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The effects of American influence on British culture

Gloria Jean Neely

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THE EFFECTS OF AMERICAN INFLUENCE ON BRITISH CULTURE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Social Sciences

by
Gloria Jean Neely
June 2001
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ON BRITISH CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Culture is a concept that can embody the entire spectrum of human behavior. Simply put, culture makes us who we are. Globalization of culture, economy and environment, as well as increased uniformity in cultural preferences, has however led to fewer cultural differences between people in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The purpose of this research is to explore the globalization of culture from a geographical perspective. I concentrated my research in England, Scotland, and Wales, where I visited villages, towns, and cities of varying size and population density. Accepting the fact that globalization of cultures would be strongest in certain core metropolitan areas, I wanted to examine the diffusion of this globalization with increasing distance from the core area. Regional differences in such things as religion, clothing, language or food occur due to isolation from other groups. The further one group is removed from another the greater the chance for differences. This phenomenon is known as "distance decay" (Rubenstein 35).

Using the theory of distance decay, and taking into account the principles of "cultural diffusion" and
"innovation", it was my intent to demonstrate that the further one is removed from the core area, the less American influence is exhibited on the region. I also intended to show that while "American" influence is present throughout much of the country, changes have been made in order to provide a truly British perspective.

My research has shown that the greatest American influence is indeed evident in the large metropolitan areas such as London. Although I encountered many areas that cater to tourists, my research demonstrates that while "American" merchandise and entertainment may be available for visitors, the people native to that area showed few signs of "Americanization" in their daily lives. This study notes similarities and differences between the United States (U.S.) and the United Kingdom (UK). Study findings suggest that while at first glance the United Kingdom and the United States may seem similar in many ways, the differences between these countries are great, making each one unique.
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DEDICATION

To Rikki for giving me the strength to continue long after I had decided to give up

---

To Bob for believing in me and making me believe in myself

---

To Billie for never losing faith in me
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PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE
OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Cultural views can exemplify the entire spectrum of human behavior, reflecting our "tastes, values, aspirations, and fears" (Rubenstein 36). Using Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Rubenstein defines culture as "the body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits constituting a distinct complex of tradition of a group of people" (36). Anthropologists define culture as "the customary manner in which human groups learn to organize their behavior and thought in relation to their environment" (Howard 4-5). Howard outlines the three primary characteristics of culture as behavioral, cognitive, and material. Behavior is seen as how people interact with one another; cognition refers to how we view the world; and the material aspect of culture refers to the physical objects we produce (5). These aspects of culture affect and are reflected in population growth, religion, food, and language (the communication of ideas through written symbols and sounds as well as non-
verbal facial expressions and gestures) (Rubenstein 36). Cultural experiences provide a stimulus for growth.

Globalization of culture, economy and environment, as well as increased uniformity in cultural preferences, has led to fewer cultural differences between people in our country and the United Kingdom. Cultural diffusion - the spreading of values, ideas, concepts and symbols (Rubenstein 31), is likely to be affected by both the availability of ideas and the intensity and willingness to import these ideas. The unique way a group of people perceives these values and ideas is seen as innovation. Diffusion of ideas globally is apparent in architectural styles and transportation patterns and recognized in such things as Nike shoes, McDonald's hamburgers, and Coca-Cola (Rubenstein 37). Uniformity of appearance makes these icons recognizable the world over. A major barrier to this uniformity however is that not all people share equal access to preferred resources. One additional boundary is in a people's desire to retain their traditional cultural elements, despite increased globalization of cultural preferences (Rubenstein 37-8). Cultural diffusion and innovation accounts for how these ideas are learned and adapted by the people.
In Not Like Us Pells writes:

... critics of globalization argued that the widespread appeal of mass entertainment was a threat to the nation-state. The international popularity of movies, television, pop music, theme parks, shopping malls, and the Internet made it difficult for democratic governments to shore up their local cultural industries or influence what their citizens saw and did. Worse, a global culture threatened to obliterate regional and local eccentricities, promoting instead a set of universal values and images that made the world more homogeneous and much less interesting (326).

Pells found that there were similarities as well as differences between Britain and the United States. On a larger scale Pells wrote, "After the Cold War, and fifty years of transatlantic political arguments and intellectual rivalries, it no longer makes sense for Americans to think of themselves as cultural leaders or for Europeans to think of Americans as cultural imperialists" (333). Many still fear that globalization will eliminate existing cultural differences. I strongly disagree. Because one has access
to certain cultural stimuli it does not necessarily follow that he will discard his views and values in favor of others.

Rubenstein makes a point that although global communication can lead to "cultural globalization" it can also lead to a diversity of ideas. With the diversity of television programming available through cable and satellite networks people have far more chances not only to experience other cultural traditions but also to share their traditions with others (38). I believe this view to be true. I believe that when given the opportunity to experience many cultural traditions people will pick and choose that which appeals to them, rejecting the rest.

Rubenstein is quick to point out that globalization has not "destroyed the uniqueness of an individual place's culture, economy, and environment" (36) although many social issues arise when a group of people attempts to preserve its local identity in face of mounting globalization. Although we may share many material resources, our cognitive view of the world and these resources varies.

As nations begin to modernize and gain economic stability, Western values and cultures are increasingly
being replaced with more traditional customs, beliefs, and languages (Huntington 91). American ethnocentrism has led to a false sense of superiority, a belief that our way is the best way - or maybe the only way. While our constitutional rights of democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from oppression are unequalled throughout the world, we cannot disparage those who are not like us. Our differences make us unique.

Objectives

The objective of this study was to look at the globalization of culture from a geographical perspective. It was my belief that although there are many similarities between the cultures of the United States and the United Kingdom there are also many differences. I further believed that globalization of cultures would be strongest in certain core metropolitan areas where exposure to American businesses and products have become commonplace and where interaction with American travelers has become routine. On the other hand I believed that rural areas, having less contact with American influence, would show fewer similarities. It was my intent to examine the diffusion of these similarities with increasing distance
from the core areas to determine if all regions of the United Kingdom share the same cultural identity and to ascertain to what extent, if any, the United Kingdom is similar to the United States.

Issues Addressed in This Research

As a means of comparison I looked at language, education, social economics, television, housing, and urban renewal within the United States and the United Kingdom. Although my research confirmed similarities between the U.S. and the UK in all areas of study, the differences are striking. Each country continues to cling to beliefs, behavior, and traits that provide for uniqueness in everyday social behavior. Additionally, rural areas within the UK do exhibit differences from major metropolitan areas.

My travels throughout England, Scotland, and Wales during the past sixteen years have contributed a great deal to my personal observations and allowed me the opportunity to view British life first-hand. It remains my firm belief that significant cultural differences do exist between our two countries, lending to a uniqueness of spirit and cultural identity.
CHAPTER TWO
GENERAL INFORMATION
AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The United Kingdom is a relatively small country, slightly smaller than Oregon, with a population of 59.5 million people. Officially known as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or simply the United Kingdom, it encompasses slightly less than 245 square kilometers and is comprised of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Island. Recent statistics show that 19 percent of the population is between the ages of 0-14 years, 65 percent are 15-64 years of age, and 16 percent are over the age of 65. The population growth rate is quite low, only 0.25 percent with the fertility rate at 1.74 children per woman. The English constitute 81.5 percent of the population, the Scottish 9.6 percent, and the Irish 2.4 percent. The Welsh, Ulster, West Indian, Indian, and Pakistani account for the majority of the remaining population. The major languages spoken in the United Kingdom are English, Welsh, and Gaelic. Life expectancy is 74.97 years for males and 80.49 years for females. The two major religions are Anglican (27 million)
and Roman Catholic (9 million). Muslims, Presbyterians, Methodists, Sikh, Hindu, and Jewish religions are present in lesser numbers. With literacy defined as those over the age of 15 having completed at least five years of schooling, the literacy rate for the entire population is 99 percent. The country is ruled by a constitutional monarchy with the chief of state since 1952 being Queen Elizabeth II.

The gross domestic product (GDP) of the United Kingdom (estimated in U.S. dollars) was $1.29 trillion in 1999, with a real GDP growth of 1.9 percent. Per capita GDP estimates for 1998 was $21,800. The inflation rate is relatively low at 2.3 percent. It was estimated in 1996 that services accounted for 68.9 percent of the nations work force, manufacturing 17.5 percent, government 11.3 percent, energy 1.2 percent, and agriculture 1.1 percent. The labor force in 1998 was 28.8 million with an unemployment rate estimated to be 7.5 percent. It is said that their agricultural industry is very efficient and highly mechanized, producing about 60 percent of their food needs with only 1 percent of their labor force (CIA).

By comparison, the United States is more than 39 times the size of the United Kingdom, however, our population is
less than 5 times as great. Our growth rate is significantly higher, almost 4 times that of the UK.

Statistics for 1999 show that the unemployment rate for the Untied States is slightly more than one-half that of the United Kingdom. Of note is the distribution of our labor force. The United States is the leading industrial power in the world. Our labor force is diversified and technologically advanced. While the majority of the British workforce (68.9 percent) is engaged in the service industry, more than 30 percent of our workforce occupies positions in the managerial and professional arena. Technical, sales, and administrative support accounts for 29.2 percent, followed by manufacturing, mining, and transportation with 24.5 percent. Forestry and fishing employs only 2.5 percent of our workers. Per capita GDP for the U.S. in 1999 was $33,900, a full 50 percent greater than that of the UK (CIA-US).
CHAPTER THREE
GENERAL THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS

You need not be in the United Kingdom for long before you begin to notice differences between the American and British cultures. Sunday dinner at a little pub in Arundel, along the southern coast about half way between Gatwick Airport and Portsmouth, can be a refreshing experience. In England the pub serves as an extension of the home. People from the local towns meet to eat, drink, and socialize with friends and neighbors. It gets quite loud and extremely crowded, with the patrons in no hurry to leave. The meal is a traditional three course English fare, usually soup, roast beef, roast potatoes, corn, peas, and Yorkshire Pudding, followed by pie and ice cream. Unlike American restaurants you can order whatever is on the menu but will get only what they might have available that night. It reminds you somewhat of the American family holiday dinner seen on the covers of the Saturday Evening Post.

Most Americans see British food as somewhat bland. They fry much of what they eat and use little seasoning. They do not serve a wide variety of vegetables with their
meals, mostly peas and carrots, and fruit is usually not served with meals. The British import a great deal of their fresh fruits and vegetables and that which you find in the neighborhood shops as well as major grocery stores are somewhat expensive.

Several food establishments catering to take-away clientele can be found in almost every city (both large and small). Food is prepared in the morning and sold throughout the day. You can buy the food and have it either heated there or take it cold. Most of these establishments do not have eat-in facilities. A typical English breakfast in a bed-and-breakfast consists of cereal, eggs, bacon, toast, beans (black beans or pork beans), fried tomatoes and fried mushrooms. Some better restaurants do however serve excellent meals, much like you would find in one of the better restaurants in the United States.

The young fill the fast food establishments. Although very few 30 plus are seen at McDonalds, Burger King, Whimpies or Pizza Hut, they are filled with teens and young adults. Unlike in the United States, one is charged for ketchup, salt, or other condiments. Take out food was everywhere with traditional English dishes of all tastes.
available. The selection of sodas is limited everywhere and most are not sold cold, something we tend to expect as Americans. Every city does have at least one local candy store, ones like you see in the Norman Rockwell paintings.

The one thing that seems unusual though is the absence of children throughout the country. The British appear to have taken the old adage “Children are to be seen and not heard” one step further - children are neither seen nor heard. Occasionally you encounter children walking to or from school, or on an outing with their parents, but this is rare. Everywhere you visit - pubs, stores, fast food establishments, parks, bus stops - is bustling with people, but very few children.

The United Kingdom is extremely conservative in dealing with what they perceive as “wrong” or “immoral”. Several television talk shows have dealt with the issue of gays. Members of the audience were openly hostile towards the panelists who admitted to having found acceptance for their homosexuality only after leaving their small towns and relocating to London. They saw their parents as unapproachable and admitted to living in fear because of their sexual orientation. According to the shows the government does not protect their status and gay-bashing is
seen by most as acceptable behavior.

The controversy surrounding the rights of minorities is equally subjective. British law does not afford "deaf" children the right to be taught in schools using sign language. However, the Welsh and the Gaels have the right to be taught using their own language. British law reads that a minority language must be territorial, and because the hearing impaired are dispersed through the country and do not settle in a specific territory they have no rights under British law.

In comparison to the United States, wages in the United Kingdom are relatively low, yet the stores are filled with people buying, buying, buying. British marketing strategy is brilliant. When you enter a department store the first things you see are video tapes, CDs, candy, ice cream, chips, and cigarettes. Some of these items are placed so close to the entrance doors that you almost stumble over them when you enter and exit. These are the first items to be seen and the very items consumers (young and old alike) head for. The British are a nation of smokers so I was shocked to note that the cost of a package of cigarettes is about 3.70 sterling, which equates to about $6.31 U.S. As a former smoker (2½ packs
I could not imagine spending close to $475 each month to purchase cigarettes.

Everyone seemed to be in a hurry - whether the town was small or large - whether they were walking or driving - they were quick to express their dissatisfaction at being bothered to the point of being rude. The elderly appeared to have the most patience and were quick to give directions or provide information, although mostly their directions were either inadequate or confusing. Asking information from those in shops and stores was futile at best. For the most part they were either unwilling or unable to provide help. This situation I believe can be attributed to several factors. First, the streets often run one-way and are at an angle to one another, whereas our streets often run in a block pattern. This makes it difficult to provide a stranger with accurate directions. Secondly, the people tend to be in such a hurry they do not seem to want to slow down long enough to provide directions, and lastly, they seem to be indifferent to foreigners. People would often say: "Oh, you're Americans."

The elderly in England appear to exhibit a great deal of independence. I visited many elderly men and women who in their 80's, 90's, and beyond, were still living alone,
many of them pensioners living in counsel housing. The counsel housing is situated such that they do not have to rely upon cars or even public transportation in order to get around. Small villages bustle in the morning with the elderly who rise early, dress in some of their finest clothes, and head for town to do their daily shopping and give their canine companions a little exercise. They use this time for recreation and socializing and are willing to stop and talk about their lives and their country.

I spent considerable time talking to one women I met in a little store. She was close to 90 and had a story she wanted told about the generosity of Americans. She and her husband immigrated to the United States after World War II and settled in the Boston area where they both found employment. They remained only a few years, preferring their "quiet" existence in England. Some years after returning to the United Kingdom she and her husband were pleasantly surprised to receive a letter from the American Embassy informing them that they would be receiving a monthly social security check from the United States. Having both retired on a meager pensioner's income this money is much needed. She said that her fondest memories of the America were the people she worked with - they were
so warm and caring. She said she truly misses the wide
diversity of fruits and vegetables we have to choose from
here, but was never able to become accustomed to buying
them in large quantities. In England if she wants to
purchase cucumber for her salad she selects a cucumber and
takes it to the check-out clerk, "nicks" it with her
fingernail, and the clerk cuts off the amount she wants,
leaving no waste. She stated that although she enjoyed her
time here, and misses much of what she left behind, she "is
and always will be British."

I met another elderly woman while visiting a World
War I memorial in Plymouth. She was close to 100 but we
did not discuss her exact age. She comes daily to visit
the memorial and read her "work mate's" name that is
inscribed upon the plaque. From there, aided by a cane,
she goes down to the ocean to take a swim. It does not
matter the time of year or the weather, she believes her
daily swim is necessary. Her name was Aubrey and she was
proud to tell the story of how she was named after Lady
Aubrey who laid the first stone on the Boar War Memorial
located a few yards away. She was a lonely woman who had,
by her own admission, outlived most of her friends and had
no family nearby. She spoke of her closest relative, a
cousin who is married to an American and lives in the San Diego area. Aubrey has visited America and says she has often thought of immigrating here but has been unwilling to leave her homeland. Her cousin retains both an English and American passport and tells Aubrey often that she will not give up her British identity. Although she has lived in America for more than 50 years she says she is not American but British and always will be.

When I picked up my rental car the proprietor told me he had been to the United States several times on holiday and had yet to meet a "real American". When pushed to describe what he meant by a "real American" he explained that he had seen "Mexicans, Pakistanis, Cubans, and Asians", but no "real Americans" - no "English Americans".

The United Kingdom has had a long history of struggle and armed conflict. These years of strife have left the country with between 50,000 and 60,000 war memorials dedicated to those who were killed in or as a result of military service. Throughout England, Scotland, and Wales virtually every town and city has at least one statue or other tangible object that commemorates those who sacrificed their lives in the First and Second World Wars, as well as lesser remembered battles such as the Crimean
and Boar Wars.

The United Kingdom is a good example of the "geographic clustering" of industries. This is noted with the "potteries" around Stoke-on-Trent, the "black country" of the English midlands, and urbanization and domestication around London. They have however allowed their industrial complexes to deteriorate leading to their inability to compete globally. There is currently a determination to bring businesses to the United Kingdom through increased efforts in the telecommunications and service areas.

It is of note that traditionally populations have concentrated in small areas around business centers. Single-family detached homes were the exception, not the rule. Citizens patronized local establishments and relied on mass transit to get around. This has changed however in recent years. With American investment in the UK, American workers have brought their predilection for suburban, single-family homes, and personal automobiles. This has changed the landscape of England.
CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE ISSUES

Language

Introduction

This chapter gives a brief overview of the importance of language as a means of preserving and promoting cultural identity. Often people view language as merely a means of communications and assume that if two nations can communicate verbally they share a common bond. It is my intent to take a more critical look at language to ascertain if the differences between British and American English are due only to isolation or if there was a conscious attempt by early Americans to establish a national language, thereby asserting their independence and promoting cultural identity.

Discussion

As one of the fundamental elements that bind a culture, language can reveal a great deal about a group of people. English is considered the 'lingua franca' or universal language, used in business and trade throughout the world. Taught in schools and universities around the globe, it is the principle language by which people who do
not share a common dialect can bridge linguistic and cultural gaps. The use of the English language is, in and of itself, not of cultural significance. It is used by many as merely a tool of communication - enabling the effective exchange of ideas between businessmen and world leaders. The significance of any language is in a culture's ability to adapt it to preserve and promote distinct cultural identities. The primary language of more than 391 million people, English is second only to Mandarin Chinese in its worldwide use (Howard 81). Around 2000 B.C. the British Isles were inhabited by the Celts who spoke Celtic. Tribes of Angles, Jutes, and Saxons invaded mainland Europe around A.D. 450 driving the Celts into northern and western Britain - Cornwall and the highlands of Scotland and Wales. These Germanic tribes from Denmark and northwestern Germany brought with them the Germanic languages. Subsequent invaders (including the French) enriched the language with words and dialects and English was declared the country's principle language in 1362 (Rubenstein 150-1).

History has revealed that subsequent to a country's independence from colonial rule, newly formed societies seek to promote indigenous languages in an effort to both
affirm their power and to define their identity (Huntington 59-64). Countries that are absorbed by others tend to retain their native tongue whenever possible, as was the case with Wales following their unification with England in the mid-1500s. While English is the official language of Wales, the Welsh Language Act of 1993 called for equal treatment of Welsh and English in the conduct of public business (Welsh). Once seen as a source of cultural unity, the use of Welsh has been abandoned by most. The Welsh alphabet, pictured in figure (1) is considerably different from English. While its use is waning, one television station still carries broadcasts in Welsh, and some schools continue to teach it. Throughout Wales many signs are written in both English and Welsh, while some are written in only Welsh (Figure 2). The decline in the use of Welsh was confirmed in a 1992 study that indicated only 21.5% of the population speaks Welsh, only 13.4% of the people are fluent in its use and a full 66.1% admit to having no knowledge of the language (History).

The English language that was brought to America by British colonists in the seventeenth century has changed considerably since those early settlement days, here as well as in England. Also, just as there are different
regional accents within the United States, there are differences in dialects within the United Kingdom. These differences exist despite the relatively small size of Great Britain and the "diffusion of standard language" through the mass media. According to Rubenstein (176),

Figure 1. The Welsh Alphabet.

Source: T.C. Evans, Cadrawd, Wales
"geographers study dialects to understand the relationship between culture and landscape." "Migration, interaction, and isolation" affect the distribution of dialects. Dialect "reflects unique characteristics of the physical environment in which a group lives, and languages change partially in response to modifications of landscape."

There are several dozen identifiable dialects in England that comprise three distinct groups (Northern, Midland, and Southern). Language and speech patterns show strong
regional differences, especially among children (Rubenstein 176-80).

The differences between the English spoken in the United States and that spoken in the United Kingdom are due to isolation. While there may be many similarities between what we call English and what the British call English, the two differ in "vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation."

The English language in the United States and the United Kingdom developed independently during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Americans added new words to their vocabulary in order to describe their new land. It was also necessary to develop new words to describe new inventions and the ever-changing world around them (Rubenstein 178-79).

The differences in spelling between the United States and England were part of a calculated plan by Noah Webster (creator of Webster's dictionary) to establish American independence. It is not fully known if Webster ignored the spelling and grammar rules developed in eighteenth century England or if he was unaware of their existence, but for whatever reason his dictionary was uniquely American. According to Rubenstein, Webster argued, "spelling and grammar reforms would help establish a national language,
reduce cultural dependence on England, and inspire national pride” (Rubenstein 179).

Pronunciation of words has changed more in England than it has in the United States. We are often accused of not speaking "proper English" but that is because the English spoken in Britain today (the British national standard) was not developed until the late eighteenth century, long after the United States was settled. Known as the British Received Pronunciation (BRP) the dialect was first associated with upper-class Britons from London, Cambridge and Oxford and disbursed through grammar books and dictionaries in the eighteenth century. It is the dialect spoken by politicians, news broadcasters and actors throughout England. Another reason BRP was not adopted by colonists in this country is because few colonists were from upper classes of British society (Rubenstein 176-80).

As colonists of the seventeenth century began to disburse throughout their new homeland, they took their speech patterns with them. These speech patterns eventually determined the language spoken by the colonists as well as by new settlers arriving in the United States (Rubenstein 176-80).

After only a very short time in the United Kingdom it
becomes apparent that the Queens English and American English exhibit a great many differences. Although the dialect was often hard to discern I particularly noted differences in word usage during my travels. I have supplemented my list with ones I located on the Internet and have included it as APPENDIX (A).

Summary

The information in this section clearly indicates that language is more than just a communicative tool. This is apparent in the decision by early American colonists to consciously depart from the use of British English in order to establish their independence and to promote a unique cultural identity. This need for a unique identity is further evident within the United Kingdom where the Welsh continue to cling to their language and their culture. Although British and American English developed independently through isolation, the addition of new words to both was a result of a need to describe the physical world around them, and the objects they produced.

Although it is evident that the variations in the English spoken in the United States and that spoken in the United Kingdom contribute to our cultural identities, it is apparent too that we ‘borrow’ words form one another and
that we have no more influence on their language today than they do on ours.

Education

Introduction

The educational system within the United States is often a source of comparison to that of various educational systems throughout the world. It has long been my belief that the educational system in the United States, while providing a standardized education to all, falls short of preparing our children to compete in the world's competitive economic market. The purpose of this section is to look at the educational system in the United Kingdom in order to determine if the educational curriculum afforded its students is comparable to that of the United States and to determine if British children are better prepared to enter the workforce upon completion of their education.

Discussion

Much like the United States, children begin school in the UK around the age of five. Prior to this they spend time in Nursery education or playgroups. The first six years are spent in Primary education, after which they move on to Secondary schools where they study until graduation
at age 16 or 18. The age at which they complete their secondary education is dependent upon the type of examination they decide to take. General Certificate of Education (GSE) is available at the age of 16. The GSE examination consists of testing in nine to 10 subjects. The Advanced ("A") Level exams are taken by many at the age of 18. The "A" Levels are taken in three to four specialized subject areas. Universities and institutes of "higher education" offer three-year bachelor degrees. Postgraduate degrees are available to those who have received a bachelor degree. A master's degree which requires classroom attendance can be obtained in one year, however, a Masters or Doctorate obtained through independent research takes three years (British).

Although most students attend state run schools, home schooling is available, as is private and public (actually private and very expensive) schooling (British). Until recently, primary schools were at liberty to teach what they wanted, how they wanted - with much of the focus placed on basic literacy and mathematics skills. The introduction of the National Curriculum, about 10 years ago, provided structure and standardized the curriculum, while allowing for regional variations in Scotland and
Wales, as well as providing for children with special needs. According to one article, *The British Education System - a teacher’s perspective*,

The idea was to standardise education across the country, to provide levels for teachers to access progress on a national norm. In theory children moving districts or to secondary schools could more easily transfer. In the primary school practising teachers would have to teach all curriculum subjects such as History and Science rather than only numeracy and literacy skills. Teacher training would be more focused. Standards would be raised.

The problem, however, is that with the National Curriculum came the requirement to administer standardized tests at ages 7, 11 and 14. Teachers in the United Kingdom, much like those in the United States, express concerns of feeling pressured to "teach to the test". It is believed that this may actually prevent children from working to their potential and lead to "lowering rather than raising standards" (British).

In England there has long been a debate as to whether education should be for the "profit value of society" or
the "personal enrichment and happiness of individuals". According to an article by David Ragsdale,

As issues of ethnicity and race have been the greatest source of political conflict in the United States, so have attitudes regarding class relations formed the basis for political change in Britain.

... the education of youth in England has been the work of an elite class, a class which has played the major role in developing ideas about education. The consequence of this traditional bias has been the persistence through numerous reforms, of a dual system of education, wherein the state-controlled bureaucracy has often tried to adapt itself to the existing private educational institutions.

This elitism was the center of a controversy in June of 2000 when an 18-year-old female public school graduate was denied entrance to Oxford University despite her top scores in all 10 subjects of the General Certificate of Secondary Education exams. According to Treasury Chief Gordon Brown, at fault was "an interview system that is more reminiscent of the old-boy network and the old-school
tie than genuine justice in our society". It is Mr. Brown’s view that "... it is now time that these old universities open their doors to women and to people from all backgrounds" (Barr).

While Oxford and Cambridge accept about 53 percent of their students from public schools, "the other 47 percent all come from elite private schools such as Eton and Harrow, which only serve 7 percent of secondary students" (Barr). Bias has been charged in the acceptance criteria, noting that students from private schools exhibit more confidence and poise during admittance interviews. The interview process is often the deciding factor in college admittance, and while public school students may show academic superiority, timidity may be the only factor preventing university admittance.

In the UK, as in the U.S., the benefits of a college education are well known. The BBC Breakfast News reported that a college graduate can expect lifetime earnings of about £70,000 more than a non-graduate, making a college education an investment in the future.

Summary

The educational systems of the United States and the United Kingdom show many similarities. While the United
States is highly structured and has utilized standardized curriculum and testing for many years, the United Kingdom has employed these teaching methods for a relatively short time. Both countries provide their children with an opportunity to learn, however, in the United Kingdom the government goes one step further, providing a cash subsidy to students who attend local colleges and universities. Despite some similarities, the two educational systems have evolved independent of one another and appear to be a result of the cultural biases within each country. The ongoing debate in the UK, as to whether an education should be for the benefit of society or the individual, is one based on class, not individual ability. In the U.S. a similar debate continues to be one of race and money.

Social Economics

Introduction

Over the past several years I have observed our politicians debating the rights and privileges of the common people. Controversy surrounds benefits for the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, and the sick. While some people believe that individuals should take the responsibility of caring for themselves, others believe
this is our government’s responsibility. Still others believe we should offer social programs but are unwilling to help fund such programs through higher taxes. This section briefly explores some of the social programs available in the UK.

Discussion

The United Kingdom manages a number of social programs aimed at providing economic benefits to its citizens. Several aggressive schemes administered since 1917 by the Department of Social Security, originally called the Ministry of Pensions (History of WPA), provide benefits for services such as child care and housing. Other benefits, including a tax-free Christmas bonus of £10, are available for pensioners (DSS). An unemployment rate of nearly 8 percent indicates there are not enough employment opportunities for citizens of the United Kingdom, especially in rural areas. Many jobs are only part time and are low paying, requiring people to seek assistance from the government.

While the United States has introduced programs aimed at getting welfare mothers back to work, the UK has gone one step further by offering a one time "Child Maintenance
Bonus” payment of up to £1,000, payable to those who relinquish benefits and return to work (DSS).

A “Jobseeker’s Allowance” is much like our unemployment insurance and is payable to those at least 16 years old but who have not yet reach retirement age, and who are not working a minimum of 16 hours each week. Benefits are available for 6 months, range from £31.45 to £81.95 each week, and are dependent on age and sex, as well as marital status. Reduced hardship benefits are available for those who are unable to work due to family circumstances. This scheme also covers those who are close to retirement age and unwilling to continue working, students, and those on job strike (DSS).

"Income Support" is a long-term benefit scheme available to all low-income citizens who are over the age of 16. The amount of benefit is dependent upon age, with premiums available for pensioners, those with disabilities, and those who are caring for a family. Payments range from £31.45 to £83.25 weekly (as of April 2001), with premium payments paid in hardship cases (DSS).

The UK government seeks to ensure all people are housed by providing a housing allowance of up to £52.20 weekly. Benefits are based on income and sex (DSS).
The "Retirement Pension" is for people who have reached the state pension age of 60 years for women and 65 for men, and is based upon "National Insurance" (NI) contributions. Additional payments are available for those with dependents, the disabled, or those over 80. State pension benefits, as shown in figure (3), are relatively low but can be supplemented through other social programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE PENSION BENEFITS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on your own or your late husband's or wife's NI contributions</td>
<td>£67.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on your husband's or wife's NI contributions</td>
<td>£40.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contributory (based on residence) - full rate</td>
<td>£40.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contributory (based on residence) - married woman's rate</td>
<td>£24.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 80 addition</td>
<td>£00.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 80 pension</td>
<td>£40.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. State Pension Benefits.


Benefits are not affected if you elect to continue working after you begin receiving your retirement pension. In an effort to reach social equality, legislation has been passed that will change the retirement age for women to coincide with that of men, however, some special retirement benefits pay more for men than they do for women (DSS).

The National Health Service (NHS) act of 1948
legislated socialized medicine for British citizens. Government run medical care is funded through health insurance taxes and monies from the national treasury. Doctors are employed by the government and receive wages plus a fee for each patient they treat (Socialized). Seen as woefully inadequate, a lack of resources is blamed for excessive delays in care. The wait in Scotland for hospital admission is 9 months to 1 year, and the wait for urgent cancer treatment is 2 months. An alternative for an estimated 13 million Britons is private health insurance (Hall). According to the London Daily Telegraph,

[If] independent hospitals were suddenly to disappear, NHS hospital waiting lists would double within the year. If the private clinics were able to double their capacity the waiting lists would evaporate (Spotlight).

According to the Heritage Foundation, the UK health system is "characterized by long lines for treatment, substandard technology, frustrated doctors and patients, and - most important - government rationing of care" (Spotlight).

**Summary**

The government of the United Kingdom provides a wider variety of social services to its citizens than the United
States does. This, however, is possible only through high
taxes and price controls. The value added tax (VAT),
imposed on all products and services, is set at 17.5
percent. Taxes on gasoline exceed 80 percent. Price
controls prevent the type of competition we see in this
country. While medical care is available to everyone, it
is costly to the government and lacking in quality. With
unemployment, and underemployment, seen as a real problem,
it is only through high taxes that the UK is able to house
and feed those who are unable to care for themselves.

Television

Introduction

In this section we compare American to British
television. In the United States the television industry
has proven to be a very lucrative enterprise that provides
countless hours of varied programming. Televisions are
inexpensive and are the major source of entertainment for
millions of Americans. This section points out that
television in the UK is much different than in the U.S.

Discussion

The media in England is staunchly conservative but I
am not sure that this position reflects the wishes of the
British people. Technology is both praised and scorned, but not accepted as being the here and now. While there is an ongoing debate about the need for more "high brow" or serious dramas on television and a push for more documentary/educational programs, the citizenry are clamoring for more diversity in entertainment. Advertisements for cable installation are pervasive and the sale of satellite dishes is booming.

The British Broadcasting Company (BBC), established in 1920, virtually controls the British airways. Its founder, John Reith, looked for a point midway between what he perceived as the rigidly controlled state system of the Soviet Union and the unregulated system available in the United States. His vision was of "an independent British broadcaster able to educate, inform and entertain the whole nation free from political interference and commercial pressure". By November 1922, when the BBC began daily transmissions of its radio programming, it had issued more than 1 million ten-shilling (50p) licenses. By the end of the 1930s that number had risen to almost 9 million listeners. They focused on the arts and endeavored for good taste and decency in programming (1920s).

In 1936 the BBC began broadcasting television from
Alexandra Palace in North London. The BBC television was blacked out due to the war in 1939. Its replacement, the "Home Service" radio programming, was dominated by mostly organ recitals and public service announcements, eliciting frequent complaints from listeners. Although Winston Churchill called the BBC "the enemy within the gates," he utilized the radio to reach out to Europe through his speeches. The BBC emerged after the war with an enhanced reputation for new broadcasting casting (1930s).

The video recorder made its debut in England in the 1980s, occupying space in only 5 percent of households. By the early 1990s this number had risen to 64 percent (1980s). Videos are sold in almost every major store. An interview with one BBC official in early July 1999 called for restrictions on the video and cable market in the United Kingdom. His view was that with the increasing number of videos being sold and the cable accessibility there is a disparity between those who can afford entertainment and those who cannot. BBC believes that it is their responsibility to do something about what they perceive as a problem of inequality (BBC News 1).

Although satellite and cable are becoming prevalent in Britain, programming has not reached the level enjoyed by
Americans. News and documentaries account for a large portion of the television schedule, but soap operas, game shows, children's programming, and talk shows are available. Sporting events are a big draw on British television. I did not observe the originality, variety, or quality enjoyed by viewers in the States. Many of the morning news programs are actually mini-talk shows. Gimmicks and props, such as poster-boards, hand puppets, dancing, and singing are utilized to entice viewers to tune in. Guests from the studio audience are brought on stage for participation in impromptu discussions. News anchors are casually dressed (levis and t-shirts). Their journalistic expertise is limited to reading and discussing stories from several newspapers to the in-studio and at-home audience.

Unlike the United States, television set ownership is not free in England. The BBC requires yearly licensing of all televisions in the country as well as computers equipped to receive television reception. Yearly cost is £101 sterling (about $170) for a color television and £33.50 for a black and white television. Those who do not pay the required fees face criminal prosecution and fines as high as £1,000 sterling. A fleet of vans equipped to detect
unlicensed communication systems as well as canvassers with hand-held detectors travel throughout the United Kingdom in search of violators. Aided by a computer database with information on over 22 million UK addresses, their success rate in catching violators is quite high. More than 1,000 people each day are caught using a television without proper licensing. The BBC estimates it costs them more than £160 million each year in lost revenue from license violations (TV Licensing).

Commercial television is licensed by the Independent Television Commission (ITC) under the direction of the BBC. There are currently three independent channels available which must carry a "mix of information, education and entertainment." Viewers pay additional charges of from £7 to £10 each for these channels (ITC). Satellite, cable, and pay-per-view services provide viewers with films, news, music and children's programs at additional costs.

The BBC is accountable to the public and is "run and regulated in the public interest." They accept no advertising and are independent of shareholders and other commercial interests. According to the BBC they, and the British government, believe that a change in this policy would "affect the range, quality and character of the
programmes made by, or commissioned by, the BBC." They justify repeat programming by stating that it offers viewers another opportunity to view the program or that a repeat program for one person is often the first viewing time for another. They further state that repeats of classic programs are quite expensive due to fees that must be paid to union actors (Frequently). High cost of television production significantly limits the range and quality of original programs in the United Kingdom.

Figure (4) provides a listing of typical shows available in Britain on any given night.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Show</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Fortune</td>
<td>Virtually a remake of America’s Family Feud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World of the Secret Camera</td>
<td>A copy of America’s Candid Camera. Clips from the 1960s Candid Camera were shown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinness Book of World Records</td>
<td>This show is part US and part UK. Clips shown previously in the US are interspersed with UK clips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star for a Night</td>
<td>A virtual remake of America’s Star Search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ve Been Framed</td>
<td>Patterned after America’s Funniest Home Videos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Typical Evening Shows.

Source: Personal files.

Summary

Cultural differences are apparent when comparing television in the U.S. to the UK. The British government plays a very active role in television. They own the major networks and determine what shows are offered to the
public, a type of censorship we do not see in this country. Television set owners pay a yearly licensing fee (actually a tax) for the privilege of watching programs on television sets they have purchased. The cost of providing the countless programs in the U.S. is underwritten by advertising, something the UK has attempted to avoid. British citizens watch American programming whenever available. They pattern their television shows after ours. It is through the medium of television that most Britons are exposed to American values - American culture. Through this medium we are a major influence on the British culture, especially on the youth of the United Kingdom.

Housing

Introduction

This section provides an overview of housing in the United Kingdom and includes statistics on the types of housing available, housing trends, and problems perceived by residents. A comparison is made between housing trends in the U.S. and the UK.

Discussion

It has long been the dream of most Americans to own their own homes. This too has become a dream, and for many
a reality, in the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom, in 1980, introduced a "Right to Buy Scheme" that has to date provided the opportunity for 1.3 million former council (government) tenants to own their own homes. It is the goal of this scheme to "...offer everyone the opportunity of a decent home and so promote social cohesion, well being and self-dependence." Residents are given the opportunity to purchase their public housing units at discount prices that are determined by the number of years they have been in residence. Data available from the United Kingdom Department of Environment, Transport, and the Regions (DETR) cites discounts ranging from 32 percent to 70 percent for cash purchases. Mortgage rates are also available. Substantial cash discounts, effective for those who applied to purchase their homes after 10 February 1999 were:

- £38,000 in London or the South End
- £34,000 for the Eastern Region
- £30,000 in the South-West
- £26,000 in North-West or the West Midlands
- £24,000 in Wales, the East Midlands or Yorkshire and the Humber
- £22,000 in the North-East
The UK DETR classifies tenants according to the following categories:

- **Owners**: Accommodation which is owned outright or being bought with a mortgage or being bought as part of a shared ownership scheme.

- **Social sector renters**: This category includes 'council' tenants (households renting from a local authority or New Town corporation) and 'Registered Social Landlord' (RSL) tenants (households renting from housing associations, co-operatives, charitable trusts or local housing companies).

- **Private renters**: This sector covers all other tenants including all whose accommodation is tied to their job. It also includes people living rent free (for example, people living in a flat belonging to a relative) and squatters.

A recently published preliminary report from the DETR for 1999/2000, indicates that there are 14.2 million households in the United Kingdom. Between 1981 and 2000 the number of owner occupied residences in the UK has risen from 57 percent to 69 percent. This same period has seen a decline in council (government) housing from 30 percent to
15 percent. The private rented sector accounts for an additional 10 percent of households, while 6 percent can be accounted for in the RSL sector. This increase, from 2 percent in 1981, is a result of the transfer of council dwellings to RSLs. Data for 1981 through 1991 show an increase in owner occupied housing concurrent with a decline in socially rented dwellings (Figure 5).

According to 1999/2000 DETR data, 37 percent of all households were comprised of couples with no dependent children. Of these, 38 percent were over the age of 45 and owned their property. Families with dependent children accounted for 28 percent of the households, while 6 percent were single parent homes. Figures show that 50 percent of the single parent households lived in social housing. Furthermore, roughly even percentages of males and females lived alone, 15 and 13 percent respectively (Figure 6).

Looking at similar data for the United States (Figure 7), we see that in 1999 the majority of households were comprised of couples with no children, followed by couples with children. Single parent families follow closely behind couples with children. Females in the U.S. are far less likely to live alone than are males (U.S. Census Bureau).
In 2000 the average price of a home in England was £108,000 (approximately $183,000) compared to £101,000 in 1999 and £20,000 in 1979. In 1998 and 1999 private sector rental properties averaged, £83 per week while the rent for council housing was £44 to £55 per week. The government took responsibility for sheltering 104,770 homeless in
1999, only a slight increase from the 104,490 in 1998.

In 1999 the median price of a home in the U.S. was $108,300, about 60 percent of the value of a U.K. dwelling. The median monthly rental price in the U.S. was $581 (U.S. Census Bureau).

Figure 6. Household Type, All Households, UK.
Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to the author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.

A full 40 percent of all private renters changed residences in 1999/2000 compared to only 7 percent of those who owned their homes and 12 percent who were social
Figure 7. Household Type, All Households, U.S.

[25 February 2001].

renters. About 50 percent of all residents had lived in their homes for 10 years, and about 25 percent for more than 20 years. Complete data on length of residence for home owners, social renters, and private renters is shown in figure (8). The DETR cited the primary reason for moving during 1999/2000 as a move to different size accommodations, co-habitation, and the opportunity to purchase a home (Figure 9). When questioned as to the main
reason for moving in the past 12 months, the majority of U.S. respondents similarly indicated it was to establish their own household, the need for a larger abode, to move to a larger abode, to move to better home, because of a new job or job transfer, or in order to be closer to work, school, or family (U.S. Census).
Figure 9. Main Reason for Moving.

Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to the author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.

Preliminary UK statistics for 1999/2000 showed the average number of persons in a household to be 2.4. (Figure 10). U.S. Census Bureau reports that in the U.S. a full 60 percent of all dwellings were occupied by only one or two
residents, with three or four residents accounting for only 16 percent and 15 percent of the households (Figure 11).

Figure 10. Number of People in Household - UK.
Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to the author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.

The minority population in the United Kingdom accounted for only 7 percent of all households in 1999/2000. Minority headed households were younger and Indians were much more likely to own their own homes than any other ethnic group including whites (DETR).

In the U.S. there are 102,803,000 households of which 66.9 percent are owner occupied. Statistics show that a
Figure 11. Number of People in Household - U.S.


Full 74 percent of all dwellings are occupied by whites, followed by 13 percent black, and 7 percent Hispanic.

UK DETR statistics further show that 89 percent who had obtained a mortgage were employed. Additionally, about 66 percent of owner occupied households contained at least one working person. This compared to about 33 percent of working persons in social sector households.
Figure 12. Households Perceiving Problems in the Area.
Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to the author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.

Much like the United States, British residents perceive crime as the number one social problem (Figure 12). Litter, traffic, and vandalism are also seen as major issues. When asked what improvements could be made to local communities, 40 percent mentioned lack of opportunities for young adults, 32 percent stress a desire for more parks and leisure facilities, and 29 percent cite a need for additional public transportation (Figure 13).
The primary criteria for allocation of public housing is determined by the length of time an applicant has lived and worked in the area, followed by their actual need for living quarters. Need is determined by "size of family; separation of family; accommodation available, especially in number of bedrooms related to the sex of children; disability; ill-health; the sharing of facilities such as kitchen or bathroom." These criteria are seen as arbitrary and less than objective. Of particular note is the criteria based on length of time an applicant has lived in the area. The government's control over people is evident when making choices as to who should receive the housing - a single man who has lived in the area for several years, or a single mother of two children who has only been a resident of the area for a short time. There is continued criticism that "council estates demonstrate social segregation and that it is to a degree related to age, and to the nature of the housing offered" (Carter 241-60).

According to one BBC news story, suburbia is dying out and people are moving even further into the country. Large shopping entities are beginning to displace the little
Figure 13: Improvements people would like to see in local services

Figure 13. Improvements People Would Like to See in Local Services.

Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to the author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.
neighborhood shops. People rely on cities for work, shopping and entertainment, but are emotionally detached from these cities. Neighborhoods are banding together, opening children’s centers and organizing adult activities, in an effort to foster community spirit (BBC News 2).

Since the turn of the twentieth century population has been declining in England’s major cities. The primary cause for this depopulation can be attributed to loss of jobs, especially in the manufacturing industry. Those who possess few skills have been the hardest hit. Inner city residents have found owner-occupation less costly and more attractive outside the city. This situation has led to falling school enrollment, lack of social cohesion, loss of trust in the area, anti-social behavior, and fear of crime. A spiraling effect associated with declining neighborhoods has been experienced (Problem).

A decline has been seen in council housing throughout the United Kingdom. They cite “government policies that undermine social housing”, high rental costs, and “the view that owner occupiers are somehow ‘better’.” Social housing is seen as somehow less desirable, even by the government and landlords.

Some studies indicate that England is running out of
space in which to expand. This situation is blamed in large part to the policy of requiring 'green belts' around cities. According to the Oxford English Dictionary green belts are defined as, "An officially designated belt of open countryside in which all development is severely restricted, usually enclosing a built-up area and designed to check its further growth" (U.S. News). The idea of green belts began in London before World War II and subsequently spread to other urban areas. By separating small cities, towns, and villages with undeveloped green spaces England has been able to curb the type of urban sprawl seen throughout the United States, and retain its nineteenth century aesthetic environment. There are 14 green belts within the United Kingdom. Currently about 12 percent (3.8 million acres) of all land is designated as green belts. U.S. News Online reports that a housing crisis is eminent if land is not made available for housing expansion. Critics of urban expansion say that urban land suitable for redevelopment (brown fields) is not being fully utilized. They accuse proponents of expansion of wanting to leave the cities because of "crime, filth, and inadequate housing" and demand these problems be fixed rather than looking to rural land as an answer to housing
problems. City planners cite a need to reduce overcrowding in the inner cities that they blame for loss of recreational areas and needed industrial space. While one plan would be to build in areas outside the green belts, known as "green fields", planners cite poor public transportation and a need to locate near jobs, schools, shopping, and leisure areas. They point to increased pollution and overcrowding of country roads as a result of additional cars. While some lobby for the protection of green belts, Nick Raynsford, Minister for London Matters and Construction expressed the feeling of many when he stated, "It is simply not possible to make people in urban environments live in unacceptable ways just to protect the countryside" (Grose).

Planning policy guidance aimed at increasing the percentage of new dwellings built on previously developed land from 52 percent to 60 percent by the year 2008 has been implemented. In 1995 36 percent of new dwellings were built on previously developed land in the South West, while this number jumped to 84 percent in London. Figures for 1997 showed that only two percent of new dwellings were built on green belts. The percentage of brown fields utilized varied from region to region. Overall, statistics
for 1997 indicate only a .01 percent increase in the use of green belts for urban use (Press Notices).

Summary

Major differences in housing between the U.S. and the UK appear to be evident when we consider subsidies provided by the British government to its citizens. Not only do they provide public housing for those in need, but they also provide monetary incentives in the form of cash discounts, to those who purchase their homes. Urban sprawl plagues the United States. In the United Kingdom green belts are used to control the spread of cities. While this approach may appear to be a good way to preserve the aesthetic beauty of the countryside, in seems unrealistic when we consider the need for land to alleviate overcrowding in cities. Widespread use of the automobile in this country allows Americans to work, shop, and play great distances from their homes. Our mobility is a unique cultural phenomenon enjoyed by few other countries.

Urban Renewal

Introduction

The United Kingdom is facing a crossroad of sorts. On one hand they are fighting a battle to generate new
economic growth through urban renewal, while on the other hand they are struggling to maintain the perception of a rural existence. This section takes a look at urban renewal within the UK and gives some comparisons to urbanization within the U.S.

Discussion

Statistics show Britain as a highly urbanized country despite its abhorrence of the big city and its affinity to the small country town. One 1992 study indicates that 66 percent of those surveyed prefer country life with "its open space, cleanliness, quietness and lack of stress" (Townscape). These attitudes are not unlike those of Americans who seek to escape the city and take refuge in the suburbs and exurbs. Another study conducted in the 1960s by geographer Peter Hall revealed, "the desired future place of residence of 59 percent of people lay in the countryside. Nearly 30 percent favoured the suburbs, and only 8 percent the town" (Townscape). There is a dislike of modern architecture and a desire to return to earlier styles. The modern buildings are seen as one cause for urban decline. Poor construction and the use of improper materials are also blamed for the decline in urban quality of life. Also at blame is the poor planning of
town, where cars and buses have displaced people, disrupting the landscape and causing environmental degradation.

The British government is looking at Sustainable Development as a means of:

... ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It means maintaining high levels of economic growth and employment, while protecting the environment, making prudent use of natural resources and achieving social progress which recognises the needs of every member of society (Sustainable).

Seen as good business practice, this philosophy is not without problems. Traffic is seen to do major damage to both the quality of life and economic competitiveness. According to the DETR, “Changes in the structure of our economy are reflected in significantly different demands in the labour market, leaving many inappropriately skilled and excluded.” They believe the most successful companies will be those who focus not only on the economic profits, but also on the potential damages they may cause to the environment and the social structure of Britain.

As in other developed nations, there has been a shift
from a manufacturing base in England to that of a service economy. This shift has brought greater "spatial flexibility" and reliance on the automobile, leading to pollution and traffic congestion. Simultaneously there has been a gentrification of districts such as Chapham in London, and the redevelopment of waterfront warehouses in Liverpool, Swansea and London. With the economic benefits of gentrification there is a displacement of low-income residents as well as a loss of less desirable economic activities from city centers. Social exclusion is seen as a necessary by-product of economic competitiveness (DETR).

The question is not so much about the use of "green belt" land but about the "recycling" of previously developed land. The DETR indicates that "Ninety percent of the buildings that will be in use in 30 years time already exist." It is their estimate that "...just over two million dwellings will be developed on recycled sites over the 25-year period of housing projections. This equates to 55 percent of the projected 3.8 million extra households being accommodated on brownfield sites." This is short of the government’s targeted 60 percent recycling of land.

Multinational corporations continue to move into England, building businesses and corporate offices along
the major thoroughfares, displacing smaller businesses. Tesco, a grocery/discount store, has strategically placed itself in many cities and provides one stop shopping. This is not unlike the building of large discount stores, such as Wal-Mart in the United States Mid-west, where local shops found themselves displaced by retail giants.

The United Kingdom has experienced an economic weakness since the decline in the traditional manufacturing industry, and has been slow to switch to a knowledge-based and consumer-based economy. According to a DETR report this decline has led to a large number of unemployed men, while creating part-time positions for women. This same employment trend has been seen throughout the American mid-west with the loss of steel, manufacturing, and textile industries.

Studies show that cities located closer to London and in the South of England have experienced greater success in the European markets. London, West Yorkshire, the West Midlands, and Greater Manchester did well, while Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, and Cleveland had limited success. This has been due in part to their proximity to the English polity. Cities in the North have not fared as well. A critical loss to Scotland was felt
when major shipbuilding, as well as oil drilling platform construction yards, were moved to England. While older cities can look to tourism and capitalize on "heritage" attractions newer cities with improved infrastructure have an advantage in economic resurgence. Many cities have been successful in "reinventing" the economic base, switching to activities that showed a heightened demand.

Highway off-ramps have been transformed into large convenience rest stops, complete with gas station, fast food restaurants, mini-markets, computer work stations, information booths, and modern motels. Highly visible from the roadways, they have succeeded in taking business from local, small town establishments. There is less chance that a traveler will venture off the roadway to spend the night at a country bed and breakfast, or stop at a farmhouse for lunch once he has spotted the multi-purpose rest stop. These major highways and rest stops have succeeded in sucking the life from many small towns much like the proliferation of freeways has changed the landscape of America. Many small towns in England have suffered, as have those along Route 66 in the U.S. The charm and uniqueness of England is lost in these modern, nondescript buildings.
London has seen a net out-migration, accounting for more than 50 percent of the average 90,000 losses from major cities between 1991 and 1997. International migration has however offset this loss, with the result that London has maintained its previous population. While London has experienced losses of skilled manual and managerial workers, it has had no decline in the number of professional workers within its city. Studies by the DETR show that while population losses in the U.S. are typically in the small to medium size cities, population decline in the UK in concentrated in large cities. According to DETR,

- Whereas all the big cities suffered significant percentage losses of population in the 1970s and 1980s, there has been a widespread turn-around in the 1990s and particularly in the latter part of the decade.

- Major net out-migration from London has been more than offset by the scale of natural increase and immigration from overseas. Greater London’s population increased by 232 thousand over the period 1991-97.

In comparing the U.S. policy of urbanization to that
of the United Kingdom's the DETR writes:

... there are two key difference in the focus of American policy: the emphasis given to the coordination of metropolitan and regional strategies, and, as part of this, the stress placed on problems being experienced in suburban areas. The latter partly reflects a difference between US and British suburban areas where, in Britain, even though some older suburban areas show evidence of problems associated with disinvestments, the tighter control of planning regulations has meant that suburbs generally suffer from less acute problems than in America. If there is a lesson here it is that there is a need to maintain regulatory control over the location of new developments in order to avoid the excessive sprawl that can undermine the market for investment in inner suburbs.

The United Kingdom restricts urban sprawl through tight zoning restrictions and the use of green belts. About 12 percent (1.65 million hectares - 3.8 million acres) of England's land is designated as green belts. The DETR lists five purposes for green belts:
to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another

to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

These restrictions have been successful, with 1997 statistics showing only a .01 percent increase in the use of green belts. While figures (14) and (15) depict the change in use of green belts, figure (16) shows those areas that were designated as green belts in 1997 (DETR). The question at hand however is if these restrictions will continue to be implemented as the UK stays its path of economic growth in twenty-first century, or if it will find itself unable to continue its rather rigid zoning policies.

Summary:

Restrictions placed on the use of green belt land are limiting growth within the United Kingdom. While zoning
regulations within the U.S. tend to favor businesses, tight controls placed on building within the UK places the government in control of economic expansion. While multinational corporations are beginning to establish themselves within the UK, their presence is limited to major cities. Small towns continue to rely on local establishments for their needs.

Figure 14. Percentage of New Dwellings Built by Previous Use, 1997 - England.

Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.
Figure 15. Percentage of New Dwellings Built by Previous Use, 1997 – England.

Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to author. 3 March 2001. Used with permission.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Designated Greenbelts</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Belt Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>1,652,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyne and Wear</td>
<td>52,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>25,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and West Yorkshire</td>
<td>252,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West $^1$</td>
<td>251,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke-on-Trent</td>
<td>44,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham and Derby</td>
<td>62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burton and Swadlincote</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>230,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>26,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester and Cheltenham</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>35,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London $^2$</td>
<td>512,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon</td>
<td>68,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW Hampshire and SE Dorset $^3$</td>
<td>82,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^1$ Previously referred to as Gtr Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire & Lancs (inc Lancaster & Fylde Coast).
$^2$ Excludes metropolitan open land.
$^3$ This area currently includes the New Forest Heritage Area.

Figure 16. Area of Designated Green Belt Land 1997.

Source: Survey of English Housing. E-mail to author.

3 March 2001. Used with permission.
CHAPTER FIVE

OBSERVATIONS OF BRITISH TOWNS

AND CITIES

Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide personal observations of various cities within the United Kingdom. By using the evaluation criteria set forth in APPENDIX (B), I was able to look for similarities and differences between the cities, towns and villages I visited, and to use this data as a baseline for comparison. I then used this information to look for signs of American influence within the United Kingdom. Personal comments regarding specific locations are inserted where I believed them to be relevant.

Portsmouth/Southsea

Portsmouth can best be described as a bustling seaside resort town, steeped with history and offering a wide variety of entertainment possibilities. Located only 74 miles from London. Portsmouth was built on the Portsea Island and has the distinction of being the only British city to be built on an island. Once accessible only by bridge it has since spread to the mainland and can be
reached by several roads as well as ferry or hovercraft.

While Portsmouth was once a strategic point of battle for the Royal Navy, the strength of British history is now evident with such sites as the HMS Warrior Museum, Royal Naval Museum, the historic remains of the Mary Rose, and the HMS Victory. It is common for men, proud of their World War II military service, to dress in full uniform and visit the many historical sites. They are happy to tell their stories and pose for pictures whenever asked (Figure 17).

Figure 17: World War II Veterans Visiting Portsmouth.

Source: Personal files.
Southsea is the Southern part of Portsmouth and is a beehive of activity. Entertainment along the beach includes a fair, amusement arcades, pubs and restaurants, museums (Royal Marines and D-Day), monuments (Southsea Castle, War memorial), and parks.

A short walk from the beachfront area is a rather large shopping center and residential area. The city center is much like our older shopping malls with many stores surrounding a common courtyard. The variety of goods however is quite limited for such a major area.

There are approximately 350 universities of higher learning in the United Kingdom. The University of Portsmouth, dedicated to preparing students for future employment, is located not far from the city center and boasts an enrollment of approximately 15,000. Few students were seen on the streets or in the city center although classes were in session. What students were seen could have been from any campus in the United States. Clothing is similar; eating habits are similar; mannerisms are similar. Students take advantage of bar meals that are available both day and evening at a very reasonable price. At night they congregate at the pubs, drink beer, listen to music, talk and laugh - typical young adults.
Note

1 I forgot to pack the voltage converter for my hair dryer and curling iron so consequently needed to purchase new ones. There was only one store in the entire city that sold these items and the selection was limited to one curling iron and two hair dryers. The store clerk told me they don’t get many requests for these items so they are not stocked. The items were priced considerably higher in pounds than what they would have cost in the United States, and once the exchange rate was factored in I paid about three times what I would have at home.

Southampton

Southampton is a large metropolitan area that has lost much of its charm and style. The old town area has been mostly torn down and construction is under way along the waterfront. I quickly got lost and could not find anyone willing to give directions. I stayed a very short time and was distressed by the rudeness and impatience of the people.

Romsey/Michelmersh

Romsey is a small, wonderfully quaint English market town dating to the thirteenth century. There was one market in town, about the size of a neighborhood store in
the United States. Lunch was available in a local “tea room” - no McDonalds or Pizza Hut in this village. Romsey is home of King Johns House and Tudor Cottage with its magnificent gardens. Also the Romsey Abbey (Figure 18) which is filled with history - and GRAFFITI. Yes graffiti. I was amazed to see graffiti dating from the 1200-1300's carved into the beautiful effigies in the Abbey. The people did not seem to be in a big hurry and were willing to stop to chat and answer any questions. Once again I noticed the strange absence of children. Local merchants had a limited variety of wares, mostly selling traditional English pastries and take out meals.

The local information center found me a bed and breakfast in nearby Michelmersh, a small village that is the home to Sir David Frost, the journalist. When I arrived the proprietor had left the door open and a note to choose any room I wanted and make myself comfortable. With her kind note she had included a snack and beverages.

Television was limited, the radio was non-existent - there were no signs of westernization in this home. The lady's husband had retired some years ago and they had moved away from the city to a less hectic existence. Her son was about 11 and envied his friends for the material
items they possessed, items common in this country - Nintendo, Game Boy, computer, stereo. Her objection to modern appeared to be with technology. She explained that she and her husband wanted a simpler life, one without western influence.

Figure 18. The Doors of Romsey Abbey.

NOTE: The door on the left was for parishioners. If a debtor were to knock on the door to the right he was granted entrance and given asylum by the Church.

Source: Personal files.
Salisbury

The Salisbury marketplace is a truly unique experience. Located in the center of a rather larger city it is abuzz with activity on the weekends. Friday it is transformed into a French marketplace with several businesses traveling from France to sell their wares (Figure 19). There are fresh breads and wines, cheeses, crepes, candles, candy, and fruits. Saturdays the market takes on a different flavor, the French are gone and the English return. Surrounding the marketplace are small shops filled with antiques and curios. Lunch is served in the local teashops.

Figure 19. Salisbury Marketplace.

Source: Personal files.
Salisbury Cathedral is located on the edge of town and is a truly magnificent place. Once again I was shocked at the graffiti. The years have taken their toll on the Cathedral and statues within. As is evident in so many English towns though money has been raised and renovation is being undertaken.

Plymouth

I had originally intended to stay in Exeter but found the people rude and obnoxious and decided to continue on to Plymouth. Not far from my room I stumbled upon a rededication ceremony for the 10th anniversary of the Royal Air Force Memorial (RAF) to RAF personnel and allied airmen who fought in World War II (Figure 20). There were Air Force Cadets, Veterans Organizations, and active military personnel taking part in the ceremonies as well as a military marching band and the Salvation Army marching band. The British Air Force participated in a fly-by. A United States Air Force Colonel gave the oration and I had the privilege of placing a carnation on the memorial. It was a very moving experience.

The weather was not warm; in fact for a time there were sprinkles. I note this because during the ceremonies several cadets collapsed and were carried out of ranks to a
make-shift hospital. This in itself would not have been worthy of comment except that the elderly veterans faired much better. One elderly man who must have been close to 90 got a little shaky and needed to sit down for a bit.

Figure 20. Royal Air Force Memorial, Plymouth

Source: Personal files.
Also a woman who was easily in her 80s (and carrying a large flag in a holder around her waist) sat for a short rest. I think this is a sign that the young people have not lived through the adversity and hard times endured by the elderly. To the elderly standing at parade rest for three hours was probably very difficult but not enough to make them quit. They are a strong, proud people.

History surrounded me. After the ceremony I spent quite some time walking through the park looking at the different war memorials. England is a country that remembers and honors its war dead. This becomes more apparent with every stop I make. You need only look to the Hoe War Memorial where monuments have been erected honoring fallen British servicemen and women who served valiantly. Nearby you find the Mayflower steps where the pilgrims disembarked for the New World.

The city is large and sprawling and the weather turned wet. A "Friday Bus" tour gave me a chance to see the sights. The people are polite, and eager to talk. Many of the amenities available in the States can be found here.

Penzance

I decided to stay in Penzance, (Figures 21 and 22) about 10 miles from Lands End. A quick stop at the
Information Booth and I had bed and breakfast accommodations. I have a beautiful, large room overlooking the ocean. This city is quite large and filled with small shops as well as a large grocery store. The alleys are filled with small second-hand shops. There is absolutely no resemblance between Penzance and any place I

Figure 21. Penzance at Low Tide.

Source: Personal files.

have seen in the United States. There is a train station on the edge of town. Signs are posted warning of terrorist activity in the area. The "let luggage" (lockers) has been closed and extra security has been posted.
I visited the Maritime Museum and a makeshift memorial to honor the Lifesaving Service. They are raising money in order to build a permanent memorial to honor those who have lost their lives at sea during rescue attempts. The Maritime Museum is filled with old treasures and memories.
Donations are being accepted to help with much needed repairs.

Eating establishments are scarce here. There are only a few places open in the evening (fish and chips mostly) so I decided to try the local pub. It was small, smoky, loud, and dark, but the food was excellent.

Lands End

Lands End is by far the most awe inspiring place I have ever seen. The view is breathtaking (Figure 23) This is the farthest western point of Great Britain. It has

Figure 23. Breathtaking View From Lands End.

Source: Personal files.
been assumed by a private entity and visitors are charged for the pleasure of visiting the area. Shops and restaurants line the one short block from the parking lot to an area just short of the rocks. Children's rides are available for an extra fee. Although the commercialism detracts from the beauty of Lands End it is nonetheless a wonderful place to visit.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

What a nightmare. It is the most horrendous place I have ever attempted to drive in. This city is a combination of New York, Los Angles, and London. The streets curve one way and then another. The signs are deceiving or non-existent. I decided to forget about Newcastle-upon-Tyne and continue to head south.

Washington

By now I wish I were in Washington - Washington D.C. Another motorway nightmare. I originally stopped in Sunderland and they had no space available so they made reservations for me at a hotel just 10 minutes away. Well the 10 minutes turned into an hour and a half. After receiving directions from a bus driver, other motorists, and the police I finally found a taxi driver who sent me in the right direction. His directions made little sense but
did get me closer to my destination. I finally got so
tired and disgusted I pulled off the motorway at an
unmarked exit and there it was - the hotel. England really
needs to work on its traffic signs.

Nottingham

Nottingham is a rather large city - another college
town. I decided to stay in a hotel rather than a bed-and-
breakfast because it was more convenient to town and the
cost was the same. There is a large multi-story shopping
mall in the city, much like any you would see in America.
A second shopping mall was located in the center of the
city. There was a street fair going on with loud music and
street vendors and lots of students milling around. There
are several fast food restaurants filled with patrons even
though the cost for a hamburger, fries, and a soda is more
than $7.00. There does not seem to be anything special or
unique about Nottingham, except for its obvious history of
Robin Hood.

Cambridge

Cambridge is a large, sprawling city filled with
history. The center of the city is home to Cambridge
University and the 22 Cambridge Colleges. Churches fill
the remaining area. A tour took me to the American
Cemetery on the outer edge of the city. Students are not allowed to have cars within the city so transportation is by bus and bicycle. Even the professors, dressed in suit and tie, or dress, ride bicycles. I found it surprising though that the last bus from the college area to the city itself left at 5:30 pm. Although the University and surrounding areas are magnificent and filled with history the outlying areas are much like any city you would find in the United States.

Oswestry

Deep in the countryside I found Oswestry, undoubtedly one of the most beautifully serene areas in the world. Located along the English-Welsh border, its seclusion is part of its charm (Figure 24). I stayed in a magnificent old estate a few miles from city centre. Located beneath the foothills of the Welsh mountains, the view of the valley was breathtaking. England's claim to Oswestry dates to 1535, although it has alternately belonged to both Wales and England. Evidence of early settlements dating to 550 BC has been found in the ruins of the city, and it is said that the Romans occupied the area from 750 AD. Oswestry can best be described as a market town, with a rather large indoor market open three days each week. The older
residents boast of a time when the city could lay claim to more than 50 pubs - all busy on Saturday nights. Principle economic activity is generated from several small stores and dining establishments as well as from large herds of cattle and sheep. The city itself is quite small and attracts very few visitors. One woman I met questioned why I had come to Oswestry to visit - making it clear that there was "nothing" to do there. Buildings and history date to the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The restaurants
and stores closed at 5:30 pm, but long before that the streets were deserted—the local residents vanishing into their homes hidden beneath the foothills.

Ironbridge

Ironbridge is considered by many to be the birthplace of the industrial revolution. Spanning the River Severn is the Iron Bridge which, constructed more than 200 years ago (in 1779), continues to attract visitors from around the world (Figure 25). The original ironworks plant has been preserved, as has much of the original city. Great care has been taken to preserve the town (Figure 26).

Figure 25: Ironbridge.

Source: Personal files.
Across the river, in the town of Broseley, iron-hulled boats were invented, as well as machines used to bore cannons that were used by the British to fight at Trafalgar and Waterloo. The coal and iron works inspired men to develop other industries, such as the chinaworks. Engineering and steam technology followed and by the eighteenth century Ironbridge had advanced to a state of technological superiority.

Figure 26: Arial View of Ironbridge.
Source: Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. E-mail to the author. 23 March 2001. Used with permission
Following the decline of the iron industry, Ironbridge switched to the manufacture of pottery, bricks, tiles, and tobacco pipes. They were able to continue their dependence on the Severn River for transportation of goods.

Today Ironbridge is a magnificent town, devoted to allowing visitors the opportunity to appreciate the town as it was nearly 200 years ago. The iron, pottery, and tile museums are open and contain magnificent specimens of the past. Small stores offer local fare. A walk across the bridge gives one a chance to reflect on the past.

Edinburgh

Edinburgh is one of Scotland's major cities. It is a truly beautiful, old city, boasting medieval architecture. Amidst the major department stores, filled with items from around the world, you find small shops that specialize in Scottish woolens and lace curtains. Some of the finest stores in Great Britain can be found along Princes Street. If you stroll through the alleyways you enter a different realm - old bookstores filled from floor to ceiling with every conceivable text and novel. Shops are so small they will hold no more than one or two patrons.

Across from the shops is Princes Street Gardens where bagpipes can be heard playing traditional songs. As a
backdrop to the gardens you can see Edinburgh Castle – a must see. Located within the city limits is the Palace of Holyroodhouse, the Queen’s official residence when in Scotland.

The sidewalks and stores are filled with shoppers and young people visiting with their friends. McDonalds is filled with teens. Except for the architectural design of the city, this could be any major cosmopolitan city, such as San Francisco or Atlanta. It is alive with sights and sounds.

The town is large and sprawling, a maze of winding streets. The public transportation is wonderful, and quite reasonably priced. There is no need to fight the traffic and parking problems when you can take a bus.

As you leave town you come across some fairly modern high-rise apartments as well as large, old family estates. At the outskirts of town a small plot of land has been reclaimed that now houses a modern Home Depot. It seems somewhat out of place in this old town.

Edinburgh is the center of a large metropolitan area that encompasses many smaller towns and cities, much like any you see in the U.S. The homes are small, single story tract type houses that have been built on straight,
narrow streets. The charm and warmth has been lost in these newer areas that reminds one of lower, middle class America.

Queensferry

Queensferry is a quaint village along the Firth of Forth, not far from Edinburgh (Figure 27). The city dates to the ninth century and still maintains much of its charm. The town immortalized through the works of Sir Walter Scott's Antiquary and Robert Lewis Stevenson's Kidnapped, is a lovely place to take a stroll, wander within the many traditional Scottish shops, or sit by the river.

Figure 27. High Street, Quensferry

Source: Personal files.
Dunoon

Holy Loch, in Dunoon, was the homeport for the United States Submarine Squadron in Scotland for more than 30 years. Pubs, bed and breakfasts, and shops line the streets. Americans frequented the pubs, theatre and local restaurants. The U.S. Navy built housing outside of town to accommodate military families, forever changing the landscape. Until the Navy left Holy Loch the American influence was felt in every facet of life. Although Americans frequented local establishments, the military established a bank in Dunoon, and Americans made a great deal of their purchases at military exchanges on-board and at shore based facilities. There was a recreation center and American restaurant near the pier. The big draw though was the many local fish and chip shops where the brave could even try the blood sausage or fried pizza.

Traditional Scottish items were available in town and local shops did a good business in video rentals.

Many sailors chose to remain in Dunoon after they completed their tour of duty, building houses and marrying local citizens. It is a quiet, serene place that never seems to change.

Prior to the Navy establishing a base in Holy Loch,
Dunoon was a resort area catering to retirees. Buses would bring tourists to Dunoon, filling the large local hotels, pumping money into the economy. Many I spoke with saw the military presence as an intrusion and although the military’s departure has had a great financial impact on the city of Dunoon, citizens were happy to see the Navy move out. I think in the case of the military presence in Dunoon that we had no greater impact on the Scots than they did on us - an exchange of cultures.

Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent actually consists of six towns and has a total population of more than 254,000. It is a major metropolitan area that in the past few years has been slated for economic development and modernization. The plan is to capitalize on technology while maintaining their link to the past through pottery and art museums. What were once many small cities have grown outward. A few major department and grocery stores have already moved in and displaced the neighborhood stores. While some residents were pleased with the convenience of larger stores, others felt anger at the loss of neighborhood cohesiveness.

The area around Stoke-on-Trent is known as the
"Pottery District". In keeping with the localization of specific industries, Wedgewood, Royal Doulton, Spode, and the other major potteries were located in this area. The roads were a nightmare. Speaking to one of the local citizens I found that the roads were built to accommodate the existing city structures, which had originally been arranged as a means of protection. As in other parts of England, road signs are confusing. The potteries are quite a tourist draw though. Informative tours are available that give an opportunity to watch artisans at work. Factory stores sell many items that may not be available elsewhere.

Cardiff

Cardiff is the self-proclaimed "youngest and most dynamic capital city" in Europe. The city is a mix of 2,000-year-old history and modern technology. Here you can find the Millennium Stadium, which was built for the Rugby World Cup in 1999, while nearby you can visit Cardiff Castle. A great deal of money and manpower has been invested in making Cardiff a modern city. The downtown area houses the governmental offices, banks, and major commercial and retail businesses.

The one thing that caught my eye though was that while
the "old" homes and buildings seemed to stand up against time, the newer constructed buildings, such as hotels, seemed to be falling apart. To me the "old" looked newer than the new.

As you depart downtown Cardiff by train you enter an area not unlike many of the neglected suburban areas of the United States. Many of the railway stations were littered and covered with graffiti. Small industrial businesses are located along the tracks, tucked back behind the houses. A short distance from the tracks I found modest, single family residences as well as multi-residence council houses. Despite the convenience of having major shops and businesses available in downtown Cardiff, many local citizens I spoke with preferred to patronize their local market places.

Ross-on-Wye

Ross-on-Wye is a beautiful little village nestled in a valley. Windy roads lead up to the mountain - some only wide enough for one car (or less). I had dinner at a Thai/Mexican/Japanese/Burmese/Indian/etc. restaurant. The shops close early, but the pubs stay open late. There is an open market in town but selections are limited. Animals freely cross the winding roads leaving town. For the most
part this area has been untouched by modern influence.

London

London is a world-class city offering the best in banking, commercial activity, entertainment, dining, and shopping. In addition, London has maintained its link with the past through the preservation of historical buildings and gardens. It is one of the major tourist attractions in the world, offering something for everyone.

London is the center of a major metropolitan area, extending out for miles in all directions. Modern influence is present everywhere (Figure 28). Land is at a premium so few “new” building are found. In some instances old buildings have been torn down and the land reclaimed. The few new structures in town are showing wear, looking old and dilapidated - while the old buildings continue to withstand time.

Cities around London show signs of neglect. Graffiti is evident everywhere, especially along the railroad tracks, although no graffiti is seen in the rail cars themselves. Young people congregate in hopes of finding something to keep themselves occupied. In some ways London is not unlike any major metropolitan area in the United States. It does, however, blend the old with the
new, never forgetting its past while it continues to
embrace the future.

Figure 28. Advertising American Food in
London.

Source: Personal files.

Summary

I have included a map of the United Kingdom (Figure
29) to show some of the cities discussed herein. It is my
hope that this will give a clearer picture of the country
and an indication of those locations I have discussed. As
noted in my conclusions, I believe that the globalization
of cultures is strongest nearer large metropolitan areas and diffuses with distance from the core area. I also believe that while large cities exhibit many similarities to American culture, people in smaller town and villages have made a conscious decision to resist any influences by Americans as well as any attempt at modernization.
Figure 29. Map of the United Kingdom.

Source: Road Atlas of Great Britain.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

The United Kingdom is a magnificent country, filled with hundreds of years of history and culture. Traveling through the countryside there is never a shortage of places to visit or historic sights to see. Although much of the trees were harvested in times of war, the landscape is nonetheless awe inspiring - the hills and valleys breathtaking.

At first glance the U.S. and the UK appear to have much in common. Granted, we are similar in many ways, yet our differences are much greater. We both speak English, although our dialects are quite different. Many of the words we use have different meanings. Although the U.S. was settled by the British, we made every effort to distance ourselves from the "Mother land" and establish our own identity. The Industrial Revolution had its birth in England, and England proved to be the dominant industrial and maritime power of the nineteenth century. It is the United States, however, who proved herself as a dominant force in the twentieth century. The British are a proud people. Although for the most part unspoken, I perceive
that the British resent our position. They seem merely to tolerate us.

A study conducted in 1991 by Dutch social scientist Dr. Geert Hofstede, quantified the cultural similarities and differences between several North American and European countries by measuring attitude and values across cultural lines. The following criteria were used for purposes of comparison (Hofstede 26, 53, 82, 113):

➢ Power Distance: The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

➢ Individualism: Pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family.

➢ Masculinity: Pertains to societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct (i.e., men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life).
Uncertainty avoidance: The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertainty or unknown situations.

Figure (30) indicates that when utilizing these criteria, the United States and the United Kingdom elicit very similar results (Hofstede 26, 53, 84, 113).

Figure 30: Hofstede's Cultural Indices.

American influence throughout the World has long been lamented, to the point of being feared. In the 1940s and 1950s British intellectuals George Orwell and Richard Hoggart described consumerism and American television as a "... threat that transcended region or class." Later British writer Francis Williams warned of what he perceived as a threat to "Englishness" itself by accepting "... more of [American culture] than it is possible for our society to assimilate and still remain true to its own virtues" (Pells 268). An Italian commentator was quoted in 1990 as saying, "... the more we import and absorb American cultural models, the more we should be scared of them, since ... we risk losing our own cultural identity" (Pells 268-9).

Nations continue an attempt (unsuccessfully in most cases) to keep American influence out of their countries. As recently as 1994 the French minister of culture wrote that France believed "... French history and culture, was being sabotaged by English" (Pells 270). Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom were similarly disturbed by "Americanisms polluting" their languages. The pervasiveness of American words and phrases was disturbing, but Europeans adopted them mostly because they had no
comparable word in their vocabulary. France made the greatest effort to regulate the use of American words when in 1994 the Minister of Culture strongly recommended a law banning "...three thousand English phrases from all commercial and governmental publications, radio and television broadcast, and advertisements" (Pells 272). French government officials lamented, "What will remain of our cultural identity if audiovisual Europe consists of European consumers sitting in front of Japanese TV sets showing American program? (Pells 275).

Britain's young people look to the U.S. for fashion, food, and entertainment. Our culture breeds "free spirit" (Hofstede's individualism dimension) and the youth want to capture that feeling. Our nation is filled with countless entertainment possibilities for teens and young adults. This is not the case in the UK, where lack of personal transportation and money leads to fewer entertainment choices. Those who reside near large metropolitan areas have more choices than those who live in rural Britain. This is true for most commodities.

In the British cities and towns closer to the large metropolitan areas I found a concentration of large international corporations such as PC World, Wickes,
Woolworths, Tesco (owned by Wal-Mart), Safeway - and the list goes on. The variety of goods and services available for purchase in the larger cities is not unlike those found in the United States. However, as one travels further from the large cities the quantity and variety of goods and services diminishes.

Cities in closer proximity to the metropolitan areas have almost exploded with fast food restaurants such as McDonalds, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut. Tourist advertising brochures often list the number of Burger Kings and McDonalds, etc. within their city limits. Multi-screen movie complexes show the latest movies. As you travel further from the large cities meals are of traditional English fare and movie theatres give way to the traditional Old English pubs with dartboards and slot machines for entertainment.

The one constant indicator you find, no matter if you are traveling in the United States or in England - whether you are visiting a small village or a large city - appears to be the clothing. No matter where you travel everyone dresses pretty much the same, however women do not dress as casually as they do in this country. Working women wear dresses and hose. Women shoppers wear dresses, as do older
women. While the older men wear hats the younger boys have taken to wearing ball caps much like the United States. Children have fair skin and rosy cheeks and wear uniforms to school much as they do in this country, except ties are required in the UK.

While many believe that the United States somehow held Europeans captive and force-fed them American culture, others, such as Pells disagree. He discounts this notion and writes that Americans and Europeans "... have been active participants in determining the effects of mass culture, constantly reinterpreting its message to fit their own social or personal circumstances" (280). The reality of this observation can be seen in the United Kingdom when we consider those traits and ideas that have been adopted and those which have not.

Where the U.S. really is lacking as a Nation is in our "spirit." The UK has worked to preserve their heritage - their past. They do not tear things down just because they are getting old. They preserve what they can. This is part of their charm - their pride. We, on the other hand, build and destroy, build and destroy. Even our laws cannot protect us from our own destructive nature. The majority of our monuments are located in Washington, D.C. For most
children this is a lifetime away. Our nation is preserved for them only on paper in textbooks. Most will never "live" their heritage - only read about it.

For those lucky enough to travel to the United Kingdom I think you will find it obvious that IT IS NOT AMERICA. Sure you will find similarities in language, food, clothing, and other tangible objects. You can find those same similarities in a number of countries throughout the world. Our identities are not defined by what we can purchase in a store but rather how we perceive the world around us. Our cultural differences make Americans uniquely "US" and the British uniquely "THEM."
APPENDIX A:

COMPARISON OF AMERICAN ENGLISH AND BRITISH ENGLISH
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AMERICAN ENGLISH</strong></th>
<th><strong>BRITISH ENGLISH</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Floor</td>
<td>Ground Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Floor</td>
<td>1st Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Floor (and so on)</td>
<td>2nd Floor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area code</td>
<td>Dialing code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-Shirt or T-shirt</td>
<td>Vest (under wear)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic teller machine (ATM)</td>
<td>Cashpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automobile</td>
<td>Car, motor car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby carriage</td>
<td>Pram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpack</td>
<td>Rucksack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band aid</td>
<td>Plaster, elastoplast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangs (hair)</td>
<td>Fringe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>Pub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrette</td>
<td>Hair slide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath robe, house coat</td>
<td>Dressing gown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biscuit</td>
<td>Roll or Bread roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blender</td>
<td>Liquidiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blinkers, turn signals</td>
<td>Flickers, indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycott the gas station</td>
<td>Dump the pump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braid</td>
<td>Plait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brakes</td>
<td>Anchors (slang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broil</td>
<td>Grill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bumper cars (at amusement park)</td>
<td>Dodgem Cars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy (as in telephone line is busy)</td>
<td>Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can</td>
<td>Tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>Sweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy Bar</td>
<td>Chocolate Bar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cart</td>
<td>Trolley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chips</td>
<td>Crisps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cigarette</td>
<td>Fag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closet</td>
<td>Cupboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coat (men's suit)</td>
<td>Jacket (men's suit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>Flat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominium</td>
<td>Block of flats</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cookie</td>
<td>Biscuit (VERY different to a US biscuit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton candy</td>
<td>Candy floss</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crepe</td>
<td>Pancake (served rolled with cinnamon and sugar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuffs</td>
<td>Turn-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cupcake</td>
<td>Fairy cake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curling Iron</td>
<td>Styling Tong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Davenport (USA - couch)</td>
<td>Davenport (UK - desk)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defroster, defogger</td>
<td>Demister</td>
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<td>Pudding</td>
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<td>Diaper</td>
<td>Nappy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down payment</td>
<td>Deposit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downsize (at work)</td>
<td>Retrench, made redundant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drapes, draperies</td>
<td>Curtains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Aubergine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elevator</td>
<td>Lift</td>
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<tr>
<td>English beer or ale</td>
<td>Bitter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eraser</td>
<td>Rubber</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimate (as in &quot;to obtain an estimate&quot;)</td>
<td>Quote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exit</td>
<td>Off Ramp/Junction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extract (as in Vanilla extract)</td>
<td>Essence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eyeglasses</td>
<td>Spectacles</td>
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<td>Fanny pack</td>
<td>Bum bag</td>
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<td>Faucet / Spigot</td>
<td>Tap</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire (from a job at work)</td>
<td>Sack (fire is used as well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First name</td>
<td>Christian Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flashlight</td>
<td>Torch</td>
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<td>Floppy disk</td>
<td>Stiffie disk</td>
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<td>French Fries</td>
<td>Chips</td>
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<td>Futon</td>
<td>Sleeper couch</td>
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<td>Galoshes</td>
<td>Wellington boots, Wellies</td>
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<td>Garter belt</td>
<td>Suspender</td>
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<td>Gas</td>
<td>Petrol</td>
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<td>Jerry can</td>
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<td>Graham crackers</td>
<td>Cream crackers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grill</td>
<td>Barbecue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground (electrical)</td>
<td>Earth</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hardware store</td>
<td>Ironmonger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hash Browns</td>
<td>Grated potato, fried</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home Fries</td>
<td>Cubed potato, fried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honk</td>
<td>Hoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hood</td>
<td>Bonnet</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>Horn</td>
<td>Hooter</td>
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<td>Hot pocket (brand name)</td>
<td>Meat Pie</td>
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<td>Installment plan</td>
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<td>Tomato Sauce</td>
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<td>Bank holiday</td>
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<td>Queue</td>
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<td>London Broil</td>
<td>Silverside beef roast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Love Seat</td>
<td>Couch, sofa, settee</td>
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<td>Mail</td>
<td>Post</td>
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<tr>
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<td>High Street</td>
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<td>Removal company</td>
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<td>Moving van</td>
<td>Removal van</td>
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<td>Muffler (car)</td>
<td>Silencer</td>
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<td>Dummy</td>
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<td>Panties</td>
<td>Knickers</td>
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<td>Pants</td>
<td>Trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panty hose</td>
<td>Stockings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parka, hooded jacket</td>
<td>Anorak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay phone</td>
<td>Phone box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period (punctuation)</td>
<td>Full stop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic wrap</td>
<td>Clingfilm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policeman or cop</td>
<td>Copper or Bobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork rinds</td>
<td>Pork scratchings</td>
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<td>Pork sausages</td>
<td>Bangers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pot holders</td>
<td>Oven gloves</td>
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<td>Potato chips</td>
<td>Crisps</td>
</tr>
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<td>Pound sign (on a telephone)</td>
<td>Hash sign (on a telephone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powdered sugar</td>
<td>Castor sugar</td>
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<tr>
<td>President (of a company)</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
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<td>Private school</td>
<td>Public school</td>
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<td>Public school</td>
<td>State school</td>
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<td>Purse</td>
<td>Handbag</td>
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<td>Radio</td>
<td>Wireless</td>
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<td>Railroad</td>
<td>Railway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red hair</td>
<td>Ginger hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>Hire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restroom, bathroom</td>
<td>Toilet, W.C., water closet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resume</td>
<td>CV (Curriculum Vitae)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Trip (airline tickets)</td>
<td>Return</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubbing alcohol</td>
<td>Surgical spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run for office</td>
<td>Stand for election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Claus</td>
<td>Father Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>Freefund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scotch tape</td>
<td>Sticky back tape, sticky tape</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shopping Cart</td>
<td>Supermarket Trolley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp</td>
<td>Prawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Kip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
<td>National Insurance Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squash</td>
<td>Vegetable marrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Station Wagon</td>
<td>Estate</td>
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<td>Store</td>
<td>Shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street car</td>
<td>Tram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strip mall</td>
<td>Parade of shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroller</td>
<td>Push chair, baby buggy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio apartment</td>
<td>Bedsitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>Underground, tube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspenders</td>
<td>Braces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweater (pullover)</td>
<td>Jumper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switchblade knife</td>
<td>Flick knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take out</td>
<td>Take away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thread</td>
<td>Cotton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Knackered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tractor-trailer</td>
<td>Articulated lorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic light, stop light</td>
<td>Robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram</td>
<td>Cable car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck</td>
<td>Lorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk (on a car)</td>
<td>Boot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnpike, Interstate</td>
<td>Freeway, Motorway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV, Television</td>
<td>Telly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment compensation</td>
<td>Dole, unemployment pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valance</td>
<td>Pelmet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCR</td>
<td>Video Machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vest</td>
<td>Waist Coat</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

114
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran’s Day</th>
<th>Remembrance day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice-president</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wash cloth</td>
<td>Face flannel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed wacker, weed eater</td>
<td>Strimmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windshield</td>
<td>Windscreen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrench</td>
<td>Spanner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zee (the letter as in XYZ)</td>
<td>Zed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zip Code</td>
<td>Postal Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>Courgettes, baby marrows</td>
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APPENDIX B:

EVALUATION CRITERIA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CRITERIA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Town</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type of Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived attitude towards Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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