



Real  
Instituto  
Elcano

de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos

**A DIFFERENCE THAT MAKES A  
DIFFERENCE? THE US AND EUROPE ON  
VALUES AND CULTURE**

*Emilio Lamo de Espinosa*

Working Paper (WP) 16/2005

22/3/2005

## A Difference that Makes a Difference? The US and Europe on Values and Culture<sup>1</sup>

Emilio Lamo de Espinosa \*

**Summary:** It is a well-known fact that, with the end of the Cold War, there started to be a strategic drifting apart between the US and Europe. The latter was no longer the battleground of a future third world war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and this had at least two major consequences which are still very much alive. On the one hand, the US lost strategic interest in Europe and the focus of its attention on foreign policy moved elsewhere, to the Middle East and, of course, to the Pacific and China and Asia. Europe became the blind spot in America's eye. It still is

### Table of Contents

- Summary
- A new divide
- What is the divide really dividing?
- Differences that don't make a difference
- Value differences and value similarities in foreign policy issues
- Why is this so? Historical experiences of war and terrorism
- Can we bridge the gap? Effective multilateralism
- A few conclusions for further debate
- Appendix

### A New Divide

It is a well-known fact that, with the end of the Cold War, there started to be a strategic drifting apart between the US and Europe. The latter was no longer the battleground of a future third world war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and this had at least two major consequences which are still very much alive. On the one hand, the US lost strategic interest in Europe and the focus of its attention on foreign policy moved elsewhere, to the Middle East (the Greater Middle East, which includes part of Asia) and, of course, to the Pacific and China and Asia. Europe became the blind spot in America's eye. It still is.

Less known but no less important, Russia ceased to be a threat to the US's major European allies, mainly Germany but also certain Eastern Europe countries. This, coupled with a new generation of younger German leaders, less constrained by the memories of the war, explains why Chancellor Schröder was capable of dramatically changing more than thirty years of pro-Atlanticist foreign policy in Germany, thereby opening the way for Chirac's neo-Gaullism. Hence, the US was no longer a necessary ally for Europe. At least from a

---

<sup>1</sup> Paper prepared for the CSIS Seminar on *The Future of US-European Relations. After the Cold War and Beyond the War in Iraq*, The Wye Plantation, 15-17 April 2005.

\* Director, Elcano Royal Institute

strategic point of view the alliance between the EU and the US became a matter of choice, not of necessity.

It is less well known, but again no less important, that partly because of this (ie, because of the dividends of peace) both sides of the Atlantic experienced huge economic growth in the 1990s, with a dramatic increase in the interlocking of the American and European economies. The well-known data compiled by Joseph Quinlan show the strong connections between the economies on the two sides of the Atlantic, to such an extent that it is no longer possible to separate American and European companies. And the flow of mutual investment continues<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, paradoxically, while Europe and the US drifted apart on strategic issues their economic links became closer than ever before.

We are now witnessing the emergence of a third divide/convergence: this time regarding values and, therefore, political culture. To what extent this is rhetoric or reality will be discussed in this paper. Aside from that, it is important to understand why this question, the supposed divergence of values between the US and Europe, has suddenly become a political issue.

Because, to start with, there is nothing new about it. Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835-40) precisely emphasised the significant differences he identified between Europe and the US. Not very surprising since the US was created by European emigrants who wanted to build a New World, something totally different from Europe's *Ancien Régime*. And considering that one of the reasons for their departure from the Old World was religion, it is not surprising that religion became enmeshed in the very fabric of American society. Thus, Tocqueville himself was astonished by the depth of American religiosity, to the point that he said:

*'Whereas in Europe the advance of freedom and Enlightenment was a conquest against religion, in the United States freedom and Enlightenment were a product of religion itself, so much so that the deepest roots of liberty should be found in the network of religious affiliations'* (volume I, chapter 9).

That freedom, democracy, and even science, could be fostered by religion is a strange and even incomprehensible concept for many Europeans, especially in Roman Catholic countries, where similar achievements were won in opposition to religion and as a result of a secular world view.

But despite these and other major and well-known differences (the death penalty, gun control, proclivity to imprisonment or selective prurience, to quote some of the most frequently mentioned), the US and Europe seemed to share major values: freedom, human rights and a free market. At least they shared the values that account for the major institutions of the modern world, namely a democratic State, a market economy and a culture based on reason and science.

This traditional community of values, reinforced during WWII and the Cold War, was strengthened immediately after 11 September 2001, when we all apparently became

---

<sup>2</sup> Joseph P. Quinlan, *Drifting Apart or Growing Together? The Primacy of Transatlantic Economy*, Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2003.

Americans<sup>3</sup>. However, after the Afghan campaign the Bush administration started to focus on Iraq and it became obvious that 9/11 had given rise to two different reactions. Europe, no doubt, under-reacted, as proved by the complete lack of preparation for the events of 11 March in Madrid. But the US certainly over-reacted in many different dimensions, from the militarization of anti-terrorism (War on Terrorism) to incarceration in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib. Thus, the image of the US began to deteriorate dramatically throughout the world and certainly all over Europe.

Even so, at least for a while, it was possible to argue that Europe's differences with the US were similar to internal differences within Europe or within the US itself. And, certainly, not only the Security Council, but also NATO and even the EU itself split as a result of the war. However, as the so-called 'post-war' period progressed, with mistake after mistake accumulating in Iraq, this ceased to be the case and European (and world) public opinion largely opposed US foreign policy directly. It was not yet clearly an anti-American attitude; in many quarters it was only anti-Bush and anti-American-foreign-policy, or at least that is what the polls indicated. One could then sustain the view that America was good, and that only Bush and the neo-cons were an evil influence that distorted America's true and free spirit.

This is no longer the case after Bush's re-election, which for some reason came as a great surprise to many Europeans and was followed with anxiety and enormous interest that turned to disappointment once the results were known. How was it possible that America had re-elected Bush? The flagrant contradiction between the expectations of Kerry's victory and reality demanded an immediate explanation, and two contradictory hypotheses appeared, both forgetting that Bush had been re-elected by a very small margin and that the US is now as divided (or not) as it was four years ago. The weaker hypothesis (favoured by Americans) argued that America was not only internally divided between Metro and Retro states, the coasts and Middle America, democrats and republicans, 51% vs. 48%, but even increasingly polarised, so much so that the traditional bipolar European distribution between left and right, now absent in Europe, might be emerging in the US. The second, stronger hypothesis, favoured by Europeans, is the one that now interests us: if American voters chose someone who is dumb, no doubt it is because they themselves are also dumb, as suggested by the *Daily Mirror*. So the question is: is America a divided nation or is it a homogeneous conservative country?

In any case, we now have the new story that is being trumpeted by the European media: the conservative revolution in the US has succeeded. We no longer confront a neo-con conspiracy or cabal stifling America's liberal spirit and controlling the Administration and its foreign policy. It is the American spirit itself that has been captured by the extreme-right and turned from Enlightenment to religious intolerance. The Americans themselves are to blame, not Bush or the neo-cons. And so, as stated by the Pew Research Center, *Anti-Americanism is deeper and broader now than at any time in modern history*<sup>4</sup>; to a far greater extent than during the Vietnam War, Watergate or the missile crisis or during the Reagan days (another president demonised and misunderstood by western Europeans). Indeed even a boycott of certain iconic American products may be starting to appear as a consequence of that strong anti-American sentiment. A recent poll by GMI found that one

---

<sup>3</sup> Even so, after the brutal terrorist attacks of September 11, 36% of western Europeans considered that US policy was the cause of the attacks and, in a sense, that America deserved it, while 66% thought it was good for the US to feel vulnerable. Pew Research Center, *Trends 2005*, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> Pew Research Center, *Trends 2005*, p. 106.

in five international consumers consciously avoids purchasing American brands as a way of displaying their discontent over recent American foreign policies and military action; the three countries with the highest percentage of consumers who indicate an intention to boycott iconic American brands are: South Korea 45%, Greece 40% and France 25%. According to the study, 60% of Italians, 60% of French, 56% of Greeks and 53% of Germans –all members of the NATO alliance– have negative feelings towards American multinational corporations<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, we can say that the EU took conscience of itself as a consequence of the Iraq war and of American mistakes. As the former French Economy Minister, Dominique Strauss-Khan, wrote in *Le Monde* on 15 February 2003, the day that huge demonstrations against the Iraq war took over the streets of many European cities, *a new nation was born, and that new nation is the European nation*<sup>6</sup>.

The result is that, as suggested by Dominique Moisi, if ten years ago we had two Europes but only one West, now, after the EU's enlargement, we finally have only one Europe, but two different Wests: the European pole and the American pole, apparently one from Venus, the other from Mars, the modern and the post-modern, Hobbes and Kant. Instead of a Huntingtonian conflict of civilisations, what emerges is an intra-civilisational clash so that, surprisingly, Robert Kagan's previously demonised view is now accepted and even reinforced by his former detractors. At least Kagan could compare Venus with Mars: they belong to the same mythical world. But what about the suggestion made by Villepin, the former French Minister of Foreign Affairs, of a clash between 'sharks' and 'seagulls', animals that do not even belong to the same world<sup>7</sup>? Do we live in different galaxies?

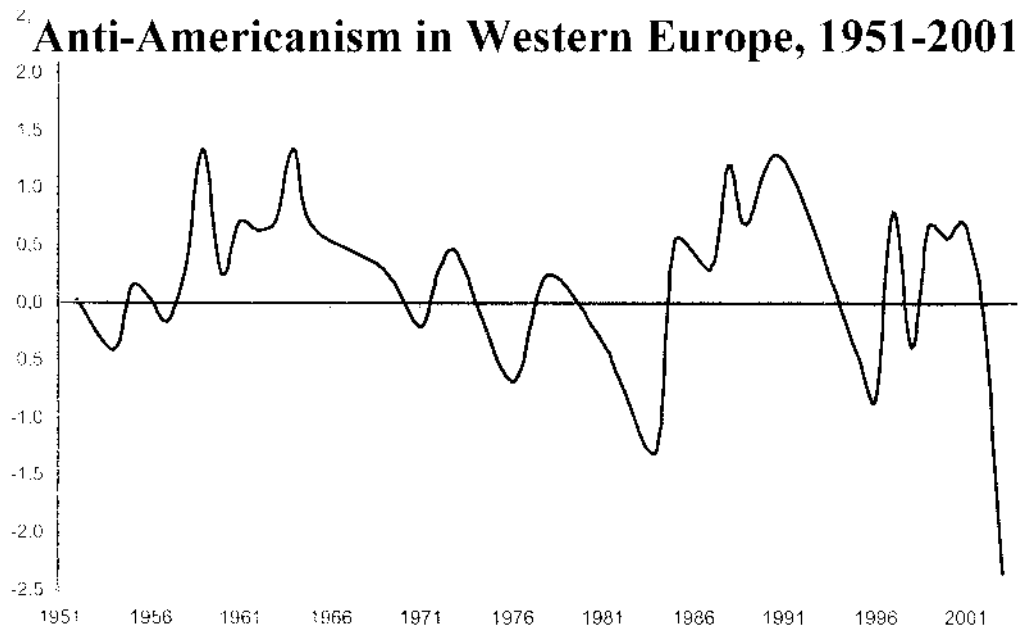
---

<sup>5</sup> See GMI *Global Backlash Against U.S. Brands: Can Tsunami Relief Efforts Stem the Anti-American Tide?*, 2005, at [http://www.gmipoll.com/press\\_room\\_wppk\\_pr\\_02022005.phtml](http://www.gmipoll.com/press_room_wppk_pr_02022005.phtml)

<sup>6</sup> *Le Monde*, 26 February 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Dominique de Villepin, *Le requin et la mouette*, Plon, Paris, 2004.

Figure 1. Trend in Net Attitudes Towards the US (Normalised Average, Yearly Base)<sup>8</sup>



The vertical line represents the net favourable opinion of the United States, measured by subtracting those who have a poor opinion of the US from those who have a good opinion. A positive number means that the percentage of those having a positive opinion is higher than that of those having a poor opinion, while a negative sign indicates the opposite. Source: USIA XX-series 1952-1967, Eurobarometer series 1970-2000, Pew Global Attitudes Survey 2002 and Transatlantic Trend Survey 2002-2004.

Ten years ago it was still accepted that the US and the EU were converging towards a new global model in which America had the lead. Now the European Dream is being presented as an alternative to the American Dream<sup>9</sup>. As Tony Judt has written:

*'America and Europe are not way stations on a historical production line such that Europeans must expect to inherit or replicate the American experience after an appropriate time lag. They are actually quite distinct places, very possibly moving in divergent directions'<sup>10</sup>.*

Whether this is so or not is highly debatable. A recent report based on time distances between the US and Europe provides shocking data. Considering only the EU-15, European *per capita* income was achieved by the US in 1985, and Europe will need up to 2072 to reach American levels provided it grows 0.5% above the US, a very unrealistic hypothesis. The same can be said for employment levels, productivity and R&D. For example, on this last issue, Europe's R&D was reached by the US in 1979, and it would take the EU until 2123 to reach US levels<sup>11</sup>.

But of course the question is not so much about realities (although one should not dismiss them) but about perceptions, and the idea that Europe is moving ahead of the US is dear to

<sup>8</sup> From Pierangelo Isernia, *The Nature of the Beast. Anti-Americanism in Western Europe*, unpublished manuscript, January 2005.

<sup>9</sup> See Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream*, Penguin, 2005; T.R. Reid, *The United States of Europe*, Penguin, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Tony Judt, 'Europe vs. America', *The New York Review of Books*, 10 February 2005, p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> See Eurochambres, *Time for a Fresh Start. A Comparison of Europe and US Economies Based on Time Distances*, 2005.

many Europeans. Indeed, it is not only that the US and Europe are different. As suggested by Timothy Garton Ash, what lies behind the argument of the difference is twofold: (1) that, because of these differences, Europe is better; and (2) that, upon these differences, a European identity can be built<sup>12</sup>.

This is an idea dear to many European politicians, who saw an opportunity for mobilising European identity at a time when public interest in the European project seems to be fading. The hope (but now the illusion) that the Convention to draft a new European Constitution could mobilise citizens around the European project, even creating a new *demos* (as expected, for instance, by Habermas), has been a complete failure as proved by the low turnout (45%) in the latest European elections and the surfacing of doubts about the ratification referendums to approve the new Treaty (with a very low turnout in the Spanish referendum and even a ‘No’ expected in France). Moreover, enlargement has changed dramatically the French and German views of Europe, the two countries that were the driving force behind the EU. For France a loss of influence and control over Europe’s destiny is involved, while Germany is trying to escape from economic stagnation and political stalemate. The temptation to project their own problems outside through a mixture of a new euro-Gaullism and old Latin-American populism is strong. So, if the EU has difficulties in consolidating its own credibility, why not use the US as an excuse? And not only politicians, but even some of the most brilliant European minds (such as the German sociologist Jurgen Habermas) have said that the United States of Europe should be built upon ‘transatlantic value differences’. Stop complaining about differences; let’s enjoy the difference, let’s make them wider, the new Wall will divide the Atlantic and help to create a stronger Europe. Up to 71% of Europeans now believe that the EU should become a superpower like the US<sup>13</sup>.

But with this shift the question of values seems to stop being an American problem. Of course it is, and we should wonder to what extent this gloomy picture of an American Conservative triumph is true or not, or if the country is as divided or even polarised as it seems. But it is more than that since the contradiction in values between the liberal post-modern Europe and the traditional conservative America can make cooperation on many matters, and mainly in international relations, no longer possible. Can Venus and Mars cooperate? Does Kant need Hobbes?

This reconstruction of the building of the thesis of incompatibility and value differences tells us many things, though nothing about its intrinsic merits. It shows us that it was not the product of scientific discovery, but an argument in a heated political debate. It shows that, suddenly, differences that existed for years became relevant, as in a Gestalt experiment. What months ago were common values have now become another reason for divergence. If the EU and the US were linked by politics and values in the past, all that remains now is a *solidarité de fait*, economic ties and interests, surrounded by recrimination and bad feelings.

Obviously, the main question is not why the thesis of the value difference has suddenly emerged. Nor is it what concrete interests this thesis serves (obviously, both extremes: European anti-Americanism and American unilateralism). Even more, the main issue is not

---

<sup>12</sup> T. Garton-Ash, *Mundo libre*, Tusquets, Madrid, 2005, p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> EOS-Gallup Europe, *Transatlantic Trends 2004*. Whenever I make references to this survey, the data refer to Europe-9, ie, the following countries: France, Germany, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Slovakia.

if there are differences in values or beliefs between Europe and the US, because there *are* differences, even if much smaller than argued. The main question for us is if these differences are relevant to political culture and, mainly, to foreign policy. The question then seems to be twofold. First, are these differences important? Do they really make a difference? And second, are these differences greater than the differences one can find within the EU or within the US? And perhaps there is even a third question: how are these differences perceived by others, outside the Atlantic area?

### **What is the Divide Really Dividing?**

But before turning to the analysis of these differences, let us first make some introductory remarks.

The first is that America means much more to Europe than vice versa. As I have argued elsewhere, even if the world can only be managed multilaterally, right now it is unipolar since there is only one major world power<sup>14</sup>. There is thus a logical asymmetry of interests. What happens inside the US is of major importance to the whole world, but not vice versa, although for the Americans Europe is still more important than Asia (54% vs. 29%). This asymmetry was made evident during the latest American elections, that were followed with as much (if not more) interest and anxiety in Europe than in the US itself, so that even though the US might no longer be of strategic interest to Europe, it is certainly a major political concern. Being affected by the US, but unable to control what happens there (indeed unable to vote), the objective European position towards the US generates feelings of inferiority and anxiety. Europeans would like the US to be just another normal country (and they would like a multi-polar world too); but it is not, and this is hard to accept. The word Empire unavoidably emerges, a word loaded with negative connotations. It is therefore natural for Europeans to tend to reject America more than Americans reject Europe. Indeed, one can say that Europeans reject America frequently because Americans are simply not interested in Europe.

This helps explain that, even though American anti-Europeanism has been weak and is a relatively new phenomenon, European anti-Americanism is both strong and has a long history. Indeed, we can identify at least two completely different and not necessarily compatible European stereotypes of the US. On the one hand, there is a more rightist view of the US as the land of consumerism, money and material values, a greedy, ignorant, plutocratic country, immoral and even libertine as a consequence, a country with neither values nor spirit. Such has been, for example, the Roman Catholic Church's classical view of the US, the land of materialism that is opposed to a more civilised, spiritual and educated Europe. On the other hand, there is the leftist view of the US as an imperialist and militarist power, highly ideologised, conservative and even semi-fascist, bordering on intolerance and perhaps even inquisitorial, but extremely intelligent to the point that all that happens in the world is manipulated and/or secretly designed by the Americans, from 9-11 to the tsunami in Asia (and nobody believes more in American omnipotence than many anti-Americans), a view also shared by many Latin Americans. In a sense, for the European right the US is a leftist country, while for the European left it is rightist. Frequently both views are shared in the same countries, such as in France and Spain where it is still possible to find two contradictory versions of anti-Americanism on left and right. I conducted a simple survey a few years ago in Spain only to find that anti-Americanism was strong in the extreme right and in the extreme left, and much weaker or non-existent in

---

<sup>14</sup> E. Lamo de Espinosa, *Bajo puertas de fuego*, Taurus, Madrid, 2004.



the centre. Why? Because for the extreme right the US had been against General Franco whereas for the extreme left the US had supported him. Both were against America, but for opposite reasons.

Finally, there is a third, far more positive view of the US, in countries that were helped or liberated by the US, either during WWII or during the Cold War, such as the UK, Germany and Italy, and later on Poland, Hungary and others. For them America is (or was) a generous country willing to risk the lives of its people to defend the freedom of others, made up of idealistic, though naïve and unsophisticated, young people. And of course we still have a fourth stereotype, the Great Satan, the Evil Empire, a view shared by the ayatollahs, some anti-globalisers and even some American intellectuals.

Of course there are also two American stereotypes of Europe: the cynical, unethical or even immoral Europe, and the post-modern, liberal minded, pragmatic and reasonable Europe.

Partly because of the general interest in the US, America means many things for many different people. It can mean freedom (for the Poles) or totalitarianism (for the Chileans); a creative culture or a mass culture; innovation or tradition; religiosity or secularism. Indeed the accusations are frequently contradictory. The US is a godless country for Muslims but a country of naïve believers for Europeans. As usual, it is not the values in themselves that matter, but the appearances, the contrasts between them and us, that create the differences that matter. Therefore the only thing that all varieties of anti-Americanism share is precisely that: rejection; but they differ widely in the kind of US they reject.

Thus, it is no surprise to find that America is also admired in many different regards. Popular culture or science, for instance, is widely admired. Between 63% and 76% of western Europeans like American popular culture (even though between 50% and 71% dislike the spread of American ideas and customs<sup>15</sup>). Indeed, Americans are liked much more than ‘America’ and the views on the American people have not been much affected lately: 80% of the British, 68% of the Germans and 53% of the French have favourable views on America’s citizens<sup>16</sup>.

**Figure 2. Opinions Regarding America**

| (%)            | Likes<br>American<br>Democracy | Likes<br>American<br>Culture | Likes<br>American<br>Economy | Admires<br>American<br>Science | Dislikes<br>American Cultural<br>Hegemony |
|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| UE             | 44                             | 67                           | 32                           | 71                             | 61  |
| Eastern Europe | 50                             | 58                           | 48                           | 63                             | 55  |
| Arab Countries | 37                             | 38                           | 43                           | 64                             | 78  |
| Latin América  | 45                             | 62                           | 47                           | 78                             | 60  |
| Asia           | 54                             | 49                           | 49                           | 81                             | 56  |
| África         | 67                             | 64                           | 62                           | 85                             | 49  |

Source: *Worldviews* 2002, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, and *Barómetro del Real Instituto Elcano*-2003.

So, we have differing views, certainly, but also different realities. America is a huge country, at least by European standards, and there are huge differences within the US. *Two nations in one country*, as T. Garton Ash wrote<sup>17</sup>. Only two? Certainly not for the marketing experts that differentiate between varied lifestyles, consumer patterns and publicity messages. No longer a mass society, you have many different markets, lifestyles,

<sup>15</sup> Pew, p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> Pew, p. 114.

<sup>17</sup> *The Guardian*, 4 November 2004.

interests and values. Ethnic identity is very strong and always has been, and there is a Black America, a Latino America, an Asian America and a Wasp America, plus Polish, Irish, Italian and Jewish minorities, to name but a few. In any case, 66% of Americans perceive that their country is more divided today and that the main cause of the cleavage is foreign policy (36%) –well above domestic issues (19%), which are precisely what divides the US and the EU<sup>18</sup>–. So, are transatlantic differences also inter-American differences?

But there are huge differences within the EU too. Europe is a label that covers countries that are very different, to such an extent that internal differences in Europe are much greater than internal differences in the US. From Andalusia or Sicily to Norway or Denmark, and from Portugal to Hungary, Europe is characterised by cultural differences. With twenty official languages in the UE (plus a dozen that are not officially recognised), a varied religious landscape (Roman Catholics, various types of Protestants, Orthodox, Jews, Muslims and others) and a strong tradition of national identities and ‘sacred’ national histories, it is not surprising that the motto ‘Unity in diversity’ (*In varietate concordia*), although certainly not very original, was chosen in the Constitutional Treaty as one of the symbols of the Union (art. 1.8).

Thus, if America is divided and Europe is also divided, should we assume that they are divided but only on separate sides of a line? Of course not. There are more differences in culture and values between Naples and London than between London and Boston. There are also greater differences between Washington and LA than between Washington and Paris. It is therefore no surprise that the US position on values is frequently within the spectrum of European positions. Moreover, if we were to make the experiment of treating the US as a collection of 50 different countries or States, then they would blend naturally with the 25 European countries on many issues. Methodologically we are comparing a relatively disaggregate entity (Europe), where some of the units are very small, with an aggregate entity of more than 250 million<sup>19</sup>.

This means that we should not deceive ourselves by supposing that there is ‘one’ America or ‘one’ Europe; nor is there ‘a’ European view of the US, in the same way that there is not ‘an’ American view of Europe. When we speak of differences, we unavoidably speak of differences identified as such. In the final analysis everybody and everything is different; the question is what issues become relevant at certain moments, thereby becoming conscious ‘differences’. And that depends on stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies.

Moreover, what ultimately matters are not real differences or perceptions of differences, but frequently the will to be different and, therefore, the will to emphasise differences. For a foreign observer, differences between Catalonia and the rest of Spain are almost inexistent. However many Catalans have been (and are) determined to find minor differences and emphasise them, producing a Catalan ‘identity’ that is different from Spain’s. Obviously this endeavour forms part of the political battles for hegemony and not of the field of scientific evidence. We do not move from reality to knowledge and consciousness, but the other way round, from consciousness to reality, and it is always possible to find fault lines if one wants to. It is the narcissism of minor differences.

---

<sup>18</sup> Pew, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> As far as I know there is only one report that compares the 50 American states with the 15 EU states: Fredrick Bergström and Robert Gidehag, *EU versus USA*, Timbro, June 2004. The comparison is on *per capita* income and the results are startling. For example, as a US state, the UK, France or Germany would be the fifth poorest American state. Spain, for example, would be the poorest.

### **Differences that Don't Make a Difference**

Let me first try to identify the list of major value differences that are frequently considered to separate the two sides of the Atlantic, a list that covers many different dimensions:

*Societal values, such as:*

- Responsibility for one's life
- Degree of State intervention
- Social Security and Welfare State
- Fiscal burden

*Treatment of delinquency and violence:*

- Gun control
- Penal population
- Death penalty

*Religiosity:*

- Belief in God
- Prurience
- Family values
- Homosexuality
- Stem cells

*Rightism:*

- Patriotism
- Racism
- Poverty
- Immigration policy

*Foreign policy:*

- Militarism
- Use of force
- Unilateralism
- Respect for UN
- Foreign aid

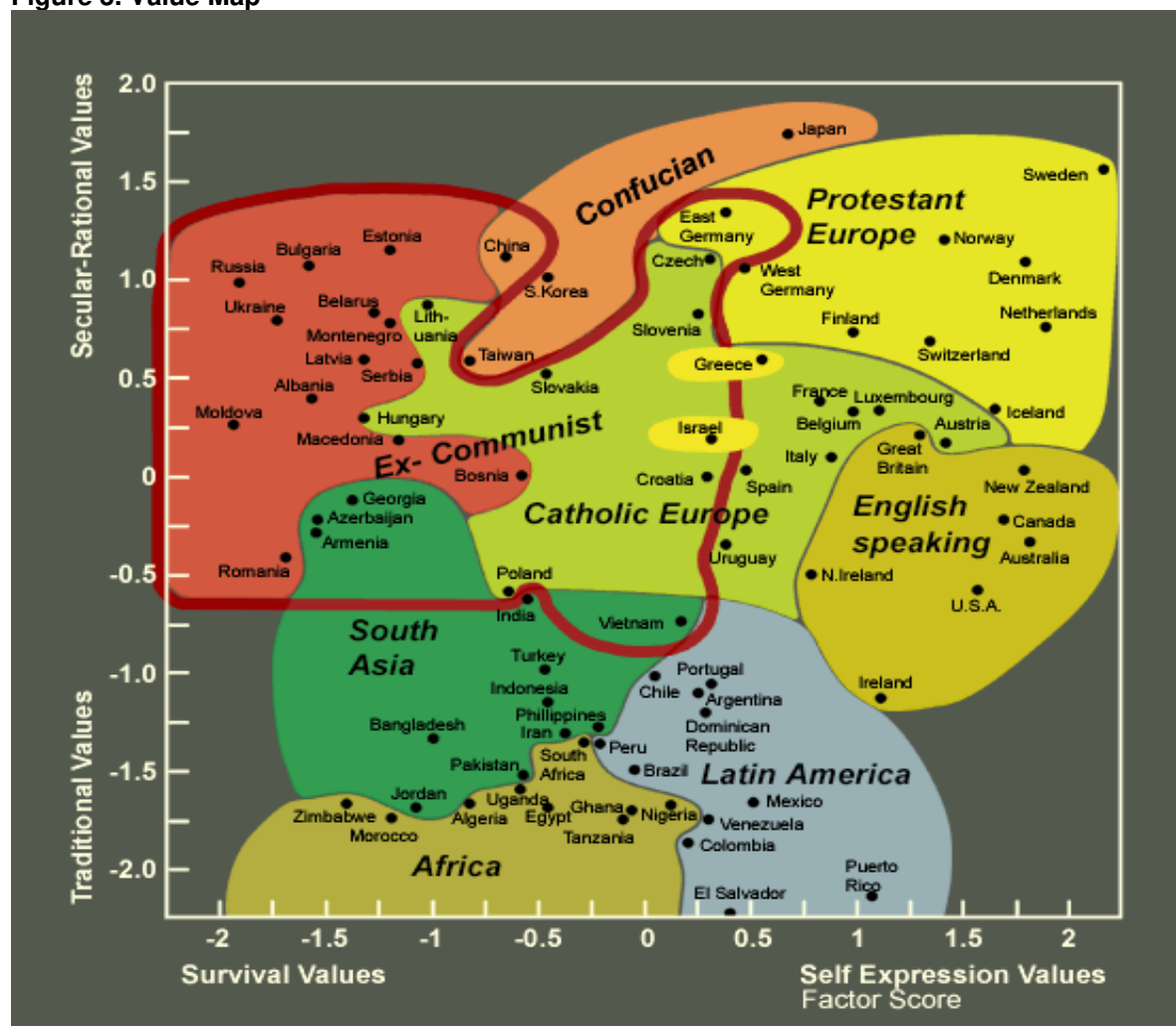
We cannot spend too much time discussing the question of societal values in general. All of them return to the question of a more traditional US versus a more liberal Europe. One must accept that this thesis is backed by strong empirical research. Ronald Inglehart's *World Value Surveys* have been comparing values in around 100 countries covering more than 85% of the world's population for more than fifteen years, so we have the most complete database on values across countries and time<sup>20</sup>. As is well known, Inglehart's thesis is that as *per capita* income increases, values shift first from traditional to secular-rational (from agrarian to industrial), and later from survival to self-expression, to post-industrial or post-material values. Thus, the US should be one of the more advanced countries in self-expression and post-industrial values. However, this is not so and the US is a 'deviant' case, much more traditional than should be expected and more traditional than most European countries. Indeed, all English-speaking countries are more traditional than Protestant Europe and on a par with Roman Catholic Europe. With the exception of

---

<sup>20</sup> See Ronald Inglehart, Miguel Basanez, Jaime Díez Medrano, Yilmaz Esmer, Loek Halman and Ruud Luijck (eds), *Human Beliefs and Values, a Cross-Cultural Sourcebook*, with companion CD ROM, Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 2004; Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003; Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Ireland, the US is the most traditional of all the developed countries. It is as if the US had problems not in moving from survival to self-expression values, but on leaving behind, as others have done, many traditional values. How can this be explained?

**Figure 3. Value Map**



Let us first see what ‘traditional’ means in this context. Traditional values include the following:

- Religion is very important.
- One should teach a child to obey.
- A strong sense of national pride.
- A main goal is to make parents proud.
- Divorce is never justifiable.
- Abortion is never justifiable.
- We need stricter limits on selling foreign goods.
- We need more respect for authority.

Secular-rational values emphasise the opposite.

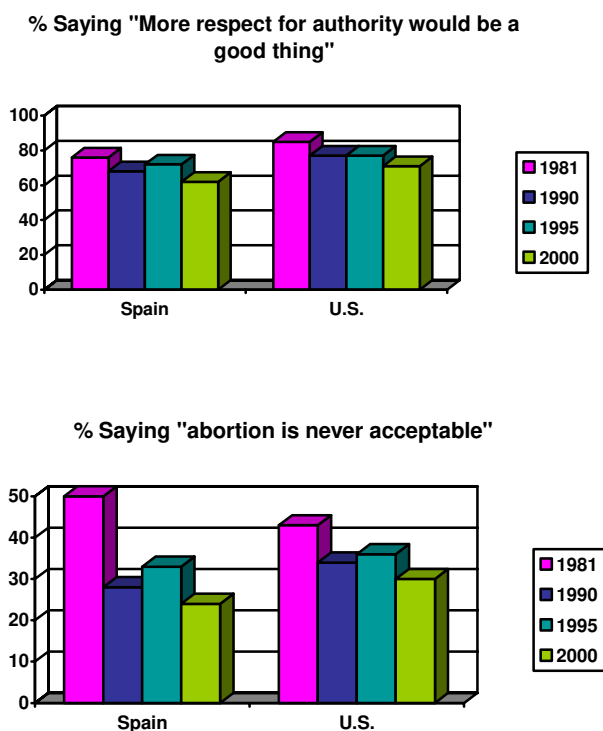
Indeed, what we have here is, to a great extent, path-dependent development plus an optical effect. Path-dependent because, as Figure 3 clearly shows, and as previous

comments by Tocqueville suggest, the starting point matters and countries move in a known direction but at different paces. The US has always been a country of believers and it remains so because there never was a contradiction between modernity and religion. For Europeans, especially Roman Catholic Europeans, modernity was built on secularism and it seems strange, for example, to link science with religion.

But above all what we have here is an optical effect. The US and Europe are both moving in the same direction: towards more liberal post-materialist values. But they are moving at different speeds and from rather different starting points. Europe is moving much faster than the US. Catholic Europe, especially, is moving much faster: twenty years ago the US was at the vanguard of secularism but now it is more at the rearguard.

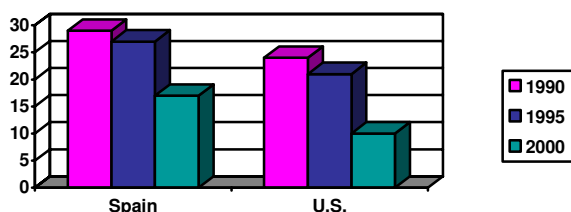
Let us compare the US with the European country that has moved faster on values: Spain. As we can see, both Spain and the US are moving in the same direction on major issues relevant to traditional values: respect for authority, gender equality, homosexuality and abortion. Spain, however, is moving much faster than the US, making inter-generational differences in Spain the world's widest. My own experience can serve as an illustration. When I moved to the University of California in the early 70s from a still Francoist Spain, I was moving from counter-reformation to counter-culture, from Trento to Marcuse and hippy power. It was not so much travelling in space but travelling in time: from the past to the future. Today this is completely different and Spain is one of the most liberal and tolerant countries in Europe (and indeed in the world)<sup>21</sup>.

**Figure 4. Spain vs. the US**



<sup>21</sup> For example, the Spanish government is now approving a law that would permit gay marriage, a law that according to all polls, is backed by the majority of the population.

**% Saying "When jobs are scarce men have more right to a job than a woman"**



Indeed, Americans are not becoming more conservative. On issues such as the death penalty, homosexuality, abortion or the legal use of marijuana they have moved towards the left, not the right. If at all, we could say that the country is more polarised: democrats are more liberal and republicans are more conservative<sup>22</sup>. Probably because, as Inglehart says, the fundamentalists *are fighting a rearguard action against cultural change*. They are on the defensive, not on the offensive.

Even more, on many relevant questions it is Europe, not America, that seems traditional. For instance, on gender equality America is ahead of many European countries such as France, Italy, Spain and Belgium<sup>23</sup>. The US is more open to immigrants than Europe: only 10% of Americans reject immigrants versus 20% in Belgium and Austria and 13% in Italy, France and Germany.

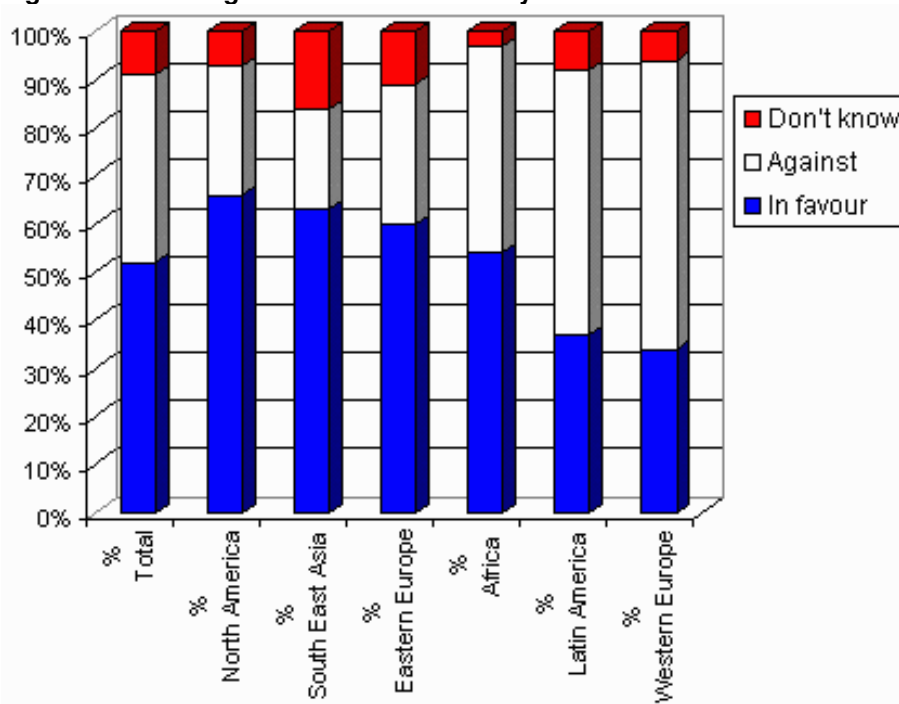
Let us take another traditional example of value difference: Americans strongly disagree with the idea that *Success is determined by forces outside our control*. 65% of Americans disagree, as well as 63% of Canadians. They are optimistic and believe that one can control one's future. In Europe the opposite is the case: 67% agree in Germany and Italy and 54% in France, while the UK is evenly split (48% vs. 48%). However, few countries in the world share the American view: 48% in the Czech and Slovak Republics and 52% in Japan<sup>24</sup>, and little else. Thus, the European view is shared by Latin American, Asian, Arab and African countries. So which one is modern and which post-modern?

<sup>22</sup> See *The Economist*, 12 February 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Data from Inglehart.

<sup>24</sup> Pew, p. 116.

**Figure 5. For or Against the Death Penalty?**



Even on such a divisive issue as the death penalty differences are not as great as they appear. It is true that the majority of Americans support the death penalty, two out of three on average, a view shared by all the world except Europe and Latin America, where it was abolished for the first time (in Venezuela in 1863). On average, in Europe two out of three are against the death penalty. However, in the UK between 60% and 70% think it is justified sometimes, and up to 58% accept it in the case of the murder of a child<sup>25</sup>. In France, in 1981, the year capital punishment was abolished by Mitterrand, 62% of the population was in favour; in 2000 it was still 45%; in 2002 it was down to 36% and to 30% in 2003<sup>26</sup>. Two-thirds of Germany's population favoured the death penalty at the time of its abolition. Today a majority of Austrians, around 50% of Italians and 49% of Swedes favour its reintroduction.

**Figure 6. Question: *Etes-vous tout à fait d'accord, plutôt d'accord, plutôt pas d'accord ou pas d'accord du tout avec chacune des affirmations suivantes?***

| Il faut rétablir la peine de mort | Rappel enquête               | Rappel enquête               | Novembre 2003 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
|                                   | Le Monde/RTL SOFRES May 2000 | Le Monde/RTL SOFRES May 2002 |               |
| - Tout à fait d'accord            | 22                           | 17                           | 14            |
| - Plutôt d'accord                 | 23                           | 19                           | 26            |
| - Plutôt pas d'accord             | 16                           | 17                           | 20            |
| - Pas d'accord du tout            | 37                           | 45                           | 38            |
| - Sans opinion                    | 2                            | 2                            | 2             |

Of course, there are differences and religiosity is indeed the major one and the one that accounts for the 'traditional' character of the US. America is much more religious than Europe. The view that *it is necessary to believe in God to be moral* is accepted by almost 60% of Americans but rejected by the majority of Europeans, including the Poles.<sup>27</sup> For

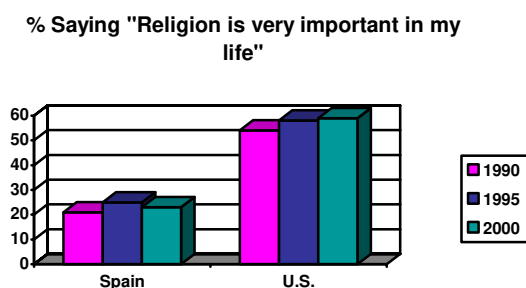
<sup>25</sup> MORI, 23 August 2002.

<sup>26</sup> SOFRES.

<sup>27</sup> Pew, p. 117.

the Americans religion is very important, but not for Europeans in general. But what can one conclude from this statement? Many European constitutions still include a state religion; many Europeans believe that the Pope cannot be wrong and many believe in the Virgin Mary. As I write, the press reports that several thousand Spaniards waited hours, during a chill night in Madrid, to visit the Christ of Medinaceli, who is supposed to grant any favour asked. First in the queue was the King of Spain. What would the European press say if Bush had done the same?

Figure 7.



And we can go on. Is the US more militaristic than Europe? Yes in terms of expenditure: the US spends US\$953 per capita, the world's third largest. France spends US\$772 and Norway US\$668. But the US has fewer soldiers per 1.000 inhabitants (4.7) than the Scandinavian Countries (around 6), Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and even France. And arms exports *per capita* (US\$15.70) are lower in the US than in Sweden (US\$54), Norway (US\$34), France (US\$21) and the UK (US\$18.70).

What about family values? The US has five divorces per 1,000 persons, whereas Portugal has only 0.88. Household size in the US is 2.6, in Ireland 3.1, in Italy 2.7 and in France 2.5. And, as expected in an advanced country, the share of single-person households over the total is at its highest in the US, at 26%, compared with 24% in Sweden and 20% in Denmark and Finland. As many have argued, it is because family realities are in trouble that family values are so much emphasised.

Thus, if we compare the European left-right continuum with the American liberal-conservative continuum, the similarity is astonishing: in Europe 68% are in the centre, 10% are extreme left and 8% extreme right; in the US 66% are centre, 10% extreme left and 14% extreme right. The data cast doubt about the issue of who is more divided.

Moreover, it could be argued that it is Europe, not the US, which is becoming more conservative. Around 15% to 18% of French people vote for Jean Marie Le Pen's semi-fascist National Front. Highly conservative or semi-fascist parties are in power in Italy and were in power in Austria were they got 27% of votes in 1999. Extreme-right parties won recent municipal or general elections in Denmark (with 13% in 2001), Norway (15% in 2001), Belgium (24% in 2003), the Netherlands, Switzerland (28% in 2003), Greece (14% in 2003) and Eastern Germany, not to mention Rumania or Serbia. Indeed, extreme right, xenophobic and anti-immigration ideas are on the rise all over Europe. In the US only 14% of the population considers itself to be on the extreme right, compared with 23% in Ireland, 22% in Finland and 21% in Denmark, Belgium and Austria. So now we can ask: is the US moving slowly in a liberal direction whereas Europe is fast moving in a conservative one?



Returning to Inglehart, the truth is that the ‘big divide’ is not across the Atlantic but, as one would expect, between rich and poor countries. One does not have to be a Marxist to understand that. As we have seen, the basic values prevailing in rich societies have been changing rapidly and along a predictable trajectory, but the values of low-income countries have not been changing. Moreover, despite globalisation, we are not witnessing a cultural convergence on a world scale; on the contrary, the cultural gap between rich and poor countries was greater in 2001 than in 1981. The great divide is still between the West and Muslim, Confucian or Nativist countries.

To mention just a couple of examples, there are perhaps more than 50 executions a year in the US but, what about the 10,000 executions a year in China, that strategic ally of the French ‘multipolar’ world? And what about the poll by al-Jazeera that revealed that 80% of the Arabs interviewed considered it legitimate for terrorists in Iraq to execute innocent westerners? These are, indeed, value differences that make a difference.

### **Value Differences and Value Similarities in Foreign Policy Issues**

If we now turn towards the attitudes and values relevant to foreign policy issues, we will find astonishing and very significant similarities but also important differences<sup>28</sup>.

Let us first turn to the surprising similarities.

To begin with, we both share *mutual views* on ourselves and the world. The EU’s rating of the US is 55 over 100; the US’s rating of the EU is more or less the same, 62. The same can be said about the mutual views of the US and France and Germany. The American rating of France is 51 and the French rating of the US is also 51. The American rating of Germany is 61 and the German rating of the US is only slightly lower, at 55. Outside views are also similar: the US and EU ratings of the Palestinians are 41% and 42%, respectively; for North Korea the figures are 35% and 31%; for China 49%; and even on Iran, they are 36% and 34%, respectively. The only significant difference is Israel: at 40% in the EU and 60% in the US. Mutual views are also similar on major *international institutions*: the United Nations has a favourable rating of 71% in the EU and of 64% in the US; on NATO the figure is 62% in the EU and also of 62% in the US.

We also share a similar perception of *threats*. International terrorism is the highest, with 71% and 76% considering it very important in respectively the EU and the US. The second is Islamic fundamentalism: with 52% in the EU and 51% in the US considering it very important. The global spread of diseases such as AIDS is rated 52% in the EU and 51% in the US. A major economic downturn is rated 43% in the EU and 41% in the US. And a military conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours is rated 40% in the EU and 38% in the US. Indeed, the similarities are astonishing. The only difference is a terrorist attack using WMD, rated 56% in the EU and 75% in the US (but in the EU the figures range from 31% in the Netherlands to 77% in Spain). One should immediately add that there has been a major convergence on this matter: only two years ago the perception of threats was much higher in the US than in Europe.

There are also surprising similarities when asked about the causes justifying the use of military force:

---

<sup>28</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all data come from *Transatlantic Trends 2004*.

- To prevent an imminent terrorist attack: 83% in the EU and 92% in the US (the rate in France is also 92%).
- To provide assistance to victims of war: 91% in the EU and 81% in the US.
- To ensure the supply of oil: 42% approval in the EU and 44% in the US; 51% disapproval in the EU and 50% in the US.
- To remove a government that abuses human rights: 50% in the EU and 57% in the US.
- To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons: 70% in the EU and 80% in the US.
- To defend a NATO ally that has been attacked: 75% in the EU and 87% in the US.

The main differences relates to how civil wars should be handled, events that are much more familiar to Europeans:

- To stop fighting in a civil war: 56% approval in the EU and only 49% in the US.
- To provide peacekeeping troops after a civil war has ended: 80% in the EU and 66% in the US.

Finally, the demand for multi-polarity does not seem to be shared by many people. To the question *Would the world be safer if another country was as powerful as the US?* only France agrees (54% vs 41%). The UK is evenly split and Germany is against, as well as other countries such as Russia, Jordan, Pakistan and Morocco<sup>29</sup>.

However, if similarities are important, differences are much greater and cover the entire spectrum of issues under discussion.

First, the Iraq war and its consequences. Here disagreements are blatant:

- US and British leaders lied about Iraqi WMD (only 31% of American believe they did)<sup>30</sup>.
- They were not sincere on the war on terrorism. For most Europeans the real reasons were the control of Middle Eastern oil, world domination, changing unfriendly Muslim governments and protecting Israel.
- 80% of Europeans think that the Iraq war was not worth it; Americans are divided.
- The US favours Israel against the Palestinians<sup>31</sup>.
- The Iraq war has increased the threat of terrorism: 73% of Europeans agree; Americans are divided, but the majority (49%) also agree.

Thus, American leadership is rejected by Europeans:

---

<sup>29</sup> Pew, p. 118.

<sup>30</sup> Pew, p. 110.

<sup>31</sup> Pew, p. 112.

- On American unilateralism, 70% of Americans believe that the US has a great deal or a fair amount of consideration for others; 70% of Germans and 84% of the French consider that not much or not at all.
- How desirable is it for Europeans that the US exerts a strong leadership? 58% are against. On the contrary, 79% of Americans believe that a strong EU leadership is undesirable.

But where differences are greater is in the use of force:

- Americans agree (82%) that *under some conditions war is necessary to impose justice*. Europeans are divided (57% disagree and 41% agree) with France, Germany and Spain on the pacifist side (approval rates of 8%-9%) and the UK on the other side.
- The idea that *the best way to ensure peace is through military strength* is rejected by 69% of Europeans whereas Americans are divided (54% agree and 44% disagree).
- Europeans think overwhelmingly that *Economic power is more important than military power* (84% agreement in Europe and only 64% in America).
- Finally, the idea that *the best way to fight terrorism is military action* is shared by the majority of Americans (63%) whereas Europeans are divided (47% approval vs. 49% disapproval).

Based on these data, we have created a typology of attitudes to the use of force by crossing two main questions: if war is or is not necessary sometimes to impose justice, and if economic power is or is not more important than military power.

**Figure 8. Attitudes to the Use of Force**

|                      | Military power |        |         |     |       |        |          |       | Economic power |     |
|----------------------|----------------|--------|---------|-----|-------|--------|----------|-------|----------------|-----|
| War is necessary     | Hawks          |        |         |     |       |        |          |       | Pragmatists    |     |
| War is not necessary | Isolationists  |        |         |     |       |        |          |       | Doves          |     |
| (%)                  | UK             | France | Germany | NL  | Italy | Poland | Portugal | Spain | Europe         | US  |
| Doves                | 19             | 49     | 52      | 32  | 45    | 41     | 43       | 65    | 42             | 10  |
| Pragmatists          | 63             | 34     | 35      | 50  | 40    | 47     | 41       | 22    | 43             | 65  |
| Isolationists        | 5              | 11     | 9       | 7   | 10    | 6      | 9        | 11    | 8              | 3   |
| Hawks                | 14             | 6      | 4       | 10  | 4     | 6      | 6        | 2     | 7              | 22  |
|                      | 100            | 100    | 100     | 100 | 100   | 100    | 100      | 100   | 100            | 100 |

Source: Transatlantic Trends 2003 and Barómetro del Real Instituto Elcano.

The results show that:

- There are a small number of isolationists on both sides.
- There are similar numbers of pragmatists: 43% in Europe and 65% in the US.
- There is a much higher number of doves in Europe (42%) than in the US (10%).
- There are similar numbers of hawks in Europe (7%) and doves in the US (10%).

Suspicion towards US motives, coupled with a relatively strong pacifist tendency, explain why Europeans demand much stricter formalities for the legitimate use of force:

- UN approval is required by 82% of Europeans, whereas Americans are divided (58% yes, 38% no). Without UN approval 70% of Europeans would not support the use of force; Americans are again divided (49% yes, 46% no).
- NATO approval is required by 72% of Europeans; again, Americans are divided (58% yes, 37% no).
- Finally, the approval of leading European allies is required by 80% of Europeans; Americans are again divided (66% yes, 29% no).

It is important, however, to see who rejects whom more, because the data clearly show that whereas the majority of Americans want to cooperate with the EU, the majority of Europeans want a more independent approach. Thus, 71% of Americans believe that we have enough common values to cooperate on international problems; but only 60% of Europeans think so. Further, 34% of Europeans think that we cannot cooperate because of value differences but only 21% of Americans think so. As a consequence, 60% of Americans think we should cooperate in security and diplomatic affairs but 50% of Europeans think we should take a more independent approach. And the same is true on Iraq: 60% of Americans think we should cooperate on Iraq but a majority of Europeans (58%) think we should take a more independent line. Indeed, up to 37% of Americans consider it very desirable that the EU exert a strong leadership in world affairs, whereas only 6% of Europeans consider the same for the US. The majority of Americans (59%) reject the view that *The US does not need the support of its European allies when it takes action globally*. The US wants to cooperate with Europe; it is Europe that is no longer willing to cooperate with America.

### **Why is This So: Historical Experiences of War and Terrorism**

Thus, in the final analysis, differences are important but are focused on a narrow set of questions: those dealing with the use of force. Americans tend to view in a much more favourable light the use of force in international affairs, while Europeans are far more reluctant.

There are good reasons for these different mindsets. I shall mention just a few.

The first is our different experience with wars. The US has only had one civil war (excluding the War of Independence); all of its other wars were fought outside its territory and therefore the population has had no direct experience of their horrors. Moreover, Americans have had a relatively positive experience with wars. As winners of the First, Second and even Third World Wars, they cannot help thinking that wars are sometimes necessary to impose justice. True, the Vietnam experience was a collective trauma and led the country to a deep process of self-critique; many lessons were learned, but the belief that wars might be right is still widespread.

The European experience is exactly the opposite. The Treaty of Westphalia led to 350 years of constant wars, almost one for each generation of Europeans. The balance of powers led to the First and Second World Wars that destroyed the continent and killed hundreds of millions of people. Even the stillborn Third World War was to have had Europe as its battleground. Precisely to avoid a continuation of this the EU was created on the basis of an alliance and parity between France and Germany. Borges' dramatic comment has never been truer: *it's not love but horror that unites us*. Thus, while Americans see wars from the outside, as something that happens abroad and against others,

Europeans see wars from the inside, as something taking place at home and resembling a civil war. This is how historians see the two World Wars: as European civil wars.

Moreover, during the long period of the Cold War, economic exhaustion and guilt led Europe to rely on the US for its own security, a role willingly accepted by the Americans. Since then Europe has fostered a free-rider culture on security matters. Unable to guarantee our own security, the fiasco of Suez in 1956 proved that the time for further colonial adventures had also come to an end. It is easy and very comforting to be pacifist when somebody else is dealing with the problems one cannot solve (and even with the problems one creates with one's inaction). When any major crisis erupts in the world, we Europeans do not look at the crisis itself or how we can solve it; instead we look to the US to see what it is planning to do. And then we position ourselves, not in relation to the problem, but in relation to the US's answer to the problem. Our problem is never the problem, but the US's answer to the problem. We have internalised that we are second-class players. Here lies the root of anti-Americanism: our anxiety over US foreign policy, a policy that affects us but over which we have little influence. Moreover, how can we rely on a force that we do not have? Europe has a collection of 25 excellent 'Westphalian' armies, perfectly prepared to defend their territory from the attacks of neighbours, attacks that are simply impossible in the framework of the EU.

But at the same time that Europe developed a free-rider culture on security matters the US developed a super-power culture. With the biggest army ever assembled and a difference in power of more than 10 to 1, never in the history of mankind has a country had such force at its disposal. No country can defy the US Army; not even an alliance of countries can defy the US Army. Any conceivable military conflict will, for sure, be won by the US. We have here the greatest guarantee for the impossibility of wars, and only terrorism can be used against a country that overpowers all others in military terms. So, if there is a problem, why not use this magnificent tool? Of course we now know the answer: you can win all wars but you cannot win peace. And terrorism is the new instrument in a world in which conventional warfare is no longer possible.

There is something more to be said, this time in favour of the Europeans: the EU has been extremely successful in democratising and bringing freedom and prosperity to many countries. Indeed, one could consider the EU not so much as an emerging new super-State or political entity but as a new method of solving international conflicts based on shared sovereignty. Instead of confronting sovereignties as in a Westphalian world, we foster *solidarité des faits* so that a common economy pulls on a common political framework, which in turn pulls on a common culture. This functionalist method has indeed been extremely successful, and Europe is today freer, more secure and more affluent than ever in its history. It is therefore natural for Europeans to see this Kantian approach of building rules, agreements and treaties, as a universal tool for international affairs. The internal reforms implemented in Turkey as soon as the carrot of EU entry was dangled before it is an excellent example.

Of course we all know that this method has limits too, and it is effective only as long as a country is willing to enter the EU. But it makes a lot of sense to try this method of general engagement before turning to any other. So, when Americans move towards war while Europeans move towards further boring negotiations, we are simply generalising our respective experiences, and we can say that, from a rational action theory standpoint, the

positions of Americans and Europeans are perfectly rational given our own experiences with war and given the tools we have available for foreign policy.

A similar dividing line emerges when dealing with terrorism. The US had very little experience with terrorism, mainly outside US territory, and 9/11 was therefore a great exception. For Americans, terrorism comes from abroad, from distant countries, and it has to be backed by some State or political entity. We Europeans have been suffering terrorism for more than fifty years; it comes from within, and is backed simply by groups of people. Indeed we manage to make democracy and terrorism compatible, and even fight terrorism with the rule of law and respect for civil and human rights. With limited success, I must add, and the continuation of the IRA and ETA (and the comparison with the Baader Meinhof gang or the Brigade Rosse) is proof of this. But we keep on trying and, in any case, terrorism is something with which one can live with as one can coexist with car accidents and death by cancer, as a manageable evil.

The result is that, after 9/11 and 3/11, Americans equate terrorism with an act of war coming from abroad whereas we Europeans equate it with another bloody terrorist act. And thus, Americans declare a war on terror and consider it reasonable to militarise counter-terrorism, whereas we Europeans believe that a new brand of terrorism has emerged, not essentially different from the old. Probably both are wrong and the new terrorism is like old wars in many ways, but not in others, and like old terrorism in many other ways, but not in others. A mixture between the objectives and goals of old wars and the most extreme methods of old terrorism is something totally new, less dangerous than wars but much more lethal than terrorism. And the connection between terrorism and WMD has not yet emerged... But again, the over-reaction of the US after 9/11 and the parallel under-reaction of Europe are rational options given our experiences and instruments available.

### **Can We Bridge the Gap? Effective Multilateralism**

Now the question is if there is a way to bridge these differences over the use of force. And the answer is yes: effective multilateralism is the answer. Europeans are reluctant to use force but not so if it is the result of a consultation process backed by international organisations.

Thus, 70% of Europeans would be willing to use their armed forces in a foreign country to eliminate a terrorist threat provided there is UN approval. Only 26% say no. Similar figures in the US are 78% and 15%. If the intervention is backed by NATO, not the UN, the rate of approval descends to 65% in Europe (and the 'No' jumps to 29%), but still more than 2 to 1 in favour (American approval does not change). Finally, if the intervention is backed by the *main European allies*, not NATO or the UN, the European rate of approval does not change whereas, paradoxically, the American rate of approval jumps to 86%, the highest of the three hypotheses. In short, for the Europeans, the UN is the body that provides most legitimacy whereas for the Americans the European allies, not the UN, gives a greater legitimacy.

A similar pattern emerges when the hypothesis is to send European armed forces to establish peace in a civil war in an African country, though now the rates of approval are lower on both sides (and again lower in Europe than in the US). With UN approval 56% of Europeans and 66% of Americans would send armed forces. The figures move down to

51% and 60% if the intervention is backed by NATO. And down again to 49% and 52% if it is backed only by *the main European allies*.

Finally, we can see the problem in another way: would you support the use of your country's armed forces if international organisations do not approve? Now the difference between the US and Europe emerges clearly. If the UN does not approve the use of force, 70% of Europeans will not approve the intervention; only 26% approve. However, Americans are divided: 49% 'Yes' vs. 46% 'No'. The same is true if intervention is not backed by NATO or European allies. Between 64% and 67% of Europeans will reject the intervention, whereas Americans are again divided.

Thus Europeans are indeed more Kantian whereas Americans are more Hobbesian, no doubt as a consequence of our experiences. Europeans believe in rules, procedures and consultation whereas Americans are more suspicious. Up to 82% of Europeans consider that, if a situation like Iraq were to arise in the future, it would be essential to secure the approval of the UN before using military force; only 58% of Americans think so. Even Spaniards, right now the most vocal anti-American and anti-Iraq war of all European citizens would approve by a wide 66% to the dispatching of troops back to Iraq if the UN approves a multinational force to assist with security and reconstruction<sup>32</sup>. Similar figures for France and Germany are 63% and 57%. Thus, rules and procedures matter, at least for the Europeans.

Are the Europeans right? Is that feasible? These are two questions we cannot address here. Of course they may be right provided it is feasible, ie, we can produce effective multilateralism. But effective multilateralism is not a spontaneous product of the UN but something that has to be produced and brought to the UN. The UN is effective if, but only if, Europe and the US work together, pulling the rest of the world's democracies. When that happens, as during the first Gulf War, the UN is effective. Otherwise, as during the Iraq war, the UN is a mess or even worse: a public scenario for the exhibition of differences while world despots rejoice.

It is therefore good news to know that majorities all over the world, but also in Europe and the US are in favour of a radical reform of the UN as shown by a recent poll for the BBC, conducted by GlobeScan and the Program on International Policy Attitude (PIPA) of the University of Maryland in 23 countries<sup>33</sup>. Thus, there is a large majority supporting the idea that the UN should become *significantly more powerful in world affairs*. A project accepted by 64% on average, and by 21 of the 23 countries polled. Germany (87%), Spain (78%) and the UK (75%) are among the most supportive of the idea, which is also accepted by Americans (58%) and Italians (58%). And on the more difficult question of giving the UN's Security Council the power to override the veto of a permanent member we find majorities even in countries that have the power of veto themselves. Thus, in the US 57% are in favour of giving up their veto, in the UK 56% and in China 48% (36% opposed). Only two permanent members are divided: Russia and France. It is therefore significant that American citizens are more willing than the French to give up their country's veto.

---

<sup>32</sup> It's important to mention that fieldwork for this survey, again *Transatlantic Trends 2004*, took place in June 2004, after Spain's withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

<sup>33</sup> See *23-Country Poll Finds Support for Dramatic Changes at UN*, PIPA, 2005.

### **A Few Conclusions for Further Debate**

The idea that a new cultural divide is emerging across the Atlantic is a gross misrepresentation of reality. The US and Europe share major values on democracy, human rights, the rule of law, market economy, family, abortion and homosexuality, even if lately Europe is moving faster along a liberal trend and the US much more slowly. The great difference on these and other important value issues (consider the role of women) is between rich and poor countries, not between Europe and the US.

Indeed, one could also argue that Europe is also moving in a more conservative direction. On questions such as immigration and xenophobia, national identities and multiculturalism, it is Europe that is lagging behind. And the emergence of powerful extreme-right parties in Europe is seldom considered but is a major fact that explains many events (for example, the Presidency of Jacques Chirac).

Moreover, there are many Americas and many Europes, and indeed many Americans are ahead of the Europeans and many Europeans are behind the Americans. There is a European America as well as an American Europe. Unfortunately we cannot compare data from the 50 American states with the 25 European nations but it is reasonable to suspect that the result would be a blending together of the two sets of data into a single continuum.

This similarity is evident in issues such as the perception of threats, mutual views and views of the world, and even on when and how to use force.

However, the greatest differences arise when one has to decide about the use of force. Here we have a difference that indeed makes a difference: Europeans are always much more reluctant than Americans to use military force under any circumstances. There are more doves and fewer hawks in Europe than in America, even recognising that many Americans share European views and vice versa. We can argue that Europeans are more reluctant to use force simply because they have very little of it, but this explanation confuses cause and effect. It has been a tough and long learning process for the Europeans to see war and terrorism in a wider context and establish measures and instruments that can be used as an alternative to force. It is our attitudes, a result of our respective experiences, that account for our military power, not the other way round.

And one final comment: isn't this reasonable? After all, war is always a last resort and must be used with great caution. Hence, a debate on its limits and conditions should be welcomed in democratic societies. Next time let's hope it is not polarised on either side of the Atlantic. We already have what could be considered a pacifist America<sup>34</sup>, so what we probably need are European neo-cons willing to discard the free-rider culture inherited from the Cold War.

*Emilio Lamo de Espinosa*

*Professor of Sociology and Director, Elcano Royal Institute*

---

<sup>34</sup> That good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace is agreed by 76% of Democrats but only 32% of Republicans, a difference that has widened since 1994. And that all should be willing to fight for their country, whether right or wrong, is accepted by 66% of Republicans but only 33% of Democrats, again a wider difference than in 1994. See Pew, p. 15.



## Appendix

b) Under some conditions, war is necessary to obtain justice.

|                        | EUROPE   |           |          | COUNTRIES |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                        | Europe 7 | Europe 10 | Europe 9 | USA       | FR   | GER  | UK   | IT   | NL   | PL   | PT   | SP   | SK   | TR   |
| Agree strongly         | 14       | 15        | 14       | 47        | 9    | 7    | 33   | 10   | 17   | 16   | 15   | 9    | 8    | 26   |
| 2003                   | 18       |           |          | 55        | 12   | 12   | 35   | 15   | 22   | 18   | 16   |      |      |      |
| Agree somewhat         | 28       | 26        | 27       | 35        | 24   | 24   | 36   | 25   | 36   | 31   | 23   | 16   | 29   | 24   |
| 2003                   | 30       |           |          | 29        | 27   | 27   | 39   | 28   | 38   | 28   | 29   |      |      |      |
| Disagree somewhat      | 25       | 25        | 26       | 8         | 28   | 30   | 13   | 27   | 23   | 27   | 18   | 38   | 21   | 19   |
| 2003                   | 21       |           |          | 6         | 28   | 25   | 10   | 20   | 18   | 24   | 14   |      |      |      |
| Disagree strongly      | 30       | 30        | 31       | 8         | 37   | 38   | 14   | 36   | 23   | 21   | 34   | 38   | 37   | 22   |
| 2003                   | 28       |           |          | 7         | 32   | 35   | 13   | 35   | 21   | 20   | 36   |      |      |      |
| [Don't Know / Refusal] | 3        | 4         | 2        | 3         | 2    | 1    | 4    | 2    | 1    | 5    | 9    | 3    | 5    | 8    |
| 2003                   | 3        |           |          | 3         | 1    | 1    | 3    | 2    | 1    | 10   | 5    |      |      |      |
|                        | 100%     | 100%      | 100%     | 100%      | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2004*, EOs-Gallup Europe, 2005.

d) The best way to ensure peace is through military strength

|                        | EUROPE   |           |          | COUNTRIES |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|                        | Europe 7 | Europe 10 | Europe 9 | USA       | FR   | GER  | UK   | IT   | NL   | PL   | PT   | SP   | SK   | TR   |
| Agree strongly         | 10       | 13        | 10       | 29        | 8    | 8    | 14   | 6    | 9    | 13   | 23   | 5    | 4    | 34   |
| Agree somewhat         | 19       | 19        | 18       | 26        | 17   | 19   | 22   | 14   | 25   | 22   | 24   | 13   | 12   | 26   |
| Disagree somewhat      | 33       | 31        | 33       | 22        | 31   | 37   | 28   | 32   | 35   | 35   | 22   | 39   | 23   | 19   |
| Disagree strongly      | 36       | 34        | 36       | 22        | 43   | 34   | 32   | 47   | 29   | 23   | 22   | 40   | 56   | 13   |
| [Don't Know / Refusal] | 2        | 3         | 3        | 2         | 1    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 7    | 9    | 3    | 5    | 8    |
|                        | 100%     | 100%      | 100%     | 100%      | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Source: *Transatlantic Trends 2004*, EOs-Gallup Europe, 2005.