



# The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream

*By Jeremy Rifkin*

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The national bestseller that shows how the American Dream is languishing, surpassed worldwide by a powerful alternative in the lifestyle of the new Europe.

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**By Jeremy Rifkin Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Why are so few Americans paying attention to the dramatic changes taking place across the Atlantic, Rifkin (*The End of Work*) asks in his provocative and well-argued manifesto for the new European Union. Famously, Americans "live to work" while Europeans "work to live," and Rifkin demonstrates statistically and anecdotally that Europe's humane approach to capitalism makes for a healthier, better-educated populace. The U.S. lags behind in its unimaginative approach to working hours, productivity and technology, Rifkin claims, while Europe is leading the way into a new era while competing well in terms of productivity. Rifkin traces the cultural roots of what he says is America's lack of vision to its emphasis on individual autonomy and the accumulation of wealth; Europe's dream is more rooted in connectedness and quality of life. Americans may be risk takers, but Rifkin is more admiring of risk-sensitive European realism, as well as its secularism and social democracy. Exploring the history behind the two continents' wildly differing sensibilities, Rifkin examines the myth of the U.S. as "land of opportunity" and the two continents' contrasting attitudes to foreign policy, peace keeping and foreign aid. Rifkin's claims are not new, but he writes with striking clarity, combining the insights of contemporary sociologists and economists with up-to-the minute data and powerfully apt journalistic observations. While he may appear to idealize Europe's new direction, Rifkin's comparative study is scrupulously thorough and informative, and his rigor will please all readers interested in the future of world affairs.

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From [Booklist](#)

The American Dream is not dead, says Rifkin, but it's showing its years. Contrasting definitively American fantasies of individual autonomy, material wealth, and cultural assimilation with an emerging European vision of community relationships, quality of life, and cultural diversity, Rifkin argues that the great bloodshed of the twentieth century liberated Europeans from their past, better preparing them for global citizenship in the twenty-first century. Rifkin paints this contrast with grandiose, if sometimes messy, strokes, blending an intellectual history of the Enlightenment into an informed discussion of modern European political infrastructure. Rifkin is an American who has spent much of his life doing business in Europe, and his reasoned arguments are likewise often accompanied by personal anecdotes; it's clear on which continent his heart lies. But those who would dismiss Rifkin's polemics as rewarmed socialism miss the author's core argument. It is not a clash-of-civilizations diatribe but rather an appeal to Europeans to back their emergent vision with (American) courage and to Americans to temper their intemperate optimism with (European) moral perspective. The point is conversation, not competition. *Brendan Driscoll*

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Review

"The European Dream" should be required reading on both sides of the Atlantic. (Andrew Moravcsik, "The Financial Times") At a time when many Americans are feeling increasingly isolated, Rifkin carves out a provocative window for self-reflection and appraisal. (Negar Akhavi, "San Francisco Chronicle")

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