The distance between European and U.S. self-understandings has recently widened, and, in all likelihood, the rift will become graver and deeper in the near future. In one sense, this distance was always there, as a cultural divide between what have long been called the Old and New Worlds. It was reinforced in the latter part of the 20th century, especially by the Cold War, which sent European and U.S. societies on fundamentally different trajectories, including, most significantly, demilitarization of Europe and militarization of the United States, trends that the end of the Cold War only accelerated. The crucial reinforcing factor, though, was the Reagan project of the 1980s. At that time the United States embarked on (something it is still undergoing) a revolutionary turn in its mission, away from a New Deal, more or less egalitarian, internationalist consensus to a public policy of belligerent social Darwinism and class warfare—a path Europe never took. During the same period, Europe’s welfare states not only retained their basic structures and motives but also expanded the application of their principles from a national to a continental vision of egalitarian, cosmopolitan democracies in an economic and legal union.

In another sense, however, the current Bush administration has transformed the distance between Europe and the United States into a political and societal rift that is fundamentally antagonistic, consequential, and perhaps enduring. I attribute the recent widening of this distance to two processes: increasing depth and breadth of Europeanization and increasing provincialism of Americanization. The political rift is both popular and governmental and is reflected in differing strategies of capitalism (regulated vs. laissez-faire), penalization (minimal incarceration vs. the death penalty and “three strikes, you’re out”), military strength (strategically limited vs. total dominance), health care (preventive and access-for-all vs. palliative and limited access), and legality (embedded internationalism vs. national sovereignty). But the most volatile and “new” dimension of the growing U.S.–European divide concerns the shift in world power from Europe to the Middle East, as demonstrated by the recent U.S.-led war against Iraq. This war is not the divisive issue, however, but merely an occasion to express a more basic disagreement over the Middle East and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. In other words, the U.S.–European relationship is no longer triangulated by Communism but by a new configuration of forces, by Europeanization, Americanization, and the Middle East.

How does the increasing depth and breadth of Europeanization and the increasing provincialism of Americanization relate to the topos “Middle East?” Let me develop this argument in three steps, discussing, first, the shift in world power from Europe to the Middle East; second, the post-1989 acceleration of Europeanization; and third, the provincialism of Americanization resulting from solidification of Reagan-era reforms and reactions to globalization.

### Shift in world power to the Middle East

After Yalta and the end of World War II, the epicenter of world power was clearly located within Europe—and this despite the exhaustion of Europe’s moral authority and the end of much of Europe’s colonial dominance of the rest of the world. NATO, along with the Allied occupation of Germany, guaranteed a U.S. presence within Europe. Although the United States approached Europe from the outside, it became internal to European development, especially to Europe’s cultural (e.g., film, food, music) and military trajectories. Today, the Middle East has become the new epicenter of world power, and both Europe and the United States are external actors to its drama. Both have great strategic interests in the Middle East, including, of course, its oil resources, but neither is positioned, like the United States was within Europe during the Cold War or as Europe was within the Middle East during its colonial “mandate” period, as internal to Middle Eastern development. As a matter of fact, the inverse might be argued: Europe and the United States appear to have very little leverage on developments in the Middle East—who listens to them there? (This may change, or at least that is the intent of the Bush administration.) Instead, the Middle East is now actively internal to both European and U.S. development, to their self-definitions and visions of the future.

It is this internality, this interiorization of a foreign body, of Middle East people and things, while being excluded from any decisive influence in the Middle East that is a source of deep ambivalence and confusion, if not irrational action, for Americans and Europeans. The Middle East’s internal pres-
ence in Europe and the United States goes well beyond the issue of oil dependence; it includes, more importantly, the presence of significant numbers of Arabs and Jews from Middle East countries. These peoples are active—Arabs and Jews in different ways, of course—in a kind of diasporic politics that is more reminiscent of the pre–World War I United States than of anything in the latter half of the 20th century. Their integration—the ways in which they become or do not become European or American—as well as their close ties to and influence on the contemporary Middle East, give them very different locations in the New and Old Worlds.

**Europeization**

How do developments internal to Europe and the United States—Europeization and Americanization, respectively—relate to this global shift in the epicenter of power? The collapse of the Cold War, East–West division of Europe has resulted in a scramble among nations there for strategic positions and alliances, all of which increasingly take shape under pressures of Europeization. In a 1997 *Annual Review of Anthropology* article, Nicholas Fowler and I introduced the concept “Europeization” as an object of inquiry and began to lay out its terms and conditions. We argued that one should avoid swinging between pessimism and euphoria and instead acknowledge the European Union as a “continental political unit of a novel order.” Europeization should be understood “as a spirit, a vision, and a process” (Borneman and Fowler 1997:510). We suggested five domains—language, money, tourism, sex, and sport—as particularly fruitful to study ethnographically to learn how different national peoples in Europe are becoming more “European.” This new form of subjectivity, the “European,” which looks more fragmented and incoherent the closer one gets to it, is nonetheless increasingly taking definition against the cultural practices of members of a particular other country, the United States.

To understand how Europeans have come to both resemble each other more and to differ from Americans, one might begin by looking at the institutionalization of their respective life courses. In an influential 1985 article, the German sociologist Martin Kohli argues that the life course (*Lebenslauf*) has its “own societal structural dimensions” (1985:1), such that, much like “gender,” it becomes institutionalized as a system of rules that orders life over time. Following the Cold War, a Europeanization of the national life course took place in European countries, driven largely by law and accelerated by the production of (and compliance with) E.U. norms. These norms regulate and make translatable intimate cultural practices—from eating and sex to marriage; from notions of equality and equity to rationalization of age grading and the treatment of minorities; from educational access to the issuance of occupational titles. One of the unusual aspects of this institutionalization has been that, although the E.U norms are formulated within Western Europe, prospective E.U. members from the former Soviet bloc increasingly seek to comply with them in anticipation of membership. (Poland and Hungary were, to my knowledge, the first countries to fully adopt this strategy.) The national Lebenslauf about which Kohli wrote in 1985 is now in competition with a European one, a competition that often frames national and local elections and becomes discursive with regard to issues of immigration, national identity, and the future of welfare provisions.

What does this have to do with the Middle East? Let me approach this through the issue of migration. The European Union has struggled for at least a decade to establish uniform European immigration, police, and border policies, encountering a great deal of resistance among member nations—until the September 11, 2001 (9/11), massacre at the twin towers in New York’s World Trade Center*. Initially, these policies may have seemed oriented toward keeping “East” Europeans out of the West, but increasingly it is clear that their success depends on the cooperation of East Europeans, with the goal of regulating Muslim entry into and participation in Europe. Eight to 12 million Muslims live within the European Union, and if the union expands to the Balkans and southwestern Europe, that number will double. If Turkey is admitted, the face of Europe will change radically. The vast majority of present Muslim residents are the product of postcolonial economic and political migration, many arriving in the 1970s to work for failing industries or in low-skilled jobs. Most live on the margins of Europe; they are poorly integrated culturally, socially, and politically and are a potential source of unrest and illegality.

Although these Muslims come from many different countries, with corresponding differences in cultural and political orientations, they are treated as a relatively homogeneous group within Europe. In reaction, they increasingly unite around Islam, not as a religion but as a cultural identity. Analysts have only belatedly come to acknowledge, if at all, how the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks were united in the European diaspora and how the new Europeized Europe, as a place with advanced freedoms and opportunities derived from a specific institutionalized life course, was essential to solidifying their beliefs and alliances and to planning their attacks on the United States. This life course is the envy of much of the world, but that is also the problem: New immigrants and foreigners in Europe desire this life course, which is absolutely unachievable in their homelands and only partly, if at all, achievable in Europe itself. Europe does not have recourse to the U.S. model of multicultural and radically uneven integration, with its weak and diffuse norms, possibilities for continuous displacement and deferral of goals, geographical mobility, and self-imposed ghettoization. Europe is struggling to develop an alternative *Ausländerpolitik*, a vision and a set of policies and practices that might satisfy both its native population and the desires...
of its new residents. My point is that a large Muslim and Arab population made up of peoples from ex-colonies, mainly low-skilled laborers, is now internal to European development, a fact of which European governments and societies are increasingly aware, making for new and more aggressive policies directed to the immigrants’ internal placement and to their diasporic links.

Jews have a much longer and more prominent history within Europe than Muslims. Jews are fewer in number, less marginal, and more integrated into European social structures than Muslims, and the numbers of Jews now immigrating to Europe are very small compared with Muslims. It is not the number of Jews, however, but how they are located that is problematic; their representation and symbolic significance is the issue. The historical antagonism between Jews and Christians within Europe is most frequently read through the lens of the Holocaust, meaning that today Jews are generally understood as THE symbolic victim group and, hence, deserving of some form of historical redress. Additionally, they form a fairly homogeneous status group; most are solidly middle class and generally considered less culturally oppositional than Muslims. One who publicly utters the particular conceptualization of Jews as fundamentally antagonistic to Christian Europeans is quickly censured, and an entire regime of guilt is brought to bear on him or her, leading to silence if not shame. (The same censure does not occur when Islam is posited as radically altered.) Witness the recent stunted careers of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider in Austria, and Jürgen Möllemann in Germany, who in various ways pandered to anti-Semitic stereotypes. Muslims and Jews, then, are very differently positioned within Europe, and the extent to which they are considered a problem is directly linked to the issue of integration or separation and to the kind of ties they cultivate with the Middle East.

Their different positioning with respect to the Middle East is creating tensions between Jews and Muslims within Europe that carry over into domestic politics. Western European politicians, in particular, are increasingly sensitive not only to Israeli-identified Jews but also to Palestinian-identified Muslims, who increasingly provide a young workforce to European-identified Jews but also to Palestinian-identified Muslims, and which ones are engaged in a kind of measured aggressiveness against the Middle East diaspora of Muslims and Arabs. One should not dismiss this turn as mere xenophobia. The governments of France, Germany, England, Switzerland, Sweden, and Belgium are, as one might expect, especially ambivalent, if not fearful, of the effects of Middle East immigrants’ long-distance links—especially to Turkey, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Pakistan, or one of the Gulf States. This ambivalence is registered in contradictory policies that alternately encourage dual or single citizenship and in contradictory everyday practices that are alternately xenophobic or insist on social assimilation, encourage multicultural identifications or, as in France and Germany, learning a Leitkultur. It is stimulated both by what Benedict Anderson a decade ago called “long-distance nationalism”—loyalties to the distant homeland where one no longer resides, which one no longer knows well, and to which one is not accountable—and by transnational terrorism, in which opportunities provided by European and U.S. science, telecommunications, and open financial markets—in short, global capitalism’s goodies—directly enable the use of violence to foment widespread anxiety.

In many ways, these current ambivalences about Islam within Europe parallel the conundrum of the U.S. government and society in deciding whether to integrate or preserve the distinctions of what some today call First Peoples.

Meanwhile, both European and U.S. media tend to give a great deal of weight to Jewish voices in Europe that speak with religious authority, hence, again interpellating Jews not as secular citizens but as somehow bound up with the Old Testament and a contemporary Israeli politics of revenge.

By contrast, although the European public increasingly recognizes the marginalization of its Muslims and the series of historical humiliations—up to the present Palestinian degradation—suffered by Arabs in the Middle East, often at the hands of European colonizers, European governments are less inclined to openly acknowledge or act on these perceptions. Instead, they, like many U.S. commentators, frequently blame Muslims for creating the conditions for their own victimization (i.e., Islamic so-called cultural backwardness is the cause of their political repression and stunted economic development; Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israelis is brought on by their own suicide bombers). Reacting to these narratives, many Arabs and Muslims are increasingly radicalized while living in the European diaspora. Some are active in the desecration of Jewish synagogues and graveyards in Europe, and many finance Islamicist political movements and parties in their countries of origin, from North Africa to the Middle and Far East.

Partly in response to the 9/11 attacks, European governments are engaged in a kind of measured aggressiveness against the Middle East diaspora of Muslims and Arabs. One should not dismiss this turn as mere xenophobia. The governments of France, Germany, England, Switzerland, Sweden, and Belgium are, as one might expect, especially ambivalent, if not fearful, of the effects of Middle East immigrants’ long-distance links—especially to Turkey, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Pakistan, or one of the Gulf States. This ambivalence is registered in contradictory policies that alternately encourage dual or single citizenship and in contradictory everyday practices that are alternately xenophobic or insist on social assimilation, encourage multicultural identifications or, as in France and Germany, learning a Leitkultur. It is stimulated both by what Benedict Anderson a decade ago called “long-distance nationalism”—loyalties to the distant homeland where one no longer resides, which one no longer knows well, and to which one is not accountable—and by transnational terrorism, in which opportunities provided by European and U.S. science, telecommunications, and open financial markets—in short, global capitalism’s goodies—directly enable the use of violence to foment widespread anxiety.

In many ways, these current ambivalences about Islam within Europe parallel the conundrum of the U.S. government and society in deciding whether to integrate or preserve the distinctions of what some today call First Peoples. U.S. ambivalence is revealed in the wild historical vacillation between policies of elimination, containment and preservation, or integration of the American Indians. I explored the relation of these policies to the development of U.S. anthro-
politics in an article published nearly a decade ago entitled “American Anthropology as Foreign Policy” (Borneman 1995). There is much ethnographic evidence for similar swings and reversals in policy and practice within Europe today. Observers might pay specific attention to areas of change in the model life course, such as the regulation of civil marriages. This regulation is of the utmost importance to religions such as Islam and Judaism, but it is no longer central to secularized Christian Europe, where marriage is increasingly deregulated and left to individual contract law. Observers might also pay attention to rituals of citizenship or civil status that require shedding or adding identifications; to language, education, and residence policies (that alternately encourage mono- or multilingualism); or to the integration or segregation of schools and residential neighborhoods.

Europe’s domestic response to the presence of the Middle East within its own political and social body exists in uneasy tension with its foreign policy response to the territorial Middle East. Of course, Europe has no foreign policy; there are only national policies driven by national interests. Neither NATO nor the European Union has anything resembling a common foreign policy. Nonetheless, at the social level there is something resembling a consensus about European foreign policy, revealed in the European public’s overwhelming rejection of the U.S.-led new war against Iraq. This public opposition to the U.S.-led war is also a response to the shift in the world epicenter to the Middle East and reflects an awareness that the most effective response to terror is not war against the enemy outside but finding a resolution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

The public in Europe is also no longer merely a discursive referent or utopian dream or an accumulation of national publics with their own corresponding projects. A European public does indeed exist and comes together (outside of and well beyond its current antwort unity) with respect to a project of political globalization—some are calling it cosmopolitanism—that is shaped both by the awareness of 19th-century colonial and imperial failures and of 20th-century nationalist (i.e., totalitarian, fascist) failures. It is also shaped by the experience of two world wars, leading to an awareness of the limitations of military solutions to political problems. One might claim that Europeans are merely cowardly, afraid of dying for their causes—and this may be true; but they have also become wise to the political instrumentalization of death cults, which only half a decade ago was a staple feature of national policies. Today, to be European is to be an internationalist without forsaking the benefits of local democratic control and to be unwilling to sacrifice society building for economic or military dominance.

My point here is that Europe is committed to a political–legal form that crystallized as a pan-European project in response to the collapse of East European state socialist regimes. This form is seemingly alien to present forms of governance in the Middle East and is also threatened by Europe’s interiorization of the Middle East with its accompanying conflicts. Why, then, given all this ambivalence about Islam and the Middle East, has the United States instead become Europe’s Other?

Americanization

My argument about the United States will be shorter and merely suggestive of a line of analysis. U.S. provincialism is increasingly becoming the counterconcept, and therefore the Other, for European self-understandings. By U.S. provincialism, I mean a reinforcement of U.S. particularities or “U.S. exceptionalism,” a return to the same, national boosterism, devotion not to a rustic but to an aggressively confront ed vision. This is the voice of the United States as global moral project, the constantly invoked we, as in “we are the world,” that has come to dominate the image of the United States abroad.

The Columbia University historian Simon Schama, in an amusing and erudite article called “The Unloved American” (2003), attributes the distance between Europeans and Americans to the “national egocentricity” and “virtuous isolationism” of the latter:

Just as obnoxious is the fraud of Christian piety, a finger-jabbing rectitude incapable of asserting a policy without invoking the Deity as a co-sponsor. This hallelujah Republic was a bedlam of hymns and hosannas, but the only true church was the church of the Dollar Almighty. [2003:39, 34]

These qualities posed no problem for Europe when the United States limited its exercise of power to its own continent, argues Schama, but they become threatening with present U.S. imperial policy and its global reach.

Schama does what anthropologists used to do and what many historians continue do when they take up culture: He makes it constant and ahistorical. Schama’s perspective—that U.S. culture is unvarying and can change only from without—vitiates the political thrust of his narrative. It would be more politically efficacious to historicize culture and this process of Americanization and to locate particular agents in the reproduction of U.S. national egocentricity. U.S. provincialism and exceptionalism in their current institutional forms date from the Reagan era, when, in the name of God-and-Country, a muscular rhetoric was employed to reinforce images of U.S. strength and national superiority—frequently set against a European foil of wimps, peaceniks, and overeducated, overcultivated cosmopolitans. It is a particular U.S. Republican vision of the world, naturalized by the huge number of Republican media and think-tank propagandists and now radicalized by those in control of the Bush administration.
Since the end of World War II, Americanization has largely defined the conditions of globalization—the spread of ideologies, cultural values, and products, the idea of a “way of life”—for Europeans as well as for much of the rest of the world. But today the European continent is departing from the U.S. trajectory, so that the old term Westernization, now used almost solely in a negative sense, no longer characterizes a Euro–American mission. If one asks, following Talcott Parsons, whether this divergence is driven by economic, political, or cultural factors, one must conclude that it is driven by all three. If one asks further whether there is a dominant system that serves both to integrate Europeans and Americans within their respective wholes and to drive them apart from each other, then, I want to argue, and this is my hypothesis here, that the European integrative revolution (a term I take from an early critique of modernization theory by Clifford Geertz*) is dominated by a project of political globalization, whereas that of the United States is driven by economic globalization.

These two projects, of political and economic globalization, are now on a collision course, and they meet in the epicenter of the Middle East. One need only watch the evening news coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict on any European television station and compare it with the U.S. news to realize the radical divergence in reporting. And one need only compare the middle-class European life course, and its widespread distribution, with the more uneven, class-based life courses found in the United States, to understand why the two publics might find the different reporting styles appealing. Accordingly, the governments in Europe and the United States find themselves addressing publics with radically different domestic electoral agendas: a politics of security production in Europe and a politics of anxiety production in the United States.

Unlike Muslims, Jews are fully internalized within the U.S. cultural–economic scene (not to speak of the number of Israelis with U.S. passports). The way this internalization works is that no U.S. politician dares oppose the foreign policy of Ariel Sharon, a policy that is aggressively anti-Arab, even if his actions run counter to U.S. national interests. And U.S. support for Sharon’s anti-Arab, anti-Muslim policies has nothing to do with how many Jews in the United States or Israel oppose or support the Likud position. Even President Bush, who constantly asserts his fearlessness in the face of terror, appears afraid to criticize Sharon. Given this configuration of ideology and power, it is not that difficult to convince Americans today that the territorial division of the world into an orient and an occident has given way to a deterritorialized mapping of virtue, the former associated with Islamic evil, the latter with Judeo–Christian good. An alternative U.S. imaginary that might call for a “Judeo–Christian–Muslim nation” is a notion that many Americans would find, well, un-American. Europe’s advanced secularization of Christianity allows for a more consistent and more thinkable model of Jewish and Muslim integration. Yet, although the mapping of assumptions of evil onto Muslims and Arabs is also prevalent within Europe, most European residents find the U.S. project of economic globalization (based on a social Darwinist model of the social) even more objectionable. U.S. economic imperialism threatens Europe’s goals of a continuance of the welfare state and a globalization of their political–legal form. In this resistance to U.S. economic and military hegemony, Europeans find a nascent ally in many of the peoples of the Middle East. Whereas the United States may hope to assert itself over the Middle East through military might and through its alliance with Israel, the Europeans do not have the means or will to pursue this strategy and instead must rely on the cunning seduction of their own modular life course.

Notes

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1. Academics are not immune to these processes either. Timothy Garton Ash recently pointed to “the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict . . . as source and catalyst of what threatens to become a downward spiral of burgeoning European anti-Americanism” (2003:8). But he is quite aware of the dangers for himself in writing about this conflict in a U.S. publication: It is “difficult for a non-Jewish European to write about [this] without contributing to the malaise one is trying to analyze” (Ash 2003:8).

2. William Safire, the former Nixon speechwriter and columnist for the New York Times, is by no means a typical reporter, but he is a leader in producing the "finger-jabbing rectitude" and bad-faith stereotypes about which Schama writes and that circulate in other media as stereotypes about the European Other. For example, in making a case for blaming "Franco–German dominance" for the failure of Bush’s diplomacy in bringing about support for the Iraqi war at the United Nations, Safire wrote, in an article entitled “Bad Herr Dye,” that German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder “does not share the free speech values of the West” (2003a). A week later, Safire described Germany’s chancellor as having a “vast intelligence system” and diplomatic corps” (2003b). In other words, Schröder (and Germany) is both wimp (bad Herr dye) and Nazi (vast intelligence system).

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