



**AMERICANS ON GLOBALIZATION:  
A Study of US Public Attitudes  
March 28, 2000**

**Appendix C: Comparison With European Attitudes**

To better understand US attitudes on globalization and trade, it is important to place those views in the context of attitudes in other countries. For this study, PIPA asked several questions that were the same as or similar to ones asked in four European countries in the spring of 1999 by the Office of Research of the US Information Agency (which has since become Office of Research, Department of State). This builds on results of PIPA's study of transatlantic trade attitudes in April 1998, which was also coordinated with then-USIA questions.

**Economic Globalization**

**Modest majorities or large pluralities in the US and four European countries all expressed positive views of economic globalization.**

In spring 1999, USIA asked respondents in each European country whether the "globalization of the economy -- that is, the increasing trade links among countries of the world" -- was a good thing, a bad thing or both "for our own country's economy." A majority of Italians (54%) embraced economic globalization; 49% in Britain and France thought it was a good thing; and 42% of Germans said the same. France had the most negative responses, with 24% saying economic globalization was bad, and 15% of British respondents agreed. Germans were more likely to have mixed views, with just 10% saying economic globalization was negative, but 24% thinking it was both good and bad. About one-quarter of respondents in each country said they did not have an opinion, except in France (16%).<sup>1</sup>

US views are not very different. As noted elsewhere in this report, the 1999 PIPA poll found 53% of Americans thought overall globalization was more positive than negative. But when Americans were asked to rate the "growth of international trade" on a zero to ten scale, just 41% viewed it as more positive than negative. Others rated it as equally positive and negative or more negative.

**Foreign Investment**

**Majorities in Europe view foreign investment positively, while a modest majority of Americans takes a negative view.**

Europeans appear to be more open than Americans are to foreign investment. Only in the United States did a majority think foreign investment was dangerous for the economy. In Europe -- as the box below shows -- slim majorities in France and Britain believed it was necessary and positive, and solid majorities in Germany and Italy favored foreign investment.

There are different opinions about foreign investment in [country]. Some people think that foreign investment is necessary and has a positive influence on our economy. Others say that foreign investment is dangerous because it allows outsiders too much control over our affairs. Which view is closer to your own?

	US (PIPA)	Britain (USIA)	France (USIA)	Germany (USIA)	Italy (USIA)
Necessary/positive	43	51	53	59	59
Dangerous	52	36	37	21	23
DK/Refused	6	13	11	20	18

## Openness To Trade

**In a classic case of a mirror image, by overwhelming margins Europeans and Americans both perceive their own side as more open to imports from the other side. Americans show a readiness to further remove trade barriers with Europe on a reciprocal basis even though a plurality mistakenly believe that European labor standards are lower than in the US.**

An abundance of polling data show that Europeans and Americans both perceive their own countries as more open to products from the other side. In the 1998 and 1999 USIA polls, Europeans were asked to rate their own country and to rate the US in terms of how easy or difficult each side makes it for the other's companies to sell manufactured products in their own countries. On the whole, in both years, the Europeans overwhelmingly rated themselves as open. On the other hand, in 1999, only about one-third or less in Britain, France and Italy thought the US to be open to EU products. A small majority in Germany did see the US as open.<sup>2</sup> In 1998, only a minority in France and Germany and a plurality in Britain said the US makes it easy for the EU to sell manufactured products in the US.<sup>3</sup>

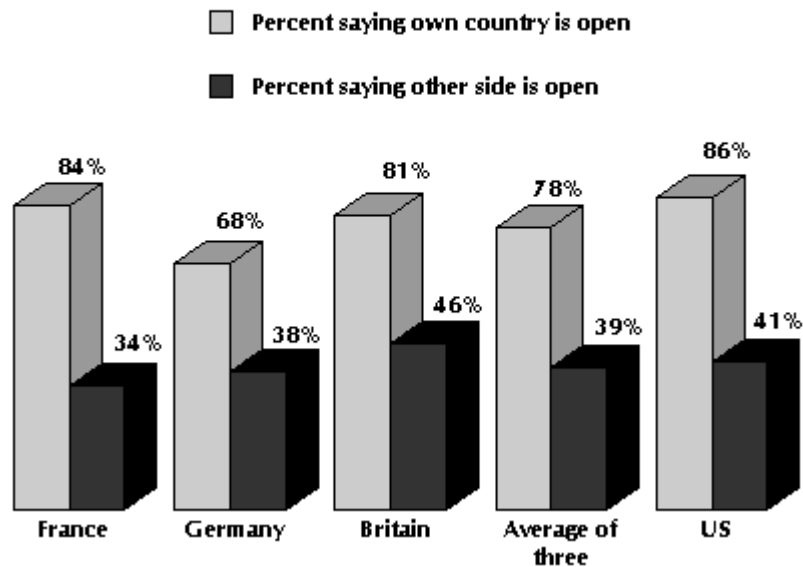
Europeans also see the US as more resistant to the trade of agricultural products. In 1999, majorities of French (65%) and British (52%) and a plurality of Italians (48%) said their own country makes it easy for the US to sell agricultural products there. Only in Germany was this not the case: 48% said Germany makes it hard for the US to sell farm goods there, while just 31% said Germany makes it easy.

On the other hand, majorities of the French (66%) and Germans (53%) and pluralities of British (49%) and Italians (39%) said the US makes it difficult for them to export agricultural goods to the US.<sup>4</sup> In 1998, a strong majority of the French and modest majorities of British and Germans saw their own country as open to US agricultural products, while less than one-third in each country saw the US as open.<sup>5</sup>

Consistent with these perceptions, some Europeans say they see the US as a difficult trade partner. In a May 1997 USIA poll, 72% of French respondents characterized the United States as uncooperative "on trade issues with the EU" (cooperative, 19%). Germans were more divided on the issue, with a plurality of 44% viewing the US as uncooperative, and 38% viewing the US as cooperative. Among the British, 32% saw the US as uncooperative, but a larger number (43%) saw the US as cooperative.<sup>6</sup>

Americans are equally confident that the US is more open than Europe. In spring 1998, PIPA asked Americans, "Please tell me your hunch: which is more open to imported goods from the other, Western Europe or the US?" At that time, 71% said the US, while only 21% said Western Europe.<sup>7</sup> An overwhelming 86% said the US makes it very (36%) or fairly (50%) easy for European companies "to sell their manufactured products" in the US. Just 41% said western European countries make it very (6%) or fairly (35%) easy, while another 41% said the Europeans make it fairly difficult.<sup>8</sup> Among another sample, 74% agreed with the statement, "In general European countries do not let in American goods as much as America lets in European goods" (20% disagreed).<sup>9</sup> Clearly, the perceptions of both sides are strikingly symmetrical and are a classic case of a mirror image.

## ***Europeans and Americans Both More Apt to See Themselves as Open to Products from the Other***



In the current poll, PIPA took a slightly different approach, but also found that Americans view other countries as less committed to open trade. Rather than asking respondents to assess US and EU policies, a single question was used to get a direct comparison of trade openness:

I would like to know your impression of how open the US is to imports as compared to how open most other countries are. Is it your impression that the US is more open, less open, or about the same as most other countries?

An overwhelming 81% of Americans said the US was more open than other countries, while a 57% majority said the US was much more open than others. Just 6% said they thought other countries were more open.

Europeans also are more apt to believe that their own country follows a free trade policy than that the US does. In spring 1999, USIA found majorities in all four European countries polled -- Britain, France, Germany and Italy -- thought their own countries followed a policy of free trade. As the box below shows, those majorities ranged from an overwhelming 81% in France to a mere 51% in Britain.

Some countries favor free trade to promote economic growth and lower prices for consumers. Other countries favor restrictions on free trade in order to protect their own products and jobs from foreign competition. Which policy do you think [country] generally follows-free trade or restrictions?

	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Free trade	51	81	66	60
Restrictions	29	11	20	20
DK/Refused	20	8	14	20

At the same time, in only two of the four countries did a plurality or majority think the US followed a policy of free trade -- Italy (52%) and Germany (45%).

Which policy do you think the US generally follows-free trade or restrictions?				
	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Free trade	29	41	45	52
Restrictions	44	47	36	24
DK/Refused	27	12	19	24

Although there is no comparable data on the European side, Americans have shown a strong readiness to further open their markets to European products on a reciprocal basis, even though they perceive that Europeans have lower labor standards. Asked in the spring 1998 PIPA poll, "If the countries of the European Union say they will lower barriers to products from the US if we will lower our barriers to their products," a strong majority of 64% said the US should agree to do so, while 28% said it should not.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, this support for lowering trade barriers with Europe is strong despite the fact that a plurality mistakenly believes that labor standards are lower in Europe than in the US. Forty-eight percent said it is their impression "that standards for labor conditions" are lower in Europe, while just 18% said they were higher in Europe (same, 25%).<sup>11</sup>

A very slight plurality (35%) also had the perception that "standards for protecting the environment" are lower in Europe. Just 21% said they are higher while 34% said that they are about the same. In fact, overall, European environmental standards are not sharply different from those of the US.<sup>12</sup>

## Trade and Jobs

**While large majorities in all countries believe importing products means at least some loss of jobs, this belief is somewhat stronger in the US than in Europe. Both Europeans and Americans tend to put a higher priority on the preservation of jobs than on the benefit of lower prices that comes with trade. Like Americans, Europeans show resistance to opening their markets to goods from low-wage countries. Europeans firmly favor their own system, over an American model, to protect workers, while Americans want their government to play a stronger role in helping workers adapt to the changes of globalization.**

Although respondents in the US and all European countries believed importing products means job loss, Americans were the most likely to think that trade costs jobs (see box below). British and French views were similar, though slightly less pessimistic. Germany and Italy were more positive. Only 9% of Americans thought trade did not result in job losses, while 35% of Italians thought the same.

Do you think that importing foreign products means the loss of many jobs in this country, only a few jobs, or no jobs?					
	US (PIPA)	Britain (USIA)	France (USIA)	Germany (USIA)	Italy (USIA)
Many jobs lost	38	34	34	30	16
Only a few jobs lost	50	47	45	37	37
No jobs lost	9	12	16	19	35
DK/Refused	3	7	5	14	12

As discussed in the body of this report, when trade is presented as a choice between lower prices and the potential loss of jobs, a modest majority of Americans prefers restrictions on foreign imports in order to protect jobs. European reactions are similar. In 1997, USIA presented a prices versus jobs choice in a European survey: "Some people favor restrictions on foreign imports to protect [country] jobs. Others oppose restrictions because they lead to higher consumer prices. Which view is closer to your own?" In that instance, 51% of the British, 56% of the Germans and 63% of the French said they preferred such restrictions while minorities opposed such restrictions (France 32%, Britain 38%, Germany 39%).<sup>13</sup>

Similar to Americans' resistance to removing trade barriers to low-wage countries, Europeans have shown a resistance to opening their markets to goods from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A USIA question asked whether their own country "should open its markets more than it already has to low cost goods (including textiles, steel and agricultural products) from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe." A majority of the French (65%) and Germans (63%) were opposed, while a plurality of the British (46%) felt that way.<sup>14</sup>

Europeans firmly favor their own system of protecting workers over the competitive advantages of a US-style system. In a January 1997 USIA poll, respondents were presented two statements about the US model. Majorities in France (76%), Germany (68%) and Britain (57%) chose the one that said the US system "neglects too many social problems because of a lack of job security and few employment benefits for many workers." On average, only one-quarter consider the US a desirable economic model "because it is able to maintain economic competitiveness through a flexible system of labor."<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in an October 1996 poll for *Le Monde*, 66% of those interviewed in France said they preferred the French system where there is extensive social protection but lots of unemployment, while 18% preferred the American system where there is limited social protection, but little unemployment.<sup>16</sup>

As discussed in the body of the report, Americans are not entirely happy with the current American approach. A strong majority would like to see the government play a larger role in helping workers adapt to changes that have come with globalization.

## Views of US Culture

**Despite much talk about the spread of American culture through globalization, only a small minority in Western Europe, as well as in the US, considers US culture a threat to other cultures. Views are more divided in Central and Eastern Europe, where somewhat more of a threat is perceived, but perceptions are not highly negative overall. Further, a modest majority of West Europeans has a positive view of American popular culture, as does a slightly stronger majority of Americans. A plurality of Russians and Ukrainians also find US culture appealing.**

Despite much talk about the threat of American culture through globalization, only a small minority in Western Europe, as well as in the US, considers US culture a threat to other cultures. West Europeans have a fairly benign view of American culture. USIA polls conducted in Spring 1999 found that only small minorities in Italy (19%), Britain (27%) and Germany (24%) thought US popular culture was a serious threat; in France, this view was held by one-third. In all countries, two-thirds or more saw it as a "minor threat" or "not a threat at all." This is similar to the low level of threat Americans perceive (see below).

How much of a threat, if at all, do you think American popular culture, such as music, television and films, is to the cultures of other countries in the world? Do you think it is a very serious threat, a
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serious threat, a minor threat, or not a threat at all?					
	US (PIPA)	Britain (USIA)	France (USIA)	Germany (USIA)	Italy (USIA)
Very serious threat	7	9	5	6	4
Serious threat	17	18	28	18	15
Minor threat	33	34	44	38	26
Not a threat at all	41	34	22	32	48
DK/Refused	4	5	2	6	8

Indeed, not only do most West Europeans think US culture is not a threat, but they also have a generally favorable view of US popular culture. A strong majority in Italy (65%), a modest majority in Britain (54%) and slim majorities in France and Germany (51% each) all viewed US popular culture favorably. Unfavorable responses ranged from 26% in Italy to 45% in France. In the current PIPA poll, while Americans were more apt to rate American popular culture "very" favorably, the 60% of Americans with a favorable view of US popular culture was only slightly higher than in European countries (Britain 54%, France 51%, Germany 51%, Italy 65% -- see below).

In general, what is your opinion of American popular culture, such as music, television and films? Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of American popular culture?					
	US (PIPA)	Britain (USIA)	France (USIA)	Germany (USIA)	Italy (USIA)
Very favorable	21	11	10	10	10
Somewhat favorable	39	43	41	41	55
Somewhat unfavorable	25	27	35	30	20
Very unfavorable	14	13	10	11	6
DK/Refused	2	7	4	8	9

Views in Russia and Ukraine also are mildly positive about US culture. According to a March 1997 USIA poll, a 46% plurality of Ukrainians said they usually find products of US culture -- such as films, television and books -- to be "appealing." Only 17% found them "unappealing," with 23% "indifferent." In Russia, a June 1995 USIA poll found a more-modest plurality (38%) thought items of US culture to be appealing. Still, only 19% found them unappealing, and 22% were indifferent.<sup>17</sup>

USIA polls from September 1997 show that publics in Central and Eastern Europe have a wide range of views about whether US culture is a threat to their own. In Hungary, a majority (55%) agreed that "the influence of American culture is a threat to our own culture." Respondents in the Czech Republic and Slovakia were divided evenly. A plurality in Poland (48%) and a strong majority in Albania (69%) disagreed that US culture is a threat (see below).

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: the influence of US culture is a threat to our own culture?		
	Agree	Disagree

Albania	20	69
Poland	39	48
Slovakia	46	46
Czech Republic	49	46
Hungary	55	39

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### All End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Question: What is your opinion about the globalization of the economy-that is, the increasing economic and trade links among the countries of the world? In your opinion, is economic globalization generally a good thing or a bad thing?

	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Good thing	49	49	42	54
Bad thing	15	24	10	8
Both (volunteered)	13	11	24	15
Don't know/No answer	23	16	25	24

Organization: United States Information Agency

Population Size: unknown

Date: Spring 1999

<sup>2</sup> Question: How easy would you say [survey country] makes it for US companies to sell their manufactured products in [survey country]-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Very easy	31	23	17	17
Fairly easy	40	58	49	48
Fairly difficult	10	12	13	9
Very difficult	2	2	1	2
Don't know/No answer	18	6	20	25

Question: How easy would you say the US makes it for [survey country]'s companies to sell their manufactured products in the US-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Very easy	7	5	15	4
Fairly easy	19	27	41	31
Fairly difficult	37	45	15	26
Very difficult	16	18	4	7
Don't know/No answer	21	6	26	32

Organization: United States Information Agency  
 Population Size: unknown  
 Date: Spring 1999

3 Question: How easy would you say [survey country] makes it for US companies to sell their manufactured products in [survey country]-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany
Very easy	37	27	23
Fairly easy	44	57	45
Fairly difficult	6	10	14
Very difficult	1	3	2
Don't know/No answer	12	3	16

Question: How easy would you say the US makes it for [survey country]'s companies to sell their manufactured products in the US-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany
Very easy	11	3	4
Fairly easy	35	31	34
Fairly difficult	31	38	38
Very difficult	4	23	7
Don't know/No answer	20	5	17

Organization: United States Information Agency  
 Population Size: unknown  
 Date: Spring 1998

<sup>4</sup> Question: How easy would you say [survey country] makes it for US companies to sell their agricultural products in [survey country]-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Very easy	16	16	4	11
Fairly easy	36	49	27	37
Fairly difficult	14	20	39	13
Very difficult	3	5	9	3
Don't know/No answer	31	11	21	37

Question: How easy would you say the US makes it for [survey country]'s companies to sell their agricultural products in the US-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany	Italy
Very easy	6	5	3	3

Fairly easy	15	19	18	21
Fairly difficult	33	40	37	28
Very difficult	16	26	16	11
Don't know/No answer	31	9	26	36
Organization: United States Information Agency Population Size: unknown Date: Spring 1999				

<sup>5</sup> Question: How easy would you say [survey country] makes it for US companies to sell their agricultural products in [survey country]-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany
Very easy	20	21	9
Fairly easy	33	52	42
Fairly difficult	7	18	18
Very difficult	3	4	2
Don't know/No answer	37	5	19

Question: How easy would you say the US makes it for [survey country]'s companies to sell their agricultural products in the US-very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

	Britain	France	Germany
Very easy	5	1	5
Fairly easy	23	21	27
Fairly difficult	22	45	42
Very difficult	10	26	6
Don't know/No answer	40	7	21

Organization: United States Information Agency  
Population Size: unknown  
Date: Spring 1998

<sup>6</sup> Question: On trade issues with the EU, do you think the US has been very cooperative, somewhat cooperative, somewhat uncooperative, or very uncooperative?

	Britain	France	Germany
Cooperative	43	19	44
Uncooperative	32	72	38
Don't know/No answer	25	9	82

Organization: United States Information Agency  
Population Size: Britain=964, France=1001, Germany=1005

Date: May 1997

<sup>7</sup> Question: Thinking about trade between the US (United States) and Western Europe, please tell me your hunch. Which is more open to imported goods from the other, Western Europe or the US? Again, just your hunch: (If Western Europe/US, ask:) Is that slightly, somewhat, or a lot more open?

Western Europe is slightly more open	8%
Western Europe is somewhat more open 8 Western Europe is a lot more open	5
The US is slightly more open	15
The US is somewhat more open	22
The US is a lot more open	34
Don't know/Refused	8

Organization:PIPA  
Population Size: 600  
Date: APR 20, 1998

<sup>8</sup> Question: How easy would you say the US (United States) makes it for European countries to sell their manufactured products in the US--very easy, fairly easy, fairly difficult, or very difficult?

Very easy	36%
Fairly easy	50
Fairly difficult	8
Very difficult	2
Don't know/Refused	4

Organization:PIPA  
Population Size: 600  
Date: APR 20, 1998

<sup>9</sup> Question: I'm going to read you a statement. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree. In general European countries do not let in American goods as much as America lets in European goods.

Agree	74%
Disagree	20
Don't know/Refused	6

Organization:PIPA  
Population Size: 600  
Date: APR 20, 1998

<sup>10</sup> Question: As a general rule, if the country of the European Union say they will lower their barrier to products from the US (United States) if we will lower our barriers to their products, should the US agree or not agree to do this?

Agree	64%
Not agree	28
Don't know/Refused	8

Organization:PIPA  
Population Size: 600  
Date: APR 20, 1998

<sup>11</sup> Question: Is it your impression that standards for labor conditions in Europe are higher than in the US (United States), lower than in the US, or about the same?

Higher in Europe	18%
Lower in Europe	48
About the same	25
Don't know/Refused	9

Organization:PIPA  
Population Size: 600  
Date: APR 20, 1998

<sup>12</sup> Question: Is it your impression that standards for protecting the environment in Europe are higher than in the US (United States), lower than in the US, or about the same?

Higher in Europe	21%
Lower in Europe	35
About the same	34
Don't know/Refused	11

Organization:PIPA  
Population Size: 600  
Date: APR 20, 1998

<sup>13</sup> Question: Some people favor restrictions on foreign imports to protect [survey country] jobs. Others oppose restrictions because they lead to higher consumer prices. Which view is closer to your own?

	Britain	France	Germany
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Favor restrictions	51	63	56
Oppose restrictions	38	32	39
Don't know/No answer	11	5	5
Organization: United States Information Agency Population Size: Britain=964, France=1001, Germany=1005 Date: May 1997			

<sup>13</sup> Question: Some people favor restrictions on foreign imports to protect [survey country] jobs. Others oppose restrictions because they lead to higher consumer prices. Which view is closer to your own?

	Britain	France	Germany
Favor restrictions	51	63	56
Oppose restrictions	38	32	39
Don't know/No answer	11	5	5
Organization: United States Information Agency Population Size: Britain=964, France=1001, Germany=1005 Date: May 1997			

<sup>15</sup> Question: Many view the United States as an economic model because it is able to maintain economic competitiveness through a flexible system of labor-meaning people can change jobs more easily and companies are not burdened with as much social expenditure. Others say this system neglects too many social problems because of a lack of job security and few employment benefits for many workers. Which view is closer to your own?

	Britain	France	Germany
US is economic model	29	19	27
US system neglects problems	58	76	68
Don't know/No answer			
Organization: United States Information Agency Population Size: Britain=964, France=1001, Germany=1005 Date: May 1997			

<sup>16</sup> Le Monde data

<sup>17</sup> Question: How would you say you usually react to American culture (films, television, books, etc.)? Do you find such US products appealing, unappealing, or do they leave you indifferent?

	Russia	Ukraine
Appealing	38	46
Unappealing	19	17
Indifferent	22	23
Organization: United States Information Agency Population Size: Russia=1822, Ukraine=1200 Date: Russia, June 1995; Ukraine, March 1997		