LEARNING TO HATE AMERICANS

HOW U.S. MEDIA SHAPE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES AMONG TEENAGERS IN TWELVE COUNTRIES

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Melvin L. DeFleur & Margaret H. DeFleur

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books@cgms.org

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FOREWORD

When foreign graduate students arrive in the United States for the first time, they often tell me that during the first few months here they are very afraid of becoming the victim of a violent crime.

"Why?" I ask.

"Because there is a lot violence in Hollywood movies," they reply. "I thought that's what it would be like here."

Of course, as time passes they realize that their chances of becoming a victim of a violent crime are not extremely high, especially in university communities. The average U.S. citizen has a 1-in-200 chance of being assaulted, forcibly raped, killed or robbed during a typical year. If you factor in the fact that university communities are generally located in low-crime areas, the risk drops even more, probably to less than 1 in 2,000.

"Based on your experience so far, do you think Americans are violent?" I ask the new students.

"No, not really," they often reply. "Most Americans are very friendly."

There's nothing like real-world experience to debunk a myth. But most young people from other countries around the world will never get the opportunity to live in America. For them, the images they derive from U.S. mass media, especially movies and television programs, will be one of the most important sources of knowledge about life in America. And those images, as professors Melvin and Margaret DeFleur point out in this book, are heavily laden with violence and scenes of tough street life in American cities.

No mass communication scholar I know would dispute the notion that Hollywood is partly responsible for the distorted perceptions that many people around the world have of violent crime in the United States. In fact, research suggests that even Americans who watch a lot of television can develop what mass media scholar George Gerbner and his colleagues call a "mean world syndrome"—an exaggerated fear of becoming a victim of crime.

But what if the adverse affects of U.S. mass media didn't stop there? What if young people around the world were developing such distorted perceptions that they thought American women were "sexually immoral"; Americans cared only about getting rich, as opposed to helping the poor; and Americans didn't care about world peace and wanted to dominate everyone in the world? What if young people around the world hated us?

These are some of the questions tackled in this provocative little book. Professors Melvin L. DeFleur and Margaret H. DeFleur asked their foreign graduate students to administer questionnaires to teenagers in 12 countries. Of course, everyone expected distorted perceptions. But the results shocked even seasoned researchers. Teenagers around the world have extremely negative views of Americans—so much so that the DeFleurs conclude they "hate us."

The research data collected by the DeFleurs alone would justify a book on this topic (see Chapters 1-5). But the DeFleurs don't stop there. They provide a detailed theoretical model to explain why there is so much negative imaging in U.S. media and why those images are having adverse effects on young people in other countries (see Chapter 6). In addition, the DeFleurs offer some suggestions for correcting the problem (see Chapter 7).

The DeFleurs do not have all of the solutions to the problem of distorted images of Americans. But that doesn't detract from the contribution that this book makes to an understanding of media effects. Perhaps the most important is that the DeFleurs have drawn attention to a new social problem—one that, if left unresolved, may have dire economic and political consequences for the United States in years to come.

In this post-9/11 world, no public policy maker, governmental bureaucrat or student of international politics can afford to ignore their study or the advice they offer. Now, more than ever, Americans need the support and respect of peoples around the world.

David Demers
Associate Professor and Executive Director
Center for Global Media Studies
Edward R. Murrow School of Communication
Washington State University
Fall 2003

DEDICATION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is respectfully dedicated to those international students and their friends, family members and acquaintances in the twelve countries who assisted with gathering the data on which the findings are based. Because some have requested anonymity, their names cannot be revealed. But the authors recognize that without their assistance this project could never have been completed.

We also would like to acknowledge Dr. John J. Schulz of Boston University, who helped publicize the findings of this project by making its Preliminary Report available to journalists worldwide via the Global Beat Syndicate's Web site (http://www.nyu.edu/globalbeat).

Melvin L. DeFleur
Margaret H. DeFleur
College of Communication
Boston University
Fall 2003

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The research reported in this book focuses on how mass media and other forms of popular culture help shape beliefs and attitudes about Americans among young people in twelve countries. A total of 1,313 teenagers between14 and 19 years of age (average = 17) responded to a questionnaire that assessed their views of people like you, your family and your neighbors. It was a study of the "next generation" of foreign teenagers and how they feel about people who live in the United States. The countries included Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, South Korea, Mexico, China, Spain, Taiwan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Nigeria, Italy and Argentina. The results show that youths studied in this project have distorted and decidedly negative attitudes toward people who live in the United States.

The major goals of the project were not only to document the nature of teenagers' beliefs about and attitudes toward Americans, but also to provide explanations of how such youthful views are shaped by mass media entertainment products and the long-term consequences of these influences. The central focus of the project, then, is on the role of mass-communicated popular culture in shaping beliefs and attitudes of the next generation that soon will be adults.

Popular culture—that is motion pictures, TV programs, music videos and recordings, as well as other entertainment products—are designed, developed and distributed worldwide by a limited number of multinational corporations. These corporations follow the basic principles of capitalism, as set forth in the late 1700s by Adam Smith. That is, they conduct their activities to make profits—a desirable and applauded goal within the political-economic system of capitalism. Generally speaking, these producers are not deliberately trying to influence anyone's belief and attitudes toward Americans. To maximize profits, their products are

designed—logically enough—to appeal to the *largest segment of the market* within the populations of the many countries to which their wares are exported. As will be clear, that segment of the market is the young.

These producers understand completely that the tastes and interests of the young are different from those of the older and more traditional members of populations. In conservative societies, in which the behavior of young people is closely controlled by their elders, youths may conform to such limits. But imported media entertainment allows them vicariously to enjoy the non-conforming behavior depicted—particularly as it portrays young Americans. In many cases, that behavior would be frowned upon, or even be expressly forbidden, within the norms governing their own lives. For that reason, it can seem exciting. Informants from the conservative societies studied in this project have confirmed this observation.[1]

Above all, however, young people the world over want to see *exciting action*. They enjoy seeing explosions, fistfights, car chases, shootouts, criminal activities and other portrayals of dangerous behavior. In particular, young males the world over want to see nude women and graphic depictions of couples in bed. Such experiences and actions are highly unlikely to occur in the realities of their own young lives.

Exactly this kind of exciting content, however, has been increasingly incorporated into the motion pictures, TV dramas, music videos and other forms of popular culture that are produced by media corporations (mostly in the United States) and shipped to other countries. The reason is that competition for audiences among those who produce media entertainment products is *fierce*. Attracting and holding the largest possible audience is critical for financial success. The products produced must attract and hold audience attention. Increasing the excitement level of what is produced enlarges the audience and thereby enhances the profits. Explanations for all of these issues will be provided in subsequent chapters.

A major factor promoting the global distribution of such content is that many societies do not have facilities for producing movies, TV programming or other forms of popular culture that their youthful populations desire. Virtually all, however, have cinemas, radio stations, television broadcasting or cable facilities that serve their populations. In some cases, what is transmitted over these media systems is highly controlled by local government. Even in such societies, some entertainment must be provided. To fill this need, the exported products of the multinational corporations are readily available.

Even if official systems do not provide such content, however, alternative sources are always available. The home use of VCRs and even DVD systems for

viewing movies and other content on TV screens is now widespread. Local entrepreneurs the world over quickly obtain copies of the latest films, TV programs and other forms of entertainment. They reproduce them (often as pirated products) and either rent or sell them cheaply in the streets. Government controls are not effective in eliminating this flow of entertainment content.

The consequences of this complex situation, as the present project will show, is that these forms of media entertainment provide subtle but abundant lessons to the youth in societies around the world as to what ordinary American people are really like. After all, they see them depicted daily on their television screens as they view *Baywatch*, *The Sopranos* or *Sex and the City*—or in the local cinema. Thus, they learn what Americans are like when they see their lifestyles, morals and behavior portrayed in TV dramas or movies, or even when they listen to Eminem's lyrics in popular music. The lessons they learn, as the present report will explain, are not planned by those who produce such entertainment products. Moreover, they are learned unwittingly by the young people who enjoy this type of media entertainment.

Essentially, then, the data obtained and reported in the chapters that follow offer evidence that the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of young people in the twelve countries studied have been significantly influenced by such media content and that those views are decidedly negative toward ordinary Americans. Specifically, they have learned that we are *violent*, *criminally inclined*, and that American women are *sexually immoral*. It is easy to understand, therefore, that Americans are people about whom they should have negative views.

The youth studied have not acquired these beliefs and attitudes by personal contact with Americans—very few have visited the United States. Their views are products of a process that psychologists call *incidental learning*—from subtle and unplanned lessons, learned unwittingly bit-by-bit over a number of years. These lessons about Americans are embedded in movies, TV programs and other content. Simply put, these instructions as to what Americans are like are brought to them by a limited set of global corporations that design, develop and distribute media entertainment products that are eagerly attended to by literally millions and millions of young people word-wide. That process will be repeated to instruct each new generation that comes along.

The present report, then, discusses what kinds of teenagers were studied in the twelve countries to reach these conclusions and how the beliefs and attitudes of these young people were assessed. The report develops a linked set of concise explanations (formal theories) concerning the nature of the system that produces and markets popular entertainment media products on a global basis. It also provides an integrated set of explanations (theories) of what happens when

youngsters in various societies encounter representations of ordinary Americans in those products—that is, what they come to believe and how that learning process takes place. Finally, the report sets forth conclusions about the long-term consequences of this complex situation—consequences that are a cause for national concern.

BACKGROUND

Americans today live in a time of stress. Following the attack on the World Trade Center, the news media continue to convey constant, and usually vague, reports of threats of possible terrorist acts to their audiences. Stressful measures to prevent such acts have been put in place at all levels of government. In addition, the relatively recent military actions in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq, with its almost non-stop TV coverage, have added to people's concerns. Violence in the Middle East and elsewhere continues, and from time-to-time individuals said to be terrorists planning violent acts in the United States are taken into custody. Bombings in other parts of the world add still more threatening events.

Taken together, these events have changed people's perceptions of personal and public risk. In many ways, then, all of these shared conditions of concern have generated and now pose what amounts to a significant *public health problem*.[2]

> Immediately after the Sept. 11th attacks, doctors and therapists across the country reported a steep rise in the number of people complaining of anxiety, depression and other psychological problems. ... For people already in treatment, mental health experts said, threats of war and jihad against America have exacerbated symptoms.[3]

Still another source of concern is the "climate of hate" (regarding the United States as a nation) that clearly seems to exist in many countries. Periodically reported by pollsters, it is well-understood that hostile attitudes toward the actions and policies of the United States are held by many of the adults in a number of populations in other parts of the world.[4] These often seem puzzling to Americans, and it can be difficult for ordinary citizens to understand either their nature or their causes.

Those hostile feelings about the United States present a complex picture. Some are related to specific recent military actions by the U.S. armed forces, such as the war in Iraq. Other negative sentiments have existed for a much longer period and have apparently been generated by previous policies and interventions

in such places as Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia or Lebanon. Some may be a result of outspoken Muslim religious leaders decrying support of Israel. Still others may be a consequence of complex foreign or economic policies—such as the rejection by the United States of the Kyoto (environmental) Treaty or the proposed (UN) International Criminal Court.

In contrast, and adding to the complexity, are clear indications that at least *some* views of Americans regarding *some* aspects of their culture are *positive*—at least among *some* people in *some* countries. Thus, co-existing with hostile attitudes—at times even in the very same countries and regions, and among the same populations—are favorable assessments of ways of life enjoyed by people in the United States.

For the most part these more positive sentiments concerning particular aspects of the American lifestyles can be found among the young. There is a high degree of interest among youth around the world in American *popular culture*. It is a result of the flow of movies, TV programming, popular music, video games and other media entertainment products from the United States to other countries. Because such media content is so sought after by the young, pictures of popular American entertainers—Elvis, Madonna, Britany Spears and Eminem—can be seen on the walls of their homes, even in countries like Iran and Iraq. The names and the musical styles of these celebrities are familiar to huge numbers of youths in such countries, and for some they serve as role models.

Beyond youthful regard for pop-culture idols, there is among other segments of populations *envy* of the personal, financial, religious and political freedoms that are routinely enjoyed by Americans. In societies where rigid political or religious controls exist, these can seem positive features indeed. Thus, a complex mix of beliefs, views, attitudes and feelings toward the United States, toward the American society and its population can be found in different parts of the world, and even within a particular population.

Because of that complexity, the meaning of terms like "anti-American" or "pro-American" can be difficult to interpret in the various polls and surveys that have been conducted in recent times in countries assumed to be hostile toward the United States. Commonly, it is the *adults* in those countries whose beliefs and attitudes concerning the "United States" have been assessed. There is little doubt that a great many of those adults view the United States in decidedly negative terms. However, much less is known about how young people—teenagers who make up the next generation, as well as the majority of people who live in such societies—feel toward *ordinary Americans*.

This is an important distinction. That is, the official United States is a different "attitude object" than are Americans as people who inhabit the United

States. It is the nature of that complexity in beliefs, attitudes, views and opinions, therefore, and the lack of detailed information about the youthful cohort who will soon come of age, that led to the present project.[5]

THE CENTRAL ISSUES INVESTIGATED

Several issues are addressed in the research project that require careful explanation. That is, what *evaluative beliefs*—what appraising assessments, views, understandings and attitudes—do they entertain about individuals and their families who live in the United States? Moreover, are those beliefs *accurate?* Do they reflect the true nature of Americans, or are they *distorted* and *flawed* in ways that provide a basis for negative interpretations and images?

To answer that question, the project assessed beliefs and attitudes toward Americans among more than thirteen hundred teenagers in twelve countries in different parts of the world. Details will be provided concerning how that was done, what was assessed and how barriers to gaining access to teenagers in countries unfriendly to the United States were surmounted. Also explained in the chapters and sections that follow will be what was found, how the results can be interpreted and what their implications may be for American society.

First, however, in order to explain the goals of the project more precisely, an important distinction must be made between Americans *as people* and the United States as an *official entity*. By "ordinary Americans" we mean persons such as you, your family, your friends, your neighbors and the people with whom you work. It is important to understand that is not the same as beliefs and attitudes toward the "United States" as a government. While it is clear that there is widespread hostility among adults in many countries toward the government of the United States—that is, its leaders, policies, power, military actions and so forth—that is not what was studied in the present project. Again, it specifically focuses on teenage views of "Americans" as everyday people.

An important reason for clarifying this issue at length is that some might claim that it is not possible to make a realistic distinction between these different "attitude objects." However, the present authors maintain that it is. Indeed, it is very clear that attitudes toward a government can be completely different than those toward the private citizens that make up its population. Events in the former Soviet Union, and more recent ones in such places as Cuba and North Korea illustrate the point. While the leaders and governments of those countries have been evaluated in very negative ways by most Americans, they have not held parallel feelings about the ordinary inhabitants of those countries.

The case of the hostilities with Iraq in 2003 illustrate the point. Very

obviously, the majority of Americans—whether they supported the war or not—truly despised Saddam Hussein and his ruthless regime. At the same time, they were sympathetic and concerned about the majority of decent and private citizens of that country. Indeed, during the conflict, extraordinary measures were taken, supported fully by Americans, to try to protect those people from harm, and then to assist them in getting their lives back in order and to provide for their humanitarian needs.

An important question, then, is whether that familiar *dual pattern* prevails among teenagers in the twelve countries studied in the present project. That is, are their views of Americans, as private citizens *different*, and *more favorable*, than their attitudes toward the United States as an official entity? In other words, do they see the United States in negative terms, but its ordinary people in a more positive way? Or, will the data from the present project show an unusual departure from that dual pattern? That is, will the teenagers have *negative beliefs and attitudes about both*? If that turns out to be the case, it would not fit the dual pattern that commonly prevails among Americans—most of whom hold no negative views of the ordinary people of other countries whose governments they regard in pejorative terms.

Anticipating the presentation of the results from this project, the youths studied definitely do *not* show that typical dual pattern. For the most part, the teenagers studied have quite negative views of *both* the U.S. government *and* of ordinary Americans. Given that outcome, an important question is *why*? That is, *from what sources* have young people in the countries studied acquired pejorative beliefs and attitudes concerning the people who live in the United States? This, therefore, is a second important question addressed in this project. Specifically, an attempt was made to determine whether such negative views have been derived from their *exposure to American popular culture* as discussed above.

That, of course raises the question of *access*. Do teenagers around the world actually have access to and attend to media-delivered content that portrays Americans negatively? There is little doubt that teenagers in almost all countries (except those that live in abject poverty in truly remote areas) have ready access to this type of media-delivered communication. Indeed, they have such access in much the same degree, or in some cases even greater access than is the case with young people in the United States. For example, noted filmmaker Charles C. Stuart traveled extensively in the Middle East in 2003 in order to explore the influence American popular culture was having on Arab identity and the Muslim faith. He found that:

U.S. television programs and movies are pouring into Muslim societies at

a dizzying rate thanks to the explosion of satellite networks in the Middle East—more than 100 today, compared to just one in 1990.[6]

Children in such areas attend the cinema, receive TV programming by satellite, broadcast, cable, or they view VCR tapes or DVDs. They listen to the radio, play video games, purchase records and so on, in much the same way as do teenagers in any American community.

Access to popular culture and entertainment content, then, is not a problem for young people in most countries seeking the experiences of gratification that such products provide. While some governments attempt to restrict access to movies and television content of which they disapprove, in reality that poses few barriers. As explained, virtually any form of popular entertainment can be cheaply rented or purchased almost everywhere on audio or VCR tape, or increasingly on DVDs. These products are supplied by street vendors in virtually every city in the world, regardless of the nature of the government. Local entrepreneurs obtain the media content, often directly from their contacts with Western sources, and then pirate, or otherwise record, and distribute it through their local organizations of vendors. Thus, the same popular music, movies, and television content is readily available to middle-class teenagers in towns and cities in Pakistan, Bahrain or South Korea as it is to young people in New Jersey, Ohio and Oregon.

A third issue to be addressed concerns who prepares and delivers world wide the media content that depicts Americans negatively and why? Answering those questions requires explaining the organization and functioning of the *entrepreneurial system* that designs, develops and distributes the various forms of popular culture that are attended to by young people on a global basis. Specifically, an understanding is needed concerning the ownership, operations and the goals of large multinational corporations that produce and market those products to provide access by youths in almost all countries.

Another truly important issue to be addressed is the *overall nature* of the process by which such content provides youthful audiences with *learning sources* from which they acquire negative and flawed interpretations of ordinary Americans and their ways of life. This is an especially complex issue. It requires an understanding of a series of *stages* by which: (1) global media entertainment content is *shaped*, (2) the way it is *distributed*, (3) why young people *seek it out*, (4) how—lacking other sources—they unwitting *learn* from it, (5) how those lessons slowly *add up*, and (6) how they finally produce seemingly valid—but seriously flawed—*social constructions of reality* concerning the nature of Americans.

Finally, the implications and consequences of what has been found in this

project must be considered. What do these results indicate about the complex problems created by current hatred and flawed negative images of Americans among the young people in the countries studied? Are there simple ways to reverse these feelings and bring the youth in such societies to admire and like Americans? That may be the most important issue of all.

WHO DESIGNS, DEVELOPS AND DISTRIBUTES MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTS?

Simply put, a small number of large multinational corporations produce most of the media content consumed on the planet. That includes both news and entertainment. Over the last two decades, there has been a significant consolidation of ownership among those corporations, studios, networks and other organizations that produce, and sell worldwide, motion pictures, television programming, popular music, video games, theme parks and news. As mass communication scholar Yahya Kamalipour of Purdue University states:

> [A] new world is being forged before our very eyes. It is a world in which the mass media conglomerates, such as General Electric, Time Warner, Disney, Capital Cities, ABC and Westinghouse play a significant role in the way(s) that we perceive ourselves, our world, and our fellow human beings. It is a technologically driven, intensely competitive, and corporate-dominated world that was quite unimaginable to our predecessors only a generation ago.[7]

Essentially, then, a small number of organizations, seek profits by preparing, producing and disseminating virtually every form of mass communicated popular culture and media entertainment content. They do so worldwide and have come to dominate both the production and marketing of such products on a global basis.

Media scholars have studied this situation in depth and many argue that these are profit-seeking corporations that operate according to strict business principles—with little concern over the consequences for their audiences of what they produce. Their major objective is to *earn maximum profits* for their owners, shareholders and managers.[8] That is, of course, a laudable goal within the present political and economic system in which such businesses operate. It has not resulted in widespread condemnation of those producers, and it is unlikely that it will. Indeed, few Americans would reject that system for something else.

A lack of concern for consequences is common in many kinds of businesses.

Clear examples are the risks to many people resulting from their use of cigarettes, liquor, handguns and fast foods. In such cases, however, the *responsibility for consequences is that of the user*—who is presumed to understand those risks and their potential negative outcomes and be willing to accept them. In these four cases, the risks associated with use of the products have been well-documented. It is widely understood that smoking can lead to lung cancer, that excessive use of alcohol can have serious health problems, that over-indulgence in high-calorie, high-fat food can result in obesity and that handguns can be dangerous to one's health.

In the present case, however, the youth who acquire negative beliefs and attitudes toward Americans by attending to popular culture have no such awareness. The same situation appears to be the case for the producers who offer these products to a young audience. Increases in hostility toward the people who live in the United States is scarcely a desirable consequence. Hopefully, research such as the present project can help to clarify that situation and lead to greater awareness of how that outcome is produced, on the part of both producers and consumers and on the part of the American public at large.

There is another important issue that is *not* addressed in this project, but which deserves comment. It concerns the *news*: Much the same principles, processes and explanations of the effects of popular entertainment content on youth may be applicable to the flow of news from the United States to other parts of the world. The "news values" that are used routinely by gatekeeping editors and others to select and develop their daily agendas of reports in print or broadcasting are well understood. News stories are selected that emphasize crime, conflict, sensationalism, deviant behavior and other actions, situations and events that capture and hold interest among their audiences and readers. They scarcely present an objective picture of life among ordinary citizens in the United States. The goal of course is to increase audience size and therefore profits. Thus, what individuals in other countries see and hear about the people of the United States in news reports also presents a clearly negative picture. Stories of crime, corruption, sex and violence play a prominent role in teaching people about the nature of Americans. For much the same reasons, then, attention to the news from the United States has every prospect of providing the same incidental lessons concerning the characteristics of Americans as is the case with entertainment.

The producers and distributors of the news are largely under the control of the same increasingly limited number of multinational corporations that produce and disseminate entertainment products. However, for some years, the growing consolidation of ownership has created a considerable debate. That debate is not focused on the consequences of negative images of Americans that are so

frequently a part of news reports. It has been mainly concerned with the consequence of *limiting diversity* in the reporting of what is taking place. Many critics claim that, as a result of this concentration of ownership, there will be less and less "robust discussion" in the press. Even more alarming, say such critics, views that are contrary to those of the dominant corporations will have a more difficult time being heard.

But even though much the same processes and consequences in shaping views of Americans among those in other countries may be present in the flow of news on a global basis, this issue is not a focus of the present project. As explained, what is of concern here is the nature of what is produced as entertainment in the form of popular culture and how it defines people who live in the United States.

Who are these multinational corporations that have achieved such a presumably powerful position? According to David Demers, the ten most dominant groups (and their latest available sales figures) were: AOL Time Warner, Inc. ($36 billion), Vivendi Universal ($30 billion), The Walt Disney Company ($26 billion), Bertelsmann AG ($16.5 billion), Viacom ($16 billion), The News Corporation ($14.2 billion), Sony ($11.3 billion). National Broadcasting Company ($6.8 billion), The Thompson Corporation ($5.9 billion) and Advance Publication ($4.5 billion).[9] There are others, but taking just these ten together, they earn over $167 billion dollars a year selling media products on the global market—which is more than half of all revenues generated by mass media worldwide.

To whom do they sell all their entertainment products? It is mainly to countries that do not have adequate facilities to produce a sufficient number of motion pictures, television entertainment programs, news reports and other related products to satisfy the desires of their populations. Indeed, *the poorer the country, the more likely it will import virtually all of their mass communication programming and content.* As motion picture attendance, the use of television, VCRs, DVDs, record players and other entertainment technology has come into use worldwide, populations want such products and are willing to pay for them. Even tightly controlled governments have to provide at least *something* and at least tolerate what they can import. For example, Kamlipour notes what he observed during a recent visit to Iran:

> Satellite receiving dishes were prominent on the rooftops of millions of Iranian homes where families would gather around their Sony TV sets and view *Oprah, Donahue, American's Funniest Videos and Growing Pains.* ... movies such as *Dances with Wolves,* and *Silence of the Lambs* were

> circulating on videocassettes. ... American pop singers, such as Michael Jackson, Madonna and others (whom I had never even heard of!), were known to the youth.[10]

Thus, the global demand for popular culture entertainment is being filled by a few aggressive conglomerates operating worldwide. However, it would be a mistake to assume that all such media giants are reaping giant profits. Indeed, some are not doing as well as they would like. While there is a huge global market for media entertainment products, it is *an intensely competitive industry*. Indeed, it is so competitive that some of the largest among them are having a difficult time making the profits that their stockholders want. As *The Economist* reported in the summer of 2002, many of their shareholders have been deeply disappointed by their earnings and stock prices:

> Part of the disillusionment reflects gloom over the groups' share prices. The markets have battered the media giants, taking aim particularly at AOL Time Warner and Vivendi Universal. Each of these has had to make vast write-downs of assets bought at inflated prices at the height of the media and Internet bubble.[11]

The fact is, however, that while these groups compete with each other ruthlessly, taken as a whole they have now become the source by which popular media content is delivered to virtually every young person in every country on this planet. They present images and experiences that youthful audiences can get in no other way:

> These images are fed through an array of sophisticated communication networks, particularly the mass media, by the very conglomerates that have penetrated virtually every aspect of people's lives, whether they live in Chicago, New York, Beijing, Tehran, Cairo, New Delhi, Mexico City, Bogota, Moscow, Paris, Algiers, or Johannesburg. In such a market-driven and media-saturated environment, then, it is no wonder, then, to see teenagers in Ankara, Bangkok, Caracas, or other major cities of the world, wearing T-shirts with the imprints of universal or Western icons, such as Michael Jackson, Madonna ... or a myriad of other Hollywood-TV-industry manufactured logos, icons and celebrities.[12]

Generally, then, operating in an intensely competitive environment, in which the demand for popular culture and entertainment products is all but insatiable,

a limited number of conglomerates design, develop and deliver mass media entertainment products and various forms of popular culture to truly enormous audiences. The majority of those audiences, due to the demographic structure of human populations, are young people. It is their tastes and interests that must be served in order to achieve as much profit as is humanly possible. For that reason, the corporations are not preparing educational materials that will accurately inform their audiences, and they are not concerned with any possible negative effects or influences that their products may have on those who consume them. As noted, those are not relevant concerns in such a business environment.

The process and consequences involved in this complex situation deserve careful study. While many critics have decried the activities of such corporations from a variety of perspectives, no significant body of empirical research has been developed that provides data on the consequences of the worldwide distribution of popular culture depicting the nature of Americans. While no claim can be made that the present project has no limitations or flaws, it does provide a beginning.

CHAPTER ENDNOTES

1. Many students who came to the United States from conservative countries to pursue degrees in American universities have indicated this to the authors. At home, they were closely governed in what they wore, how they spoke to others, with whom the could socialize and so on. These behaviors were highly controlled by their families and local norms. They reported that when they viewed American family situation comedies (that they saw on TV at home), they were secretly envious of the teenagers portrayed when they saw them talking back to or disobeying their parents, or even dressing in ways not acceptable in their own society.

2. Evidence is accumulating that terrorism acts and threats are posing psychological problems of stress and anxiety among some Americans. For example, a study of more than 1,000 adults in Manhattan indicated that nearly 10 percent of the people studied were having stress disorders. See: Erica Goode, "A Nation Challenged: Mental Health," *The New York Times* (March 28, 2002), p. A-15. Another news article reported a study of 8,300 school children conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report indicated that thousands of children around the country were experiencing chronic nightmares, fear of public places and other mental health problems following the World Trade Center attack. See: Abby Goodnough, "Pain Found to Linger in Young Minds," *The New York Times* (May 2, 2002), p. A-1.

3. Jonathan Saltzman, "Far from the Front, Cases of Anxiety Rise," *The Boston Globe*, April 6, 2003, p. W-1.

4. An organization that periodically conducts such polls is the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, located in Washington D.C. It assesses adult beliefs and attitudes toward the United States in many countries, as well as the opinions of local populations concerning many issues that may be influenced by U.S. policies and actions. Their web site (enter "Pew" as a search term) is simple and easy to use.

5. It is important to understand where the financial support for a project of this type came from. For that reason, a comment is appropriate concerning the background of the researchers, their source of financial support and their reasons for conducting this study. That comment is this: Any study that has potential political or economic implications these days can seem to be suspect in the minds of some. Questions can be raised about who funded the study. What were the goals and motivations of those who supplied the funds? What are the characteristics of the researchers, and how might their commitments and loyalties tempt them to color or slant the results? To set the record clear on these issues, the following facts are in order. No government agency or private group funded this study. The researchers paid all the costs involved from their own pockets. The characteristics of the researchers that might bias their report are these: Both are university professors teaching students from many parts of the world. Neither is a registered member of either political party. Both have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. (Margaret DeFleur served as a medical corpsman during the Viet Nam conflict, and Melvin DeFleur saw extensive combat in the South Pacific as a U.S. Marine during World War II.) Their motivation for conducting the study was to assess the views, attitudes and beliefs about Americans held by the next generation in the countries studied, and to offer the results to those who might make use of their findings to increase the security of the people of the United States.

6. Don Aucoin, "Getting the Picture," *The Boston Globe*, June 30, 2003, p. D 11.

7. Yahya Kamalipour (ed.), *Images of the U.S. Around the World* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1999), p. xxii.

8. For a review of scholars who are critical of large-scale media organization, see David Demers, *Global Media: Menace or Messiah?* rev. ed. (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2002).

9. *Ibid*, see Chapter 3.

10. Kamalipour, *op. cit.* p. xxiv.

11. See, *The Economist*, "Tangled Webs," May 25, 2002, pp. 67-69.

12. Kamalipour, *op. cit.* p. xxiii.

CHAPTER 2

WHY DO THEY HATE US?

The case for hatred of the United States, its officials, policies and actions, is clear. In recent months observers reporting from many countries have noted much the same phenomenon. President Bush, say some high school students in Germany, is a "second Hitler."[1] Claims are made in some Arabic countries that the tragedy of the World Trade Center was an event planned and conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency in order to arouse hatred against Muslims.[2]

Even twentieth century history is being revised. Some young people in Germany now interpret the World War II bombings of Berlin by the United States and its allies as acts of pure barbarism, carried out by a vicious and immoral nation without any justification.[3] The earlier London blitz and aggressive activities of the Nazis who plundered Europe and conducted the "final solution" for millions of victims have apparently been forgotten.

Perhaps these views should not be surprising. They are held by youths who were born in the last decades of the twentieth century. For them, the roles played by the United States and its allies in the 1940s—liberating European countries from the grip of fascists—can seem little more than dim events in a distant past. For example, today's 17 year olds were born in 1986, nearly half a century after World War II ended—and even after the infamous Berlin Wall came down. Little wonder, then, that they have no active memory and a limited understanding of those events. They regard them as ancient history with few implications for their current lives.

Thus, it appears that what is essentially a "culture of hate" concerning official America has in recent decades been replacing the more favorable views of the United States that characterized earlier generations in various parts of the

world. That emerging culture defines the United States in truly negative terms. The evidence is not hard to find. For several years now, night-after-night, Americans have seen on their televisions sets street demonstrations by angry mobs shaking their fists and holding up banners indicating that they "Hate America." Their participants gleefully burn the American flag or set fire to grotesque effigies of the American president. Even more dramatic evidence are the acts of terrorism against American embassies and other assets abroad that have been carried out—as well as the terrible events of September 11, 2001. In some countries, among some people, those acts are seen as deserved and justified.

At the same time, people in other countries do not hate Americans in some blanket sense. Indeed, at least some of them like some features of American life very much—especially the young. But in other ways they despise us. We noted that one source of complexity is that attitudes toward the United States as an official entity are often not identical with their attitudes toward the lifestyle that many Americans enjoy—economic prosperity, along with personal and political freedoms. To many that can seem very attractive. At the same time, the fact that the United States has the most prosperous economy, the most powerful military and one of the most abundant ways of life creates invidious comparisons with the situation of people in many other countries. Those comparisons are seldom a source of contentment.

THE UNITED STATES AS A SUPERPOWER

The question is not whether a culture of hate against the United States exists in some populations. There is no doubt about that. A more important question is *why*? Part of the answer to that question may lie in the current characteristics of the United States as a nation. The most important of those characteristics is undoubtedly its *sheer power*. By the beginning of the 21st century, the United States had emerged as the sole superpower in the world. No other country even approaches its dominance in either military might or economic status. On defense, the United States consistently spends more than a third of the amount spent *by all of the other countries in the world combined* (36.3%). Expenditures by the Pentagon to support the American armed forces will be over $400 billion next year—not including the continuing costs of the war with Iraq—which is greater than what will be spent on their military establishments by the next fifteen most prosperous nations taken together.[4]

In spite of the ups and downs of the stock market, the American economy is still twice that of Japan, which is the second largest in the world.[5] Looked at in another way, the United States has a mere 4.7% of the world's population.

However, in terms of its capacity to produce, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the highest of any country. In recent years the United States produced nearly a third of all goods and services that were created *in the entire world* (31.2%). And finally, the amount invested in research and development (R&D) by Americans annually is close to half that spent by all other nations taken together (40.6%)[6] Given this staggeringly dominant position of military and economic power in world affairs, it is little wonder that it arouses strong, and often negative, emotions of envy and resentment among people in other countries. That is probably inevitable, and it probably will not change over time.

One might be tempted to conclude that such negative judgments could be offset by sentiments of gratitude among some for help in the form of economic assistance, protection, or deliverance from truly oppressive regimes. However, good deeds done in the past do not appear to count for much. The United States, by most objective measures, has been a good world citizen for a very long time. It has helped rid the world of a long list of brutal regimes and dictators, and it has provided both protection and many kinds of financial and other assistance to other nations.

However, there does not seem to be an historical "balance sheet" of such international behavior, by which people in other counties weigh past contributions of the United States against their current grievances. It does not matter much that, during the twentieth century, the U.S. did many things at great cost to its citizens to stop aggression on a worldwide basis, to rebuild nations devastated by war, to stop or prevent the invasions and atrocities in various countries by military actions of aggressors, to return to their people a number of formerly occupied lands and possessions, to supply monetary assistance to nations in economic difficulty, to send food to the starving, and to provide security forces to those in need of peacekeepers.

For the most part, it appears that these efforts brought no legacy of international good will, no long-term appreciation or current public approval, even by those who greatly benefitted. Indeed, among younger generations in many nations—most of whom had no personal experience with these events, or even among those who did—these actions are often forgotten, unknown, or dismissed as insignificant and just dry history.

It is unrealistic to assume, therefore, that such efforts of the past shape the views of people in the present—and especially those of teenagers who make up the next generation. To many Americans, however, it must seem as though Rudyard Kipling had it right early in the 19th century when he noted that he who steps in to help those who need assistance, who have been left behind, or who require protection, will, as he put it:

... reap his own reward,
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard.[7]

Thus, given the ephemeral nature of remembrances of the past—and America's contemporary position of predominance in economic and military spheres of power—it is not difficult to understand how people in many countries can find something about the United States and its people to *envy*, *denounce*, or even *hate*.

THE ISSUE OF AMERICAN CULTURAL IMPERIALISM

It is often the case that those in control in another country, or conservative elements in their populations, resent the intrusion into their societies of ideas, role models and moral standards that are not consistent with their traditional ways of life. That raises the issue that some have called "cultural imperialism." It is linked to the distribution of media entertainment and can arouse strong emotions.

The basic charge that Americans engage in cultural imperialism is founded on the idea that cultural change occurs as a result of a *subtle conspiracy* among American business and economic interests, along with the U.S. government. That conspiracy, it is said, seeks to force changes on other people in order to gain economic advantage, political power or some other unspecified form of control over them. This is a popular idea among many academicians as well.

A foundation idea of cultural imperialism is that it brings *change*. There is little doubt that cultures do, in fact, constantly change. Evidence from paleoanthropology and other sources indicates that cultural change has been taking place since the stone age. Various tools, practices, beliefs, ideas and so on have always spread from one society to another. When a population acquires a new product, a new form of conduct or idea, and comes to do something different, it is not always because some outsiders are attempting to force alien practices or material things upon them.

An alternative explanation of change is *cultural diffusion*, which has nothing to do with the powerful seeking domination. For centuries, the spread of untold numbers of innovations from one society to another has been taking place. The American culture as it exists today is a composite of thousands of ideas and practices that had their origins in other societies. Almost every incident of cultural change takes place voluntarily.

In today's highly interactive world, such importations continue at a faster and faster pace. Thus, cultural change is seldom brought about by conspiracies or

external pressures exerted by evil business people working with conniving governmental officials. More often they are the result of a voluntary process among a county's inhabitants. When people in a country see an object, idea or practice in another that is not available to them, but which seems appealing and can be acquired from outside, there is often an "adoption of innovation" on the part of local citizens. On their own, they seek and make use of whatever they deem desirable. For that reason there is a constant flow of styles, technologies, foods, language, art and a host of other items between nations.

Nevertheless, some in the receiving countries prefer to see such cultural changes as a consequence of a conspiracy and interpret them as part of a deliberate plan on the part of business and government interests in the United States to gain power and influence. Little wonder, then, that under such conditions, those interpretations generate negative attitudes and even hatred. The adults who hold such views can easily pass them on to their children, perpetuating in the next generation their pejorative beliefs about Americans and the United States in general.

One of the innovations that appears to be most readily adopted among many young people around the world is *popular culture*. Mixed with their views of the U.S. government is their interest in, opinions and assessments of American popular culture as media entertainment. Simply put, there is solid evidence that they may dislike many things about the United States, *but they love its popular culture*. Specifically, they enthusiastically enjoy American movies, television programming, celebrities, entertainers and popular music. As Gary Smith, President of the American Academy in Berlin, recently observed among German youth:

> There is a total disconnect. They wear jeans and listen to Eminem, but this is not relevant to the America that these students are afraid of. In the end it comes down to America's power in the world.[8]

RELIGION AS A FACTOR

Hatred of the United States is often interpreted as a result of religious differences between Muslims and Christians, as well as Jews. These differences have ancient origins. As a religious faith, Islam was founded in the 7th century by the Arabian prophet Muhammed. From its origins in what is now the Middle East, it quickly spread to parts of Asia, Africa and other areas of the world. What brought Islam into conflict with Judaism and Christianity by the 12th century, with beginnings of the Crusades, was its rejection of the basic beliefs that characterized

those faiths. Both the God of the Jews, and belief in the divinity of Christ, so central to the beliefs of Christians, were not accepted. Allah, the God of Islam, was said to be all powerful, omnipotent and the only true divinity. Muhammed was his sacred prophet. These differences inevitably brought clashes between Christians and Muslims. In many ways, these differences of beliefs still underlie what is happening between Palestine and Israel today, and they have played a role in attacks on Americans, such as those of September 11, 2001.

Since such conflicts have been present for centuries, they are not likely to go away soon. However, while there is little doubt that religion is a powerful motivating force for many people, those differences do not provide a full answer concerning hatred of Americans. They are a basic source in some cases, but as the present project will show, negative views of Americans and of the United States are not confined to Muslim populations.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE NEGATIVE INCIDENT

Beyond the sources of pejorative beliefs and attitudes already suggested, strong emotions may also be a consequence of a *significant negative incident.* These inevitably take place when Americans are present in large numbers on foreign soil. An example is the truly regrettable killing of civilians by U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2002, in which Air Force personnel flying a combat mission apparently misinterpreted gunfire from the ground (said to have been shot into the air in a traditional way to celebrate a wedding) as anti-aircraft fire. The Americans returned fire with tragic consequences.[9] In objective perspective, the incident appears to have been a "fog-of-war" mistake. For many in the village, however, and indeed in the country as a whole, it was denounced as a barbaric, brutal and deliberate act. Whatever the factual explanation, some found it a focus for hating Americans.

The war in Iraq produced a number of examples—in spite of the fact that Americans tried very hard to use precision weapons to crush a brutal regime that had tortured and murdered thousands, kept the majority in poverty and lived in lavish luxury. Some supposed events probably never happened—such as Iraqi claims in the early phases of the war that an American missile was deliberately aimed at a marketplace in Bagdad—killing a number of innocent civilians. The American military concluded that it was a spent anti-aircraft surface-to-air missile launched by the Iraqis in an attempt to bring down a U.S. plane, but which fell back into and exploded in Bagdad.

Often, the incident is a tragic accident—such as a recent one in South Korea, in which a young girl was run over and killed by a military vehicle. In some cases,

the negative incident may be a deplorable criminal act, such as the American soldier who, in recent times, raped a young and innocent girl in Okinawa, a host country. It may even be the loss by a local team in a sporting event, in which some group from the United States participates and wins.

Whatever the realities, and given the fact that negative incidents are almost certain to occur wherever sizable numbers of Americans intervene with intentions to assist in world affairs, it seems imperative to understand the dynamics by which those conditions and events generate hostility.

Most negative incidents are not enough to spark and generate a culture of hate. On the contrary, widespread denunciation of a negative incident by a population appears to rest upon a *prior condition*—a pre-existing complex of negative beliefs and attitudes toward the people of the United States and their government. Thus, a basic assumption upon which the present study rests is this: *The collective condemnation expressed by a people when a negative incident occurs does not come out of nowhere*. As a general principle, a negative incident can become a *cause celebre,* rallying widespread anger, only if a necessary condition is met. Specifically, there must already be in place a foundation of shared negative beliefs and attitudes toward the United States and its people upon which the feelings generated by the specific incident can be based.

It is that assumed necessary condition or principle that in many ways played a part in prompting the present research. We noted earlier that there is little need to demonstrate that the United States is despised in some parts of the globe. Periodic opinion polls and surveys of populations in different countries, carefully conducted by various professional research groups, have shown that many adults in the world have negative, and even hostile, attitudes toward the United States, its leaders, actions and policies.[10]

However, as explained earlier, the existence of those sentiments on the part of adults does not necessarily mean that parallel views are entertained by teenagers concerning the private citizens of the United States. For that reason, it was important to identify in very clear terms what was to be studied in the present project. The question, then, is whether these teenagers *like* the American people who generate these mass communicated entertainment products—movies, television programming, music videos and popular entertainers? Or, do they *dislike* them—sharing the negative views concerning the United States as their older compatriots?

CHAPTER ENDNOTES

1. Nina Bernstein, "Young Germans Ask: For What?" *The New York Times*, March 9, 2003, Sec. 4, p. 3.

2. Jon Sawyer, "Public Anger Against U.S. Runs Deep Even in Egypt, A Close Ally," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 11, 2002, p. A9; and Robert Mendick, "An Audience with the Tottenham Ayatollah," *Independent on Sunday* (London), September 30, 2001, p. 9.

3. Bernstein, *op. cit*., p. 3.

4. "Will a Quartet of Euro-enthusiasts Undermine NATO?" *The Economist*, May 3, 2003; Steve Lopez, "Just How Big Does the World's Biggest War Machine Need to Be?" *Los Angeles Times*, May 9, 2003, Metro, p. 1.

5. "The World in Figures," *The World in 2003,* special issue of *The Economist*, pp. 81-87.

6. *The Economist* (reporting figures obtained from the UN, the World Bank, and Institute for Management Development), June 29-July 5, 2002, p. 4.

7. From Rudyard Kipling (1856-1936), "The White Man's Burden."

8. Bernstein, *op. cit*., p.3.

9. Andrea Stone and Dave Moniz, "Fallout from Afghan Incident Could Be Substantial," *USA Today*, July 2, 2002, p. 6A; Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, "Bomb Kills 11 Afghan Civilians U.S. Calls Airstrike 'Tragic Incident' in Attack on Enemy," *Boston Globe*, April 10, 2003, p. A10.

10. See, For example: "We Have to Take Muslim Anti-Americanism Seriously," *Newsday*, March 26, 2002, p. A35; "Poll on Islamic Mood Isn't Surprising," *USA Today,* March 4, 2002, p. 11A; "Even the Kuwaitis Dislike Us," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 29, 2002, p. A9; "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Division," *The Times* (London), July 4, 2002.

CHAPTER 3

OBJECTIVES AND OBSERVATIONAL STRATEGIES

Because of the complex and multidimensional nature of the views, opinions, beliefs and attitudes toward Americans, as well as toward the U.S. government, it is essential to clarify the objectives of the present project. Explanations are also required to understand the strategies used to obtain the quantitative findings. A major reason for doing so is that not everyone is familiar with how such a project is conducted, and the way in which psychologists define attitudes. Moreover, there are a great many ways in which they go about measuring such attitudes and the implications of what is found can sometimes be less than clear.[1]

First, what are attitudes and how are they measured?[2] The measurement strategy used in the present project makes use of a classic procedure originally developed by psychologist Rensis Likert in 1932.[3] With numerous modifications since then, the Likert Scale has become one of the most widely used means for measuring attitudes in contemporary times. It is a complex procedure. For that reason, the discussion that follows makes no assumption that its nature is either obvious or well understood.

To begin with, this study assessed the attitudes of teenagers toward ordinary Americans as an attitude object. This immediately raises two questions: Exactly what is meant by the term "attitude," and what can kinds of things, events or other phenomena can be designated as an "attitude object?" Providing specific answers to these questions may sound unnecessary, but anyone familiar with the voluminous psychological literature on the nature of attitudes and the part they

play in shaping behavior will recognize that these concepts have been defined in a great many, and sometimes contradictory, ways.[4] Therefore, because the term "attitude" can mean many things to many people, it is necessary to describe how this concept was defined and measured in the present project.

DEFINING AND MEASURING ATTITUDES

The term "attitude" needs definition in such a way that it lends itself to the *strategy of measurement* that will be used. Therefore, for the purposes of the present project, the following serves as a general definition:

> An attitude is *a configuration of related evaluative beliefs about some attitude object.*

Stated in that way, the definition identifies an attitude as a "cognitive" condition—that is, a state of "thinking, believing and feeling" that characterizes an individual. At the same time, of course, that definition raises two additional conceptual questions: (1) What is an *evaluative belief*? And (2), what is an *attitude object*?

Here, the answers are relatively simple. An evaluative belief about something is one that implies *acceptance or rejection*, that is, a *positive or negative* assessment of the attitude object. Or, put more simply, a *favorable versus unfavorable view* concerning that object.

To illustrate, assume that the task is to assess people's attitudes toward a particular city, such as *Boston,* as an "object" about which a person can have positive or negative beliefs. One could, of course, have a belief that "Boston is a city in Massachusetts," or "Boston has a large population." Both of those statements express beliefs that a person might hold, and both happen to be true. However, both are simply statements of *fact* and if a person agreed with them that does not imply that he or she has a favorable or unfavorable orientation toward or Boston as an attitude object.

In contrast, statements such as "I like Boston,"or "Boston is a nice place to live," do have such evaluative dimensions. If a person "agreed" with these statements, it would imply that he or she entertains at least *some* level of a favorable or positive orientation toward the city. If that same person "strongly agreed," it would suggest an even greater level of positive feelings. The opposite would be true if the person "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the statements. This level of agreement or disagreement (e.g. "agree" or "disagree" vs "strongly agree"or "strongly disagree"), then, indicates two different levels of

positive or negative feeling.

Those simple considerations concerning the nature and level of evaluative beliefs provide the basis of the Likert Scale strategy for assessing a person's attitude toward such an "attitude object." One can prepare a *list* (say a dozen or so) of related evaluative statements toward Boston—half expressing a negative proposition and half a positive one. If a person whose attitude is being assessed shows a consistent pattern of "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" with the positive statements in that list, and "disagreeing" or "strongly disagreeing" with the negative ones, that pattern provides *observable evidence* of his or her underlying views, feelings and beliefs (that is attitude) about that particular "attitude object."

An advantage to this strategy is that it is not difficult to "quantify" such attitudinal responses. In the standard Likert procedure, if a subject chooses a response category, such as "agree" for a particular statement that expresses a *modestly favorable* view, that response can be given a positive number (such as a score of +1 for that statement). If the person's choice indicates an *even more favorable view* of the statement, such as "strongly agree," that can be assigned a score of +2. For negative responses the same strategy can be used. Modest and strong negative responses would receive corresponding numbers of -1 and -2. Neutral responses would receive scores of zero.

In developing the Likert attitude scale for the present project, however, a common and very simple variation on this procedure was used to obtain numerical scores for responses. The purpose was to make the results easier for non-specialists to understand, and to simplify the task of representing them in charts (as will be seen in the presentation of the results in later sections). Using this variation, a numerical transformation of the -2 through +2 numbers was performed by multiplying each by a constant factor. In this case, that constant was 2.5. This provided individual attitude scores for each of the responses to the statements in the scale that ranged from -5 (for very negative responses) through +5 (for very positive responses), with zero representing the mid-point (neutral responses). Again, this numerical transformation does not change the procedure or the results in any way, other than to make them easier to understand and to represent graphically. (These numbers will be found at the bottoms of the numerous charts presented in later sections.)

When a particular subject has responded to each of the statements of evaluative belief—by selecting a response category for each that expresses his or her view—then the positive or negative scores corresponding to those responses can be averaged over the total number that make up the attitude scale. This provides a single number representing that person's internal psychological orientation (a favorable or unfavorable view) toward the attitude object.

Obviously, the scores for all subjects assessed in a particular country can also be averaged to obtain an "overall" attitude measure for all subjects from that country.

But, given that measurement strategy, let us return to the question of what specifically is actually meant by an "attitude object?" We used "Boston" in the explanation above, but the idea of an attitude object is quite flexible. An attitude object for a person can be *any aspect of his or her physical or social environment about which he or she has positive or negative feelings* (that is, evaluative beliefs). Examples of such "objects" would be particular *categories of people*—such as Catholics, old people, Muslims, lawyers, movie stars or ex-convicts. They might be *political decisions*—such as passing new taxes or undertaking military action against some country. Another "object" might be *public policies*—such as those of affirmative action, same-sex marriage or allowing or preventing abortions. Or, the object could be various *forms of human conduct*—such as using drugs or engaging in political protest. These are only a few examples of possible attitude objects about which people can have configurations of positive or negative evaluative beliefs.

In summary, a decision was made to define attitudes in the traditional way as a set of evaluative beliefs (about an attitude object) making it possible to use a Likert Scale. This procedure makes use of a set of statements of evaluative beliefs about an attitude object, and it provides a numerical (positive or negative) score for each statement by a subject or respondent. After the numerical transformation explained, those scores were averaged to obtain an attitude score for each teenager. Those were then averaged for each country. This permitted both statistical analyses of the results and the preparation of tables and charts that present the results in an easy-to-understand manner.

The Likert Scale developed in this project to assess teenagers' attitudes toward ordinary Americans is shown in Table 1. These twelve statements were composed after extensive discussions—using focus group strategies—with graduate students who had recently arrived at Boston University from each of the twelve countries studied in the project. The statements reflect the beliefs that many of these students felt were common among the young people they knew at home—other youths who had neither traveled to the United States nor had any extended contact with Americans.

DEFINING THE "ATTITUDE OBJECT" OF THE PROJECT

A factor that complicated the designing of the objectives and strategies of the present project was the fact that in recent years there have been many reports in the press concerning "attitudes toward America," or "attitudes toward the

TABLE 1

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Concerning Your Opinions About Americans

Read each of the statements below. Note the phrases above the lines of small spaces [ ] for each of the statements. After reading the statement, decide how you feel about what it says concerning **most Americans** (that is, citizens of the United States).

If you "strongly agree" with the statement, then put an X in the small space [ ] under that phrase. If you "strongly disagree," place the X in the space under that phrase. If your feelings are somewhere in between, or you are undecided, write the X in the space that best expresses how you feel.

Question	I Strongly Disagree	I Disagree	I Am Undecided	I Agree	I Strongly Agree
1. Americans are generally quite violent.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2. Americans are a generous people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3. Many American women are sexually immoral.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4. Americans have respect for people unlike themselves.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5. Americans are very materialistic.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6. Americans have strong religious values.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. Americans like to dominate other people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8. Americans are a peaceful people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9. Many Americans engage in criminal activities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10. Americans are very concerned about their poor.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11. Americans have strong family values.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12. There is very little for which I admire Americans.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

United States." Some have been impressionistic observations of populations in different countries around the world provided by journalists, visitors, former residents, or other informants. Many are colorful accounts about how "people in the street" in those countries feel about the "United States" or about "Americans."

There are several problems with such reports. They do not carefully define the attitude object; it is not always clear who was being observed; they are not

based on careful measurement and they are often contradictory. For these reasons, such impressionistic accounts offer a very confusing picture and they are of limited value for assessing how people in other countries actually view people who live in the United States.

Beyond those reports, there is also a large number of well-conducted and large-scale studies by professional pollsters of the beliefs and attitudes of specific populations concerning the United States, or Americans, as attitude objects in different parts of the world. Many show increasingly negative attitudes toward the United States.[5]

Unfortunately, these different reports and polls have two limitations in terms of the objectives of the present project. First, for understandable and logical reasons, they sample adult populations rather than youth. In addition, these polls, taken as a whole, present a confusing picture because they are based on different measurement strategies and have focused on different aspects of U.S. policies, cultural products, official actions, etc. In trying to sort out specifically what these different "attitude objects" were, there appear to be at least three distinct topics to which most of these reports were referring. Specifically, they were the following:

- *Attitude Object 1:* The United States as a political, economic and military power.
- *Attitude Object 2:* American popular culture and mass media entertainment products.
- *Attitude Object 3:* American political freedoms, technology and financial advantages.

Among those who write about, conduct polls about, or publicly comment on, beliefs about the nature of the United States and American life as viewed by populations in other countries, most appear to focus on Attitude Object 1. These assessments seem clearly to indicate that the views of the people studied are largely *negative* toward the United States, in terms of its leaders, policies and actions.

A number of polls have on some occasions assessed views concerning Object 2. Here a mixed picture has emerged. Entertainment products and popular culture developed in the United States are viewed by many adults in conservative countries in a negative way. Among religious leaders, and others in such societies, the content of such imports is often seen as having a corrupting influence on youth—bringing to their attention unwanted ideas, behavioral models and moral codes. At the same time, other sources claim that young people (in particular)

have *overwhelmingly favorable* attitudes toward Object 2. They base that claim on the grounds that such youngsters enjoy and highly approve of popular music, celebrity performers and other entertainment products that are produced in the United States.

However, in discussions with people who have traveled within, or have lived for a time in various countries, Attitude Object 3 is frequently cited as evidence that *favorable* attitudes toward Americans prevail. They report that there is often wistful envy of the democratic system, the personal freedoms and the affluent lifestyle that they believe many Americans enjoy. With tongue in cheek, such informants report, local people in such countries essentially say, "Yankee go home," but then quickly add, "But take me with you!"

As explained, Objects 1, 2 and 3 were *not* what was studied in the present project. The focus of the study was on another and different attitude object —*the daily behavior, standards of conduct, and moral codes of ordinary Americans and their families*.

Basically, then, three major questions are addressed in this project. One is to assess the complex dimensions of beliefs and attitude objects that teenagers in other countries appear to have concerning the people who live United States. A second is to try and unravel the sources from which they obtained their beliefs and attitudes. A third, which will be explained in greater detail, is to discuss and explain the implications of what was found.

THE LIKERT SCALE ITEMS AND THE LARGER QUESTIONNAIRE

To accomplish the project's objectives, twelve evaluative statements were prepared for the Likert scale to assess the overall attitudes toward Americans of the youthful respondents (see Table 1). The scale was included in a larger questionnaire that gathered data on patterns of TV and VCR ownership, movie attendance and other media use; travel to the United States; and personal characteristics. Each, of course, was carefully translated into the language of the country where the teenagers lived, and was thoroughly checked by translators in each country to ensure it would be understood by the respondents.

ASSESSING THE INFLUENCES OF DEPICTIONS OF AMERICANS IN POPULAR CULTURE

There are no simple answers to the complex question of the sources of anyone's attitudes, actions or beliefs concerning any issue or object in their environment. The roots of teenage negative views of Americans can be many.

However, it is not difficult to make a case that media entertainment content plays a significant role. Teenagers are heavy users of mass communicated entertainment and popular culture. Going to the cinema is a frequent activity of young people in all of the countries studied. Furthermore, music recordings, radio and television broadcasts are almost universally available.

If movies, popular music and television programs are not produced locally, they have to be imported. However, not many countries have such production facilities and they must obtain entertainment products for their populations from those that do. Remarkably, few governments rigidly censor all that is made available to their populations. Indeed, on the evening in which the "shock and awe" bombing campaign began in Bagdad in April of 2003, the local (Iraqi government operated) television broadcast system was showing an American movie (*The Guilty).* That particular film contains a great deal of controversial violence and sexual content.

Even if the media are rigidly controlled by governments, previously recorded programming is easily obtained via VCR tapes or DVDs that are sold or rented on the streets. With those in place, something of interest will always be readily available to young people seeking entertainment.

It is easy to understand, then, that entertainment products, particularly in the form of TV programs and movies, are obtained from Western sources and distributed in one way or another to a great many local populations. To underscore this factor of availability, an effort was made in the present project to determine the degree to which television sets and VCRs were in use in homes and elsewhere (e.g., community and village centers) in the countries studied. As it turned out, television receivers and equipment for playing VCR tapes were virtually universal in the homes, the homes of friends or elsewhere, providing ready access for the teenagers who participated. That may not be true of the desperately poor in less developed societies, but people in the middle economic strata of the twelve societies studied commonly enjoy these facilities.

To gain information on the possible influence of mass-communicated entertainment products on the attitudes of the youths studied, the Likert Scale that was used provided a way in which to assemble data on this topic. The strategy used is what psychometricians call a *subscale.* A subscale is a "measure-within-a-measure." It is based on a small number of the items (evaluative statements) that are embedded within the overall Likert scale. In the present case these were items 1, 3 and 9 (emphasizing violence, crime and sex). These were included because they represent the most common themes that the producers of media entertainment use to make their products interesting and exciting for their audiences. Scores obtained from this subscale provided information about influences of *depictions*

of Americans in mass media entertainment content (e.g., mainly movies and televison programs) as sources for the views of the respondents. Additional items included in the larger questionnaire to which the subjects responded focused on the *access* the subjects had to media entertainment, whether they or their families had traveled to the United States, and their personal characteristics in terms of age, gender, etc.

In general, then, the overall objective of the investigation can be stated simply. It is to gather, analyze, present and interpret data provided by a Likert attitude scale, as well as information from the larger questionnaire, responded to by teenagers in twelve countries around the world. As noted, one strategy for achieving that objective was to use a subscale to study the influences of certain features of media entertainment content that define Americans in negative ways.

Finally, the project's overall objective includes an effort to understand and explain the major stages in the complex process by which such media entertainment is developed, distributed and consumed to produce flawed views of Americans among young people in other countries. Stated in formal terms, the project seeks to:

(1) Understand the ways in which the next generation in the countries studied regards Americans. That is, an important goal is to measure attitudes and beliefs about ordinary Americans held by teenagers in those countries who will soon become politically and economically active adults.

(2) Try to understand the many sources from which such views are formed—with a particular emphasis on the part played by depictions of American families and individuals, including their behavior and ways of life, in motion pictures, television entertainment and popular culture.

(3) To describe the complex process by which media content and other popular culture is designed, developed and disseminated to teenage audiences in countries around the world, as well to explain the process by which they attend and learn about Americans from its content.

CHAPTER ENDNOTES

1. Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Attitude as a Scientific Concept," *Social Forces*, 42, 1, 1963, pp.17-31. See also: Melvin L. DeFleur and William R. Catton, "The Limits of Determinancy in Attitude Measurement," *Social Forces*, 25, 1957, pp. 295-300,

and: Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Verbal Attitudes and Overt Acts: An Experiment with the Salience of Attitudes," *American Sociological Review*, 23, 6, 1958.

2. For a comprehensive explanation of the nature of attitudes, their measurement and related issues, see: Stuart Oskamp, *Attitudes and Opinions* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991).

3. Rensis Likert, "A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes," *Archives of Psychology,* No. 140, 1932.

4. The debates over the nature and psychological functions of attitudes began more than a century ago. Literally thousands of studies on different types and aspects of attitudes have been published over the years. For examples, see: Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Attitude as a Scientific Concept," *Social Forces,* 42, 1, 1963, pp.17-31. See also: Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Verbal Attitudes and Overt Acts: An Experiment on the Salience of Attitudes," *The American Sociological Review,* 23, 6, 1958, pp. 667-673.

5. Examples are the complex and detailed reports developed by the Washington D.C., Pew Research Center. Beliefs, opinions and attitudes of 38,000 people in 44 nations were studied in 2002 and another 16,000 a year later (following the war in Iraq). Their views of many attitude objects were assessed, including the following: economic globalization, democracy, terrorism, the United States and a number of others. Opinions regarding the United States have become increasingly negative. Not studied were attitudes toward the common people of the United States. See: "What the World Thinks in 2002," The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Washington, D.C., December 4, 2002. See also: "America's Image Further Erodes, Europeans Want Weaker Ties," The Pew Research Center, March 18, 2003.

CHAPTER 4

CONTACTING TEENAGERS TO ASSESS BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

Using high school students as subjects for research is difficult in any country. Even in the United States, gaining permission for classes of high school students to respond to a questionnaire can be problematic and complex. To accomplish this in the United States, approval must be obtained from the educational administrators in charge of the school. In addition, cooperation must be sought from the teachers in charge of specific classes. Moreover, permission often must be obtained directly and in writing from the parents of the students involved.

In other words, school administrators, teachers and parents (understandably) are very cautious about what kind of research questionnaires they will allow young people to complete. Particularly difficult is parental permission. The reason is that trying to contact youthful subjects or their parents, by calling on families at home, can be a challenge. Sampling frames—that is, lists of families who have children of the specific age and student status required—are seldom available. Even if such lists can be obtained, parents may or may not cooperate.

In the setting of nations *not* friendly to the United States, gathering such permissions from all the authorities and parents is "mission impossible." Indeed, in the present case, such a strategy could not be accomplished. That is, it would have meant obtaining permission from educational officials through twelve different diplomatic channels in order to access young people in their high schools to serve as subjects in an assessment of attitudes toward Americans. Even with an unlimited budget, gaining governmental and family permission in

such diverse settings would have posed unsurmountable problems.

To overcome these barriers, the authors decided to use a different strategy to gather the data. They were able to employ an "under the radar screen" approach that by-passed government officials and relied instead on educators in each of the countries studied. At the same time, there was no intent to use subterfuge or deceptive measures to avoid contact with government officials.

STRATEGIES USED TO ADMINISTER THE QUESTIONNAIRE

How were the data gathered? That is, how was the questionnaire presented to the youthful subjects in order for them to record their responses?

Essentially, it was done through a network of contacts with friends and relatives within the countries studied—persons who were willing to administer the questionnaire to the young people the authors wanted to study. These arrangements were made in 2002 through a network of interpersonal friendships and family relationships existing among graduate students studying in the United States who were from the countries involved. These were students who were in advanced degree programs in a private northeastern university. The key element was that each had friends and/or relatives who were teaching in, or administering, high schools in the specific countries.

To make the arrangements, one or more nationals (graduate students) from each country, working with the authors, identified and contacted specific friends or relatives by email or phone. Each of these was a classroom teacher or principal in a high school in their home countries. In each of the 12 countries, these persons were asked by the student participants if they would be willing to assist personally with data-gathering in their school's classroom settings.

These were not simple requests. Some refused. In addition, some of those contacted were concerned about possible retaliation if their attempt to assist Americans was revealed. Even among those who had no such concerns, serious questions were raised about the purpose of the study and its sponsors. There were, of course, suspicions as to who was doing this and why. When the nature and goals of the project were clearly and fully explained—as university research, and not spying by the CIA or some other agency of the United States—the majority of these relatives, friends and acquaintances were very cooperative, even in some cases with risks to themselves.

Clearly, a significant issue in some of the countries was the assurance of total anonymity for both the youthful subjects and those who assisted with data-gathering. When the procedures for assuring that anonymity were made clear, in each setting those associates who participated were both interested and curious about what the results would show. Therefore, the result was that all of the

questionnaires were personally administered in classrooms by active teachers and high school administrators in each of the twelve different countries in 2002.

While this strategy made data-gathering possible, it had obvious technical sampling limitations. At the same time, however, it also had an important advantage. Those who administered the questionnaires in the classrooms were persons who were familiar to the subjects. They were not strangers to be distrusted—who might be seen by the teenagers as agents of the United States. This was a serious issue, and as noted, some who helped to administer the questionnaires, were truly concerned that their identities not be revealed. They had legitimate concerns about potential negative reactions by their governments. For that reason, no additional information on this feature of the methods will be provided. What did take place, however, was that the completed questionnaires were filled out seriously and responsibly, and they were returned in a timely manner to the authors for analysis.

As is the case in any psychometric measurement, the authors were concerned about *validity*—whether the procedure used actually assessed what it was designed for. There is always the danger that respondents might deliberately try to mislead the investigator, or that they may have filled out the questionnaires in capricious ways. That turned out not to be the case. There are reasons to conclude that the teenagers found the experience an interesting one and that they completed them responsibly. Evidence for this conclusion comes from the fact that many of the young respondents wrote extended remarks to indicate that they welcomed the experience of having their views sought. Indeed, some filled entire backs of several pages. Allowing youths to express their views is not common in some of the countries included in the project. This led some of the young subjects to state in detailed notes their appreciation for this opportunity to explain how they felt. Other respondents added extended explanations that elaborated upon what they had recorded for various items in the Likert scale.

Some of the teenagers prepared crude scatological drawings in margins or on the backs of pages that offered suggestions that Americans should perform a gross but anatomically impossible act on themselves. Still others expressed clearly in short essays their strong dislike of Americans. But more important, there was no significant evidence of attempts to fool the researchers or to play games (such as leaving many items blank, or checking the same response category in the same way for all items, etc.).

WHO WERE THE TEENAGERS STUDIED?

What were the characteristic of these subjects? As indicated, they were teenagers who were in high schools. Even so, the nature of school systems is not the same from one country to another. What Americans think of as "high school" may be defined somewhat differently in other countries. As it turned out, this was not really a problem. To achieve as much comparability as possible, it was made clear to those administering the questionnaires that the respondents needed for the study should be in schools that were *beyond the primary level, but not at the college level.* In each case, these were schools attended by young people who were in their early to late teens.

Their median age was 17 years—with half above that age and half below. They were evenly divided between males (51%) and females (49%). Few had ever traveled to the United States (11%) and those who had were primarily from the Western and more developed societies. Virtually all, however, often attended the cinema and viewed programs on TV (most of which were produced in the United States).

In social class terms, the teenagers were neither the rich nor the poor, but those basically in the middle level of their societies. Those who assisted locally with data-gathering were asked to make certain that the schools selected were neither elite and expensive institutions attended by the children of the wealthy nor humble ones attended by the very poor. Explanations and descriptions provided by those assisting indicates that these criteria were carefully applied. Only in one case were the questionnaires that were returned to the authors not used in the analysis. This was because they were from a private and expensive school catering to the children of the wealthy. Similarly, none of the questionnaires came from schools for the very poor.

Overall, then, each of the schools selected served youths from the *middle* to *lower middle* socioeconomic strata in the societies under study. While these categories are defined somewhat differently in each of the countries, the parents of the students who responded are generally people whose heads of family are literate, steadily employed, of at least modest means, and who are supportive of their children's education.

Obviously, this was not a routine sampling procedure. This project's samples do not meet rigorous text-book criteria of equal probability by random selection from a carefully defined and pre-listed population (sampling frame) of subjects. Meeting those requirements was simply not possible. Essentially, then, these are twelve *convenience* samples. They also have some features of *quota* samples as well. But whatever their definition, their selection was based on the

above procedures and criteria.

The result was an overall sample of 1,313 reasonably comparable teenagers from the twelve countries involved. Their responses provide a wealth of insights about how such youths feel about Americans in different parts of the globe. In the opinions of the authors, it seems likely that their views are at least somewhat representative of the young people in the middle levels in each of the countries studied.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS?

The principal findings on the attitudes of these 1,313 teenagers are presented in three major sections that follow. The first section presents two sets of results: One set is from *all countries combined.* This is followed in this first section by the more detailed results on each of the attitude scale items *from each country separately*. The second major section on results presents the findings in a different way—*item-by-item from the attitude scale*, with the results from each country listed in rank order. Finally, the third section on findings is devoted to the results from the *media subscale.* Immediately following, then, is a summary of the results from the first of these three analyses.

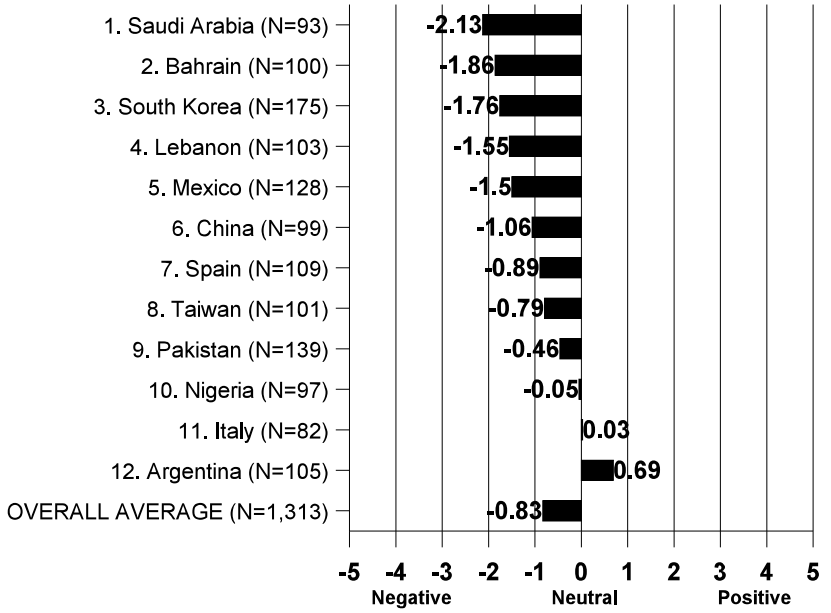
AN OVERVIEW BASED ON THE COMBINED DATA FROM ALL TWELVE COUNTRIES

Figure 1 shows the average or *overall attitude score* for the respondents in each of the countries, in rank order. Figure 2 lists the average responses for all countries for each item. The significance of these charts is that they provide for comparisons of the overall views of Americans among the twelve countries studied. As can be seen, in most of the countries, the respondents had at least some degree of negative attitudes toward American people. These range from clearly negative averages in Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain, through essentially neutral views in Nigeria and Italy. The only respondents who had somewhat positive attitudes were the young people in Argentina.

It should come as no surprise that teenagers in Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain—two Muslim countries—have quite negative views of Americans. The

Figure 1

Overall Attitudes Toward Americans by Country



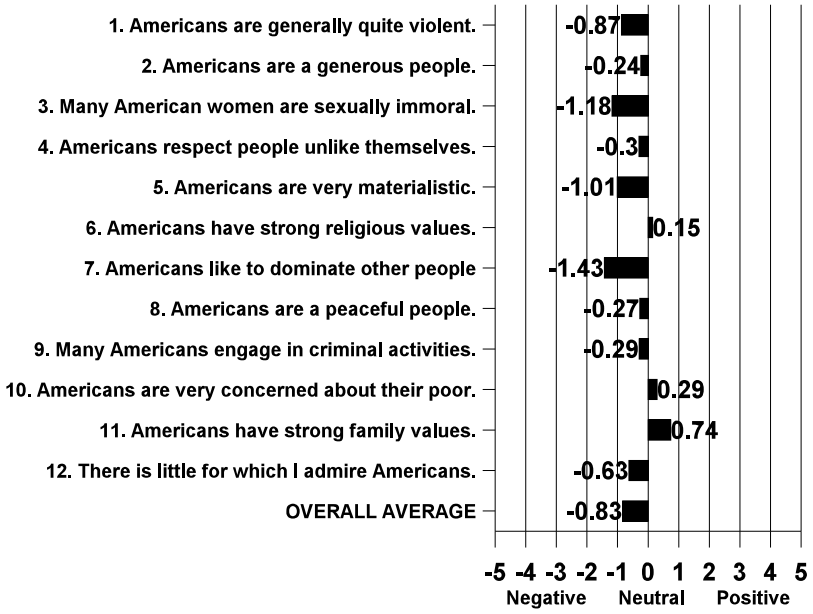
influence of religion is often cited to account for such negative feelings. However, it is likely that the negative image of Americans also reflects what psychologists refer to as a "halo effect." That is, a carry-over influence from the beliefs and attitudes of the widely held-views of adults in those countries concerning the U.S. government, its official policies and actions. A recent Gallup poll of the opinions held by adults in nine Muslim countries, concerning the official actions and policies of the United States government, showed very negative attitudes.[1] It seems most likely that those adults have a significant influence on the next generation, passing on their views, not only about the official policies and actions of the United States, but also—in a halo effect—about Americans as people as well.

What is surprising about Figure 1 is what was found in South Korea and Mexico. The young respondents in both countries held attitudes toward Americans almost as negative as those in Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain. Without considering the influences of mass communications, it would be hard to explain why young people in South Korea and Mexico judge Americans so harshly.

These negative judgments are not solely a function of religion. Neither Mexico nor South Korea has a significant Muslim population. The case of South

Figure 2

Beliefs About Americans (All Countries, N=1,313)



Korea appears to present an example of Rudyard Kipling's principle. It was the United States that kept their country out of the communist sphere—with many thousands of American soldiers killed in the process. To understand what would have happened to their families and lives if that effort had not been made, one need only to look northward. It may seem to some that Kipling had it right. Helping, or even protecting, people can earn enmity and not gratitude—at least among many. Furthermore, events of the past are ephemeral and just dry history for subsequent generations and seem to have little carry-over to current attitudes, beliefs and opinions.

At the same time, many thousands of American troops have had a very visible presence in South Korea for more than half a century. Korean youths see American soldiers every day on the streets of Seoul and elsewhere. To them, it can appear that the United States is *occupying* their country. An analogy would be this: If British troops had come to the United States half a century ago to assist in repelling an invasion, and if many thousands of them remained for half a century, our teenagers might come to believe that Great Britain was occupying their country.

If the views of teenagers studied in South Korea seem difficult to explain,

those of Mexico are even more so. There are no U.S. troops there. But, clearly, ordinary Americans are not held in high regard by the young people studied. They were more negative than those in the People's Republic of China—with which we have long had significant differences. Mexico was also more negative than the Muslim country of Pakistan. Obviously, other factors are at work here.

Somewhat the same comment can be made about Taiwan. The teenagers studied in Beijing were more favorable toward Americans than those in Taipei. The American government is spending vast sums to protect that island population from the demands of The People's Republic of China. If it were not for that protection, the people of Taiwan would be leading the more regimented life-style of a communist society.

Teenagers from Nigeria and Italy were not negative—merely neutral. Several factors could be playing a part in the case of Italy. It certainly has few Muslims. However, many American families came originally from Italy, and the United States played a key role liberating that country from fascism decades ago in World War II. Perhaps some vestige of those factors remain as a foundation for current beliefs and attitudes.

It is not easy to explain the neutral findings from Nigeria. The United States has not been particularly involved with that country on any sustained basis. Nigeria has been neither a source of extensive immigration to the United States, nor, particularly, a recipient of its assistance. With so little involvement, it appears that Kipling's principle does not apply.

Argentina was the only country of the twelve in which teenagers generally gave Americans positive marks. This finding is truly difficult to understand. The United States has not played a particularly positive role in Argentine affairs. Indeed the United States sided with the British when Argentina attempted to claim the Faulkland Islands by military force in 1982. However, that does not seem to have provided a basis for teenage negative views of Americans. It may be that the limited U.S. involvement in the affairs of Argentina is the foundation of the respondents' positive attitudes—compared to, say, Mexico, with which we are closely involved.

The reasons for teenagers' negative views of Americans in some of the countries are not difficult to understand. The religious factor undoubtedly plays a part in some. The influence of parents and other adults on the next generation also seems likely in some cases. Yet, in countries like South Korea, Mexico and Taiwan, the finding that young people hold negative beliefs about Americans is more difficult to explain.

PROFILES OF SPECIFIC BELIEFS ABOUT AMERICANS OBTAINED IN EACH COUNTRY

Figures 1 and 2 provide overviews that combined the responses for each country. In contrast, Figures 3 through 14 on the pages that follow provide much greater detail. These twelve charts show how the subjects in each country responded to each of the evaluative statements in the attitude scale. Thus, they provide a detailed profile of how Americans are judged by the teenagers in the study.

A feature of these charts that stands out is their many differences. Some are obviously more negative on some statements than others, but in some, the respondents gave positive responses. Thus, no two are alike. This is an important finding in that no assumption can be made that overall assessments of attitudes (such as those shown earlier in Figures 1 and 2) can adequately describe the more subtle dimensions of positive or negative views of those who responded to the scale in a particular country.

RESPONSES BY EACH COUNTRY TO EACH ATTITUDE STATEMENT

The results obtained from each of the twelve attitude scale items, *considered one-by-one*, are shown in Figures 15 through 26 on the pages that follow. These twelve charts show the degree to which the respondents in each of the countries expressed positive or negative feelings about the particular statement shown at the top. On each chart, the countries are listed on the left *in rank order*—with the most negative country (for that statement) at the top and the most positive at the bottom.

As can be seen by examining these charts individually, there are numerous differences in the patterns of response to these statements of beliefs about Americans. As might be expected, Saudi-Arabia and Bahrain led in negative responses, reflecting their overall patterns as discussed in the previous section (Figures 1 and 2).

What was not evident in those charts was the *pattern* of positive and negative responses to the various statements for each country independently indicating beliefs about Americans. As might be anticipated, the subjects in the more favorable countries overall—namely Argentina and Nigeria—gave positive responses to many of the items. However, as was noted in the discussion of patterns in Figures 3 through14, countries that were negative in an overall sense—namely Pakistan, China and Taiwan—also gave positive responses to at least some of the individual statements.

Figure 3

Saudi Arabia: Beliefs About Americans (N=93)

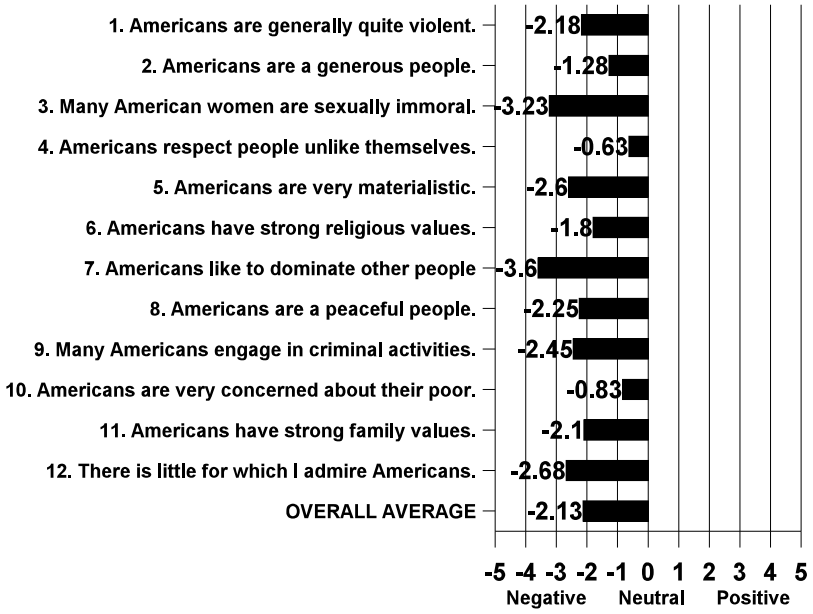
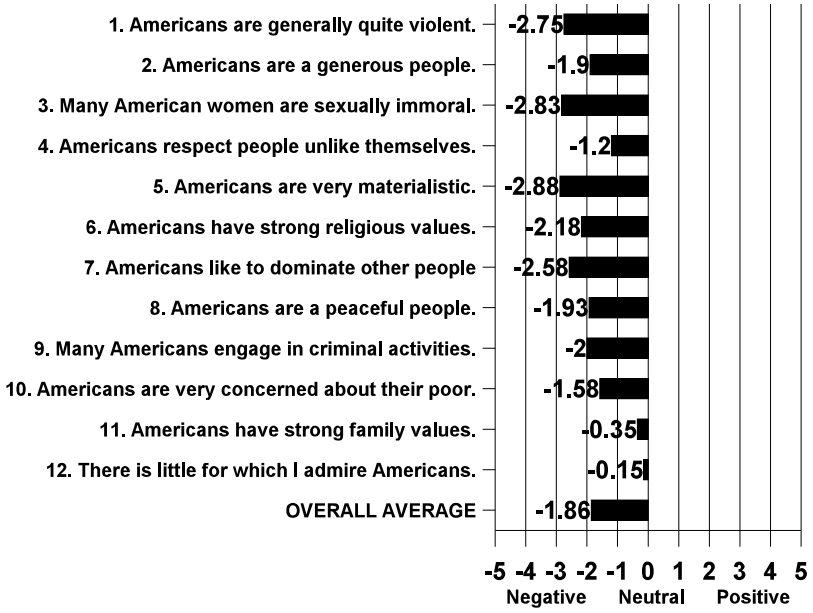


Figure 4

Bahrain: Beliefs About Americans (N=100)



toward the United States in many countries, as well as the opinions of local populations concerning many issues that may be influenced by U.S policies and actions. Their web site contains extensive explanation of the nature of attitudes, their measurement and related issues, see: Stuart Oskamp, *Attitudes and Opinions* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1991).

2. It is important to understand where the financial support for a project of this type came from and their reason for conducting the research. Therefore, throughout this book we will report the financial support and their reasons for conducting this study.

3. That comment is this: Any study that has potential political or economic implications these days can seem to be suspect in the minds of some. Questions can be raised about who funded the study, and what were the goals and motivations of those who supplied the funds? What are the characteristics of the researchers, and how might their commitments and values influence the research? For examples, see: Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Attitude as a Scientific Concept," *Social Forces*, 42, 1, 1963, pp.17-31. See also: Melvin L. DeFleur and William R. Catton, "The Limits of Determinancy in Attitude Measurement," *Social Forces*, 25, 1957, pp. 295-300, Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Verbal Attitudes and Overt Acts: An Experiment on the Salience of Attitudes," *The American Sociological Review*, 23, 6, 1958, pp. 667-673.

4. The debates over the nature and psychological functions of attitudes began more than a century ago. Literally thousands of studies on different types and aspects of attitudes have been published over the years. For examples, see: Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Attitude as a Scientific Concept," *Social Forces*, 42, 1, 1963, pp.17-31. See also: Melvin L. DeFleur and Frank R. Westie, "Verbal Attitudes and Overt Acts: An Experiment on the Salience of Attitudes," *The American Sociological Review*, 23, 6, 1958, pp. 667-673.

5. Examples are the complex and detailed reports developed by the Washington DC - Pew Research Center. Beliefs, opinions and attitudes of 38,000 people in 44 nations were studied in 2002 and another 16,000 a year later (following the war in Iraq). Their motivation for conducting the study was to assess the views, attitudes and beliefs about America as it is now perceived in the countries studied, to offer the results to those who might make use of their findings to increase the security of the people of the United States. See: "What the World Thinks in 2002," The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press: Washington, D.C., December 4, 2002. See also: "America's Image Slips, But Allies Share U.S. Concerns over Iraq, Terrorism," The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press: Washington, D.C., June 2, 2003.

6. Many students who came to the United States from conservative countries to pursue degrees in American universities have indicated this to the authors. At home, they were closely governed in what they wore, how they spoke to others, with whom the could socialize and so on. These behaviors were highly controlled by their families and local communities. When they arrived in the United States, they were surprised to see many students of the opposite sex in the same classes. Some were shocked when they saw them dressing in ways that were considered immodest in their own countries. Others were surprised to see students openly disagreeing with their professors. Some were amazed when they viewed American family situation comedies that they saw on TV at home; they were secretly envious of the teenagers portrayed when they saw them talking back to or disobeying their parents, or even dressing in ways not acceptable in their own society.

7. See, for example: Don Aucoin, "Getting the Picture," *The Boston Globe*, June 30, 2002, p. D1; Barbara Stanwyck, "Fatal Attraction," *The Boston Globe*, March 18, 2002, p. C1; Indira A.P. Lakshmanan, "Bomb Kills 11 Afghan Hotel Workers," *The Boston Globe*, March 8, 2002, p. 6A; Indira A.P. Lakshmanan, "Bomb Kills 11 Afghan Hotel Workers," *The Boston Globe*, March 8, 2002, p. 6A; Yahya Kamalipour (ed.), *Images of the U.S. Around the World* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1999), p. xxii.

8. For a review of scholars who are critical of large scale media organization, see David Demers, *Global Media: Menace or Messiah?* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2002), p. 11; Yahya Kamalipour (ed.), *Images of the U.S. Around the World* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1999), p. xxii.

9. *Ibid*, see Chapter 3.

10. See, For example: "We Have to Take Muslim Anti-Americanism Seriously," *Newsday*, March 26, 2002, p. A44; "Women as Islamic Missionaries," *The Boston Globe*, March 3, 2002, p. A14; "Even the Kuwaitis Dislike Us," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 29, 2002, p. A9; "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Division," *The Times* (London), July 4, 2002.

11. See, *The Economist*, "Images and Worries," May 25, 2002, pp. 65-69.

12. Kamalipour, *op. cit.*, p. xxii.

3. Jonathan Saltzman, "Far from the Front, Cases of Anxiety Rise," *The Boston Globe*, April 6, 2003, p. A-1.