

The Obama Factor: Change and Stability in Cultural and Political Anti-Americanism

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Global public opinion toward the United States is an important factor in international politics. But to what degree are distinct dimensions of attitudes toward the United States associated with the person of the president and the consumption of U.S.-produced media content? Two surveys of German college students before and after the 2008 U.S. presidential election revealed that attitudes toward U.S. foreign policies improved from 2008 to 2009, and views on U.S. culture remained stable. Perceptions of Obama depended less on attitudes toward U.S. culture than perceptions of ordinary U.S. Americans, indicating a potential for the president to influence foreign political support, even in the face of cultural reservations. Consumption of some types of U.S. media was also associated with lower levels of anti-Americanism.

Keywords: Obama, anti-Americanism, stereotypes, image, entertainment, news, public opinion, Germany

Introduction

The election of Barack Obama as the 44th U.S. president captivated people around the world, including many Germans. More than 200,000 spectators came to listen to his speech on transatlantic relations near Berlin's Brandenburg Gate on July 24, 2008. Berlin's *Der Tagesspiegel* declared that the speech was "the signal of a new era for a new generation on both sides of the Atlantic" (CNN, 2008, para. 3) and the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* enthusiastically proclaimed Obama "The World's President" on its November 10, 2008, cover. Such excitement surrounding Obama's visit to Berlin reflected a hope among many Germans that the controversial era of George W. Bush would finally come to an end.

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Date submitted: 2013-02-22

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There is little doubt that the 2008 U.S. presidential election had a profound impact on perceptions of the United States, especially in Germany. According to a 17-nation poll (BBC World Service Poll, 2009), 78% of Germans expected in late 2008 that Obama's election would lead to improved relations with the rest of the world. Although the BBC poll found similarly high hopes in most of the other nations, the rapid change in perceptions of the U.S. political leadership among Germans was remarkable.

To better understand how perceptions of the United States in Germany were influenced by the 2008 U.S. election—and how these perceptions changed during the first year of the Obama administration—this study analyzes survey data collected from almost 1,600 German college students in October 2008 and in December 2009. Consistent with Chiozza's (2009a) *dimensions of America theory*, we expect that attitudes toward the United States will be partly shaped by the "human element" of the president's persona. In addition, we hypothesize that these attitudes will be associated with exposure to domestic and U.S. news and entertainment media. Consequently, our two surveys test the relationship between media use and feelings of anti-Americanism among young Germans—and how these feelings might be associated with perceptions of the U.S. president and Americans in 2008 and 2009. Because anti-Americanism is a multidimensional concept (Chiozza, 2009a; Chiozza & Choi, 2012; Katzenstein & Keohane, 2007), this study was designed to capture both political *and* cultural anti-Americanism and evaluate their relative impact on perceptions of President Obama and Americans overall.

The Concept of Anti-Americanism

Definitions of the term *anti-Americanism* vary widely in the academic literature. Rubinstein and Smith (1988), for example, defined anti-Americanism as "any hostile action or expression that becomes part and parcel of an undifferentiated attack on the foreign policy, society, culture, and values of the United States" (p. 36). In their review of how anti-Americanism has been defined in popular and academic commentaries and studies, O'Connor and Delaney (2009) identified no fewer than five competing definitions of the concept: (1) as one side of a simplistic pro/con binary; (2) as a relative tendency (such as polls asking whether opinions of the United States are more or less favorable relative to a previous occasion); (3) as a manifestation of fanaticism; (4) as an undifferentiated prejudice or bias; and (5) as an ideological belief system rooted in sophisticated geopolitical knowledge. Because of this variation between definitions, Katzenstein and Keohane (2007) argue for a simpler conceptualization of anti-Americanism as reflecting individual distrust toward and bias against the United States.

Notwithstanding these attempts to clarify the concept, the various definitions have led to different forms of anti-Americanism being studied with the focus placed alternately on cognitive and emotional processes. Ideology-driven anti-Americanism was found, for example, to lead to misrepresentations of U.S. society and government actions (Rubin & Rubin, 2004). Some studies focusing on the affective component of anti-Americanism claimed that it constitutes a generalized, irrational, and instinctive opposition to various aspects of the United States, including government, policies, culture, values, institutions, and people (e.g., Hollander, 1992). This view was also taken by Haseler (1985), who asserted that the strong irrational component of anti-Americanism, which he identified as a resentment-based antagonism toward various cultural and political values, would persist regardless of changes in U.S. policies or administrations (see also D'Souza, 2002; Revel, 2003).

More recent studies, however, have resisted the temptation to look at anti-Americanism as a one-dimensional cultural syndrome (Chiozza, 2009a) and have used multidimensional measurements to parse out different elements of anti-Americanism. Speulda (2005), for example, examined the image of the U.S. government and its leaders, qualities of the American people and their character traits, and the United States' perceived global influence. Glick et al. (2006) evaluated anti-American sentiment through three dimensions: individuals' perception of American personality traits (measured with 19 survey items about the U.S. government or its citizens gauging warmth, competence, and arrogance), their emotions toward the United States (21 measures designed to assess four clusters of admiration, contempt, envy, and pity), and their assessments of American goals, motivations, and attitudes toward other nations (15 measures of perceived domination, human rights, and beliefs of superiority).

We conceptualize anti-Americanism as multidimensional as well, placing this study squarely within the framework provided by Chiozza's (2009a) dimensions of America theory. This theory draws on Zaller's (1992) and Converse's (1964) more general theories of public opinion and views anti-Americanism not as a coherent cultural trait, but as a highly circumstantial and context-dependent balance of relevant individual predispositions, cognitive capacities, and levels of information that together produce sentiment toward the United States. This sentiment, captured in beliefs and attitudes about the United States, might represent a reaction to specific U.S. policies, military actions, economic power, and leadership decisions or a more general resistance to the global influence of U.S. culture and values.

According to Chiozza (2009a), anti-American sentiment has multiple, frequently overlapping, causes of varying weight (see also Chiozza, 2009b; Chiozza & Choi, 2012). Based on several multinational studies of attitudes toward the United States, he explored anti-Americanism along two broad dimensions: attitudes toward U.S. culture, society, and political systems (science/technology, freedom/democracy, American people, U.S. movies and TV, U.S. products, and U.S. education) and attitudes toward U.S. foreign policies (toward Arab nations, the Palestinians, and Europe and toward ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, the U.S. War on Terror, and the U.S.-led wars in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan).¹ Overall, his analyses found that positive views of American culture and ideals do not guarantee approval of U.S. foreign policies. However, negative views of U.S. policies did not necessarily translate into negative evaluations of American culture and its people (Chiozza, 2009a). Chiozza concluded that people conduct separate evaluations of the United States with varying weight accorded to their cognitive and emotional components depending on the aspects evaluated.

Based on this view of anti-Americanism as a multidimensional concept with overlapping causes, we expect that Barack Obama's election in 2008 would influence political and cultural judgments closely connected to the persona and actions of the U.S. president. As Chiozza (2009a, 2009b) has shown, perceptions of George W. Bush contributed substantially to foreign publics' attitudes toward the United States during his tenure as president.

¹ This distinction, which Chiozza also refers to as the "polity/policy distinction" (2009a, p. 85), is similar to Holsti's (2008) distinction between what the United States *does* and what it *is*. Shi, Lu, and Aldrich (2011) provide corresponding evidence for a two-dimensional structure of perceptions of the United States among Chinese citizens.

Chiozza (2009a) suggests that foreign publics' attitudes toward the United States can be shaped by the "human element" of a president representing a nation and its actions. Accordingly, commentators expected the Obama presidency to improve the overall image of the United States in many nations around the world (e.g., Hayden, 2011). In fact, experimental data collected during the first year of his presidency indicate that exposure to Obama primed Canadians to hold more favorable opinions toward the United States (Dragojlovic, 2011). Similarly, observational data from a survey of Pakistani citizens found that favorable attitudes toward Obama were associated with greater support for U.S. policies (Golan & Yang, 2013). We thus expect that Germans will exhibit lower levels of political anti-Americanism in 2009 than in 2008—mostly due to the positive perceptions President Obama enjoyed among Germans during his first year in office.

We also expect that positive evaluations of the U.S. president will translate into more positive attitudes toward the cultural aspects of the United States among Germans in 2009. However, attitudes related to U.S. culture should be less affected than attitudes toward U.S. foreign policies because they are less related to mental representations of the U.S. president, dampening the relevance of U.S. political events for cultural anti-Americanism (see Chiozza, 2009a). Overall, though, we expect that both political and cultural anti-Americanism in Germany will be lower in 2009 than in 2008. The first hypothesis, therefore, states that:

H1: Political and cultural anti-Americanism among Germans will be less pronounced in 2009 than in 2008. However, cultural anti-Americanism will decline less than political anti-Americanism between 2008 and 2009.

German Attitudes Toward the United States

Germany's relationship with the United States has been characterized both by hostility and friendship that can be traced back to the end of World War II (Diner, 1996; Nolan, 2005; Stephan, 2004). Many Germans were grateful for America's support in rebuilding West Germany after World War II, for the protection the United States offered this country during the Cold War, and its instrumental role in Germany's reunification in 1990. Although perceptions of the United States in Germany remained positive and fairly stable throughout the post-Cold War era, they precipitously dipped to record lows during the George W. Bush presidency. The U.S.-led war in Iraq and other foreign policy decisions by the Bush administration all but eliminated the public support and solidarity that characterized German-U.S. relations for many years. Empirical evidence for such a surge of anti-American attitudes has been found in a number of international surveys conducted during the height of the Iraq War and the following years (e.g., European Opinion Research Group EEIG, 2003; Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2002, 2014). As shown in Figure 1, the United States enjoyed a 60% approval rating among Germans in 2002, which dropped to a low of 30% in 2007. Similarly, favorability toward Americans declined from 70% in 2002 to 55% in 2008.

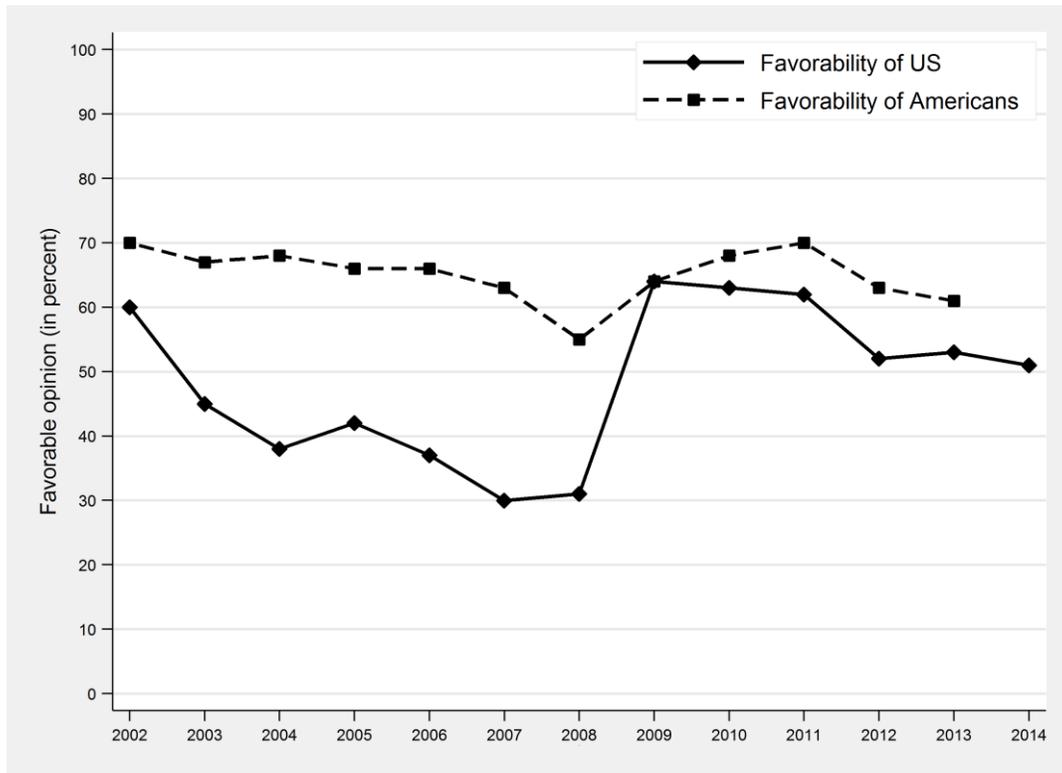


Figure 1. Favorability Ratings of the United States and of Americans in Germany, 2002–2014 (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2014).

Note. The full question wording was “Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of the United States/Americans.” The plots combined the “very favorable” and “somewhat favorable” responses.

Perceptions of the United States and Americans quickly improved after Barack Obama’s election in 2008. According to the Pew Global Attitudes Project (2014), favorable attitudes toward the United States among Germans jumped 33 points between 2008 and 2009 before leveling off at 62% in 2011 and dropping back to around 52% from 2012 to 2014. Similarly, the percentage of Germans holding favorable attitudes toward Americans increased by 9 points between 2008 and 2009 before stabilizing at 70% in 2011 and dropping back to 61% in 2013. Overall, Germans felt much more positively about the United States and its people in the three years following Obama’s first election.

The idea that improved perceptions of the United States were related to Barack Obama’s election finds support in opinion polls that were taken at the time. Gallup (2011), for example, found that job approval ratings for U.S. leadership reached 57% among Germans in 2009—an increase of 36 points compared to one year earlier. Of course, Germans were not alone in their support of the new U.S.

president. Between 2008 and 2009, approval of U.S. leadership jumped to 52% in France (+39 points), 54% in Spain (+46 points), 64% in Great Britain (+41 points), and 49% in Italy (+30 points).

We therefore expect that perceptions of Americans will improve between our first survey conducted in October 2008 and our second survey done one year later. In line with the dimensions of America theory (Chiozza, 2009a), we hypothesize that positive perceptions of the U.S. president contributed to this trend. We also expect an increase in positive perceptions of President Obama because of the largely positive coverage he received in Germany during his first year in office (Pettersson, 2011). However, because people tend to defend their stereotypes of abstract groups when they come across exemplars perceived as largely counterstereotypic, such as the United States' first Black president, we also hypothesize that, between 2008 and 2009, perceptions of President Obama will improve more than those of Americans in general. We therefore propose that:

H2: Perceptions of President Obama and Americans will improve among Germans between 2008 and 2009. However, perceptions of Obama will improve more than perceptions of Americans.

Media Exposure, U.S. Images, and Anti-Americanism

One important concern of this study is the relation between anti-Americanism as a generalized attitude structure and specific images people hold of Obama and Americans. Like past research, we assume that anti-Americanism has a substantial influence on such perceptions. However, contrary to former conceptualizations of anti-Americanism, we do not assume this influence to be unidimensional and uniform across dimensions.

Irrespective of more stable factors, such as shared economic and security interests (Goldsmith, 2006; Goldsmith, Horiuchi, & Inoguchi, 2005), the political components of anti-Americanism have been shown to be related to perceptions of the U.S. president as the main representative of U.S. politics (Cole, 2006; Fabbrini, 2010; Furia & Lucas, 2006, 2008; Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2009). The cultural dimensions of anti-Americanism, on the other hand, should be less tied to political exemplars such as the U.S. president, but more so to the abstract collective of "typical Americans" who better represent the United States as a whole. Thus, we expect that the political components of anti-Americanism will be mostly associated with perceptions of President Obama, while its cultural dimensions will be more related to perceptions of regular Americans. Hypotheses 3a and 3b, therefore, posit that:

H3a: Political anti-Americanism will be a better predictor of Germans' perceptions of President Obama than of their perceptions of Americans in 2008 and 2009.

H3b: Cultural anti-Americanism will be a better predictor of Germans' perceptions of Americans than of their perceptions of President Obama in 2008 and 2009.

Anti-Americanism and U.S. images abroad are likely to depend, at least partly, on the dissemination of media content relevant to these attitudinal and cognitive structures. Most studies that have examined relations between individual exposure to U.S.-produced media and favorability toward the

United States have found positive relationships. A 1998 survey of 220 Japanese middle school students, for example, found a positive correlation between their exposure to U.S. movies and television programs and the attitudes they held toward the United States and its people (Inoue, 1999). In a similar survey conducted among 328 Singaporean college students in 2004, Fullerton, Hamilton, and Kendrick (2007) also found positive relations between exposure to U.S. media and students' attitudes toward Americans. In particular, Internet use and the consumption of U.S. magazines, television, newspapers, and music correlated with more positive attitudes toward Americans (see also Randolph, Fullerton, & Kendrick, 2010, for similar findings). Using 2002 survey data from the Pew Global Attitudes Project, Chiozza (2009a) found that respondents with greater access to international news (CNN and BBC) and more contact with Americans were less likely to hold anti-American views in most parts of the world, including Western Europe.

Even though most of these studies find a positive relation between exposure to U.S. media and perceptions of the United States, there is growing evidence that the type of medium consumed also is an important predictor of attitudes toward the United States. For example, a 2004 survey of 1,571 German citizens (Seifert, Emmer, & Vowe, 2006) found that Internet and television use correlated with negative attitudes toward the United States, while newspaper use was associated with positive attitudes. Using survey data gathered by Gallup in nine Muslim-majority countries in 2002, Nisbet, Nisbet, Scheufele, and Shanahan (2004) found that exposure and attention to television news coverage about the United States was associated with more anti-American perceptions. However, the authors also found channel-specific effects that moderated this negative association between media exposure and attitudes toward the United States. Individuals watching pan-Arab regional networks, which include Al-Jazeera and MBC, held more negative perceptions of the United States, whereas those who mostly relied on Western networks (such as CNN or the BBC) held significantly less negative perceptions of the United States, mirroring Chiozza's findings.²

A similar analysis of the 2002 Gallup data by Gentzkow and Shapiro (2004) found that exposure to domestic media was not correlated with attitudes toward the United States. However, exposure to CNN was, again, associated with pro-American attitudes, whereas exposure to Al-Jazeera correlated with anti-American views.

Overall, then, most studies find that exposure to U.S. news and entertainment media is indeed associated with *lower* levels of anti-Americanism.³ In the case of news exposure, information about the

² Blaydes and Linzer (2012) draw a similar conclusion in their study of anti-Americanism in the Islamic world. However, their analysis, like others (e.g., Shi et al., 2011), does not distinguish between U.S.-produced and non-U.S. media content, a problem that is addressed in the present study.

³ This is not to say that attitudes toward Americans cannot also exert an influence on people's selection of media content. For example, individuals who are deeply opposed to the United States might refrain from exposing themselves to media products coming from that country in an effort to maintain attitude-behavior consistency. However, we suspect that (a) this is only likely to occur among individuals with particularly pronounced and salient attitudes toward the United States, and (b) in the aggregate, these reverse effects are smaller than influences of media consumption on U.S. perceptions and attitudes.

United States should lead to a better understanding of U.S. political processes and culture, which in turn should decrease feelings of estrangement and antipathy toward the United States (Chiozza, 2009a). In the case of entertainment exposure, narratives set in a U.S. environment should increase familiarity with U.S. culture. The positive depictions of American life in most U.S. entertainment media could lead to the cultivation of positive attitudes toward the United States (Shrum, 2009), particularly if those depictions are perceived as realistic (Busselle, Ryabovolova, & Wilson, 2004). This relationship should be especially pronounced among Germans who lack the opportunity to check mediated portrayals of the United States against firsthand experiences (Güllner, 2004). The fourth hypothesis therefore proposes that:

H4: Exposure to U.S. media will be associated with lower levels of anti-Americanism among Germans in 2008 and 2009.

Although this study is based on the assumption that exposure to U.S. media is associated with perceptions of the United States, exposure to mediated information about the United States does not necessarily influence attitudes toward all things American equally. We expect this to be particularly true for perceptions of President Obama. Throughout 2008, many Germans were interested in the campaign and paid close attention to election news from the United States (Kulish, 2008). Moreover, in 2008 Obama received an enormous amount of coverage in the German media (Holtz-Bacha & Zeh, 2011), a trend that continued until 2010 (Balmas & Sheafer, 2013) and corresponded to the tendency of Western news media to focus on charismatic foreign leaders (Balmas & Sheafer, 2014). We expect that the media focus on Obama and his personal attributes made most Germans focus more on the president than on the United States and its people shortly before and well after the election. Accordingly, media exposure should have correlated more strongly with perceptions of Barack Obama than with perceptions of Americans in both 2008 and 2009. The final hypothesis, thus, states that:

H5: Media use will be a better predictor of Germans' perceptions of President Obama than of their perceptions of Americans in 2008 and 2009.

Method

The data for this study come from two identical online surveys of 1,574 German students conducted in 2008 and 2009. The first survey ($N = 824$) was administered to undergraduate and graduate students at two large German universities during the three weeks before the 2008 U.S. presidential election, from October 9 to October 31. The second survey was administered to a similar group of students ($N = 750$) at the same two German universities in early December 2009. Both groups were similar in terms of sex, age, political interest, and number of semesters completed (see the Appendix for a comparison of sample characteristics).

Comparisons across time with two separate samples are problematic. However, the two samples studied here—despite the fact that they do not represent the same subjects—control for several sources of possible bias because college students represent a fairly homogeneous group of people. They share

common traits such as age (generally between 18 and 25 years old), education (some college), and political attitudes (liberal rather than conservative). These group characteristics change very little from year to year, which increases the validity of comparisons across time.

Participants were invited by e-mail to take part in the survey, which included an identical set of questions for wave 1 and wave 2. The questions focused on respondents' (1) perceptions of President Obama and Americans in general, (2) political and cultural anti-American attitudes, including their evaluations of U.S. influence on Germany, and (3) exposure to German and U.S. media as well as (4) several control variables, including general political interest, attention to the 2008 election, demographics, and real-world interactions with Americans and U.S. culture.

Perceptions of Barack Obama and Americans

To measure perceptions of the U.S. president and the American people in general, respondents were asked to indicate how accurately they thought each of 10 adjectives described Barack Obama (qualified, friendly, competent, trustworthy, knowledgeable, sincere, confident, attractive, intelligent, and honest). For each adjective, participants were given a five-point scale with end points labeled *describes Barack Obama not at all* and *describes Barack Obama very well*. Similarly, respondents were asked to indicate to which degree they thought each of 12 adjectives described "the typical American" (competent, tolerant, knowledgeable, honest, creative, generous, confident, friendly, independent, trustworthy, intelligent, and sincere). Both sets of image attributes were based on similar scales used in previous studies across several Western democracies (Kaid, 1991, 2004; Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 1995). In addition to the individual item scores, we created two summary indices that denote the overall favorability of President Obama ($\alpha = .92$) and of Americans overall ($\alpha = .80$). Values range from one to five, with higher values indicating more favorable perceptions.

Anti-Americanism

Following scholars who define anti-Americanism as a multidimensional concept (Chiozza, 2009a; Glick et al., 2006; Isernia, 2006; Speulda, 2005), this study distinguishes two main dimensions in measuring anti-Americanism. The first, political anti-Americanism, was assessed by asking respondents to indicate their agreement (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*) with U.S. foreign policy in six policy domains (protecting world peace, the Iraq War, global warming, the fight against poverty in the world, free international trade, the fight against terrorism). The second dimension, cultural anti-Americanism, was measured by asking respondents how much they liked (1 = *dislike very much*, 4 = *like very much*) each of seven American ideas, products, and practices (ideas about freedom and democracy; consumer products; cultural diversity; ways of doing business; the spread of American ideas and customs; music, movies and television; technological and scientific advances). Both measures were adopted from the Pew Global Attitudes Project (2002). The scores for each set of questions were combined into scales that represent the political and cultural dimensions of anti-Americanism ($\alpha = .71$ for political anti-Americanism; $\alpha = .69$ for cultural anti-Americanism). In addition to these specific questions, the surveys also asked more general questions about (a) how much influence respondents thought the United States is having on how things are going in Germany (*a great deal of influence, a fair amount, not too much, no influence at*

all, don't know) and whether they thought such influence is good or bad and (b) whether they thought German culture is becoming more like American culture (*more like America, less like America, no movement either way, don't know*) and, again, how they evaluated such a development (*a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad, don't know*).

Domestic and U.S. Media Use

To assess domestic and U.S. media use, respondents were asked how often (1 = *never*, 5 = *every day*) they used German news media (printed newspapers, TV news, online news, and political blogs) and viewed U.S. news and entertainment shows shown on German television (CNN, TV series, and TV movies). To assess their exposure to movies and music, respondents were asked how often they listened to music or watched a DVD in a typical week (1 = *never*, 5 = *every day*) and how many times a month they went to the cinema (0 = *never*, 5 = *five or more*). To obtain an estimate of exposure to U.S. music and movies, respondents were asked to estimate the percentage (0–100%) of music they listen to or movies they watch that are produced by U.S. artists or studios. In the analyses reported below, the measures of exposure to U.S. music and movies express the frequency of exposure to each medium weighted by the self-reported share of consumed media originating from the United States (scores range from 0 = *no exposure to U.S. music/movies* to 100 = *exclusive exposure to U.S. music/movies*).⁴

Control Variables

Political interest was measured by asking respondents how much interest they have in politics (1 = *no interest at all*, 4 = *a great deal*). The 2008 survey also included questions that assessed how closely respondents followed the presidential election campaign (1 = *not at all*, 4 = *very closely*) and how often they used the Internet during the past month to get news or information about the campaign (1 = *never*, 5 = *every day*).

The surveys included a series of demographic control questions that assessed respondents' sex, age, religion, minority status, number of semesters studied, and English-language proficiency. The inclusion of such control variables is important because previous studies have found that respondents' personal characteristics can affect both their U.S. attitudes and their exposure to and processing of media messages about the United States. Nisbet and Myers (2011), for example, found that the effects of exposure to Al-Jazeera in six Arab nations were dependent on the respondents' political identification.

Finally, to control for the potential effects of interpersonal contact with Americans, the survey included four questions about the extent of respondents' direct experiences with Americans. This was done

⁴ Although it is possible to argue that all media entertainment variables measure exposure to U.S. entertainment, it is likely that not all types of U.S. entertainment media have the same effect. They should therefore be tested separately. Exposure to U.S. music, for example, might be associated with positive perceptions of the United States, whereas exposure to U.S. TV drama series might lead to more negative perceptions. Moreover, regular exposure to long-running U.S. TV series might have a greater impact on perceptions of the United States than the more sporadic exposure to single U.S. movies.

because intergroup contact has been shown to influence outgroup perceptions and evaluations in general (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kawakami, 2003; Stangor, Jonas, Stroebe, & Hewstone, 1996; Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Bachelor, 2003) as well as anti-American sentiments (e.g., Carlson & Nelson, 2008; Chiozza, 2009a). Answers to these questions were combined in an additive index of direct experience with Americans ranging from zero to five, with higher values indicating more personal contact. Similar to the demographic control questions, these measures served to control for possible selection bias regarding exposure to different media that may entail spurious associations with anti-Americanism and perceptions of Obama and Americans.

Findings

The first hypothesis predicts that anti-Americanism among Germans will be less pronounced in 2009 than in 2008. We examined three indicators of anti-Americanism for possible change over time: (1) approval of U.S. foreign policies, (2) evaluations of general U.S. influence in Germany, and (3) evaluations of cultural U.S. influence in Germany. In addition, we looked at possible changes in respondents' cultural affinity for the United States, which we hypothesized to remain relatively stable over time.

As shown in Table 1, the data largely support the hypothesis. As predicted, respondents indicated more favorable views of U.S. foreign policies in 2009 than in the 2008 pre-election survey for five of the six policy domains included in the survey. The only domain in which respondents judged U.S. foreign policy less favorably in 2009 was free international trade. The most pronounced changes between 2008 and 2009 were in approval of the Iraq War, the U.S. efforts to protect world peace, and its global warming policies. Approval of the way the Iraq War was handled almost doubled from 5.5% in 2008 to 10.4% in 2009 ($\chi^2 = 12.79$, $n = 1,550$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Similarly, approval of U.S. global warming policies increased from 6.8% in 2008 to 12.4% in 2009 ($\chi^2 = 14.40$, $n = 1,523$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). The biggest absolute change was observed for attitudes toward U.S. policies to protect world peace, which jumped from 28.6% in 2008 to 41.6% in 2009 ($\chi^2 = 28.07$, $n = 1,527$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Overall, these findings suggest that the 2008 change in U.S. political leadership boosted the approval of U.S. foreign policies among Germans in 2009.

To tap more general feelings of anti-Americanism, respondents also were asked how much influence they thought the United States has on how things are going in Germany and whether they thought such influence is good or bad. As expected, feelings of anti-Americanism at this general level were less pronounced in 2009. Whereas 35.5% of respondents expressed disagreement with U.S. influence on how things are going in Germany in 2008, this percentage dropped to 30.3% a year later ($\chi^2 = 5.28$, $n = 1,461$, $df = 2$, $p = .07$).

A similar question asked respondents whether they thought German culture is becoming more like American culture and whether they thought such a development would be good or bad. There was no change between the two survey waves in this regard. The percentage of people who were dissatisfied with an observed cultural convergence remained the same between 2008 and 2009 (47.0% in 2008 and 46.9% in 2009). The fact that almost half of the respondents expressed such dissatisfaction in both years

indicates a fairly high and stable degree of anxiety among German students about the United States' potential cultural impact on German culture.

In addition to the more general questions about U.S. influence in Germany, the surveys included a series of questions about more specific aspects of U.S. culture. The findings reveal an almost identical pattern across time in expression of cultural affinity for seven American ideas, products, and practices, with only little and inconsistent fluctuation between 2008 and 2009. Respondents least approved the spread of American ideas and customs (2008: 28.3%; 2009: 28.0%), but they mostly approved the technological and scientific advances coming from the United States (2008: 96.5%; 2009: 94.6%). Overall, no substantial differences occurred between 2008 and 2009 in the approval of the seven U.S. cultural practices and ideas, which indicates that Obama's election did not lead to a shift in Germans' evaluations of U.S. culture.

Table 1. Approval of U.S. Foreign Policies and U.S. Culture (in percent).

	2008	2009	Δ	N
Dimensions of U.S. Foreign Policy				
The Iraq War	5.5	10.4	+4.9	1,550
Global warming	6.8	12.4	+5.6	1,523
The fight against terrorism	29.0	33.1	+4.1	1,544
Protecting world peace	28.6	41.6	+13.0	1,527
Fight against poverty in world	32.0	33.2	+1.2	1,323
Free international trade	54.1	49.0	-5.1	1,349
Dimensions of U.S. Culture				
Spread of American ideas and customs	28.3	28.0	-0.3	1,503
Ways of doing business	35.0	32.0	-3.0	1,346
Consumer products	53.4	49.3	-4.1	1,544
Music, movies, and television	83.6	84.4	+0.8	1,558
Ideas about freedom and democracy	86.1	85.6	-0.5	1,545
Cultural diversity	87.0	88.4	+1.4	1,515
Technology and scientific advances	96.5	94.6	-1.9	1,532

Note. Percentages indicate agreement or strong agreement with listed U.S. policies and aspects of U.S. culture. Delta (Δ) denotes the change of approval in percentage points from 2008 to 2009.

The second hypothesis predicts that perceptions of President Obama and Americans overall will improve among Germans between 2008 and 2009—with perceptions of Obama improving more. To test these predictions, one-way between-groups multivariate analyses of covariance were conducted.⁵ These analyses include all the individual indicators of political and personal perceptions as dependent variables (10 items for Obama, 12 items for Americans) and various controls (sex, age, English-language proficiency, minority status, number of semesters completed, and direct experiences with Americans). The

⁵ Although the data analyzed here do not come from random samples, we apply statistical significance tests to confirm the direction of the data with no intent of making inferences to a larger population. Instead, we apply them here for the more modest purpose of obtaining the probability of a given result if a randomization procedure had actually been implemented (see Mohr, 1990).

Multivariate analyses were followed by univariate comparisons between waves to provide a more nuanced picture of changes and continuities in perceptions of Obama and Americans among the respondents.

As predicted, perceptions of Obama changed between 2008 and 2009 (Wilks' $\Lambda = .957$, $F(10, 1,547) = 6.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .043$).⁶ As shown in Table 2, all 10 dimensions of his political image improved between 2008 and 2009. Especially strong improvements were found for perceptions of Obama's qualification, friendliness, competence, trustworthiness, and knowledge.

Although perceptions of Americans worsened slightly between 2008 and 2009, this effect was much weaker and less consistent than the one observed for Obama (Wilks' $\Lambda = .974$, $F(12, 1,545) = 3.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .026$).⁷ In fact, only perceptions of the intelligence, honesty, and tolerance of Americans worsened between 2008 and 2009, while all other indicators remained stable. Overall, then, while perceptions of Obama improved between 2008 and 2009 among our German respondents, perceptions of Americans remained fairly stable during the same time period. In line with expectations, the overall change in perceptions was greater for Obama than for Americans at large, and the second hypothesis is thus partly supported.

The third hypothesis states that cultural dimensions of anti-Americanism will be associated more with perceptions of Americans than perceptions of the U.S. president, with the reverse being true for the political dimensions of anti-Americanism. This proposition was tested in two regression analyses, the results of which are shown in Table 3 (columns 3 to 6). As predicted, in 2008 and 2009, attitudes toward U.S. culture contributed strongly to how Germans characterized Americans ($\beta = .42$ in 2008 and $\beta = .40$ in 2009). Obama's image, however, was much less dependent on people's attitudes toward U.S. culture in 2008 ($\beta = .13$) and 2009 ($\beta = .10$). Overall, German students' attitudes toward U.S. culture strongly predicted their perceptions of Americans but were much less associated with their perceptions of Obama, which supports Hypothesis 3b.

Support was less clear for the prediction that political anti-Americanism will be associated primarily with perceptions of Obama rather than perceptions of Americans overall (H3a). As expected, political anti-Americanism was associated with perceptions of Obama, at least in 2008. Respondents who were more supportive of U.S. foreign policies in 2008 were less likely to hold positive images of President Obama ($\beta = -.13$)—a finding that is likely due to Obama's insistent criticism of official U.S. policies during the election campaign. This interpretation is supported by the fact that attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy

⁶ The omnibus test results for the covariates were: sex, Wilks' $\Lambda = .983$, $F(10, 1,547) = 2.69$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .017$; age, Wilks' $\Lambda = .987$, $F(10, 1,547) = 2.05$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .013$; English-language proficiency, Wilks' $\Lambda = .993$, $F(10, 1,547) = 1.12$, $p = ns$; minority status, Wilks' $\Lambda = .986$, $F(10, 1,547) = 2.13$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$; semesters completed, Wilks' $\Lambda = .994$, $F(10, 1,547) = 0.99$, $p = ns$; political interest, Wilks' $\Lambda = .981$, $F(10, 1,547) = 3.02$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$; direct U.S. experience, Wilks' $\Lambda = .993$, $F(10, 1,547) = 1.08$, $p = ns$.

⁷ The omnibus test results for the covariates were: sex, Wilks' $\Lambda = .958$, $F(12, 1,545) = 5.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .042$; age, Wilks' $\Lambda = .988$, $F(12, 1,545) = 1.54$, $p = ns$; English-language proficiency, Wilks' $\Lambda = .977$, $F(12, 1,545) = 3.04$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$; minority status, Wilks' $\Lambda = .977$, $F(12, 1,545) = 3.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .023$; semesters completed, Wilks' $\Lambda = .989$, $F(12, 1,545) = 1.46$, $p = ns$; direct U.S. experience, Wilks' $\Lambda = .956$, $F(12, 1,545) = 5.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .044$.

played no major role in perceptions of Obama in 2009. At the same time, respondents with more favorable attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy in 2008 had more positive perceptions of Americans ($\beta = .08$). Thus, attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy were associated with perceptions of Barack Obama and Americans in 2008, but in opposite directions.

Table 2. Change in Perceptions of Obama and Americans, 2008–2009

	Perceptions of Obama							Perceptions of Americans							
	2008		2009		Δ	F	η_p^2	2008		2009		Δ	F	η_p^2	
	M	SD	M	SD				M	SD	M	SD				
Qualified	3.69	0.86	3.98	0.88	0.30***	48.53	.03								
Attractive	3.57	1.05	3.67	1.01	0.10*	4.14	.00								
Friendly	4.16	0.98	4.41	0.94	0.25***	29.74	.02	3.92	0.85	3.92	0.85	0.00	0.00	.00	
Competent	3.71	0.89	3.95	0.89	0.24***	29.94	.02	2.76	0.75	2.71	0.77	-0.04	1.17	.00	
Trustworthy	3.71	0.98	3.91	1.02	0.21***	19.52	.01	3.02	0.77	3.00	0.77	-0.02	0.54	.00	
Knowledgeable	3.51	0.87	3.68	0.85	0.17***	17.04	.01	2.50	0.78	2.54	0.79	0.05	2.19	.00	
Sincere	3.54	0.98	3.66	1.01	0.12*	6.22	.00	2.98	0.8	2.92	0.84	-0.06	2.91	.00	
Confident	4.34	1.04	4.44	0.96	0.09*	4.40	.00	4.31	0.87	4.30	0.87	-0.01	0.08	.00	
Intelligent	4.21	1.02	4.37	0.94	0.16**	11.30	.01	2.87	0.72	2.75	0.77	-0.12**	8.49	.01	
Honest	3.36	0.89	3.50	0.94	0.14**	8.76	.01	3.12	0.86	2.98	0.93	-0.14**	11.31	.01	
Tolerant								2.76	0.97	2.64	1.02	-0.12**	6.91	.00	
Creative								3.42	0.83	3.41	0.87	-0.02	0.16	.00	
Independent								3.49	0.94	3.49	0.98	0.00	0.17	.00	
Generous								3.55	0.87	3.50	0.93	-0.05	1.52	.00	

Note. Perceptions were measured using five-point scales (ranging from 1 = *describes Obama/Americans not at all* to 5 = *describes Obama/Americans very well*). Higher values on a perception measure denote greater attribution of the characteristic. Delta (Δ) denotes the change in means from 2008 to 2009. $N = 1,562$, $df = (1, 1553)$ for all tests of mean difference. Covariates included in the models are sex, age, English-language proficiency, minority status, semesters studied, political interest, and direct U.S. experience.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

The fourth hypothesis predicts that U.S. media use will be associated with lower levels of anti-Americanism. To test this possibility in both survey waves, an index of overall anti-Americanism (combining the political and cultural dimensions) was used as the dependent variable in hierarchical ordinary least squares regression analyses of the data collected in 2008 and 2009. In both models, the demographic control variables were first entered as a single block, followed by a second block that included the media use variables.

In both years, media use explained around 10% of the variance in anti-Americanism among the German respondents in our two samples (columns 1 and 2 in Table 3). However, not all media variables were equally associated with anti-Americanism. As shown in Table 3, exposure to CNN, U.S. television movies and television series were relatively strong media predictors of anti-Americanism. Overall, the

observed associations between media use and anti-Americanism indicate that respondents who consumed more U.S. media also exhibited lower levels of anti-Americanism. Watching CNN and U.S. television series showed the strongest association and correlated with less anti-Americanism in both survey waves. Although the fourth hypothesis is mostly supported by the data, it should be noted that exposure to U.S. movies in theaters and on DVD was not associated with anti-American attitudes.

The fifth hypothesis proposes that media use will be a better predictor of how Germans see President Obama than Americans overall. Contrary to our prediction, no notable differences in the power of the various media predictors were found (Table 3, columns 3 to 6). In 2008, indicators of media use explained just as much of the variance in perceptions of Obama as in those of Americans (2.1% and 2.7%, respectively). In 2009, media use indeed contributed more to the perceptions of Obama (3.8%) than to those of Americans (1.9%). However, overall we found little evidence to support our expectation that media use is more strongly associated with Germans' perceptions of Obama than their perceptions of Americans: Most media use variables were only weakly associated with perceptions of Americans and Obama. Only the use of political blogs was associated with more negative perceptions of Obama in 2008 and 2009.

These findings are consistent with the notion that other factors—people's cultural and social convictions and values, for example—usually play a dominant role in shaping such perceptions. As expected, we also found that some of the demographics predicted anti-Americanism and perceptions of Obama and Americans in general. For example, anti-Americanism was more pronounced among women, minorities, and those who were more interested in politics. Perceptions of President Obama, on the other hand, tended to be more negative among men and more positive among those who followed the U.S. election in 2008. Finally, perceptions of Americans were generally less positive among respondents who belonged to a minority, but were better among those who already had personal experiences with Americans.

Conclusions

This study's goal was to analyze whether a high-profile change in U.S. political leadership, the election of Barack Obama as the 44th president, could impact levels of anti-Americanism among young Germans. To trace possible changes in how Germans felt about the United States and its people, we analyzed their perceptions of Barack Obama and Americans in general shortly before the election and then again one year later. In addition, we measured Germans students' attitudes toward the political and cultural influence of the United States in Germany by employing a multidimensional assessment of anti-Americanism across time.

Our findings indicate that Germans' support for U.S. foreign policies increased substantially between 2008 and 2009. The most pronounced changes were observed in the approval of U.S. efforts to protect world peace (+13%), its global warming policies (+5.6%), and the Iraq War (+4.9%). These findings suggest that the "Obama factor" decreased political anti-Americanism in Germany during the year that followed his election.

Table 3. Predictors of Anti-Americanism, Perceptions of Obama, and Perceptions of Americans in Germany, 2008–2009.

	Anti-Americanism		Barack Obama		Americans	
	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
Demographics						
Sex (male = 1)	-.30 (.06)***	-.22 (.06)***	-.20 (.06)***	-.13 (.06)*	-.01 (.03)	-.04 (.04)
Age	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)*	-.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
English fluency	.02 (.04)	-.02 (.04)	.00 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.02)	.01 (.02)
Political interest	.06 (.05)	.13 (.06)*	-.03 (.05)	.05 (.05)	-.02 (.03)	.05 (.03)
Minority (yes = 1)	.03 (.09)	.29 (.10)**	-.08 (.08)	-.16 (.09)	-.08 (.05)	-.18 (.06)**
Number of semesters	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)
Direct U.S. experience	-.04 (.02)	-.03 (.03)	-.02 (.02)	.03 (.02)	.02 (.01)	.04 (.02)**
Follow U.S. election	-.03 (.05)	—	.16 (.05)***	—	.06 (.03)*	—
Incremental R^2 (%)	4.7%***	7.1%***	2.8%**	3.0%**	3.2%***	5.3%***
Media Use						
<i>Local media</i>						
Newspapers	-.01 (.02)	.02 (.03)	-.03 (.02)	-.01 (.02)	.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
TV news	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.03 (.03)	.01 (.03)	-.02 (.01)	-.01 (.02)
Online news	-.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.04 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	.00 (.02)	-.03 (.02)
Political blogs	.02 (.03)	.09 (.03)**	-.07 (.03)*	-.10 (.03)***	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)
<i>U.S. media</i>						
CNN	-.09 (.03)**	-.11 (.04)**	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	-.03 (.02)	.02 (.02)
U.S. music	-.01 (.00)***	-.01 (.00)***	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
U.S. movies (cinema/DVD)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
U.S. TV movies	-.08 (.04)*	-.10 (.04)*	-.02 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	-.04 (.02)	.02 (.02)
U.S. TV series	-.10 (.03)***	-.04 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	-.01 (.02)	-.04 (.02)*
Incremental R^2 (%)	11.1%***	9.8%***	2.1%*	3.8%**	2.7%**	1.9%
U.S. Perceptions						
U.S. culture	—	—	.13 (.06)*	.10 (.07)	.42 (.04)***	.40 (.04)***
U.S. foreign policy	—	—	-.13 (.06)*	.02 (.05)	.08 (.03)*	.06 (.03)
Incremental R^2 (%)	—	—	0.9%*	0.4%	15.7%***	13.0%***
Final R^2 (%)	15.8%	16.9%	5.8%	7.3%	21.6%	20.2%
<i>N</i>	824	741	824	741	824	741

Note. Cell entries are unstandardized ordinary least squares regression coefficients for the full model, with standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Cultural anti-Americanism, on the other hand, remained mostly unaffected by Obama's election. Although the share of Germans who expressed concern about American influence in Germany shrank slightly (-5%), the percentage of people who expressed dissatisfaction with an observed cultural convergence between the United States and Germany (47%) remained about the same between 2008 and 2009. Consequently, it seems that Obama's early presidency was not associated with a shift in Germans' evaluations of U.S. culture overall.

Although the sample studied here was almost evenly split on the issue, anti-American sentiment remains a common phenomenon. Almost half of the respondents had concerns about the cultural influence of the United States in Germany. One possible explanation for this finding might be that younger Germans harbor more critical attitudes toward American culture than Germans who grew up during the Cold War era and still remember the United States as a protector of a free and independent West Germany. Thus, younger Germans may be less likely to perceive an overlap of political and cultural values with U.S. society (White, 2010). A closer look at specific dimensions of U.S. culture indicates that young Germans have mixed feelings toward different aspects of U.S. culture. In fact, they are both fascinated and repulsed by America's cultural reach—perceptions that have remained stable despite Obama's move into the White House.

As predicted, perceptions of President Obama in Germany changed between 2008 and 2009. Especially strong improvements in his image were found for perceptions of his qualification, friendliness, competence, trustworthiness, and knowledge. Perceptions of Americans, on the other hand, worsened slightly during the same time period. However, this change was small and observed only for views associated with Americans' intelligence, honesty, and tolerance. Thus, despite our expectation that more positive perceptions of Barack Obama would lift impressions of Americans among young Germans, such a connection was not found. This intriguing finding adds support to the proposition that people's stereotypes of abstract groups often remain inert when they come across exemplars perceived as deeply counterstereotypic (Rothbart, 1996).

In addition, we found that attitudes toward U.S. culture were strongly related to how young Germans viewed Americans both in 2008 and 2009 but were much less related to perceptions of President Obama, which suggests a potential for the president to influence foreign publics' political support, even in the face of cultural reservations against the United States as a whole. Prior research suggests that such support can manifest in the foreign policy behavior of other countries (Datta, 2014; Goldsmith & Horiuchi, 2012).

However, limited evidence was found for the expectation that political anti-Americanism is more strongly associated with perceptions of the U.S. president than with perceptions of Americans overall. Germans who were more supportive of U.S. foreign policies actually were less likely to hold positive images of Obama in 2008—which makes sense, given that at the time he still was a candidate openly opposed to various policies of his predecessor, George W. Bush. At the same time, respondents with more favorable attitudes toward U.S. foreign policy had more positive perceptions of Americans in 2008. Overall, these findings do not support our prediction that political anti-Americanism is more strongly associated with perceptions of President Obama than with perceptions of Americans overall. However, the

fact that the political and cultural dimensions of anti-Americanism in our study are associated in distinct ways with perceptions of the U.S. president and the American people confirms Chiozza's (2009a) dimensions of America theory, which suggests multiple, often overlapping, causes of anti-American sentiment.

Another question this study tried to answer is whether exposure to U.S. media content is associated with more positive or negative perceptions of the United States, the U.S. president, and Americans overall. As predicted, respondents who consumed more CNN, U.S. television programs, and U.S. music exhibited lower levels of anti-Americanism. Although consumption of U.S. media content only explained about 10% of the variance in anti-Americanism in both surveys, these associations survived controls for demographic factors such as sex, age, political interest, and direct experience with the United States and its people. They also are in line with findings of earlier studies that exposure to U.S. media is related to more positive perceptions of the United States (Chiozza, 2009a; Fullerton et al., 2007; Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2004; Randolph et al., 2010).

Although this study supports the notion of possible associations between media exposure and anti-Americanism, only limited evidence was found for the prediction that exposure to U.S. and domestic media would explain perceptions of Obama better than perceptions of Americans in general. Because of the extensive media coverage Obama received in the German media during and after the 2008 presidential election, we assumed that his image in Germany would be more strongly associated with media use than perceptions of typical Americans. However, as it turned out, only the use of political blogs was associated with how young Germans viewed President Obama in 2008 and 2009. Moreover, this association was negative and therefore contradicted our expectations. We can only speculate why this was the case, but it is possible that users of political blogs generally were more critical of the United States and Obama's presidency and used the blogs to nurture and express this dissatisfaction. This finding complicates our understanding of the relationship between media exposure and the perception of U.S. leadership, and calls for future studies that take into account the possible effects of user-generated content.

We acknowledge a number of limitations of this study. First, this study was based on cross-sectional, correlational data. We therefore were not able to present conclusive causal evidence—and all interpretations of our data depend on theoretical assumptions about the effects chain that most plausibly explain the patterns we found in the data (Eveland, Hayes, Shah, & Kwak, 2005). One of the most critical caveats in this respect is our inability to test whether exposure to U.S. media might lead to more positive attitudes toward the United States and its people, whether positive attitudes toward the United States and its people lead to more exposure to U.S. media, or whether both of these are true.

Furthermore, selection effects might go hand-in-hand with exposure effects. Between-group differences due to self-selection might be perpetuated by sustained exposure to U.S. media in the pro-U.S. group, and such exposure effects might resonate with existing predispositions in that group. In turn, this would give rise to a "reinforcing spiral" in the relationship between media uses and perceptions of the United States (Slater, 2007). Obviously, these limits call for further research using designs that give greater causal leverage (such as panel designs or natural experiments) as a follow-up to this study so that

ambiguities inherent in the data may be unraveled. Longitudinal designs would be desirable as well. This study only analyzed attitudes shortly before and one year after Obama's election. A longer time frame with repeated measures would allow more precise tracking of attitudes beyond President Obama's initial honeymoon period.

Other important caveats about the generalizability of the findings are due to our sample and analytical approach. We worked with a nonrandom sample of college students from one country only, who reported their media use, viewpoints, and self-perceptions in an online survey. The usual criticism of such an approach applies: The sample has high specificity and is representative of neither all students in Germany nor the general population. Furthermore, the measures of media use were based on self-reports and therefore only represent imperfect measures of actual exposure (see Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986). Yet the latter criticism can be leveled against most survey studies that analyze media use among larger samples of respondents. However, it should be noted that this study did not focus on offering a representative picture of a specific population. The greater goal was to identify patterns that become visible by analyzing a specific group, yet are likely to indicate a more general phenomenon—an assumption that is subject to future investigation.

A final caveat concerns the limits of studying one specific country. The study examined anti-Americanism in Germany, which represents a very specific cultural and historic context. We would like to see this line of research expand to include comparisons of associations between media use, anti-Americanism, and perceptions of U.S. presidents and Americans across nations. Although this would require substantial logistical efforts, it also would represent a crucial step in the development of a more general and context-sensitive model of media effects on perceptions of people from other nations.

As it is, this study offers some empirical evidence of the roles different media play in the generation and sustenance of such perceptions. Although there were changes in the perception of Barack Obama as he progressed from political superstar to U.S. president, his trajectory as a salient American exemplar did not translate to changes in perceptions of the United States. Thus, one of the most important conclusions to draw from this study is that even popular presidents are seemingly unable to change cultural perceptions of a nation, at least within one year of being in office. Although we did identify an "Obama factor" in young Germans' attitudes toward the United States, its influence was confined mostly to the political realm. On the flip side, however, this relative independence of perceptions of the president from broader cultural attitudes toward the United States suggests a potential of the president to garner international public support for U.S. foreign policies, even in the face of unfavorable views of U.S. culture in foreign publics.

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Appendix: Comparison of Sample Characteristics

	2008		2009		Δ
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Demographics					
Male (%)	40.41	0.49	43.18	0.50	-2.77
Age (years)	23.87	4.09	23.33	3.90	0.55**
English fluency	4.20	0.81	4.23	0.77	-0.03
Political interest	3.43	0.66	3.57	0.60	-0.14***
Minority (%)	9.71	0.30	9.33	0.29	0.38
Number of semesters	6.38	4.25	5.75	4.51	0.62**
Direct U.S. experience	2.38	1.28	2.37	1.19	0.01
Media Exposure					
<i>Domestic media use</i>					
Newspapers	3.27	1.20	3.22	1.20	0.06
TV news	3.77	1.15	3.78	1.18	-0.01
Online news	4.20	1.06	4.25	1.06	-0.04
Political blogs	1.83	1.02	1.89	1.08	-0.06
<i>U.S. media use</i>					
CNN	1.99	1.00	1.78	0.88	0.21***
U.S. music	52.45	21.60	53.35	22.79	-0.90
U.S. movies	15.01	12.87	14.18	11.75	0.84
U.S. TV movies	2.79	0.86	2.68	0.86	0.12**
U.S. TV series	2.99	1.20	2.98	1.19	0.01
U.S. Perceptions					
U.S. culture	2.86	0.44	2.82	0.45	0.04
U.S. foreign policy	1.89	0.50	1.99	0.54	-0.11***
<i>N</i>	824		750		

Note. Delta (Δ) denotes difference in means between 2008 to 2009 samples.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.