea of spreading consumer goods as being soft power.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, at the height of the Cold War consumer goods signified the American system. People knew then that the only way that these consumer goods could be part of their everyday life, was to implement the system that provided the goods. Over time, Europeans discovered, one could pick-and-choose from the system that gave washing machines to all, and even if they did not take the whole system or kept some of their own, they still could manage providing ordinary people with the goods. However deep rooted changes were made across Europe in the post World War era in order to make this possible, proving that soft power although not full proof actually worked.

The changes made in Europe have been so profound that it looked as the American liberal system had won after the Cold War ended, and towards the end of the 1990s American economists, politicians and business moved inn to ensure that the American economic system

¹¹⁹ Joseph Joffe. “The Perils of Soft Power” *New York Times on the web*, 14 May 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/14/magazine/14wwln_lede.html?scp=5&sq=american+soft+power&st=nyt> (02 May 2008)

¹²⁰ Huntington. "The West: Unique, Not Universal"

would be implemented in places like Russia and Eastern Europe. Any suggestion from Europeans of following the European example from after World War II of a collective rebuilding and a gentle introduction to capitalism was brushed off. Russia was to undergo a shock therapy¹²¹ to ensure its rapid transition to capitalism. Without going further into the case of Russia we have to acknowledge the fact that the Americanization of the country did not succeed in the same way as in Western Europe, at least if the intention is to create a stable nation with good and stable relations with the United States. The Russian economic system was influenced by liberal ideas, however politically and socially it did not seem to respond in the same way, throwing millions into poverty as the state was unable to provide basic services such as wages and pensions. The situation became oppositional to the case in West Europe after World War II where living standards improved while American aid created an atmosphere of optimism.

4.4

Disappearance of American Culture as a Positive:

Although there is little doubt over the fact that the United States has played an important role in Europe in the last century, its role met increased challenge from several sources towards the end of the Century. Having laid the foundation for a more independent Europe, and implemented an increasingly successful liberal system, Europeans adapted, appropriated, and selectively incorporated American culture making it their own.

There is one fundamental issue that must be accounted for in the relationship between the United States and Europe; the formation of the European Union. The actual formation of a new union in 1993 is important, but equally so are the underlying processes that led to an increasingly unified Europe based on a more or less unified identity. It should be noted that the European Union is by no means a union on par with the union of the fifty states in North America. Nonetheless, since its early beginning in 1957, it had made remarkable progress, and by the end of the Cold War, it had become an economical and political giant to be reckoned with. The case of the EU is not one-sided on the issue of Americanization since the idea of a more unified Europe was strongly supported by the Americans. Moreover, the EU has taken on a liberal economic mission. Nonetheless despite having helped realize American foreign policy goals, there are several important issues that historically have divided the

¹²¹ Naomi Klein. *Sjokkdoktrinen: Katastrofef kapitalismens fremmarsj* (Toronto: Forlaget Oktober AS 2007), 233.

United States and Europe, some are more easily detected than others nonetheless they are there.

These issues, which might be said to have “survived” the Americanization process, are important because they became central to the new European identity an identity that appears to be putting a break on further Americanization of the European culture. It may be that a new European identity also challenges America by undermining its soft power in Europe. In the *European Dream*,¹²² Jeremy Rifkin identifies the most important differences between Europe and the United States as the quality of life over accumulation of wealth, sustainable development over unlimited material growth, universal human rights over individual rights, rights to nature over property rights, and finally global cooperation over the unilateral exercise of power.¹²³ If he is right that a more desirable “European dream” has emerged, the imaginary “America” that in itself has been a soft power producer for the United States has been challenged once again.

Americanization and American soft power is build upon feeling, dream, and image. If this image of the good life crashes, it will deplete its soft power. In addition, there are signs that the materialistic side of American soft power is actually facing real opposition, and not only from a leftist ideological point of view. For example, Europeans in general are choosing to put in less work hours with the side effect of lower wages than the Americans do. Statistics from the OECD shows that while an average American worker spent 1877 hours in their workplace the Frenchman worked 1562 hours;¹²⁴ moreover, the Europeans take longer holidays, making an American work ten weeks more than the average German does. This shows cultural differences in not only the economic and political sphere but also in perception of freedom. This development is often simplified with the phrase: “Europeans work to live, the Americans live to work”.

Another factor in the European American relation is religion.¹²⁵ Although difficult to measure and sometimes believed to be unimportant, it is a factor that many point to when addressing the issue of Americanization. Why are European religious patterns not following consumer patterns that have been heavily influenced by the Americanization process? Religion in the public sphere is declining in Europe, at least when we speak of the largest religion of Christianity. Any mention of personal faith from a politician is unpopular in

¹²² Jeremy Rifkin. *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*. (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).

¹²³ Rifkin, 3

¹²⁴ Rifkin, 50

¹²⁵ Noelle Knox. “Religion takes a back seat in Western Europe” *USA today* (08 Oct. 2005)

Europe, while in the United States any politician with ambition would implement faith in his or hers speeches, to ensure the voter's confidence. This fact has more or less been stable in the relationship between the two cultural entities, and religion has never seemed to create much of a rift between them. One believes more and the other believes less, and that seems to be that. Although somewhat less profound, it can be added that typical American sports like baseball and American football in reality never made it across the Atlantic either.

Towards the end of the millennium there was one issue in particular that seems to have become very important: environment. For almost two centuries this has been the allure of America, the image of an abundant country full of opportunities has attracted immigrants from all over the world. A large portion of the American power is based on the availability of cheap energy and everlasting growth. Excessive use of energy has been the key to economic growth in all industrialized countries, however to an even larger degree so in the United States. However, things begun to change, the world's climate was found to be changing, and many scientists are pointing at human use of fossil fuel as one of the main causes.

The climate had become one of the most important issues in world politics at the beginning of the new millennium. Rising temperatures are believed to be a result of human activities and it is threatening economic growth from two sides. First because the effects of heightened temperatures might cause an increase in freak weather and consequently more damages from storms, floods, drought, and mudslides and on the other side if we decide to do something about it, we are faced with lower consumption both of energy and goods.

In 1997, nation-states from around the world got together in Kyoto and decided to agree on decreasing or curbing its emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. Although historically the United States addressed ecological issues early on, having dealt with smog problems in their largest cities, and pioneering in the establishing of national parks, the Americans redrew from the Kyoto protocol largely because it would be more costly for the United States to implement than too many of its competitors.¹²⁶ In addition, the Clinton administration questioned the Protocol for failing to set accurate goals. Right or wrong the United States was left almost alone in the international community with this point of view, and the rest wanted to go forward even without the United States. This was a blow to American soft power, since the United States now "officially" was no longer the driving force in the face of a challenge; instead, it posed itself as a reactionary force. Its ideas around the operation of the market and the importance of letting the economy solve problems were

¹²⁶ Peter J. Spiro. "The New Sovereignists: American Exceptionalism and its False Prophets." *Foreign Affairs* 79.6 (November/December 2000).

resisted by a vast majority of the world's nations. It was after all the market, which by encouraging rapid economic growth got us into this situation in the first place. After the United States rejected the Kyoto Protocol it was left almost alone, and the European states moved ahead and ratified it. Although many of the European states have never been anywhere near their goals, they ratified it and accepted global warming as a problem. At the same time as they acknowledged the problematic aspects of increased human influence on the planet's eco-system.

The emphasis on economic growth is an important theme in all developed countries. Few countries have linked economic growth so closely to its own understanding of success than the United States. The American Dream is for many about the possibility of achieving a higher standard of living than one could in their old country. Of course, this dream includes reaching goals that are not necessarily about money, but economic prosperity continues to be an essential feature in the American ideology. Prosperity has in the United States usually been linked with "big": big cars, big houses, and big lawns that again has fuelled the growth of suburbia. Whereas the most expensive housing in most European cities is in the central areas the Americans have been longing for quiet suburban single housed communities, that has sponsored out-of-control spatial growth of its cities leading to ever increasing energy consumption.

Finally we can consider one other fundamental issue that has been an obstacle to American soft power in Europe: capital punishment. It is often used to identify America's shortcomings when it comes to human rights. The European Union has made opposition to the death penalty into a marker of European consciousness as no member state in the European Union can keep or re-institute the death penalty. These arguments are conflicting to the American soft power in two ways. First, it shows that American soft power is losing grounds because it does not have the answers anymore and secondly it indicates that the Europeans begun thinking they have an alternative to America and American society.

In addition to ideological issues linked to the economy, way of life, and ecology, American popular culture continued to be a hot issue in the European American relations. Europe had struggled against Americanization for more than two hundred years, through ridicule, by overt expressions of anti-Americanism, and by attempts to legislate away American influence. However somewhere along the way, European cultures begun to be easy, as if the threat of annexation was less apparent or it simply did not matter all that much anymore.

Just a few years before the iron curtain was dismantled, Western Europe went through a media revolution;¹²⁷ the development of satellite and cable ended the governmental control over TV in many European countries. New cable television stations popped up in every country, with some attempts to make pan-European television stations that were to take over for the old time national channels. In the early years of this revolution most of these channels served old reruns of American TV. series, although increasingly the national private stations began to produce their own shows, series and soaps. Some served sports, some old reruns while Sky channel served all of Western Europe a mix of programming including music. In 1987 six years after its American opening MTV Europe was launched. The media revolution coincided with liberalization of opening hours and work laws besides a general economic boom in which the old school social responsibilities were thrown overboard in favour of personal goals and aspirations. This did not occur simultaneously across the continent. Many countries, for instance had established commercial television at an early stage, and regulations concerning opening hours and advertising varied throughout the continent.

In any case, the West Europeans was more or less fully educated in liberal communications when the wall fell. By the beginning of the 1990s, the Americanization of European cinema and television seemed unstoppable. Some attempts had been made by France among other nations to curb American programming on European television. The idea was to force television stations to air a certain amount of European-made programs. This would ensure the survival of local and European production, culture, and language. The European Union followed suit and managed to get audiovisual programs excluded from “the anti protectionist provisions of the 1993 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade”.¹²⁸ This meant that American television and films were not protected by the GATT agreement, and that in order to save their culture, countries could impose quotas or the like on foreign made films and programming. However, by the time the French/European initiative came along it was arguably already outdated. The trend was already going in the direction of more local programming. People wanted their local language; pan-European television station was long gone, and MTV had decided for national programming to several countries in their own language and with their own artists. Later the reality wave made it possible for even the smallest channels to set up a local reality show.

¹²⁷ Lee Artz, Cees J Hamelink and Yahya R Kamalipour. *The Media Globe: Trends in International Media* (Rowman&Little Publishers, Inc, 2006), 58-60.

¹²⁸ Pells, 263-265.

The imagined worst-case scenario where the Americanization process eradicates local European languages seemed like nothing but a moral panic. In Norway it looked like the more the government opened up the gates of commercialized television and the possibility of Americanization, the stronger the local culture got as people started to believe in their own language and culture, without being told by the authorities. In this respect, culture must be read as anything locally produced, and not necessarily related to the notion of “high culture”. What originally came from America had become part of what Europeans had become, and a new generation had matured without any first hand knowledge of anything different. Culture is a difficult matter, with many meanings.¹²⁹ On the one hand, culture can mean civilized, as in civilized manners or educated. It can be a critique of civilization in form of the German “Kultur”, which criticises urbanization and modernization by upholding the genuine. And there are different sub cultures within a society that promulgates specific traditions or customs. If we use the German example of “Kultur”, will in a European setting be connected to preservation. An example of this “preservationist” view could be the use of national costumes; they are replicas of old-fashioned clothes that are highlighted as bearers of a culture, as if culture is something static. Besides this idea of culture as preservation prevents an understanding of what a nation’s contemporary culture really is. Finally, there is the concept of culture into high and low culture, which in short can be summed up as Opera as high versus folk music as low. Culture is central to the European critique of America. Interestingly, the different European views on culture places America at the “wrong end”. If we take the idea that culture has to do with civilized manners and behaviour, Europeans have often argued that America stands for the vulgar, hence not educated. From German thinking of culture, American modernity could be the reason for critique. Finally, if you relate culture to history the United States would also fall behind because of its relatively short history.

Steinar Bryn has tried to describe this subject matter in his book *Norske Amerika-bilete*.¹³⁰ He describes cultural patterns that might have had its origins in the United States, but brought to Norway and repackaged for Norwegian customers. Much of it is cheap attempts to market goods and services in an imagined American fashion that is nothing like the original and that he feels speak more about our own culture than that of the American. This has been especially apparent in the sales of food. Bad food is renamed and packaged as “American”. As an attempt to hide Norway’s own culinary and cultural shortcomings behind

¹²⁹ Steinar Bryn *Norske Amerika-bilete: Om amerikanisering av norsk kultur*. (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1992), 56-78

¹³⁰ Bryn.

colourful stars and stripes. Clearly, the mass produced hamburgers on sale along the E6 did not resemble the kind of home made burgers you could get in the United States; or to put it another way, they would always resemble the worst of what you could get in the United States but never the best.

In the world of fashion, one of the most important American contributions has been the blue jeans and casual wear. To the generations after the Second World War, it symbolized the freedom and individuality of a mythical America. It became later a protest against society and against parental control. This notion has disappeared as Jeans no longer means Levi's, and are not necessarily made in California. For most Europeans jeans is now a "must have" in anyone's wardrobe, made to fit whatever the trend that is here and now and with an unclear message. In 1978, Renzo Rosso founded Diesel Jeans.¹³¹ Although it is an Italian company, they have an international design group and have had a serious international breakthrough with its Swedish made advertisement campaigns using what they saw as international images along with the 1990s "doctrine" of irony. Diesel is only one of many sources that have distorted the idea of blue jeans. Now almost all fashion houses and chains such as H&M, Zara, and Gap have their own jeans brand, and the word American has been largely forgotten in the mix. This development fuelled by the fact that the world was becoming more intertwined, as globalization became the hottest buzzwords of the era.

4.5

Globalization and Americanization:

Towards the end of the 20th century the world became more globalized, a development that further blurred the ancestry of any product. With big multinational corporations, no one can be sure from what culture they are from, it can even be hard to find where they have their headquarters. These multinationals thrive on the idea of a world culture; any local nuance would mean more extra cost for them in order to break into that market. They operated without local government control and forced national governments to change their policies instead of vice versa. The global market became a strong force against diversity¹³² at the end of the last century, making cities, airports, and fashion similar on all continents.

The history of the relations between Europe and the United States is a unique story, ever since Europeans started colonizing and changing the land to the west, Europe changed

¹³¹ Diesel S.p.A, Home page, 28 February 2008, < <http://www.diesel.com> > (28 Feb. 2008).

¹³² Pells, 329.

along with it. However, the American influence on Europe correlates with increased globalization and it is therefore important to identify the origins of the current situation in order to understand the concept of Americanization. The question is what the difference between Americanization and globalization is.

Recall that as the United States grew bigger in the 1920s and more important it started to make a bigger impact on Europe, and when the United States finally eclipsed European military and economic might around the Second World War, it had the capability to physically, invade Europe. It was around the First World War that Europeans begun looking at the American influence as an Americanization of the whole continent, with a possible threat to local cultures and languages. At the same time as this Americanization process started to be recognized, another trend was reappearing forcing local cultures to adapt to an increasingly “smaller” world. This process, called globalization has no official starting point and has pushed forward by standardising products and cultures all over the world making many believing that we one day would be one great united human culture. Globalization, often been believed to be a product of Americanization, or caused by it. As the American composer, John Cage stating, “It will not be easy...for Europe to give up being Europe. It will, however, and it must: for the world is one world now”.¹³³ Although probably aiming higher than was the official aim of the Americanization of Europe, the statement indicates that one world Globalism or Globalization meant America. This idea has been challenged over time, and globalization today is believed by many to be more independent of Americanization than previously believed. The economic side of globalization is certainly linked to liberal economic principles however, whether or not the process can be called American is up for debate.

Philippe Legrain is an economist who rejects the idea of Americanization as the mother of globalization. In his book, *Cultural Globalization Is Not Americanization*¹³⁴ he argues for the fact that globalization has less to do with America, and more to do with communications. With increasingly well-organized communications, knowledge and emigration the world’s different cultures will ultimately exchange ideas in his view. He believes that the American take of globalization is not disproportional to its population and wealth however only playing as a part of an ongoing process led by no one and everyone. In his job as chief economist of *Britain in Europe*, he is campaigning for Britain to adapt the

¹³³ Wellens, *Music on the Frontline*. 118 (quoting John Cage).

¹³⁴ Philippe Legrain. “Cultural Globalization is Not Americanization” *The Chronicle Review* 49.35(May 9, 2003):B7

Euro. He points out that due to globalization many of the arch American products that we surround ourselves with is not so American after all. For example, Levi's jeans that originally was made by a German immigrant who had taken his ideas from the French way of weaving demin combined with the trousers that dock workers in Genoa (Genes) used to wear. Although he favours globalization and assures us that it is not American, we get little information of what globalization really is. Is it the travel that we do and the new trends that we see on the streets? Alternatively, is it the way street corners around the globe are increasingly looking the same? It is likely that he attempts to reclaim some of the ingredients that is said to be American, more than discussing the difference between globalization and Americanization.

Ramesh Garg agrees that globalization is not Americanization; however, he believes that it is fuelled more than anything, by the economy: "in essence, globalization is an evolving process in today's business environment that is based on certain tenets which are common to any global company without regard to its national origin. Incidentally, this process has been speeded up with the advent of the internet and the broadband technology".¹³⁵ He is therefore stating that it is business, not personal relations or any one nation that drives it. Americanization is not only constrained to economics. It has a multifaceted structure that involves economics, culture, language, and ideology. Many who interpret it as an orchestrated plan by the United States to take over the world also link it to imperialism. Globalization and Americanization are not the same, although they are closely related. Globalization as a term was not coined until the 1980s, but it describes a process that has occurred throughout history, with its first peak before World War I when the European empires started collapsing. In this respect, globalization is linked to imperialism as the colonization of the Americas, Africa, and large parts of Asia¹³⁶ a process that started in Europe in 1492 according to the French/Egyptian academic Samir Amin.¹³⁷ The Thirteen Colonies emancipation from the English crown was nothing else but the beginning of a sort of Europe 2. Amin identifies three waves of colonialism: the first is the settlements in the Americas, Australia, and parts of Africa and Asia with the following genocides of indigenous people. The second wave came with the industrial revolution where European powers sought to broaden their economic spheres imposing free trade that mostly benefited Europe, and the third wave began after the Cold War where the three large centres of the world: The United States, Europe, and Japan,

¹³⁵ Ramesh Garg, "Americanization versus Globalization" Eastern Michigan University (2004) <<http://www.cob.emich.edu/pel/documents/rameshgarg.pdf>> (03May 2007)

¹³⁶ Samir Amin. "Imperialism and Globalization," *Monthly Review* 53.2(2001).

¹³⁷ Amin, (Information). <<http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/~felwell/Theorists/Amin/Index.html>> (15 Feb.2008)

are increasing their influence world wide. Samir Amin claims that imperialism and globalization has the same origin, and maybe because of his Franco-African background he rejects the idea of division between Europe (Atlantic Europe) and the United States. In his view, the United States in his view is a product of Europe and Europeans. This notion is of course problematic to the whole idea of Americanization. It would instead place Americanization as a continuation of European colonialism only that Europe 2 has taken the lead instead of Europe 1. It is of course a point of view from a non-European although it is no less important because it says something about the Eurocentric point of view that lies behind the question of Americanization of Europe. If this was about Americanization in Africa this would probably not apply; Europe could only be Americanized because it in itself was the first one to Americanize America so to speak.

Whether or not Americanization is the mother of globalization or vice versa is harder to define. Globalization has been around since before Americanization; Europeans had been able to sustain their overpopulation for centuries before they discovered the Americas, by relying on global trade and resources. It was in fact their globalism, which drew them to explore the Atlantic in the first place. Today however, globalization is a trend driven forward by American business and liberal economic practices although it is no longer certain who the beneficiary of the process is, since the process has become truly global in the last decades. In the discussion of Americanization, globalization serves more as a problem than a solution since it makes the lines between the two processes unclear.

4.6

Europe: From Western Civilization to Venus:

The bond between Europe and the United States has always been strong, a shared culture, religion, and history has formed a natural alliance often expressed as the idea of Western Civilization. This idea of a western civilization is not at all new, and has followed European culture since ancient times. Western Civilization is based on a historical summation of “the classical cultures of Greece and Rome; the Christian religion, particularly Western Christianity; and the Enlightenment of the modern era”.¹³⁸ During the Cold War, this notion was identified in relations to the east-west conflict between the United States and its West European allies, on the one hand, against the Soviet Union and its East European satellite

¹³⁸ Lawrence Birken, “What is Western Civilization?” *the History Teacher* 25.4(Aug 1992):451-461.

states on the other. From the First World War, through the Second and lastly the Cold War, the United States became the defender of Western Civilization consequently the centre of the civilization. Regardless of the shift of power within Western Civilization from Europe to the United States, the notion of a shared cultural community was always there. Many changes have taken place within the United States and in Europe during the last decades of the Cold War that impact on this idea of western unity. The United States has become a truly multicultural nation as new immigrants came from non-European countries have flooded in North America. As the idea of globalization emerged, American business no longer wanted any affiliation to a constraining idea of the West, since its domain had become global: it now needed a global image. The process is multifaceted, with political and social connotations. It is somewhat easier to explain the divide through foreign policy as the idea of a Western Civilization or cultural heritage seem excluding to people of non-Western origin. Throughout the 1990s, the discourse on American/European relations became steered towards what Lundestad described as transatlantic drift.¹³⁹

In the post-Cold War world, American triumphalism was rampant, as American liberalism seemingly had conquered all of its competitors over the last century. Francis Fukuyama¹⁴⁰ described it as the end of history, or the triumph of the liberal capitalist system leading to the incorporation of other non-western societies, as they one by one would adjust to the western system. Later on Robert Kagan¹⁴¹ described Europe and The United States as Venus and Mars. Europe had become Venus; a place of laws and regulations keeps everyone safe from the bigger fishes in the sea, while America still had to live in the “real” world and protect itself from harm by keeping fit and strong. The idea is that Europe has transcended to a higher state of development than the rest of the world, however only under the protective wings of the United States. The weakness of Europe became obvious when the conflicts in Yugoslavia surfaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s. No international law or good will seemed to help in ending the conflict, and Europe was without any forceful means to end the crisis that had occurred on European soil. It was yet again up to the Americans to do the dirty work of ending the escalating ethnic conflict.

¹³⁹ Lundestad,

¹⁴⁰ Francis Fukuyama, *the End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, Inc, 1992).

¹⁴¹ Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power: American and Europe in the New World Order* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003).

4.7

Conclusion:

The changes that took place in Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union towards the end of the 20th century transformed the whole world order leaving the United States as a lone superpower. Moreover, it changed the relationship between Europe and the United States. As they had no longer any shared enemy, their relationship seemed unclear. During the Cold War, many of their differences had to be brushed under the carpet in order to keep the alliance strong. As millions of east Europeans celebrated their new independence and personal freedom, the two allies had to look at them self to see if their relationship had any deeper role than their common security. The discourse that followed never really gave an answer; it only pushed them further away from each other as it to a large degree ended up in either slander, or an acknowledgement of their differences. The natural historical link has to a large degree been left out.

As the power game between east and the west ended, it soon became clear that the United States would not step down its reliance on hard power. It chooses the opposite path as it saw the new situation not as an end to a conflict rather the possibility of new ones to come. The Europeans probably had a narrower span of other threats due to its vicinity to the Soviet Union. The end of The Cold War never brought the stability and peace as many hoped for after the archenemy of western civilization fell. In fact, the first decade after the Cold War became a period of large-scale American warfare.

Coinciding with the new geopolitical situation of the east west relations, came a strengthening of an independent European identity that was formulated through a deepening of the European integration and the formation of the European Union, and de regulation of European mass media. The changes of attitude towards culture that took place in Europe in the late 1980s through the 1990s did not as many had predicted open up the floodgates of Americanization. On the contrary it strengthened local languages and cultures as people chose local instead of international (American). Conflicts over culture was not new, however the 1990s brought to attention a series of series differences between Europe And the United States for many culminating in the American rejection of the Kyoto Protocol.

Up until the American experience, human history has been a long battle over scarce recourses; however, that changed with the discovery of the Americas. Two large continents opened up for unlimited possibilities for many European powers. The United States had lived on this image of endless recourses up until now, with earlier westward expansions, discovery

of minerals and oil along the way erased the idea of boundary and restraint. The economy has been based on a steady influx of newcomers, constant growing demands, abundance of resources and cheap energy. As for the United States, there are deep-rooted structural sides of the modern American culture such as the suburban growth, and its reliance of cars that makes any adjustment toward ecological sustainability more difficult than in Europe, where living patterns tend to leave less of a biological footprint. The new situation leaves the United States in a stalemate seemingly unable to change, let alone be in the position to be the world leader.

As the European economy has grown, it has also strengthened its own cultural expression. Although it has been heavily flavoured by the strong American presence, it has not been turned into an America 2. It is from this European acceptance of American ideas that the United States has been able to draw much of its soft power from, the mythical America that shines through the European TVs, the informal American behaviour and egalitarianism alongside its music and its famous motion picture industry. Except the film industry that is still highly American and rules supreme many of the other ingredients of Americanization have been taken up in the European culture and converted into a European expression and through time, or form, its true ancestry has been lost. If the American ancestry get lost so too does its ability to convert culture into soft power. Finally, Americanization and American soft power was obscured by the idea of globalization. The fact that American power eclipsed European at the same time as the globalization process moved into a more aggressive phase has blurred our perception of Americanization.

The 1990s was a window of opportunity for the United States. No other period of its history bore such promise for the spread of American values than this decade. Never before had the United States been unchallenged economically, politically, culturally, and militarily like it was in the last decade of the 20th century; yet this was the time in which serious cracks in its ability to convert ideology and culture into soft power. It became apparent that Europe had been selective of what it had adapted from the United States, and finally the American soft power's ability to influence others was in question.

5.1

Concluding Chapter:

I set out to research how different forces in the United States in the last century began to change Europe. One of my ideas was that culture was an important ingredient in foreign policy. The idea that culture is important has sometimes been downplayed or even dismissed. It is harder to measure the effects of culture in foreign policy, in contrast to a trade agreement or an arms reduction agreement. Culture is often mentioned in speeches made by heads of states visiting foreign countries, usually as non-specific flattery of the adversary before the “real” talks begin. Throughout history, nonetheless, culture has always been relevant; it has been at the core of almost every conflict. Ancient Rome made great efforts in spreading its culture and imagery to new parts of its empire. Just as other powerful cultures always have done. What is interesting about the spread of American culture, therefore, is not so much that it is exceptional or unique, but the fact that it is happening to us here and now. The relatively recent Americanization process in Europe has made it virtually impossible to understand European culture without also understanding American culture.

I am aware that this thesis borders on the periphery of American studies. The main aim of American studies is to understand America¹⁴² and by moving the focus toward the reception of America in Europe, the thesis also moves towards European studies. That said, the Americanization process of Europe is also an American story. As Europe’s active role in transforming the United States diminished, it has through the Atlantic relationship at least passively continued to influence the United States, just by being such an important focus point for American foreign policy. The fundamental point is that the Americanization process did not just come about because Europeans wanted American films or lifestyle. The American presence in Europe in the 20th century is a central part of American studies because it reflects a concerted American effort to change the course of Europe, making its values and culture more in tune with the American which can be explained, in part, through a messianic drive in the American creed.

Americanization from a European point of view has had many puzzling effects. First, it has in contrast to European fears that it would destroy their culture, possibly done the opposite as it has brought new elements in, and forged a better understanding of their culture.

¹⁴² Horowitz, Richard “Roots of American Studies”.(2008) <<http://myweb.uiowa.edu/rhorwitz/rootsas.htm> > (27Apr.2008)

As Americanization became an issue in Europe over the last century it also made Europeans understand the need for unity. European unity is, as I have said earlier not a new idea, many have tried to conquer the whole continent before. The Americans thought it would be convenient if Europe spoke with one voice, and should get recognition for its role in the formation of the Coal and Steel Community in 1951. On the other hand, the development of European integration has largely been a European work, where the most important legacy of American involvement in European integration has been not so much direct as indirect, i.e. a result of a cultural influence. What I mean by that is that because of the challenge Americanization posed Europe had to work together. The United States in this respect became the outside force that through its presence united Europeans.

5.2 Foundation: Rob Kroes on the receiving end

The internationalization of American studies can mean various things. The phrase pops up in various contexts. There used to be broad agreement that the object of American studies was the history, society, and culture of the geopolitical entity that we know as the United States, commonly referred to by both its own citizens and outsiders as America. As recent trends in American studies make clear, however, the object of study needs to be internationalized, and so do scholarly approaches to it.

Rob Kroes¹⁴³

Reception of American culture in Europe is part of the American experience, and it relates to goals and aspirations that have been formulated by the American leadership in a specific eras. In order to understand recent European history one must also take American history into consideration. The relations between American policies and their influence on foreign powers are interesting also from an American perspective. Americanization has a European agency although it concerns American studies because Americanization of other cultures is also very much a part of the American experience.

To conclude my thesis I have chosen to filter my ideas through the work of a prominent European scholar in American studies. Rob Kroes is arguing for a closer look at the receiving end, in his case the receiving end is Europe. In addition to his own, Kroes put forward two approaches in American studies. The first he calls the Thelen approach (after

¹⁴³ Rob Kroes, "American Empire and Cultural Imperialism: A View from the Receiving End," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2002), 295.

David Thelen).¹⁴⁴ This approach seeks to define the study of the United States without the boundary of the nation-state. He wanted to explore to what extent and in what ways the nation-state had any influence on American history by looking at “how people and ideas and institutions and cultures moved above, below, through, and around, as well as within, the nation-state, to investigate how well national borders contained or explained how people experienced history.”¹⁴⁵ The second approach he calls the “Daniel Rodgers paradigm” who argues for a non-exceptionalist view on the United States “connected to the impact of and response to those forces in other nation-states.”¹⁴⁶ Rob Kroes proposes a third way. In his mind we need to “re-introduce an exceptional element” to the idea of America. His main argument is that the study of America should be international because America has affected the world like no other present day nation. If America has had such an effect on so many people it is must in a sense belong to everybody. In my understanding of Kroes, this is the central idea that makes exceptionalism interesting in respect to America due to the effect it has on other cultures.

How different cultures react to America on the other hand, is part of that culture’s or nation’s history. And because of the centrality of “America” in that reception this should be included in American studies. Although Kroes’ main interest is in commercial culture and advertising, I find his ideas transferable to a broader discussion of Americanization and perception.

The United States has taken on a central role in the world, politically, economically, and culturally to an extent that it has been called imperial, it has not needed to physically force its own culture onto the Europeans. That said Kroes draws up a formula of how American imperialism has worked in a sort of ternary or tri-partite accord. The ternary accord of American imperialism consists of political imperialism, economic imperialism, and cultural imperialism.¹⁴⁷ The political part, identified with how America as the political hegemon of the West after WWII was manifest in the reorganization of the economic structures of Europe through the Marshall Plan. In turn, this opened up for American exports including of its cultural industry, making the economic imperialism the carrier for cultural imperialism. Now, arguably there was little freedom of choice for Europeans after the war, as the consequences of declining to accept American involvement seemed very un-appealing. Nevertheless, the Americanization that came through the American involvement was in the end still a choice.

¹⁴⁴ Kroes, *American Empire*, 296.

¹⁴⁵ Kroes, *American Empire*, 296.

¹⁴⁶ Kroes, *American Empire*, 296.

¹⁴⁷ Kroes, *American Empire*, 300.

An interesting element of this situation is how Europeans appropriated the cultural, economical, and political influence into something uniquely their own.

The American influence was not accepted easily in every European country, however. France has fervently resisted Americanization culminating with its redrawing from NATO in the 1960s. France was one of the first nations to address the imperial overtones of the American industrial expansion in Europe. Rob Kroes uses a quote where France's President Françoise Mitterrand says: "A nation that stops representing itself in images stops being a nation. It is doomed to lead a derivative life, vicariously enjoying worlds of imagery and imagination imported from abroad."¹⁴⁸ It is explanatory of the French thinking about Americanization, as a foreign intruder into their culture, but it is also saying something about how France and the United States have had somewhat similar ideas about the need for national image building. In this respect, the French stand becomes more static and un-free in contrast to the American. The French state are willing to actively combat foreign influence to preserve what it think should be the pillars of French culture, while the Americans gives us the impression that their culture is a collage of foreign and domestic influences combined with liberal economic policies. Kroes is interested in explaining the crucial role of the American commercialism in spreading the image of America, to Americans and to people around the world. The image of America is that of "freedom", whether it is in Marlboro country inhabited by individualistic cowboys or sexually charged images of youth drinking Coca Cola. The commercial image building on behalf of the American nation has been so strong in the United States that when American consumer goods are marketed in Europe it can understandably come across as imperialistic. The European and especially the French countermeasures becomes futile because it only relies on what Kroes describes as "parental guidance" where the state protects its subjects from foreign influence but with few effective means of promoting its own national images in return. In other words, it is a passive act, that inhibits the French culture from developing, and that allows American culture to be the active partner in the relationship.

The French attempt to curve Americanization is not only futile it is also harmful to French culture. Rising walls around the French cultural sphere will only preserve the French culture as it once was and not develop as cultures has always done. This thinking implies a risk of cultural membership based on ethnicity rather than citizenship. In Kroes mind this type of cultures is more prone to become oppressive than that of a culture where membership is

¹⁴⁸ Kroes, *American Empire*, 301.

determined by citizenship alone.¹⁴⁹ Kroes has a positive outlook on cultural influence: the European cultures have managed to appropriate and translate the American culture and official hindrance to this development has only dragged out the process not put an end to it. Moreover, he argues that openness rather than a closed door will liberate the native European cultures and speed up the creolization process that in the end creates a culture that is not only different from what it was, but also more liberated from the Americanization process that sparked the change in the first place. Once liberated from the original American cultural influence, the balance between Europe and the United States as agenda setters will equalize.

5.3 General Conclusion:

I have identified three important eras of European American relations in the 20th century. Wilson's idealistic liberalism and an outward looking American leadership that wanted to change the world by installing a system similar to what the United States had signified the first era from 1919 to 1939.

In order to become convinced Europeans had to get accustomed to American liberal capitalism as American liberals emphasised the close ties between capitalism and liberal democracy. Of course, Europe had already been capitalist for centuries but there where increasing threats from other ideologies and from increased nationalism that threatened free trade. American business flocked to Europe in the interwar era, backed by the fact that the United States had experienced enormous economical gains making the promotion of the American economic system easy to promote.

At the same time as American business started to change European manufacturing and business culture, American entertainment industry turned its eyes on Europe. It was jazz and American films that first started to outdo local musicians and film producers. The prevalence of American films combined with jazz music made many Europeans come to believe that the battle against Americanization was a lost case; jazz took over for local musical traditions even in usually America-wary France. However, it was also in France that the first signs of cultural appropriation begun, as Django Reinhardt made jazz into a Parisian phenomenon. The Americanization process was halted by the financial collapse in 1929 and the following depression. To put it bluntly, I argue that although the United States strengthened its position in Europe during this period, it failed to accomplish its goal of creating stable peace.

¹⁴⁹ Rob Kroes, "Culture as a Historical Agent?" *Boundary* 23.1(spring, 1996): 200.

It was not until the second era that the United States managed to accomplish this mission, the post war era became a very successful era for the United States. In Europe, the United States took on the role as protector, and the Marshall Plan opened up for more Americanization of European industry and culture. Europe became a receiver of American culture and business as the United States had eclipsed Europe in cultural, economical, and military power after WWII. One of the United States main agendas after WWII was to prevent other ideologies to root in Europe. Although fascism was defeated, the Soviet Union posed a security threat to the European continent, along with strong communist parties in many countries. What made the period into such a success for the United States was mainly its ability to combine its arsenal of soft and hard power. Western Europe was forced to seek protection from the United States against the Soviet Union, and formed NATO in which the United States was the undisputed leader. This geopolitical situation changed with the end of the Soviet Union.

The last era in the 20th century began with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. The period from 1989 to 1999 started out victoriously for the United States, however the close relationship with Europe lost its momentum. There were several reasons for this, first of all the Soviet collapse had made American hard power superfluous. This however, was not the only change in the relation. The agenda setting ability of the United States diminished along with the declining importance of its hard power. As the United States celebrated its unipolar moment and its final victory against the last remaining oppositional ideology in Europe, the European nations continued its economic and political integration through the European Union. Europe managed to set the agenda on issues like the environment where the United States became identified as the country that did not sign the Kyoto protocol. The end of the Cold War also made cultural differences more apparent, showing that the Europeans had managed to appropriate American culture without being consciously Americanized. Moreover, the European economy had grown to such extent that the European economy at the end of the era was almost on par with the American. Culturally, European self-confidence made itself present in television and music. As the need for American hard power diminished, several scholars and writers started to suggest that Europe and the United States were drifting apart.

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