



# Conference Papers on the Web

**The American Impact on Western Europe:  
Americanization and Westernization in Transatlantic Perspective**

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## Conceptualizing the American Impact on Germany: West German Society and the Problem of Americanization

As you know from the explanatory material that was sent out to you, this conference is intended to be both a stock-taking exercise of past research and arguments concerning the American impact on postwar Europe, and Germany in particular, and an attempt to see where future research might be going. As to past research, there has been a lively debate for quite a number of years now about how we might conceptualize and periodize the manifest presence of the United States in Europe. This debate is in turn related to a larger quest: As we approach the new millennium it is perhaps inevitable that we look back on the past century while at the same time wondering what the next one hundred years might bring.

It was no different in 1899 when the newspapers were as full as ours are likely to be at the end of this year with assessments of the nineteenth century and predictions about the twentieth. A scanning of the European and American press would show that many Europeans and even more so the Americans saw the nineteenth century as an era of technological and economic progress and of proliferating political democracy. Some viewed all these developments as a blessing and expected them to continue, leading to even greater economic prosperity and political freedom; others, while not rejecting growing wealth, nevertheless disliked the structural changes brought on by industrialization, urbanization, and the population explosion; they feared the growing power of the so-called masses and believed that the nineteenth century had had a disastrous impact on the traditional social and political order. And looking ahead they wondered with trepidation what the new century might bring not only for the economy, but also for politics if the "masses" continued to demand greater participation and power.

Yet whatever people thought might happen to the socio-economic structures and power balances inside their country, there was, in that age of imperialism and colonial expansion, also the question of how the international system might change and what place their nation would occupy within it. It is significant for the discussions of this conference that it was almost one hundred years ago, at the Paris World Exhibition of 1900 and elsewhere, that the established European powers began to worry about two players in the international system. On the one hand, there was the rapidly expanding industrial and military might of Germany led by a volatile emperor who was talking about his challenge to the existing order; on the other hand, there was the rise of the United States from a hitherto remote agrarian settler colony to a major power with dynamic, highly modern industries and growing urban populations. If *Begriffsgeschichte* is still a viable genre of inquiry telling us something about historical change, it is at this time a century ago that the term "Americanization" cropped up in Britain and Germany, and probably also elsewhere in Europe.

Since then there has been a great deal of discussion about the usefulness of this term, and it is no coincidence that its applicability to what happened in Europe in this century is still controversial. There are, as you will have seen from the General Statement in your conference papers, some who reject it altogether. They view the socio-economic, political, and cultural changes that have occurred as part of a slow process of modernization that affected all industrializing and urbanizing societies since the nineteenth century. If, to take a concrete example, Germany as a society is structured today as it is and if its inhabitants behave as producers, consumers, and citizens

the way they do, this is due to their country's long-term transition to modernity during the past century or more, reaching a certain conclusion by the end of the twentieth. Other scholars, looking at the same processes, have interpreted them as the "Westernization" of Germany and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel will explain in his paper what he means by this.

Now, as you will have gathered from the title of my presentation, I would like to make the case that the concept of "Americanization" that the other two schools dislike and that Kaspar Maase, judging from the title of his paper, will knock particularly hard, is helpful to understanding the processes of socio-economic, political, and cultural change in Germany in this century and certainly since World War II. My paper is divided into three parts. I will first put forward something like a definition of what I mean by "Americanization." Secondly, I would like to present some material to demonstrate how "Americanization" worked in practice after 1945. In a third and final part I will then broaden my perspective and throw out some ideas on how research might develop in the future.

### 1) Toward a Definition

To my mind, "Americanization" refers to a process by which ideas, practices, and patterns of behavior that were first developed and widely spread on this side of the Atlantic first aroused the interest of some Germans. They studied them and introduced them into public discussion in their country, raising the question of transferability and applicability. Those who were convinced that what they saw and scrutinized was transferable, began to import these ideas and practices. Not America as a whole, but America in this limited way, became to them a model to be emulated. They were helped in this transaction by Americans who not only believed that their model was superior to existing alternatives (e.g., the British one), but who also had a vested interest, or felt a mission, in wanting to export the American model. I would like to call these two groups the "Americanizers."

However, as we move to analyze the impact of this process which the "Americanizers" triggered, two points must be borne in mind without which the meaning of "Americanization," as I see it, would be badly misconstrued, and it is in fact this misunderstanding from which much of the criticism of this concept stems. To begin with the "Americanizers," i.e., those who promoted the process of "Americanization," suffered from what Leon Festinger defined as "cognitive dissonance." Applied to our case this means that the American model was not taken in its entirety. Rather the "Americanizers" selected only those elements that they regarded as suitable for importation into Germany. To be sure, it was not an America that was a *complete* figment of their imagination. Their America existed, but it was only a partial picture of it. It was filtered with a view to what could be fitted into pre-existing structures, practices, and patterns of behavior back home in Germany. Yet even this selectivity did not guarantee quick and easy adoption. "Americanization" seen as a process in which elements first developed and practiced in the United States were introduced into Germany, invariably met with resistance from those who rejected these elements as alien and unsuitable to German society, its economic, political, and cultural traditions.

The consequences of this resistance for the process of "Americanization" are considerable and are hence part and parcel of any deployment of the concept. In the extreme case, the American imports would be rejected altogether and the process would stop. But even where resistance was less powerful and persistent, "Americanization" never meant that ideas, practices, and patterns of behavior first developed on the American side of the Atlantic simply steamrolled into Germany,

flattening and obliterating whatever existed before. Rather - and this cannot be stressed too strongly - the transfers always became subject to negotiation. What emerged from the process was not a simple replica of conditions in the United States, but a blending of those imports that came to be accepted, on the one hand, and indigenous traditions, on the other. They formed a peculiar mixture, the specific American content of which varied from issue to issue, from social group to social group, and from region to region. It is this aspect that opens up a window to comparative history that I find quite fascinating. It is a comparative history that looks not merely at different groups or region within Germany, but also between the nations of Europe, all of whom came to be exposed to the process of "Americanization" and responded to it in ways similar to those described above with regard to Germany.

There is yet another angle to conceptualizing "Americanization," at least in the sense in which I propose to deploy the term. The process that the "Americanizers," both foreign and indigenous, set in train produced a stance that came to be known as "Americanism." It signaled the willingness to integrate and blend American ideas, practices, and patterns of behavior, already selectively picked, into existing ones. This means that the resistance that, as I have argued, the imports from America also provoked, amounted to anti-Americanism which had a reverse side: it extolled the need to uphold German traditions that the American imports were thought to undermine. I do not propose to dwell upon the meaning of such perceptions of Self and Other at this point. But they obviously must be put into the context of debates about identity and rootedness. Celia Applegate and Alon Confino have worked on these questions in a German context. For my purposes, this kind of work represents the other side of what I am dealing with in my attempt to define "Americanization" and its analytical usefulness for understanding socio-economic, political, and cultural change in Germany in this century and in particular since 1945.

In light of recent research on identity, the interesting question to pursue in relation to the question of "Americanization" is therefore not what happens to the "Americanizers," but to those who resist the integration and ultimate blending of American elements, as they are being imported. Looking back over the past fifty years, it seems to me that anti-Americanism weakened progressively. It did not do so steadily, but evolved in fits and starts; it experienced ups and downs and even witnessed unexpected revivals. Nevertheless, the overall trend in Germany was towards a gradual erosion of anti-Americanism, defined as resistance to the process of "Americanization" propelled by those who advocated blending and integration of what they wanted their society to take over from America.

While I will try to illustrate this interaction and negotiation in a moment, I would like to introduce another conceptual issue without which my assertion cannot be understood, and of course criticized, that "Americanization" is a more useful concept for the purposes of this conference than "Westernization" or "modernization." The progression of the process of Americanization is not just dependent on the relative balances of power between "Americanizers" and their indigenous critics; it is also related to the hegemonic pressure that the United States is willing and able to exert upon a foreign society. I am not talking here about those individual Americans who, for reasons of vested interest, join hands with their German "Americanizing" partners. What I have in mind is a comprehensive pressure emanating from a collective determination of the United States as a player within the international system to use its power against, in this case, the Germans as a whole. This pressure can take a variety of forms: political, economic, cultural. It could be quite direct, though it was rarely physical; or it could be indirect, subtle, and covert.

Looking back over the past century, American hegemonic pressure may be said to have been very weak before 1914. It became stronger during and immediately after World War I, before it weakened again as a consequence of American isolationism. It partially revived in the mid-1920s, when American industry became a model for Germany and American investments also propelled a rise in commercial mass culture. Mary Nolan has analyzed how German entrepreneurs and trade unionists went to the industrial centers of Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to study the transferability, to their country, of what they saw. She, John Saunders, Frank Costigliola, and a few others have also discussed how popular culture and entertainment, how jazz, Hollywood and the Tilly Sisters appeared in Germany. Dietrich Neumann has written about the impact of New York and Chicago architecture on German debates. And finally, there are the volumes by Werner Link and William McNeil about “American money and the Weimar Republic.”

And, in line with my earlier definition, there was both acceptance and integration of these imports and resistance to them. Well, if this was no more than “Westernization” and “modernization” rather than the beginning of “Americanization,” I do not know what we are talking about. True, there was Wertheim and KaDeWe in Berlin and there was modern poster art, but study the evolution of the American department store or the rise of Madison Avenue and you know where the dynamic of innovation originated. That is where German business went, not to Britain or France. Nor were they exposed to cultural imports from other European countries the way they dealt, enthusiastically or grudgingly, with American ones.

The picture changed again with the onset of the Great Depression after 1929. The United States, whose popular isolationism had blocked a stronger political engagement in Europe during the 1920s, retreated economically. But the cultural offerings that had come from across the Atlantic did not lose their magnetism, opening up an intriguing chapter for the cultural historian of the tension and dialectic between Nazi anti-Americanism and Americanism. Joseph Goebbels was mesmerized by American film and thought of a “counter-Hollywood;” Albert Speer built scale-models of assembly halls, railroad stations, and bridges for Hitler’s proposed urban reconstruction program and time and again American architecture provided the models; Ferdinand Porsche inspected Ford’s factories before he began to construct what came to be called the Volkswagen Works at Wolfsburg; Michael Kater has examined the “forbidden fruit” of jazz and big band music in the Third Reich. Of course, Hitler’s societal utopia, driven as it was by racism, military conquest, and mass murder was fundamentally different from the “American dream.” Yet even for him who began to establish an exclusive Germanic folk community the United States never completely disappeared from his ideological radar screen. However fierce the regime’s anti-Americanism may have been, even now the penetration and impact of ideas, practices, and patterns of behavior from the other side of the Atlantic did stop completely.

In 1945, America’s hegemonic pressure on Germany was greater than ever before. This was partly because, in learning the lessons from the mistakes of the interwar period, the country’s political, economic, military, and cultural elites were absolutely determined, from 1941/42 onwards, to shape the structures and mentalities of the Europeans, and of the Germans in particular in ways similar, though not necessarily identical, to their own image of themselves. The contours of this *Pax Americana* emerge from the Atlantic Charter of 1941, and they can also be read up in the influential article, titled “The American Century,” that Henry Luce, the owner of *Life* magazine published a few months earlier. This article was both a criticism of America’s past failure to deploy its

hegemonic weight and an exhortation decisively to project its manifest political, economic, and cultural superiority around the world after the end of the war. Inevitably, Germany became a major focus of these reordering plans, as Hitler's own New Order plans unfolded in occupied Europe even while his defeat became a certainty. This Nazi *Pax Germanica* was anathema to everything that America and its East Coast elites said their country stood for. Even if realities inside the country diverged from this self-image, the point is that perceptions and projections in this case shaped decision-making more decisively than actual reality in various parts of the United States.

It must be added that in the German case American willingness to use its hegemony after 1945 met with a good deal less resistance than in the past. Faced with the collapse of the country which was not only military and political, but also moral and cultural, the "Americanizers" who were prepared to blend elements of the American model into the postwar reconstruction process were quite numerous. But there was also resistance, if only because older attitudes lived an "after-life." Meanwhile the American occupiers who came to Germany to implement their program of reconstruction and recasting appreciated that whatever they did in the country, it would never be a replica of their own system. What they wanted to make certain was that structurally, institutionally, and ideologically the "New Germany" (which with the incipient Cold War and the division of the country along the Iron Curtain became in fact West Germany) was compatible with the global "American Peace" that they wanted to establish.

The American occupation of Germany did see the application of direct force to achieve its aims, but not in any major and brutal way. Rather it was based on the idea that any recasting of the country's political, economic, and socio-cultural structures and traditions would only succeed through negotiation, blending and voluntary acceptance by the large majority of people. As Edward Mason, Harvard economist and an influential member of the Committee on Economic Development (CED) which acted as the think-tank, wrote in 1946: "Of all the institutions and policies known to history ... those imposed by victors on a vanquished enemy are likely to be the most impermanent. The only lasting structural changes that can be made in the German economic and political system will have to be made, in the absence of continuous occupation, by the Germans themselves." (102)

## 2) The Process of Americanization

If I have been trying to offer a definition of "Americanization" until now and to defend the term's usefulness for understanding the course of modern German history, let me now present some further evidence for the process as it impacted on West Germany after 1945. Starting with the shaping of the political system that emerged first at local and regional and later at interzonal level, the origins of the Basic Law, i.e., the fundamental constitutional document that was finally ratified in 1949, have been the subject of several studies. John F. Golay was probably the first to analyze how the Americans, not least through General Lucius D. Clay's adviser, the Harvard political scientist Carl Joachim Friedrich, negotiated with the Parliamentary Council.

On the other hand, we know from Karl Erich Fromme's monograph how the memory of the Weimar Republic and pre-Nazi German constitutional traditions also influenced the Basic Law. But this book does not refute, but on the contrary reinforces, what I tried to argue more generally about the process of "Americanization." West Germany did not import the U.S. Constitution en bloc. Friedrich, who had studied law at Heidelberg before moving to the United States in the 1920s and

publishing an influential book on the American political system, knew, like his colleague Edward Mason, how impossible and indeed foolish it would be even to attempt this. What the Basic Law therefore reflects is a mix of American with indigenous traditions and principles. Golay and others have identified the points at which Clay's office exerted more direct pressure and where the Americans left it to the Germans to design a constitution that broadly fitted with the principles of parliamentary-representative government, a division of powers, democratic elections and basic rights. In a very broad sense it might be said that the German political system was Westernized in that it was wrenched away from its authoritarian traditions and practices that had spelled the end of Weimar democracy. But the specific forms that this transformation took were British or French at best in a very marginal sense. The blending occurred between what the American hegemon and the West German constitutional experts envisioned. If Westminster or Paris had been the model in the background, the Basic Law would have come out quite differently.

The "Americanization" of West Germany is perhaps even more striking when we consider the economic system. One does not need a great deal of economic history to appreciate that the type of economy that had emerged in Germany by the late 1930s, never mind 1943/44, was fundamentally different from the liberal, multilateral, competitive Open Door world system that the Americans wanted to re-establish after the war. The Nazi economy was still capitalist, at least for the time being, in the sense that in general it upheld the principle of private ownership. It was also industrial and, within limits, wedded to constant technological innovation. But beyond this there was little left to compare. It was totally cartellized. The market and competition had been virtually abolished. Collective bargaining, workers' rights and trade unions had been proscribed. It had been largely decoupled from the world economy and aimed at the creation of an autarkic *grossraumwirtschaftlich* bloc within which the conquered national economies of Germany's neighbors would be blatantly exploited and geared exclusively to the needs of the German economy and financial system. It was a system of trade based on barter and bilateralism. The Nazis spoke of the creation of a consumer society, but it was one that was based on the idea of ethnic exclusion and the murder of "undesirables" and *überflüssige Esser*. I believe it is important to remind ourselves of the principles on which the Nazi economy was run and would have run if Hitler had won the war in the East before we begin to consider how American plans for the recasting of the German economy interacted with indigenous traditions and practices.

Now, we know that American planners were determined to decartellize the Nazi economy and to establish, at the earliest opportunity, competitive market conditions. They also wanted to deconcentrate some of the virtual monopolies, such as I.G. Farben und Vereinigte Stahlwerke, but did not envisage a total break-up. Rather they envisaged the creation of units of production that were still large enough to act as engines of growth in the European reconstruction effort and to be able to compete in the Open Door world trading system. In using their hegemonic clout, the Americans could rely on a number of German businessmen and politicians as their "Americanizing" allies. Ludwig Erhard, whatever others may have said about his connection with the Freiburg School, was one of them. Otto A. Friedrich, the brother of Carl Joachim another.

The history of German decartellization and of the introduction of an American-style anti-Trust law has been told in a whole number of books. There was considerable opposition, mainly from heavy industry in the Ruhr, to this reshaping of the German system and the legislation that was finally ratified in 1957 was not a mirror of the Sherman Act. It blended German and American traditions; but it was not, as some have argued, a failure. Instead, it pushed German business away

from their ancient cartels and syndicates in the direction of a competitive oligopolistic capitalism very similar to the American one. If I look at the German economic system today I find little of its 1930s shape, its quest for self-sufficiency, anti-competitive behavior, authoritarianism, and repression of labor.

For a long time, economic historians have totally ignored these aspects of West German reconstruction. For years they compiled an impressive array of useful statistics tracing the origins of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. They were not interested in questions of political economy nor of mentality. Wedded to an econometric approach so popular in economics departments, they produced analyses of the most arid kind. If they engaged in debate, it was whether or not Marshall Plan aid made any difference to West German growth or whether the country, so to speak, pulled itself up again by its own bootstraps. Only recently has there been a change, and it was certainly very encouraging to see Christoph Buchheim, to whom we are indebted for a number of those heavy-going monographs, has recently used the term “Americanization” when speaking of the processes of economic change after 1945. Again if we see this as a blending of American and German ideas about how to organize a modern industrial economy, this is indeed exactly what happened in West Germany after 1945. If we add to the recasting of the market organization, the emergence of management styles, interest representation, or labor relations we will discover the same hegemonic pressures, German and American protagonists of American-type innovation, and resistance, ultimately resulting in new forms in which the American elements are nevertheless clearly discernible. For me it will be interesting to see how this plays out in our next panel which is devoted to postwar labor relations and mass production (the latter, *nota bene*, also known as Fordism).

This leaves me with the question of the American impact on social and cultural change in West Germany during the postwar period, fields in which the notion of “Americanization” again seems to me to be more applicable as an analytical tool than the alternatives. Recent research has focused on how Hollywood and American popular music returned to the West Germany. It has looked at relations between local populations and GIs and it has studied the impact of exchange programs. Much of this research has rightly taken a generational approach to the question of the importation of culture and the ways it was received in the Federal Republic. On the German side the “Americanizers,” it seems, were very much young people who responded positively, indeed enthusiastically, to what arrived from across the Atlantic. The resistance to these imports came from an older generation who rejected rock and jazz, James Dean and Coca-Cola as products of an *Unkultur*. For a while they thought that West Germany’s youth was immune to American youth culture and they were shocked when riots broke out at the end of rock concerts. The arguments that could be heard were the familiar ones that dated back to the 1920s. But the attractiveness of this culture to the young was something that intellectuals, academics, parents, churchmen, and family politicians could not contain. There was something inexorable about the way American mass culture began to blend into West German society.

The reason for this was that this wave was inseparably connected with something that West German business had embraced as part of the recasting of the country’s industrial system: Fordism. In the 1920s, as we have seen, German industry had begun to experiment with rationalized production. But, to quote Mary Nolan, had done so with major reservations: “Industry sought to gain the economic benefits of modern technology and factory organization without any of the leveling effects of Americanism. They wanted higher productivity without mass production, greater exports without mass consumption, and higher profits without higher wages.” In other words,



German business then refused to accept the other side of Henry Ford's equation, i.e., that the transition to mass production would be incomplete if it did not result in a lowering of prices, thus making products that were hitherto reserved for the few within the budget of the many. It was with this principle that Ford had initiated the motorization of the United States in the 1920s. The German car industry refused to adopt Fordism in this sense, with the exception of Opel Cars, acquired in 1927 by General Motors, which began to produce the *Laubfrosch*

The acceptance of this important difference by historical scholarship may have the benefit of hindsight. But shrewd economists like Moritz Bonn, who knew both America and Germany well, expressed it all very clearly in 1930 in his *Das Schicksal des deutschen Kapitalismus*. Ford's significance does not lie in [his] assembly-line [production] and a well-thought-out division of labor which the grown-up German children who visit America for the first time see as the *raison d'être* of American life. Rather it lies in the sober fact which is propagated under the slogan of 'social service', but hence somewhat removed from rational analysis, that American entrepreneurs like Ford know that the masses will only tolerate the accumulation of great wealth in the hands of a few, if they themselves derive a corresponding advantage from it. ... The authoritarian German capitalism, and heavy industry in particular, has never allowed others to share in their earnings."

After World War II, confronted with the need to adapt to an American-dominated, competitively organized, multilateral world economy, made the transition to mass production and embraced the idea of mass consumption, encapsulated in Ludwig Erhard's slogan *Wohlstand für Alle*. The marketing of mass-produced consumer goods may, as Arnold Sywottek and Axel Schildt have argued, not immediately have led to levels of consumption comparable to the United States in the 1950s. Many Germans could not yet afford a car, a fridge, or a washing-machine and invested their rising wages in the replacement of essential household items. However, all this does not mean that the introduction of Fordism - defined here not just as mass production, but also as the initiation of mass consumption - did not arouse consumerist desires and dreams of a better life.

The psychological effect of Fordism, in other words, needs to be taken into account so that when greater prosperity came people were ready and prepared to take the plunge. The mass marketing of consumer durables stimulated the commercialization of culture, and in the face of the techniques of persuasion of Hollywood or rock concert managers resistance by those who decried these imports as trash and detrimental to morality proved ultimately futile. It is important to study this cultural resistance in order to understand the process of cultural Americanization, but in a society which extolled the principle of free choice in both the political and the economic marketplace immaterial cultural imports could not be stopped, the more so since they were comparatively inexpensive and, unlike cars or fridges, within the range of young Germans' budgets.

### 3) Directions of Future Work

While our understanding of these processes has greatly improved and become more sophisticated, there is an area of cultural Americanization that we are only now becoming better informed about. If the "hidden persuaders" of Madison Avenue and their German allies spent ever larger amounts of money to get Germans of all ages to adopt American consumption habits and to buy American products, the primary motive behind their investment was to obtain a commercial return. What has not yet been fully appreciated is how much public money and money from

philanthropic foundations was spent in West Germany to publicize America as a cultural power. Washington, represented first by the Office of the U.S. Military Governor, later by the High Commissioner and an array of agencies spent huge amounts of money to overcome the cultural anti-Americanism which it knew existed particularly among intellectuals and educated Germans. Literally millions of dollars went into the distribution of information about American society, into the programs and libraries of *Amerikahäuser*, into newspapers and journals published by the American authorities and, last but not least, into newspapers published by Germans who opposed this cultural anti-Americanism. When budget cuts in Washington in the wake of the Korean War resulted in a reduction of these often covert subsidies, the big foundations stepped in, funding journals, exchanges, the *Fordbau* at the Free University, and the establishment of American Studies professorships.

It is not possible to go into the details of these programs that provided collateral support to the processes of cultural Americanization that have been discussed above. The interesting question that we still have to tackle is why all this money was distributed, the spending of which hints at the central point I wish to make, i.e., that Americanization was not merely a process of importation and blending that percolated gently into West German society; rather it was a process that was deliberately planned, consciously advanced, and actively manipulated.

What, when discussing the European rejection of American culture as barbaric and pernicious, whether in the interwar period or after 1945, we often overlook is that the same debates about the meaning and impact of this culture also raged among intellectuals and educated elites in the United States, and did so contemporaneously. Particularly the 1950s saw a fierce debate about “Masscult” and “Midcult” unleashed by influential critics like Dwight Macdonald. It is worthwhile reading his essays and comparing them with the somber studies by David Riesman on *The Lonely Crowd* and other sociological work appearing at this time.

Their pessimistic verdicts on American mass society and its future were vigorously rebutted by another set of East Coast intellectuals and academics who, quite to the contrary, highlighted the vibrancy, diversity, and multiculturalism of the United States. I would like to refer you here first and foremost to Daniel Bell’s widely read *The End of Ideology*. This book is in effect a grand defense of democratic American culture against its critics on both sides of the Atlantic. It also operates with a broad definition of culture which includes not just the arts and humanities, but also the sciences and in fact all institutions that are, in one way or another, involved in cultural activity. Finally, Bell embodied a position within the intellectual community which, inspired by the ethos of the social sciences of the 1950s, assumed that advanced industrial societies had fundamentally solved all their major social and economic problems. In the future it was merely a question of slow and constant reformism and prudent management by the country’s political, economic and intellectual elites.

The crucial point for the Americanization debate is now that Bell was part of a larger group of Americans who were convinced that the military, political and economic hegemony that the United States had established in Western Europe after 1945 would only be secure if the Europeans, with the West Germans among them, could be brought to accept that the United States also had a culture and indeed could claim cultural leadership. It was a leadership that was not just based on the popularity of American popular culture, rich and colorful as Bell had argued it was; rather it was a leadership that also emanated from the “high” cultural achievements that the United States could by

then boast. In support of this claim - hence their broad definition of culture - they would point to their science departments at the great universities and to their research institutes and laboratories that the Europeans could hardly match. But it was not just the counting of Nobel Prizes. The claim extended also to the humanities and social sciences, to the visual arts, to dance, theater, opera, literature, and architecture where the United States had after the war taken the lead. The avantgarde was no longer in Paris, or Berlin, but in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, or so at least went the argument of those who asserted American cultural hegemony.

And given their managerial view of modern society, it is, finally, not surprising that the protagonists of this stance would not only emphasize European-American cultural affinities rather than contrasts, but would also conjure up the existence of an Atlantic community. It is, of course, at this point that the Cold War context of the struggle against the Soviet Bloc comes into play which had not just military, political and economic dimensions, but also a cultural-indeological one. However, the intriguing point is that the intellectuals who spoke of this Atlantic cultural community believed that by the mid-1950s the cultural cold war against the Soviets had for all practical purposes been won. The revolutions in Hungary and Poland in 1956 were seen as the final proof of this Western victory.

So, why did the Americans continue to spend millions of dollars of public and private money on cultural ventures in Western Europe? Why did *Der Monat* continue to receive subsidies and contained so many articles about all aspects of life in America? The answer is: to persuade the European elites that the United States had become the leading cultural power and that the cultural anti-Americanism was without foundation. The interesting question is to ask, at least with reference to West Germany, how successful this projection of American culture has been. There are indications that, if not in Germany, certainly in France, the effort was pretty much wasted. At the same time, Kaspar Maase has written a very illuminating book about this in which he deals with at least one aspect of this cultural change. So, let me quote him before he tells you a different story in a moment: "The upper echelons of business, politics, science, and technology, among the academically trained professions, the right to enjoy the bliss of common culture is claimed extensively. Popular art and entertainment have become the culture of all."

There is also an apposite passage in Dietrich Schwanitz's 1996 novel *Der Campus* "In the evening of that day Bernie was lounging in his television easy-chair and watched a German crime movie in the 'Derrick' series. Being a professor, Bernie had a bad conscience when he watched television. It was a pure waste of time and unworthy of an intellectual person. For rather than watching this movie, he could have been reading a few scholarly articles or written his own article on 'The Ironic Use of Experienced Speech in Flaubert.'" But Bernie ignored his bad conscience and instead enjoyed "Derrick" - that indefinable mix of American and German crime movie culture.

If Schwanitz's fictional point captures an observable reality, I would like to argue that the definition of the processes that has been offered here should not be discarded, but be taken as a useful concept to analyze the German-American relationship and its evolution after 1945. More than that: Americanization shows us a path toward making comparisons between different European societies after 1945, with their divergent responses to the American hegemonic impact upon them. The results of this kind of comparative history, I think, will be very illuminating for our understanding of what has become of these societies at the end of this century.