

Attitudes Towards Britain and the British

Summary Report

**Research Study Conducted for
The British Council in the UAE**

January - March 2000

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Preface

This report contains the findings and the computer tabulations of a study conducted for the British Council in the UAE by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) among a group defined as the ‘successor generation’ in the UAE.

Background and Objectives

As the British Government’s principal agency for cultural relations overseas, the British Council’s overreaching objective is to enhance the reputation of the United Kingdom in the world as a valued partner. In order to better understand how people in Vietnam perceive the United Kingdom, the Council instigated this market research study.

The target population was defined as the ‘successor generation’, i.e. those who might be expected to become the decision makers of future years. The precise definition was agreed in consultation with MORI’s partner in the UAE and the local British Council office:

- Affluent UAE nationals with influential positions in the government and in the corporate world (both private and public sectors) and students from prestigious colleges e.g. the American University in Dubai.
- Age: 22-35
- Income group: AB with a minority of C1

Methodology

The survey was conducted in two distinct phases, beginning with two **qualitative focus group discussions**. The groups were held in Abu Dhabi and in Dubai on 10th and 14th February 2000. The decision as to which cities to use was taken in consultation with MORI’s local partner and the British Council office in the UAE. In each case, they were moderated by an experienced researcher with MORI’s partner in this country.

The objectives of this first stage were to:

- Explore how people perceive Britain:
 - top of mind thoughts
 - what feelings they have towards Britain
 - positive and negative images
 - where Britain stands in their consciousness generally

- knowledge about Britain
- Discover opinion-forming processes:
 - what factors influence an opinion & how ?
 - what would be the most effective methods of influencing people's opinions ?
- Establish extent to which there is an overlap between the British Council's strategic objectives and perceptions of the successor generation
- Help identify the most important topics for the quantitative stage

On completion of the group discussions, MORI's local partner provided a transcript of the discussion (in English) and a short summary report of the findings.

The quantitative phase of the survey was undertaken at the same time, among 200 members of the same target audience. Interviewing was conducted face-to-face between 18th February and 1st March 2000 in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al Ain.

Quotas were set to ensure that a reasonable cross-section of members of the successor generation was interviewed. Again, interviewing was concentrated in those cities where it might reasonably be expected that up and coming decision makers might be present in large numbers.

Publication of the Data

These findings are subject to the Terms and Conditions of Contract agreed at the outset of the project. Any press release or publication of the findings of this survey requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval is only refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misinterpretation of the research findings.

Summary of Findings

Familiarity and Favourability with Key Countries

- A large majority of the successor generation in the UAE is familiar with the five countries measured: 93% know at least a fair amount about the UK and the US, followed closely by Japan (85%), Germany (73%) and France (72%).
- Not only are the UK and the US the countries which Emiratis feel they know best, they also achieve the highest favourability ratings – more than four in five rate their attitude towards both countries as ‘very/fairly’ favourable.
- Japan and Germany follow closely, while France, despite being known by almost all respondents achieves relatively low levels of favourability (49%). In this instance, the same proportion (46%) are unable to make any comment in either direction.
- Respondents from Abu Dhabi tend to have a more favourable opinion about the UK than those from Dubai.

Image of Great Britain

- Only 7% of the successor generation say that the UK is the same thing as GB. In addition, awareness of the different countries which make up the UK is high. At least four in five respondents are able to name all four constituent countries.
- The Royal family (27%) stands out as the most recognised symbol of England (7% also mention the Queen), followed by the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben (15%).
- Scotland is more likely to be recognised for its scenery and landscapes (23%), its cold weather (20%) and its highlands and mountains (19%), than for its “traditional dress”, the kilt (mentioned by a minority of 4%) or bagpipes (4%).
- Images of Northern Ireland are dominated by violence and religious conflict (mentioned by 31%), and the IRA (25%). Only 1% refer to the peace process. Still, a significant proportion also have a spontaneously positive image of Ireland: 15% mention the scenery and 9% the greenery.

- Like England, the monarchy is also the dominant image of Wales in the UAE, with more than a quarter citing Diana, Princess of Wales, while one in five mention the Royal family (20%) and the Prince Charles (19%).

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Echoing the previous findings, the conflict in Northern Ireland is perceived as the UK's major weakness (20% mention it spontaneously), followed by the Monarchy, more likely to be seen as a weakness than a strength (17% vs. 4%).
- Other weaknesses mentioned by around one in ten people are related to the British people themselves, spontaneously described as racist/intolerant (11%), cold and reserved (10%), traditional (9%) and snobs/arrogant (8%).
- The UK's main strength is felt to lie in its education system (16% name this without prompting) and its military power (13%), but also the English language (10%), which is said to be a universal language.

British Society

- As might be expected from the spontaneous strengths and weaknesses above, Britain is more likely to be regarded as a traditional (51%) than a modern society (32%).
- Respondents who live in Dubai are more likely to say that we are modern than those from Abu Dhabi (56% vs. 11%).
- With regard to our national institutions, the successor generation in the UAE tends to be fairly positive and knowledgeable: they think highly of our health service, our legal system, our commitment to the environment, the fact that women are not discriminated against, and our democratic government.
- However, it emerges from the groups that, although democracy and freedom of speech are considered to be at the heart of the British government, a British decision-maker has a less positive image: "He" (although recall of Margaret Thatcher is higher than Tony Blair) is seen as very conservative, old, slow in taking decisions and whose "own interests come before those of the nation".

The British society looks at the leader as a straight person who hasn't got the idea of entertaining himself; he is only made for this thing he is there to serve the nation. But the American society looks at the president as a normal person who plays golf and basket-ball

Dubai

He sets up rules or principles and when you try to 'break' them you can't; in the States you could

Abu Dhabi

The more decisions he takes, the more he will benefit himself; as he will always be a 'manager' and a decision-maker, what does he care about?

Abu Dhabi

- Furthermore, views of the successor generation are negative on the issue of Britain's welfare system and whether it is a classless society or not. Although our society is said to be multicultural, this does not mean that we are seen as welcoming towards foreigners and racially tolerant; in fact, almost half of respondents believe this is not the case on both issues.
- Indeed, the qualitative research shows that the British people are perceived to be the opposite of the people from the UAE: "reserved", "not welcoming", "racist towards the Arabs" (one mentioned Al-Fayed who has been refused British nationality), and most of all, "not flexible" ("they don't let go")

British people? They are unpleasant. They hate Arabs

Abu Dhabi

They are organised, as Israel said about Arabs; they said that Arabs will occupy Israel when they will be able to get on to a bus in a queue

Dubai

You feel a certain inflexibility in the way they deal with others. If he believes something that's it, it's got to be right, even if you see it as wrong he sees it as right. No flexibility

Abu Dhabi

Also these people the first thing they notice is your accent, if it is like them they will talk to you. For example, if you say, "I beg your pardon", they will regard you as low class and they won't talk to you, but if you say "excuse me", they will talk to you. "I beg your pardon" is regarded as a low class phrase

Dubai

It is impossible for me to live in the British society. They do not agree between themselves as Europeans, how are they going to agree with us? If anyone comes to the UAE, when leaving it, he says: "How am I going to leave this paradise?" Regardless of our climate, people like the way the Emarati deals with other people

Dubai

- The only perceived similarity between Emiratis and British people are their traditional nature. Indeed, Emiratis described themselves as traditional, even conservative and, like British society, a people with values. Without these values, it is felt that the country would be in chaos. Furthermore, our pragmatic nature is seen as the foundation of our well-organised country. We are believed to be respectful of the law, making Britain a very safe country to live in.

They care about tradition more than Americans. Americans are more chaotic than British. British are more concerned about these values, whether or not these values are positive or negative

Abu Dhabi

British Business

- The US and Japan are viewed by almost all respondents not only as being major financial trading centres but also as having world-beating companies (around four in five ‘strongly’ agree). The UK follows some way behind, while Germany and France take fourth and fifth position respectively.

Capital is moving from all over the world to Britain as a financial centre. Britain is the mark of quality

Abu Dhabi

- Respondents from Al Ain are more likely to say that the UK and France have world-beating companies than those who live in Dubai (98% vs. 72% in the case of the UK and 70% vs. 41% for France).
- British products and services are highly regarded for their quality (54% say they are ‘very’ good, while only 1% say they are poor). Similarly, our workforce is highly rated (90% say it is good) as are British managers, although marginally less well regarded than the workforce (81%).

Even with services, they care about the quality. They don’t want their standard to be low; in Britain, no one can imitate the big companies

Dubai

Life expectancy of a product made in Britain is longer than that of a product of the States

Abu Dhabi

In Britain, for example if you buy something and you find any defect in this thing you can return it the outlet with its invoice. But here in the UAE the service is very bad and the customer who enters an outlet does not like to come back again

Dubai

Everybody likes the American products because their prices are reasonable, but the British products have a high quality and a high cost

Dubai

- As emerged from the qualitative work, these figures would appear to indicate that, on the one hand, British businessmen are praised for their pragmatism, precision and trustworthiness, with the quality of their products and services being of one their major strengths, but criticised for their unwillingness to take enough risks and, therefore, lacking the innovative spark necessary to compete in the global arena. In comparison, American businessmen are seen as dynamic, innovative, flexible and take risks, the key to success.

I think that the British do not like to take a risk in any thing they do not innovate in their work. For example, the American, if he likes an idea and believes that it will have a good interest, he will enter in it, even if the business is not completely safe. But the British, even if there is a risk of .0001 %, he will not enter it

Dubai

I had business deals with British people, they have to examine the project from the point of view of the country where he goes to, or the company, then from his own country's point of view, then from the insurance point of view. If all three are ok, he starts the project. It's not a question of luck, or that "it is an open market, I try my luck". No

Abu Dhabi

The British sees the business as steps, like the ladder, step by step, but the American can take two steps in one time, he can shorten

Dubai

Science & Technology

- Here again, the US and Japan lead the way in terms of perceptions of their scientific and technological innovation, followed closely by the UK and Germany, and well ahead of France.
- Here again, interviewees in Al Ain are more likely to say that the UK and France has a strong reputation in this area, compared to those in Dubai (72% vs. 47% for the UK and 94% vs. 67% for France).
- These results appear to back up the opinions raised in the qualitative research, where British scientists were regarded as being very rigorous in their work but standing behind the American scientists, progressing at a lower pace and lacking the innovation.
- This low level of appreciation of British scientists may go some way to explaining why there is a very low awareness of the fact that a number of important inventions do in fact emanate from this country. Around seven in ten believe that the World-Wide Web and Viagra are American inventions, while 74% say that TV comes from Japan. As for the jet engine, opinion is more divided: around one-fifth attribute its discovery to France (up to 34% in Al Ain and down 16% in Dubai), Germany, the UK and the US.
- Furthermore, there is a feeling that American scientists are very proud of what they do and want the whole world to know about it. They are, therefore, more likely to share their knowledge and discoveries, helped by a powerful media that “spreads the news”.

They (Americans) always like to be the first. They want to show everything they do

Dubai

The British scientist is selfish. Americans want to show the whole world

Dubai

British Media

- Members of the successor generation in the UAE regard our media highly: around three-quarters say that the British media tells the truth, while 8% say it is not truthful.
- This is reinforced when compared with the media in the UAE. Almost half (45%) believe that the British media is more honest than in the UAE, compared to 13% who feel that it is worse. Still, a significant proportion (42%) say that both media are comparable on this dimension.

- When quality is the issue, the British media fares far better: seven in ten (72%) rate the quality of the British media as better than that in the UAE.
- Despite this, the qualitative work raised a number of issues, and particularly the freedom of speech. This is very much a double-edged sword, since it can easily over-step the limits of privacy (some refer to the Princess Diana), and therefore tarnish the credibility of the British media (reference made to the Tabloids) and its trustworthiness and accuracy. The media in UAE, which is censored by the government, is regarded as the opposite – less able to raise different issues, but restrained in its actions.

We did some research at the university about the papers and noticed that western papers, e.g British, French, they don't focus on humanistic news or cultural news. They focus mainly on the things I mentioned, private matters, this actor went abroad, that other one's come back

Abu Dhabi

Their only work is to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of a person, and the best example is Diana. They went after her everywhere to take her pictures. This is because they don't have any other issues to talk about. I feel that Americans talk about important issues, they do not care about the personal life of people

Dubai

British papers have the entire first page full of news about Charles and Diana. They are specialised in scandals, private secrets

Abu Dhabi

In Britain and the States the chief editor himself tells the reporter to go after this woman, take pictures of her with a bathing suit on, and he publishes them; then they earn a lot of money and the paper becomes more famous. This doesn't exist here in UAE. It is impossible for this to happen

Abu Dhabi

- UK newspapers are praised for providing up-to-date and valuable information in a traditional way, but they are felt to be too politically-orientated and sometimes not as entertaining as the American ones, but still more up-to-date than the UAE media.

Maybe there is more information in the British newspaper but the American one attracts me and I feel relaxed due to its colours and appearance

Dubai

If I want something completely political I'll read the British newspaper; if I don't want to get a headache, I'll watch CNN or read an American newspaper. If I want something local I'll read the UAE newspaper

Dubai

- 88% of respondents in Al Ain say that the British media tells the truth and 94% that newspapers are of better quality than the UAE media, rather more than those in Dubai (53% and 63% respectively).

British Arts

- Members of the successor generation in the UAE have a high opinion of British Arts: 80% say that British design is renowned around the world while another 70% agree that Britain is renowned for its creativity and innovation in the arts (up to 86% in Al Ain, compared to 61% in Dubai).
- There is a general consensus, however, that Britain's reputation is based more in the past than in the present: 81% agree with this statement, compared to just 2% who disagree.
- Findings from the qualitative research confirm the above in the sense that British Arts were mainly associated with literature, painting, theatre and opera which are perceived as 'traditional' arts, as opposed to cinema, music and photography - areas in which Americans were well-regarded being seen as innovative and technologically advanced.

Americans are more famous, more popular and more widespread

Abu Dhabi

The American media is stronger than the British media. It can make an artist famous in no time, not only in the States but world-wide

Abu Dhabi

- However, British Arts were said to be of better quality than American Arts. They were also described as 'high class' Art which might not be accessible to everybody.

But where quality is concerned I believe that the British are better

Abu Dhabi

- When asked to cite contemporary British pop musicians, a third are unable to think of any. Elton John is the most mentioned artist (47%, rising up to 84% in Al Ain, spontaneously mention him), followed by the Spice Girls (37%, up to 56% in Al Ain) and George Michael (17% and more famous among 30 to 35 years old than 22-29 years old). Furthermore, all mentions are British, which indicates that respondents are fairly knowledgeable in this area. The Beatles (15%) and John Lennon (3%) are still considered as contemporary bands and pop musicians, though.

I feel that the British Art is very high class. For example, if normal people like us see a painting of plastic art, we will not buy it because we don't feel that it means something but you can find an old tableau sold for millions, because there are people who appreciate the old paintings in Britain

Dubai

British Personalities

- Respondents were then asked which, if any, of a list of 22 'celebrities' they had heard of, which they thought were British, and which would be a positive role model for them personally. With the exception of Robin Williams, all 22 were British.
- Tony Blair is the most recognised British 'celebrity' among the successor generation in the UAE, followed by the Spice Girls and Naomi Campbell (87%, 71% and 67% respectively). They also are the most likely to be thought of as British (88%, 61% and 26%). Robin Williams (the only American in the list) comes in as the fifth most recognised name (21% have heard of him); however, a much lower proportion believe he is British (7%). It is interesting to note that recognition of Naomi Campbell's British background is relatively low, an indication that, perhaps, her colour is something which Emiratis do not associate with Britain.
- Tony Blair stands out as a potential role model in the UAE: 27% say that he represents the most positive role model for them personally (this is true more among men than women - 32% vs. 10%). Three in five (62%), however, feel that none of the 22 names on the list represents a role model for them personally.
- As a word of caution, it should be noted that a red herring was inserted into the list – Firzana Perveen from the British Council in the UK. However, Firzana only achieved a 2% recognition factor (similar to Vivienne Westwood, though) and none of these people claim to know she is British or say that Firzana would be their most positive role model.
- British designers and sports people are less likely to be heard of than anybody else. Indeed, respondents from the UAE are less knowledgeable about sports people generally. When asked to name one or two sports celebrities, more than half are unable to cite anybody (and almost all women, which might not be surprising). When they do, they are most likely to mention British

footballers like David Beckham (20%), Michael Owen (15%) and Alan Shearer (14%).

Britain's Relationship with Other Countries

- Britain is perceived to highly value its relationships with all the countries/associations measured, especially with the Commonwealth (7% say that the UK's glorious past is one of its main strengths) and the US: two-thirds say we 'very' much value our relations with them, while 55% say the same for the UAE (this figure increases to 76% in Abu Dhabi but is down to 25% in Dubai) and 50% for Europe (66% among women).
- The qualitative work backs up these findings but points out that this is felt to be driven by self-interest: Britain is not perceived as holding any real power in the international political arena and when it helps a country it is for our own benefit.

In general, the nation cares about its work and does not interfere in anything if it doesn't affect them

Dubai

Their policy is pragmatic, the more they will benefit from something the more interest they will show in an issue. They don't contribute financially and they are not emotionally effected

Abu Dhabi

They think, "if I am going to help this country, am I going to benefit from it, if yes, OK, I will help them, but if no, let them act as they want"

Dubai

- Almost all respondents know that the UK is part of the European Union (93%). The majority say the same, however, for all the countries measured, including Switzerland (56%, rising to 72% in Al Ain).

British Education

- Nearly every member of the successor generation rates the overall quality of British higher education as good, while seven in ten (70%) rate it as 'very' good, none rates it poor. Furthermore, British people are themselves perceived as being well educated (by 87% of the successor generation).
- Echoing the above, the UK and the US are said to be the two main choices for studying abroad, or for distance learning courses, for the successor generation in the UAE, although the US is slightly more popular.
- This is certainly a feature which emerged in the groups, during which respondents agreed that the quality of the British education makes Britain one of the key study destinations sought by UAE nationals. Its institutions are reputable and founded on sound credentials.

I've seen pictures on the Internet, and in magazines, by chance in cultural programs on TV, about culture in Britain. They were showing scenes from universities and colleges. They looked old fashioned, but you could see that they were well organised

Abu Dhabi

I think they don't care much about the buildings. They care about the quality of education, they tell you what is important is that you have a place to study. They provide computers, the kind of knowledge you're seeking, medicine or whatever, specialisations are available, but the place, whether it's big or not, they don't care

Abu Dhabi

Britain has history. The best doctors are British

Abu Dhabi

- They also indicated that, while they see the British educationalist as highly educated, "he" is also perceived to be rigid, "old", has a very traditional approach and therefore, does not always take a student's needs into account. This would make respondents prefer the US as a place to study – where education is said to be of similar quality and where teachers are seen to be more modern and more approachable.

The curriculum itself is rigid. In the States he might be young with a Masters Degree, because they are more flexible there. You can stop studying subjects, you can postpone them and go ahead, you can 'jump' certain specialisations, if you have high grades, you can proceed with Masters and PhD. There's flexibility. In Britain, it's different, the British system is always 'Step by Step' (in English) so when he finishes he will be old

Abu Dhabi

The American teacher will give you the feeling that it is a discussion, as it is between friends. You can give your opinion and also it may not be related to the course. It may be also outside the class itself. He will interact with the student

Dubai

An example: we were in college and they brought to us the British Council to us to teach us English because our English was weak. After a course of six months, no one benefited anything from the course. The college changed, they brought American teachers, after six months all of us benefited from the course and our grades were all OK

Dubai

I know the British Council in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and in Sharjah. People of British nationality there are usually old. Also, if you open a book published in Britain, you will feel it's only words, small font, words and words. An American book will have pictures

Abu Dhabi

- Despite this, the United Kingdom is more likely (than the US) to be regarded as the country that offers the educational qualifications which provide the most credibility with potential suppliers (55% vs. 30%), especially for respondents who live in Al Ain (88%), compared to those from Dubai (31%).

If you want to learn the English language, you have to learn British. But their way of teaching is hard and the British certificate is higher regarded than the American

Dubai

The English Language

- Every member of the successor generation in the UAE speaks English. Whether it is for business, education, travelling, career development or knowledge enhancement, the English language (said to be one of the main strengths of the UK), is seen as equally important by this audience.
- If they could speak another language, four in five would learn French (79%, rising to 90% among women), while around one-fifth would like to speak German or Spanish. But it is clear that the ability to speak English is vital in the UAE, and in the Arabic countries.

Sources of Information About Countries

- The Internet is the main source when looking for information about a country (55%, while 32% say it is their *single* source of information). Tourist authorities and official authorities such as consulates and embassies are also of importance (mentioned by 37% and 34%, respectively). The successor generation also get information from people who have visited the country (35%) and word of mouth from their friends or family (30%).
- A variety of information sources about the UK, are used among the successor generation. For 55%, the internet is the most important source about this country (rising to 74% in Al Ain). However, talking to people who have visited the UK (especially in Dubai) and visiting the UK personally are also important sources of information: indeed, almost half of respondents claim to have visited the UK, of whom 18% have done so more than once. The British press is mentioned by a minority (11%), though, alongside BBC World TV (9%) or BBC World Service (8%), as sources of information.

*From the Media. Like I said, it used to be a great power,
when we were small we used to hear London, London,
London, you'd imagine it's something great. But when we
went there, we found that it didn't match that image*

Abu Dhabi

Implications

- Overall, members of the successor generation in the UAE regard Britain highly as a financial and economic power. They are knowledgeable about and positive towards British institutions e.g. the education system. However, the UK remains in the shadow of Japan, and above all the US, and is felt to have lost its position as a world power. We are perceived as not being able to move on from our glorious past, to innovate or to take risks.

Since ancient times Britain was there, it was the only great power, together with Portugal. After the Romans

Abu Dhabi

- Opinion is rather strong when it comes to the British people themselves. With a monarchy, which is perceived to weaken the country, British society is more likely to be seen as traditional than modern. It is also seen as somewhat conservative (like the UAE), although this is not seen as a major weakness. Most of all, however, British people are not highly regarded (some even have extremely negative views): unwelcoming, we are perceived to be racist towards foreigners, and especially Arabs. There is a perception that Britain considers itself as a highly developed country, and sees the Arab countries as developing countries, and therefore, looks down on them. This is a pattern we observed in Saudi Arabia in last year's survey, and, more recently, in Vietnam where the successor generation also said that Britain looks down on themselves.

They think that Arabs are from the less developed countries, which always depend on them and need their experience and capital. In their opinion, we are people who have money but do not have brains. In fact, I don't like to deal with them

Dubai

Britain is a country which sticks to the system; people are restricted by the system, there's no flexibility. But their products are generally of good quality, although the people are not loveable and not amiable

Abu Dhabi

- However, the successor generation praises Britain for its traditions, on which they themselves put a lot of emphasis. Traditions, values and respect for others are of prime importance to the Emiratis and are probably the only aspects that bring both countries closer.

A community with principles, rules and regulations, with a set purpose, planning ahead for 10 or 15 years in the future to create an industrial society, and to compete with other countries. These countries have a strategic plan to reach certain achievements over a definite period of time

Abu Dhabi

- Britain is one of the main tourist and study destinations for Emiratis, ahead of the US. With 2% of the UAE population made up of Western expatriates, (of whom British form the largest proportion), opinions about British people are more likely to be forged upon experiences than perceptions. The internet, however, remains the main source of information.
- It is worth noting that in the quantitative stage respondents who live in Al Ain are more knowledgeable and more favourably inclined towards Britain than those in Dubai.

MORI/12644

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Appendices

Statistical Reliability

The sample tolerances that apply to the percentage results in this report are given in the table below. This table shows the possible variation that might be anticipated because a sample, rather than the entire population, was interviewed. As indicated, sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample and the size of the percentage results.

For example, on a question where 50% of the people in a weighted sample of 206 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than seven percentage points, plus or minus, from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures.

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

| Size of sample on which survey result is based | 10% or 90% ± | 30% or 70% ± | 50% ± |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| 200 | 4.2 | 6.4 | 6.9 |
| 140 | 5 | 7.6 | 8.3 |
| 50 | 8.4 | 12.8 | 14.0 |

Tolerances are also involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels*

| Size of the samples compared | 10% or 90% ± | 30% or 70% ± | 50% ± |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------|
| 100 vs 100 | 8.3 | 12.7 | 13.9 |
| 150 vs 50 | 9.6 | 14.7 | 16.0 |

British Council - UAE

Topic Guide

Introduction – 5 minutes

Name, job etc.

Communities

What I want to do this evening is to explore your perceptions and feelings about three different countries. To do this we're going to play a game - it might sound a bit odd but bear with me. The reason for this approach is that we need to focus on general characteristics about the countries and the people who live there, without getting drawn into discussions such as 'oh when I was in such and such a place.....'.

In the game we are going to pretend that there are three communities, and each one represents one of three countries - The United States, Great Britain, and (INSERT COUNTRY NAME HERE). Each of the three communities is meant to encompass EVERYTHING about that country to you.

PART A – THE PEOPLE

10 minutes

So to start us off, I'd like you to tell me about the people who live in each of the communities - what are the people like ? For example, if you were to visit the British community, how would the people welcome you ? Why do you think that ? And what would the welcome be like in the INSERT COUNTRY NAME community? And in the American community ?

And, within the same community, how do the people relate to each other?

Imagine the British community. Is this community united? Do the people live in harmony? Do they support and respect each other? IF NOT, ASK Why not?

PROBE FOR: Is there any discrimination e.g. between ethnic groups, or between men and women?

And what about the INSERT COUNTRY NAME community? How does it compare with the British community?

And in the American community?

PART B – HIGHER EDUCATION

10 minutes

Now I'd like you to think about some specific individuals who might live in the three communities. Firstly, imagine that there is a person living in each community who represents **higher education**. When you think of the person who represents British higher education, what sort of person do you think of ? *(PROMPT IF NECESSARY: male or female ? young or old ? traditional or modern ?)* What kind of educational establishment do they teach at ?

What kind of teacher are they ? What is their teaching style ?
What are that person's good and bad points ?
What about an American who represents education - what sort of person do you think of? What kind of teacher are they ? What kind of educational establishment do they teach at ?
And the educationalist in the INSERT COUNTRY NAME community. What are they like?
Overall, who would you choose to be your 'teacher' ? Why ?
What are the best points about the educationalist in each country ? And what are their worst points ?

PART C – ART

10 minutes

Moving on now to another character in the communities. I'd like to get your impression of the Arts in each of the three countries. So please try to imagine a character in each community who represents **the Arts** (not necessarily someone who paints). When you think of someone in the INSERT COUNTRY NAME community, what kind of artist would they be ?
What about the person in the American community - what kind of art would they produce?
And the British person who represents the Arts ?

Thinking about the British 'artist', describe that person to me.
What is the quality of their work ?
How well regarded do you think that person is in their own community, and elsewhere?
What are that person's major strengths ?
Which of the three 'artists' would you most admire ? And why ?

PART D – DECISION-MAKER

10 minutes

I'd like to think now about the **person in charge** of the community, and how they run the community. How do you think the British community is run ? How involved are the community occupants in the **decision-making** ? Is it a good way to run a community ? And what is the person in charge like? (Please try not just to describe your impression of the current British Prime Minister - it's a general picture of a typical British leader I am looking for. (*Unless Tony Blair encapsulates British leadership - in which case, why?*)) Overall, what are the best points about the running of the community ?

How do these issues differ in the INSERT COUNTRY NAME community: the running of the community and the person in charge ? In what ways is this community different to the British community ?
And what is the running of the American community like ?

PART E – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

5 minutes

To what extent do you think the occupants of these communities would take an interest in what is going on elsewhere ? How much is the American community, for example, involved in affairs which affect the other communities ? Are they getting more or less involved in such affairs ? And how much do people in the other communities listen to what the American community has to say ? How is the British community different ?

PART F – BUSINESS

10 minutes

Now I'd like to move on to thinking about businesses in each of the three countries, so continuing to use the community analogy, I'd like you to think about typical **business-people** who might live in each of those communities. How would you describe the British business-person?

Is he/she a good manager? What makes them good or bad ?

How does the British businessman differ from the others?

What kind of **business** is it that the business-people work for ? First, the business in INSERT COUNTRY NAME (*PROMPT IF NECESSARY: services or manufacturing ? what does it produce ? big or small ? socially responsible or cut-throat ? efficient ?*)

Is it successful at what it does? Where does it sell its products/services - in the community or elsewhere (more to the American or British community ?) Describe its management and **workers**. What are the particular strengths of the business ?

What about the American business - what does it do ? How are the American business's workers and managers different to their INSERT COUNTRY NAME counterparts ? Where does it sell its products ? In what ways are the American business's products/services better or worse than those produced by the INSERT COUNTRY NAME business ?

And how does the business run in the British community differ from the other two ?

PART G – THE MEDIA

10 minutes

Imagine now that each community produces a **newspaper**. Describe the newspaper in the community representing Britain. What does it look like ? What kind of coverage does it have ? Is it well-read ? Do you believe its contents ? What is the best thing about the paper ?

What about the American newspaper - how is that different ?

And the INSERT COUNTRY NAME paper - what is that like ? Do the people in the community read it and like it, do you think ? What are the paper's qualities ? Which of the papers would you prefer to read ? Why ?

PART H – SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

10 minutes

And finally, there is someone who represents **science and technology** living in each community. What would the British scientist be like? What kind of things would he/she work on? And what kind of working habits would they have? What is the best thing about the British scientist? And the worst? How does that compare with the American scientist? And the INSERT COUNTRY NAME scientist?

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

5 minutes

Could you describe in three words each of the communities?
Would you live in the British community? Why/Why not?
And now thinking about your ideal community - how would you describe that in three words?

BRITAIN

10 minutes

To conclude, now, I'd like to focus for a short while specifically on Great Britain, and how you have come to have the impressions that we have just been discussing.

Have you ever travelled to Britain? (IF NOT, ASK Why not?) What was the purpose of your visit?

What do you think are the things which have most influenced your impressions of Britain? What source(s) of information has been the most valuable when you looked for some information about Britain? i.e. magazines, newspapers, programmes on TV/radio, Internet, friends, travel agencies...

Earlier, you said that the British:

- educationalist
- artist
- person in charge
- newspaper
- business-person
- scientist

... would be like What has made you think of someone/something like that?

How else have you found out about Britain?

Overall, have your experiences of Britain been positive/negative?