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ABSTRACT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE URBAN MEXICAN REACTION TO THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY: A Study in Cross-cultural Attitudes

by Robert Osborne Turley

The problem of this study is to determine whether the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which occurred when the fieldwork for a representative sample of 1,126 respondents drawn from urban Mexico was nearly half-completed, affected the attitudes of those interviewed after the event. If it did affect their attitudes, in what ways and by how much did they change?

After reviewing precedents and the relevant theoretical literature, disaster research and general systems theory, empirical questions are addressed to the data: 1) Is there a difference in attitudes as measured before and after the assassination? and 2) To what extent can the differences, if any, be attributed to the assassination?

The research design approximates the "before-after study with interchangeable groups". In order to answer the questions, the assassination is employed as a fortuitous, "experimental condition" to divide the sample into "before" and "after" subsamples, which correspond to the "control" and "experimental" groups, respectively, of this variation

on classical research design. The responses of the two groupings to forty-one attitudinal items are tabulated and compared. The respondents in the respective groupings are compared along five standard sociological variables which are then partialled with the attitudinal items.

There appears to have been little change in attitudes except for a cluster of attitudes toward the United States, which changed consistently across certain sociological strata at high levels of significance and in a uniformly positive direction. The more positive attitudes and evaluations of the United States and its people expressed by urban Mexicans in the wake of the assassination were apparently results of that event, but the exact contribution of the assassination to the change is difficult to isolate due to the possible contamination of population differences in the subsamples. The findings do, however, agree with those reported in studies of the response of the American public. Women; the young; those with little or no education, in lower occupational strata and in more highly urbanized settings tended to react more strongly to the assassination of President Kennedy.

AN ANALYSIS OF
THE URBAN MEXICAN REACTION
TO THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY:
A STUDY IN CROSS-CULTURAL ATTITUDES

By

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

1969

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Dr. Charles P. Loomis for the opportunity he gave me to work on the Five Nation Study. He and his associates in the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University were very helpful and my association with all of them was a valuable and rewarding experience.

I also want to thank my former colleagues of the Department of Sociology at Central Michigan University for much inspiration and unrestricted use of the facilities. I especially appreciate the assistance of Dr. Bernard N. Meltzer, Chairman, who read the manuscript and made suggestions for the final draft.

For their extensive suggestions for revision of the first draft, submitted in 1965, I thank Dr. Eugene Jacobson, member, and Dr. Donald Olmsted, chairman of my committee. Kudos for their patience in the 1965-67 Peace Corps and succeeding intervals.

Special appreciation is due my wife, Anne M. Turley, for her constant encouragement, assistance, and typing of the final draft.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Violence is an existential constant of the human condition. As such, it provides one enduring mode of social change. A society, in order to survive, must continually and effectively adapt to new conditions in the environment, some of them caused by events or acts of a violent nature. The source may be natural or human; the effects are material and/or social. The persistence of violence in all its manifestations and the high material and human costs accruing from it justify its study.

Science ultimately seeks to establish cause and effect: physical science, to predict and control the occurrence of natural violence; behavioral science, to assess the human consequences of natural disasters, as well as to explain those elements in the human character which produce and react to man-made violence. At this time, science is far short of these objectives. Natural and human disasters occur daily. To most people, it seems that violent crimes strike randomly. We live with the constant threat of nuclear annihilation. Indeed, violence is very much a part of human existence.

The social effects of a human act of violence comprise the subject of this work. The event is the assassination of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy on November 22, 1963. In light of the subsequent assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert Francis Kennedy, the assassination of President Kennedy can no longer be viewed as a unique isolated event, although it probably produced a greater impact. The social causes and consequences of political assassination and, perhaps, related phenomena such as the death of an important person should be categorized and incorporated into the theory of the behavioral sciences, either within the middle-range hypotheses of "disaster research" or, perhaps more heuristically, within the broader perspective of "general systems theory."

This study is the result of a natural experiment imposed on an attitudinal study of a representative sample drawn from urban Mexico.¹ The assassination occurred near the mid-point of the fieldwork for this sample. Although all the studies reported to date regarding the American response²

¹This sample was one of five drawn from Phase I of the Five Nation Study coordinated by Professor Charles P. Loomis, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University. The following agencies have contributed to the support of the Study: International Programs, M.S.U.; the Carnegie Corporation; the United States Public Health Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station (Michigan State University).

²Throughout the present study, "American" will be used to indicate citizens of the United States of America.

concur on the nature and extent of the immediate, emotional response,³ there was no apparent change in basic, enduring American attitudes.⁴ Despite the geographical contiguity of the United States and Mexico and the long-standing, relatively high rate of interaction between the systems, the two states maintain very different cultures. Therefore, the pragmatic question arose as to whether the assassination had affected the responses of Mexicans interviewed after it occurred. The answer to such a question could provide an opportunity to measure cross-cultural attitudinal response toward events in another socio-cultural system.

The Problem

The primary problem of this study is to determine whether the assassination of President Kennedy, which intervened when the fieldwork in urban Mexico was nearly half-completed, affected the attitudes of the respondents interviewed after the event. If the assassination did affect Mexican attitudes, what was the nature and extent of the effect?

³Bradley S. Greenberg and Edwin B. Parker (Eds.), The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public: Social Communication in Crisis (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965).

⁴Paul B. Sheatsley and Jacob J. Feldman, "A National Survey of Public Reactions and Behavior," in Greenberg and Parker, pp. 174-5.

Review of the Literature

The literature which is relevant to this problem has been divided into four sections. The first section will cite precedents for this type of study. As far as the author has been able to determine, no directly comparable studies have been reported. The study design conforms, in some respects, to the "before-after study with interchangeable groups" in the Selltitz, et al. typology of experimental designs.⁵ There are, however, some related methodological and substantive precedents. The next section will view the problem from the perspectives of two theoretical approaches: The Study of Disaster and General Systems Theory. The third section will review the findings of students of the assassination regarding the American reaction to the assassination. The final section will attempt to describe Mexico and Mexicans and their relationship to the United States, in general and specifically, to President Kennedy.

Precedents

There are a few disparate precedents for this type of study. American reaction to the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt was the subject of two studies conducted in the

⁵Claire Selltitz, Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch and Stuart W. Cook, Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1959) p. 110.

United States.⁶ Public reaction to Roosevelt's death was also gauged in France on June 1, 1945.⁷ Hadley Cantril studied attitude change over a period of time in relation to the events of World War II.⁸ Richard Centers, in his The Psychology of Social Classes, bases a major postulate of his work on the effect of the British Labour Party victory on self-identification with the working class in the United States.⁹ Dr. Stephen Withey of the Survey Research Center, the University of Michigan, cites a similar situation to the present study in which the announcement of our first H-bomb test intervened in a survey of public attitudes toward war, international threat, and civil defense. Regarding such situations, he says that there are very few projects that have been lucky enough to bridge a significant social event without creating confusion in the data.

⁶D.E. Johannsen, "Reactions to the Death of President Roosevelt," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology (1946), 41, 218-22 and H. Orlansky, "Reactions to the Death of President Roosevelt," Journal of Social Psychology (1947), 26, 236-66.

⁷Hadley Cantril (Ed.), Public Opinion, 1935-1946 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951).

⁸Hadley Cantril, "Opinion Trends in World War II: Some Guides to Interpretation," Public Opinion Quarterly (1948), 12, 30-44.

⁹Richard Centers, The Psychology of Social Classes, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), pp. 139-40.

It is highly probable that there were other surveys and studies in process at the time that the assassination occurred. It seems unlikely that the potential effects of such a significant event could or would be ignored. If their study were vulnerable to such effects, the investigators would have at least three other alternatives: scrap the study; try to assess the consequences of the assassination for the study and control for it; or use it as an experimental variable.

Dr. Robert T. Bower of the Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc. informed the author of one projected study. Professor Lark O. Daniel of San Diego State College had administered a pre-test in an experiment in "profile techniques for program analysis" to 250 students at 9:00 a.m. (PST) on the day of the assassination and a post-test on another group of 250 students at 11:00 a.m. As in the present study, the pre-test group had not been exposed to the assassination, but the post-test group had. The data were not analyzed.¹⁰ A study which successfully bridged the assassination was conducted by David O. Sears. He used the assassination as the experimental variable and compared political partisanship among college students surveyed before and after the assassination.¹¹

¹⁰Letter from Professor Daniel to the author, June 19, 1968.

¹¹David O. Sears, "Effects of the Assassination on Political Partisanship," in Greenberg and Parker, pp. 305-26.

Theory

In an effort to bring the findings of this study, as well as other relevant studies, into a meaningful theoretical context, two alternative bodies of behavioral scientific thought will be briefly considered: disaster research and systems theory.

The Study of Disaster

Prior to this analysis, the Kennedy assassination had not been viewed as a "disaster situation" in the sense which is used in the study of disaster.¹² It is doubtful whether adding a new category such as "assassination of noted persons" to the plethora of disaster categories already extant would be of much scientific value. Perhaps a more generic "deaths of significant persons" would be of value, however. At any rate, the conceptual framework of this field provides one matrix in which the Kennedy assassination could be meaningfully analyzed.

The study of disaster is mainly a product of the Atomic Age and the Civil Defense movement. Only two studies were conducted prior to World War II.¹³ Disaster research is an

¹²Since this paper was first submitted in June, 1965, Wilbur Schramm in his article, "Communication in Crisis," in Greenberg and Parker, pp. 4-7, has proposed a similar argument.

¹³Samuel H. Prince, "Catastrophe and Social Change," Studies in History, Economics and Public Law (Columbia University Press, 1920), Vol. 94, No. 1 and Hadley Cantril, The Invasion from Mars (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 1940.

interdisciplinary effort to describe and explain empirically human reaction to disaster or extreme situations. Inventories of studies and reviews of the literature abound.¹⁴ To date, however, no general, systematized theory of disaster has been constructed which can stand independently, although attempts have been made to subsume disaster concepts into other theoretical matrices.¹⁵

Basically, any disaster involves a disruption of the social context in which the individual functions. Deaths, injuries, destruction of property and disruption of communications all acquire importance principally as departures from the pattern of normal expectations upon which the individual builds up actions from minute to minute. The central problem for research becomes, "What factors produce what degrees of disruption in this social context, and how do individuals and groups behave in the face of this disruption?"¹⁶

¹⁴A.H. Barton, et al., Social Organization Under Stress: A Sociological Review of Disaster Studies (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council, 1963); Disaster Research Groups, Field Studies of Disaster Behavior: An Inventory (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Science - National Research Council), 1961; Charles E. Fritz, with Mark E. Nearman and Devorah K. Rubin, An Inventory of Field Studies on Human Behavior in Disaster, Disaster Research Groups, August 15, 1959; Jeannette F. Rayner, "Studies of Disasters and Other Extreme Situations - An Annotated Selected Bibliography," Human Organization, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer, 1957), pp. 30-40.

¹⁵Charles P. Loomis, "Social Systems Under Stress -- Disasters and Disruptions," Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1960), pp. 129-67; Pitirim Sorokin, Man and Society in Calamity (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1942). See also journal issues devoted to disaster research: Human Organization, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 1957) and Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1954).

¹⁶Lewis M. Killian, "Some Accomplishments and Some Needs in Disaster Studies," Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1954), p. 67.

One inventory lists 114 field studies conducted on 103 events in the following categories: airplanes; blizzards; earthquakes; volcanoes and other land movements; epidemics and epidemic threats; explosions and fires; false alerts; floods; hurricanes and typhoons; mine disasters; tornadoes; toxicological substances; World War II bombings and miscellaneous.¹⁷ In reviewing these studies, it becomes readily apparent that the emphasis is on natural disasters and the primary focus of interest is those people immediately affected by the disaster. Yet, Form and Nosow urge that "generalizations dealing with disaster . . . should cover both natural and artificial disasters, predictable and unpredictable ones."¹⁸ A few studies have been conducted in other cultures.¹⁹ Fewer have analyzed intercultural cooperation in disaster situations.²⁰ To the writer's knowledge, no systematic study has been conducted to measure cross-national border reactions to disaster.

¹⁷Disaster Research Groups.

¹⁸William H. Form and Sigmund Nosow, Community in Disaster (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958) p. 11.

¹⁹See J.E. Ellemers, General Conclusions: Studies in Holland Flood Disaster 1953 (Amsterdam and Washington D.C.: Institute for Social Science Research in the Netherlands and National Academy of Sciences - National Research Council Committee on Disaster Studies, 1955); and Hilda Grieve, The Great Tide: The Study of the 1953 Flood Disaster in Essex (Chelmsford, England: County Council of Essex, 1959).

²⁰See Ellwyn R. Stoddard, Catastrophe and Crisis in a Flooded Border Community (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University, 1961).

The Kennedy assassination deviated from the normal disaster situation in a number of ways: the source of the disaster; the target and scope of the disaster; and the net effect of, and reactions to, the disaster. Normally, the source is natural, the target is broader than one individual and the effects are physical as well as psychological. Due to its variation along these dimensions, the generic category including assassination could possibly be employed as a polar ideal-typical construct in the formulation of disaster theory. Figure I shows how the Kennedy assassination can be classified according to the salient dimensions of disasters.

FIGURE I: The Kennedy Assassination as Related to the Salient Dimensions of Disaster Situations

<u>Dimensions of Disaster Research²¹</u>	<u>Correspondence of the Kennedy Assassination</u>
Predictability Inevitability Controllability	<u>No warning</u> ; more precaution was impracticable
Nature of precipitating agent	<u>Man</u> , as opposed to natural forces
Assignable intent of the agent	<u>Man-made</u> , as opposed to fortuitous; possibly punitive or retributive
Speed of onset	<u>Instantaneous</u> , as opposed to progressive
Scope	<u>Focalized</u> , as opposed to diffuse
Duration	<u>Short</u> , as opposed to prolonged
Primary destructive effects	<u>Individual</u> , as opposed to mass destruction
Lingering destructive effects	<u>Psychological</u> , as opposed to physical
Repetitive quality	<u>Non-recurring</u> , as opposed to intermittent or continuous

²¹Fritz, Nearman and Rubin, p. iii.

The variation of the assassination along these dimensions does not preclude its integration into the study of disaster. The assassination does seem to conform to Killian's definition of a disaster situation. As noted above, its deviation may be of heuristic value for the field. At least two students of the assassination have subsequently cast it within the disaster framework.²²

The assassination created an ambiguous, unstructured situation that was outside normal experience . . . Without exception the accounts revealed one or more of the classic responses to a threatened crisis, e.g., psychological evasion, irrational behavior, expressions of fear.²³

General Systems Theory

As an alternative to disaster research, Wilbur Schramm suggests that the assassination can be viewed more meaningfully from the perspective of general systems theory.²⁴

His rationale is as follows.

Systems theory would describe the response to crisis as a sudden imbalance in the system, followed by emergency steps to restore balance, and then a gradual restoration of normal functioning

²²William H. Mindak and Gerald D. Hursh, "Television's Functions on the Assassination Weekend" in Greenberg and Parker, p. 130.

²³Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1957), chapter 2 as quoted in Ibid.

²⁴For example, L. Bertalanffy, "General Systems Theory: A Critical Review," Yearbook of the Society for General Systems Research (1962), 7, 1-22; K.E. Boulding, The Image (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1956); and Walter Buckley (Ed.), Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist (Chicago, Illinois: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968).

around whatever new balance is achieved. This comes closer to describing what seems to have happened in the case of the Kennedy assassination. We can identify three periods. First came the time when the news had to be told. Then followed a period when society staggered under the blow but struggled to restore equilibrium - the shocked response of ordinary men and women, the shocked but disciplined response of officials striving to maintain law, order, and government. And finally came a period of social reintegration: the government closed ranks around a new chief, and the people overcame their shock, expiated their grief, and returned to old responsibilities in a new situation.²⁵

It is hoped that this study and others with the assassination as their subject will be integrated into a larger theoretical scheme. It is not our purpose here to judge the relative merits of disaster research and general systems theory for the heuristic incorporation of these studies, but it does seem that as the ultimate objective of systems theory moves toward realization, it will incorporate the study of disaster, anyway. So, it appears that the alternatives will not prove viable in the long run.

Reactions in the United States

Successful and attempted assassination of the President is not a new phenomenon in the United States. In 1835, President Andrew Jackson was the intended victim of an assassin, but the gun misfired. The most famous preceding assassination to the current one was, of course, that

²⁵Schramm, p. 7.

of Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865. James A. Garfield was the next victim on July 2, 1881. Just after the turn of the century, on September 6, 1901, President William McKinley was assassinated. Eleven years later, an unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of Theodore Roosevelt. Americans had a twenty-one year reprieve until 1933, when bullets, whose target was President-elect Franklin Roosevelt, were deflected by a by-stander. Finally the most recent precedent was the attempt on President Harry Truman in 1950. The assassination of John F. Kennedy, too, is now a matter of history. Despite the precedent, however, the loss of this young and vital man by violence was no less a shock to the current generation.

Evidence analyzed thus far indicates that the assassination captured and retained the attention - and gripped the emotions - of a larger number of people, at a deeper level of awareness and affect, for a longer duration than any other singular event in the twentieth century; perhaps, in history. In these respects, the event seems to bear greater significance than "the beginning - or end - of World War II or the equally sudden death of Franklin D. Roosevelt."²⁶ For these reasons and because the audience is now peopled with social scientists, this event and related ones will probably be the object of research for a long time to come.

²⁶Waldo W. Burchard, "Reactions to the Assassination of President Kennedy - A Preliminary Report I," (Northern Illinois University), p. 1.

A group of social scientists met in Washington, D.C. the day after the assassination to organize and coordinate study of the event.²⁷ As of mid-April, 1964, scarcely five months after the assassination, at least thirty-three research projects were underway.²⁸

Diffussion of the News

Due to the ubiquity of the mass media, the bureaucratic settings in which most Americans interact and the time of day, the news of the assassination diffused at a very swift pace. In those studies measuring time elapsed between the assassination and first hearing of it, over two-thirds of the respondents heard about it within thirty minutes and over ninety per cent before an hour had passed.²⁹

Three Systemic Stages

During the initial stage of reaction, most Americans felt shock and disbelief.³⁰ Most people turned to the mass media for confirmation. The majority of Americans then

²⁷E. Langer, "Kennedy's Assassination: Study Organized by Social Scientists," Science, Vol. 142, No. 3598 (December, 1963), pp. 1146-7.

²⁸Burchard, p. 2.

²⁹Schramm, p. 15.

³⁰Ibid., p. 16.

suspended their normal activities and moved into the second stage: the emotional response that characterizes grief for a loved one. Included in this grief syndrome are physical as well as psychological reactions.³¹ The third stage was one of reintegration in which Americans recovered and returned to their normal activities. The majority achieved this by the fourth day after the assassination.³²

Demographic Differences

Women consistently showed deeper, more emotional, vivid and dramatic reactions than men.³³ The reactions of different age groups were not compared in these studies.

All the studies consistently found an inverse relationship between social status and the intensity of feelings and beliefs about the assassination. Working-class and, to some extent, middle-class respondents expressed more intense sadness and sorrow and more extreme opinions than those with upper-class educations, incomes, or occupations. This relationship held for both the immediate responses and the responses a few weeks later, when most passions had somewhat subsided. What those of higher status did was resort to cognitive rather than affective behavior.³⁴

³¹Sheatsley and Feldman, pp. 159-60.

³²Sheatsley and Feldman, p. 160; Mindak and Hursh, p. 140; and Charles M. Bonjean, Richard J. Hill and Harry W. Martin, "Reactions to the Assassination in Dallas" in Greenberg and Parker, p. 185.

³³Greenberg and Parker, "Social Research on the Kennedy Assassination" in Greenberg and Parker, p. 367.

³⁴Ibid., p. 371.

Level of education seemed to follow the same pattern as social status. The "civilizing effect" of education is posited as an explanation for these differences.³⁵

Mass Media

One indication of the unparalleled attention to the mass media is the amount of television viewing estimated by the A.C. Nielsen Co. for the period from November 22-25, 1963. Approximately 166 million Americans in over fifty-one million homes tuned in at some time and in one-sixth of these homes, the television set was on for eleven hours a day. The average viewing time was approximately eight hours per day.³⁶ According to some observers, television and the other media were largely responsible for the prevailing calm, lack of collective disorganization or violence, and the relative absence of fear and anxiety. Television provided a personal experience that the individual shared with the nation.

The experiences of 150 million Americans before their television sets during the dark weekend, were a sharing of common information, a reassertion of national norms, and a national act of mourning, which must have been for many viewers a catharsis of grief. When the experience is seen in this way, it is somewhat easier to

³⁵James S. Coleman and Sidney Hollander, Jr., "Changes in Beliefs in the Weeks Following the Assassination" in Greenberg and Parker, p. 263.

³⁶A.C. Nielsen Co., "T.V. Responses to the Death of the President" (New York, 1963).

understand why the experience was so largely grief rather than anxiety, why Americans closed the book on an anxiety over conspiracy more quickly than Europeans did, and why the recovery after the weekend of grief came so comparatively soon, came with elements of rededication and reintegration rather than divisiveness and disquiet.³⁷

In a related observation, Sheatsley and Feldman report that the assassination "had practically no effect at all, even in the short run, on certain basic beliefs and values of the American people."³⁸ Table 1 shows their findings.

TABLE 1: Effect of Assassination on Selected Basic Beliefs³⁹

<u>Belief</u>	<u>Before Assassination</u>		<u>After</u>
	<u>Date</u>	<u>% Agreeing</u>	<u>% Agreeing</u>
Feel strongly or very strongly about religious beliefs.....	6/63	66	69
Most people can be trusted.....	4/57	75	77
Communist Party members should be allowed to speak on the radio.....	4/57	17	18
Death is like a long sleep.....	1/63	55	59
Death is not tragic for the person who dies, only for the survivors.....	1/63	82	82
White students and Negro students should go to the same schools (whites only).....	6/63	63	62

³⁷Schramm, p. 24.

³⁸Sheatsley and Feldman, p. 174.

³⁹Ibid., p. 175.

This table has important implications for the present study. If there was no shift in basic American attitudes as a result of the assassination and the subsequent murder of the accused assassin, might we expect any shift in another culture?

Foreign Reaction

In partial answer to the above question, Greenberg and Parker note that "speculative comparisons with Europe, which lacked our pervasive coverage, might suggest that the extensive television coverage during the weekend enabled (the American) people to achieve 'cognitive closure'."⁴⁰ On the other hand,

outside the United States, there was not the same intensive involvement throughout the four days that was experienced by nearly all Americans. There has also been a slower decline in publications about Kennedy, in rumors, in suspicions that the facts are not known, and in a belief that Oswald either was not the killer or was the tool of a larger plot. A traveler outside the United States is quickly aware of a continued attention to Kennedy that is far greater than in the United States, of an unwillingness to close a book that Americans have firmly closed. It is unclear even which of the two phenomena requires explanation: the rapid decline in the attention paid by Americans, or the continued attention in other countries. Even without explanation, the difference reminds us of the different courses public opinion can take and of our meager knowledge of its dynamics.⁴¹

⁴⁰Greenberg and Parker, p. 364.

⁴¹Coleman and Hollander, p. 268.

To repeat, it appears that the American public reflected no change in basic attitudes as a result of the assassination. By definition, foreign nations constitute "publics-at-a-distance" when attending to internal events in other nations. The distance, of course, varies among foreign publics and with the relative magnitude of the event. Consequently, it would appear to be a safe assumption that if American attitudes were not affected by this extraordinary event, the attitudes of other nations would also be unaffected. Apparently, however, this is not the case.

In the United States, mass media coverage was continuous for four consecutive days following the assassination. The constant flow of information was comprehensive and perceived as reliable. The apparent effects of the coverage and the concomitant attention were to allay anxieties; provide a mass, emotional catharsis and a high degree of "cognitive closure;" and in large measure, contribute to the reintegration of the American social system. The reaction of the American public could be characterized as personal-emotional. The end of the television coverage on the fourth day seemed to coincide with the recovery of the American public and their adaptation to the new situation.

In their daily round of activities, few foreigners probably have occasion to think about the United States.

An extraordinary event such as the assassination, however, undoubtedly imposed the United States on the awareness and perceptions of most foreigners. This heightened awareness of the nation and things "American" could affect the responses of foreigners regarding the United States, its leaders and citizens.

Other nations did not have as extensive mass media coverage of the event. Speculative accounts from other nations indicate that there was a strong personal-emotional reaction, but doubts about conspiracy, for instance, persisted long after they had died in the United States.⁴² The volume of press coverage on Kennedy and the assassination after the four days was greater in the foreign press. Apparently, people outside the United States did not achieve the same degree of "cognitive closure." Consequently, had any systematic research been conducted in Europe, for instance, there may have been a marked, albeit temporary, shift in attitudes toward America. It was partly on the basis of such an assumption that the present study was undertaken. Before we try to assess the Mexican reaction, let us look at Mexico.

⁴²Coleman and Hollander, p. 268; and Greenberg and Parker, p. 364.

Mexico, Mexicans, the United States
and Kennedy

A disaster occurring within one social system has consequences for that social system. Yet in this day of rapid diffusion and systemic interdependence, the consequences are likely to extend beyond national boundaries. Since the United States is a leading world power, its national leaders are thrust to the top of the international hierarchy; if a catastrophe should strike such a leader, repercussions naturally resound throughout the world. This was the case with the assassination of President Kennedy.

The focus of this study is the reaction of the Mexican people. Although interaction between the two systems is continually increasing, the United States-Mexican borderline remains a cultural-dividing line. Socio-cultural variables make prediction of reactions in Mexico on the basis of reactions in the United States virtually impossible.

In order to exploit this natural experiment in cross-cultural attitudes,⁴³ it was necessary to approach it from a sociological perspective. Form and Loomis have said, "Studies of personality adjustment under stress, although important, must be analyzed within the broader social and

⁴³Eugene Jacobson, Hideya Kumata and Jeanne Gullahorn, "Cross-cultural Contributions to Attitude Research," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer, 1960), p. 223.

cultural contexts of life."⁴⁴ In another source, Loomis says that ". . . if modern industrial societies are considered sensate or Geselleschaft-like, many more primitive societies of more Gemeinschaft-like or ideational cultures may react differently to disaster."⁴⁵

The Mexican society is, indeed, more Gemeinschaft-like and ideational than United States society. Mexico is considered an underdeveloped nation, albeit all indexes of development seem to indicate that she is developing rapidly.

The political Revolution spanned two decades and ended in 1930. Since then, Mexico has been in the throes of an economic revolution that has gained increasing momentum and is now focussing on agrarian reform and industrial expansion.⁴⁶ As these changes are effected, social benefits accrue. Since 1930, the gross national product has increased five times; per capita income has more than doubled; one hundred million acres of land have been distributed; agricultural production has increased fourfold. The mortality rate has been cut in half. The literacy rate has doubled to 60% of the population.⁴⁷

⁴⁴William H. Form and Charles P. Loomis, et al., "The Persistence and Emergence of Social and Cultural Systems in Disasters," American Sociological Review, Vol. 21, No. 2 (April, 1956), p. 185.

⁴⁵Charles P. Loomis, "Social Systems Under Stress - Disasters and Disruptions," p. 134.

⁴⁶Edwin M. Martin, "The Economic Revolution in Mexico" Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 49, No. 1278 (December 23, 1963), p. 960.

⁴⁷Ibid.

For the most part, however, these statistics reflect only one of the "two economies". One is advanced and the other is at subsistence level or below, a characteristic situation in the developing countries. Today, the per capita income is \$330 and approximately half the population received less than \$100 annually. The rural population comprises fifty per cent of the total, yet it produces only twenty per cent of the national wealth. The reciprocal of the figure cited above: forty per cent (conservative estimate) cannot read. Finally, the population growth rate of three per cent adds one million individuals annually and necessitates the creation of 350,000 new jobs annually.⁴⁸ "Mexico is moving toward the Gesellschaft-type of society and . . . strains accompany this process of change."⁴⁹

Much of Mexico's success can undeniably be attributed to its contiguity to and interaction with the United States. In his book published just months prior to the assassination, Howard F. Cline described the status of interaction between the United States and Mexico.

Mexico and the United States are interacting more vigorously, more extensively, and more intensely, than at any earlier time. But unlike some previous epochs, contacts are friendly, cordial, and largely routine . . . A distillation from

⁴⁸Martin, p. 961.

⁴⁹Charles P. Loomis, Zona K. Loomis and Jeanne E. Gullahorn, Linkages of Mexico and the United States, (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station, 1966) Research Bulletin 14, p. 54.

experience has firmly established the working conclusion (accepted by both countries): the only viable long-term basis for living together is partnership, based on mutual esteem and reciprocal confidence.

He continues:

Contacts between the republics . . . have multiplied. Probably more Americans know Mexico than any other foreign land. Across countless conference tables, in numerous joint enterprises, and in informal, popular interchanges among businessmen, students, and just plain citizens. The deep reservoir of good will that has been thus accumulated displaces many of the hidden resentments which formerly poked above the surface to founder the unwary.⁵⁰

In order to measure the amount of and desire for "systemic linkage" between Mexicans and Americans, the Loomis study from which the data for this study were taken measured the amount of interaction between citizens of the respective systems and their attitudes toward cooperation with citizens of the other system.⁵¹

Some pertinent observations on interaction between the two systems follow. The income which Mexico receives via tourist dollars and bracero labor from the United States has been crucial for her stability and growth. The number of Mexicans who desire to become and eventually do become

⁵⁰Howard F. Cline, The United States and Mexico, revised and enlarged edition, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 432.

⁵¹The theoretical base for the Loomis study is expounded in: Charles P. Loomis, Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand and Company, 1960).

naturalized American citizens has always been relatively large.⁵² About eight per cent of Mexicans speak English and about three per cent of Americans speak Spanish. Between ten and seventeen per cent of Mexicans attend to radio or television broadcasts originating in the United States. Sixteen per cent of Mexican respondents reported having American friends and nineteen per cent of Americans have Mexican friends.⁵³ The Loomis study indicated that nearly one-quarter of the population of the United States and the same proportion of the urban Mexican population had visited across the national border.⁵⁴ In spite of these behavioral linkages, however, Mexican culture has maintained a unique identity which blends the assimilated cultures of its origin: Latin and American Indian. The consequent "national character: complicates the problem of prediction of reaction. Cline asserts:

The important traits of the Mexican character, as judged by themselves and foreigners over the years, include a number of favorable sides, as well as some that evoke strong criticism. Both are 'Mexican.' Perhaps a noteworthy primary fact is that on a great number of matters Mexicans are ambivalent; they show two faces, and have at the same time two opposed views. No one is certain why this occurs, but it is a basic and bewildering fact.

⁵²Loomis, et al., Linkages of Mexico and the United States, pp. 4 & 5.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 13-15.

⁵⁴Loomis, et al., Linkages . . ., p. 74.

The following instances are illustrative of this "fact":

Running in parallel channels to gaiety, humor, and wit is a deep morbid strain. This sadness or tristeza is attributable to both European and Indian backgrounds and manifests itself in innumerable facets of Mexican life. Melancholia underlies song and story. Death is not feared; it is a constant companion whose presence is taken as natural rather than shocking. The co-existence of melancholia and optimism seems unlikely, but . . . connected in obscure ways to pessimism and submission is a pattern of violence and relative indifference to personal suffering and cruelty to humans and animals. Callousness and violence are as much a part of the Mexican heritage as the strong Mexican emphasis on humanitarianism and an easy-going tolerance of individual and group diversity.⁵⁵

One finding that emerged from the Loomis study contradicts Cline's last assertion. Using the Bogardus Social Distance Scale, Loomis found that . . .

Mexicans manifest a surprising amount of prejudice, particularly toward Protestants, Negroes, Jews and Indians, especially those Indians who do not speak Spanish. The rather high prejudice manifested toward "whites" appears to be responses of Mexicans who take pride in brown or "Indian" color, a characteristic of considerable value, for example, in running for political office in Mexico. The greater prejudice in Mexico than in the United States, particularly for such status-roles as fellow citizens or fellow workers, was unexpected by the investigators associated with the study. However, these facts concerning the relatively high amount of prejudice manifest by the Mexicans as compared with citizens of the United States need to be set against another consideration. The extent of prejudice of Mexicans as compared with that of North Americans is considerably more closely related to educational

⁵⁵Cline, pp. 60-62.

attainment - the higher the education the less the tendency to reject others who are different.⁵⁶

Such findings which are contrary to expectation illustrate the power of scientific survey research to dispel "common-sense" generalizations which, by virtue of their wide-spread acceptance, may be paid lip service, even by experts. These generalizations can and should be utilized as the basis for hypotheses to be tested.

Figure II shows some further hypotheses which Loomis and his associates tested in the first phase of the Five Nation Study.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Loomis, et al., Linkages . . . , p. 74. For a fuller explanation of these findings, see: Jeanne E. Gullahorn and Charles P. Loomis, "A Comparison of Social Distance Attitudes in the United States and Mexico," Social Science Institute, 1966.

⁵⁷Loomis, et al., Linkages

FIGURE II: Phase I, Five-Nation Study; Selected Hypotheses Comparing Mexico and the United States, 1963

The data confirm that Mexicans:

Are linked to systems different from those in which they traditionally interact less... (pp. 64-5)
 Engage in religious activity and evaluate religious organizations more highly... (pp. 55-8)
 Are more territorially immobile and anticipate moving less... (pp. 61-2)
 Are less oriented toward the future... (p. 62)
 Manifest less trust in people, generally... (pp. 64-5)
 Accept social welfare programs which may increase the power of the government more readily than... (pp. 65-6)
 Believe their lives will change more in the near future... (pp. 69-72)
 Evaluate particularism in office less negatively... (pp. 72-3)
 Desire more cooperation and closer ties with the United States... (pp. 28-9)

...than Americans.

The data offer little or no support to indicate that Mexicans:

Interact more within the family and evaluate the family as more important... (pp. 58-61)
 Derive social rank more from ascription and less from achievement... (pp. 63-4)
 Evaluate change less favorable... (p. 72)
 Are more frustrated in the face of rapid change... (pp. 68-9)

...than Americans.

Behavior contacts and friendships with citizens of the other country; level of education; and size of the place of residence were all positively correlated with both behavioral and desired linkage with the other social system.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 75.

Mexican Reaction

President Kennedy apparently liked the Mexican people and they reciprocated. He and his new wife honeymooned in Mexico. As he proposed and eventually established the self-help Alliance for Progress for Latin America, he had Mexico in mind as a model. During his state visit to Mexico in the year before the assassination, President and Mrs. Kennedy received a welcome that was unprecented except by Madero riding down the same streets in 1911.⁵⁹

There can be little doubt that Mexicans, in general, were aware of and identified with, President Kennedy to a greater extent than any previous American leader. His charismatic qualities, to which people all over the world responded, were enhanced for Mexicans by his religion. His high regard for Mexico was readily apparent on his visits there. His interest in Latin America, in general, was expressed in his foreign policy priorities. Lyndon Johnson, on the other hand, bore none of the charismatic qualities, was Protestant and a Southerner from a state which remembers the Alamo with pride. To the extent that Mexicans were aware of these factors and synthesized them, it is conceivable that their attitudes might be affected. It is highly doubtful, however, whether most Mexicans met either condition.

⁵⁹Cline, p. 429.

Due to the relative limitation on the use of the mass media and the relatively high rate of illiteracy extant in Mexico, the major mode of diffusion of the news was probably by word of mouth. Despite these limitations, however, it will be assumed that the news diffused to the urban population with which we are dealing at much the same rate as in the United States. It will be assumed further, for the purposes of this study, that virtually all subjects interviewed on or after November 23, 1963, were aware of the assassination.⁶⁰

Partly as a result of its long-standing interaction with American society, Mexican society is in a period of rapid social change, moving toward a more Gesellschaft-like system. Mexicans are stereotyped, with some validity, as having an emotionally volatile, "Latin temperament" as a component of their national character. These conditions make it difficult to preject the reaction of Mexicans to the assassination. A correspondent for an American newsmagazine filed the following report of his impressions of the reaction in Mexico City.

⁶⁰In survey research, it is a rule of thumb that 10 to 20 per cent of a national sample constitutes a hard core of "know-nothings." In the United States, five and a half hours after the President was shot, only 0.2% had not heard the news. By the morning of the 23rd most urban Mexicans had probably heard the news.

Mexicans are stunned. You hear people talking in horrified tones about the assassination and the fact that it could happen in the United States, which Mexicans look to as a model of law and order . . . Sympathy and friendship here for Mr. Kennedy were heightened by his religion in this almost completely Catholic country, by his overwhelmingly successful visit to Mexico with Mrs. Kennedy last year and by his action in returning the disputed Chamizal area of El Paso to Mexico after a 100-year dispute. Mexicans, it is clear from the reactions to his death, felt a personal identification with Mr. Kennedy. They believed he honestly worked for peace . . . Mexicans are also concerned. They considered Mr. Kennedy 'a great friend' and the most revolutionary President the United States ever had.⁶¹

⁶¹Anon, "Foreign Countries, Too, Mourn 'First Citizen' of the World!," U.S. News and World Report, Vol. 55 (December 2, 1963), pp. 48-9.

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CHAPTER II

THE STUDY DESIGN

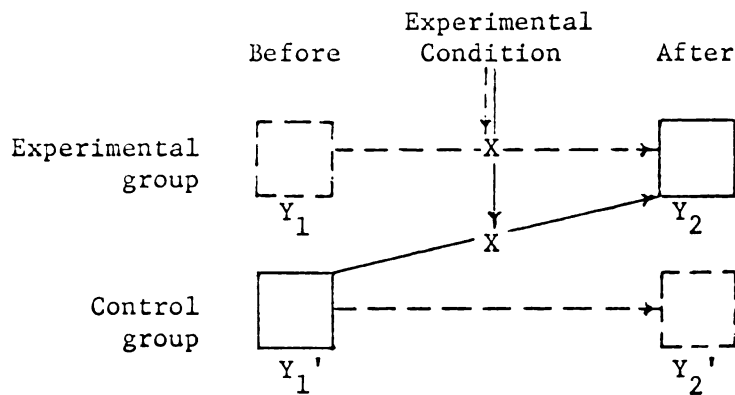
The data for this study were taken from the first phase of the Loomis Five Nation Study to which reference was made in the first chapter. This phase involved the United States and Mexico. The present study will use data from the sample drawn to represent urban Mexico.

The urban Mexican sample was a stratified random sample of the people in urban areas of Mexico, aged twenty-one or older. The findings are based on 1,126 personal interviews. The sample constitutes a close approximation to the adult population of Mexico living in areas of 2,500 or more. The fieldwork began on November 2, 1963 and was finished on December 20, 1963. President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. By that evening, twenty-one days had elapsed since the beginning and interviews had been conducted for 496 respondents, or forty-four per cent of the sample. In the remaining twenty-eight days subsequent to the 22nd, the remaining 630 respondents, or fifty-six per cent of the total, were interviewed. In this study, the pre-assassination subsample will be used as the "control group;"

the assassination as the "experimental variable;" and the post-assassination subsample as the "experimental group."

Thus, the analysis will attempt to impose experimental conditions on a fortuitous situation and determine whether and, to what extent, the assassination affected the attitudes of urban Mexicans. The study is actually an ex post facto "nonexperiment" which approximates a "before-after study with interchangeable groups." In this type of study, two samples are selected in such a way that they represent the same population, i.e., they are matched to make them as near identical as possible with regard to population characteristics. One group, the "control group," is measured without exposure to the experimental variable and the other group, the "experimental group," is measured after exposure to the experimental condition. It is a basic variation on the classical before-after experimental design with one control group. The derivation of the former from the latter experimental design is shown in Figure III. The whole figure represents the classical design, but the solid lines represent the parts employed in the design using interchangeable groups.

FIGURE III: The Before-After Study with Interchangeable Groups as a Variation on the Classical Before-After Study with One Control Group



The difference between the before measure taken on the first group (Y_1') and the after measure (Y_2) is assumed to be due to the effects of the experimental condition (X). In this study, " Y_1' " is the before-assassination subsample, " X " is the assassination and " Y_2 " is the after subsample.

There are a number of reasons why this study, although cast in an experimental frame, cannot be considered an "experiment", in the formal sense. It was not conceived and designed in advance; it is ex post facto. The urban Mexican sample was independently and randomly drawn and representative of urban Mexico; the subsamples do not necessarily have these properties partially because of the fortuitous introduction of the experimental condition, the assassination. Furthermore, there is no way to determine whether the respondents in the after subsample were, in fact, aware of the assassination or the level of their knowledge of the assassination and subsequent events; the schedule was designed for other

purposes and was not altered in order to access and assess the possible effects of the assassination. These problems, which inhere in this type of study, are formidable but it is best to delineate them before the analysis is made.

The Sample⁶²

The urban Mexico sample was designed and interviewed by the International Research Associates, S.A. de C.V. of Mexico City. The interview schedule, which was thoroughly pretested, was lengthy, taking some two hours to administer by trained interviewers. The sample design employed in this study was a new sample, designed during 1963, and using the latest census figures as provided in preliminary form by the Mexican census bureau.

This universe was divided into four urbanization strata, in accordance with data from the census. The number of interviews assigned to each stratum was in the same proportion as that of the actual population, but each stratum was sampled separately in order to prevent random variation from affecting this proportionality.

The cities were arranged geographically into six regions, reflecting broadly the major ethnic and cultural groupings that exist regionally in Mexico. A minimum of one city in

⁶²This section adapted from: International Research Associates S.A. de C.V., "An Attitude Survey in Mexico in 1963: A Description of Sampling Performances," (March, 1964).

each stratum was selected for each of the six zones in which cities of these different populations existed. Within the broad geographic arrangement, the balance of the cities was selected by systematic sampling techniques, beginning from a random start. In both the selection of the minimum of one city per stratum per zone, and in the subsequent selection of the balance required, a probability of inclusion proportionate to population was accorded to each city.

Within each city selected by these methods, a sample of blocks was chosen. These blocks served as second stage sampling units. In order to select households within the sample blocks, a complete list of households on each of the blocks chosen for the city was compiled. The precise number of interviews assigned to each block was calculated by multiplying the total number of interviews for the city by the ratio which households on a given block bore to the total number of households on all sample blocks for the city. In each group of blocks in the sample the specific households interviewed were chosen in the same manner in which the blocks were selected.

A weighting procedure was carried out in order to reduce the bias from sampling mortality. Five call-backs were made in half of the total sample, and one call-back in the other half. It is generally accepted that those persons who are more difficult to reach, and who are interviewed after

repeated call-backs, are more nearly similar to those people who are never located at all, than are those who are found easily. Thus those persons who were found and interviewed only on the second or later call-back were accorded a weight in tabulation sufficient to compensate for the entire mortality of the sample.

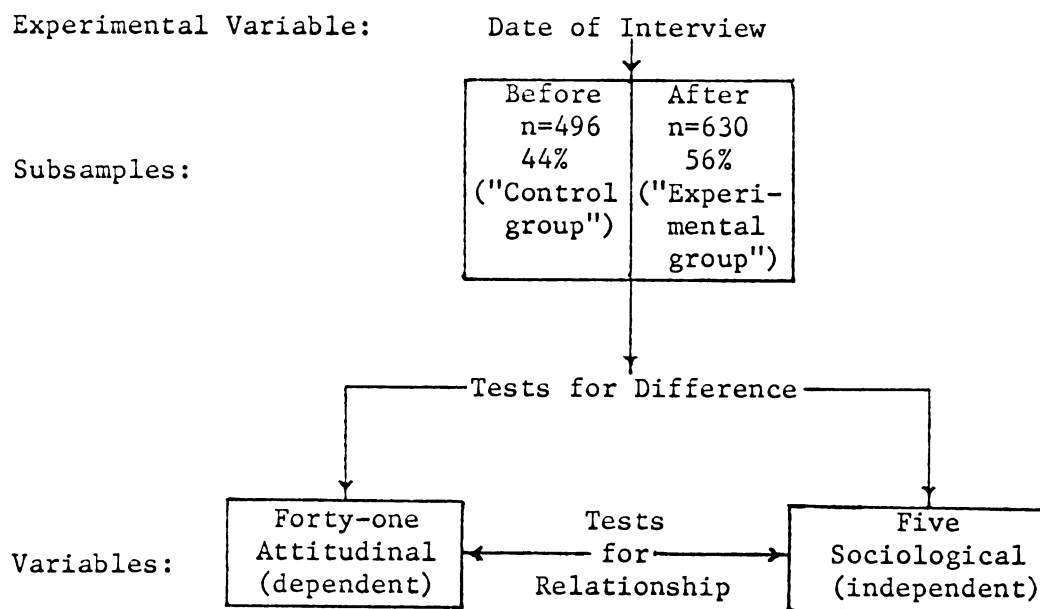
Upon inspection, it was found that this procedure, as expected, had significantly increased the percentage of upper class and male respondents in the sample. These two groups are traditionally the most difficult to interview, and are the principal sources of bias. The proportions of men and of upper class respondents, as they appear in the final deck used in tabulation, resemble closely the actual percentages of persons of these characteristics in the population.

The Variables

It has been pointed out that the urban Mexican sample was divided into two subsamples by the date of interview relative to the date of the assassination which is used as the "experimental condition" for our purposes. Those respondents interviewed on or before November 22, 1963 were combined to form the "before subsample," or "control group," of 496 respondents. Those interviewed after that date comprise the "after subsample," or "experimental group," of 630 respondents. The same question schedule was administered

to all respondents. From this schedule, forty-one attitudinal items were selected as the dependent variables in the analysis. In an effort to isolate the effect of the experimental variable, five dependent, sociological variables were selected. Figure IV provides a schematic representation of the variables employed and their analytic inter-relationships.

FIGURE IV: The Variables



Date of interview was used to distinguish the before and after subsamples. The set of five sociological variables includes: sex, age, level of education completed, head of household occupation and size of place of residence. These variables will be used to determine the interchangeability of the subsample.

The forty-one attitudinal items selected for this analysis seek to measure a wide range of attitudes. They are of two kinds. Thirty-eight of the forty-one are of the Linkert-type, where the respondent is asked to indicate the extent of his agreement with the statement, ranging on a five-point scale from "strongly agree" to "slightly agree" through "don't know", refusal or other response to "slightly disagree" and "strongly disagree".⁶³ The other three items employ a ten-point semantic differential scale, ranging from highest, positive to lowest, negative evaluations.⁶⁴

⁶³Sellitz, et al., pp. 366-9.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 380-3.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The problem of this study, as stated in the first chapter, is to determine whether the assassination affected urban Mexican attitudes and, if so, to describe the nature and extent of the effect. Due to: the insufficiency of relevant theoretical and methodological precedent for this type of problem; the inherent problems specified in the study design; and the nature of the data, it was considered inappropriate to test formal hypotheses. Rather, the object of this analysis will be to answer questions derived from the problem statement.

QUESTION 1: Is there a difference in attitudes as measured before and after the assassination?

In order to answer this question, forty-one items which tap a broad range of attitudes were selected from the schedule and categorized, on the basis of related item content, into fourteen clusters, each containing from one to seven items. The item clusters focus on the degree of alienation, authoritarianism, autonomy, compartmentalization - internalization, religious orthodoxy and fanaticism and the respondents' attitudes toward birth control, foreign linkages,

the future, property rights, social change, socialism and social status.

Comparison of the collective responses of the before and after subsamples seems to indicate that the answer to Question 1 is negative, with qualification. Sixteen of the forty-one items reflect differences, significant at the five per cent or greater level, from before to after. With forty-one items, some of these differences may be attributable to chance. Examination of item content revealed no meaningful pattern of response to explain the differences, with one noteworthy exception.

As Table 2 indicates, there is no apparent relationship among the significantly different responses as measured before and after the assassination, except for the last five items, all of which concern attitudes toward the United States. These five items are all significant at greater than the one per cent level and the mean shift in response for all five is in the positive direction, whereas the difference in response to some of the preceding eleven items are relatively more likely to have occurred by chance and some of them reflect negative mean shifts.

TABLE 2: Significantly Different Attitudinal Items,
Before to After, $p < .05^*$

Item and (Item Designation)	χ^2 & Sig. Level		Direction of Mean Shift
Real friends are as easy as ever to find. (I-2)	19.08	.01	+
People can be trusted.(I-7)	15.10	.01	+
Whatever we do, it is necessary that our leaders outline carefully what is to be done and exactly how to do it.(II-2)	10.85	.05	-
We should be as helpful to people we don't know as we are to our friends.(III-1)	12.20	.05	-
Married couples should practice birth control.(IV)	17.06	.01	-
Political beliefs should have nothing to do with a person's work.(V-1)	17.07	.01	+
New methods of raising children should always be tried out.(XI-1)	15.21	.01	-
I like the kind of work that lets me do things about the same way from one week to the next.(XI-3)	9.78	.05	+
I would be willing to have decay-preventive chemicals added to water.(XII-1)	15.17	.01	-
Political leaders should be changed regularly, even if they are doing a good job.(XII-2)	12.25	.05	+
The only way to provide good medical care for all the people is through some program of governmental health insurance. (XII-5)	13.65	.01	+
Our leaders should be working more with the leaders of the U.S.A.(XIV-1)	31.16	.01	+
Our country should have closer connections and ties with the U.S.A. than we now have.(XIV-2)	19.80	.01	+
On which step would you place the United States <u>right now</u> as to strong and weak? (XIV-3)	19.50	.01	+
Where would you place the United States <u>right now</u> as to good and bad?(XIV-4)	24.81	.01	+
On which step would you place yourself in terms of how friendly you feel toward the American people?(XIV-5)	19.67	.01	+

*For complete listing of forty-one attitudinal items, see Appendix.

TABLE 3: Significant vs. Non-significant Differences in Forty-one Attitudinal Items, Before to After*

<u>Items</u>	<u>Significant</u>	<u>Not Significant</u>	<u>Total</u>
Non-U.S.	11	25	36
U.S.	5	0	5
Total	16	25	41

*With Yate's correction.

As might be expected, the Chi-square of 6.22 is highly significant, approaching the .01 level. So, the gross comparison of attitude responses, before with after, seems to indicate that there is little difference generally in attitudes as expressed by urban Mexicans interviewed before and after the assassination and no discernible relationship or consistent direction of response among the eleven significantly different non-U.S. items. The responses to the items measuring attitudes toward the United States, however, were all significantly different at a very high level and the shift in response from before to after were consistently in the positive direction. These findings suggest that, generally, there was little change in urban Mexican attitudes, but, specifically, with regard to the United States, attitudes did change. This brings us to the next question.

QUESTION 2: To what extent can the differences in attitude be attributed to the Kennedy assassination?

The primary objective of this analysis is to determine the effect, if any, of the Kennedy assassination on the responses of urban Mexicans interviewed after the assassination.

Ideally in order to isolate the possible effect of the assassination, the experimental variable, the before and after subsamples should represent the same population, i. e., the subsamples should not differ significantly. Five sociological variables were employed to determine the degree of deviation from the ideal; sex, age, education, head of household occupation and size of place of residence distributions for the respective subsamples were compared to determine the sub-samples' interchangeability. Tables 4 through 8 show the distributions of subsamples, which were tested for significance of difference by the Chi-square test.

TABLE 4: Sex of Respondent, by %

	<u>Before Assassination</u>	<u>After</u>
Male	34.16	43.17
Female	65.84	56.83
Total	100.00 (n = 496)	100.00 (n = 630)

The sex distributions of the subsamples were significantly different at the .01 level. Both subsamples had higher proportions of women, but the after subsample included a significantly smaller proportion of women.

TABLE 5: Age of Respondent, by %

<u>Years</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
21-29	29.70	24.60
30-39	27.47	27.46
40-49	20.40	19.21
50-59	11.72	13.17
60 & above	10.71	15.56
Total	100.00	100.00

The Chi-square test reflected no difference in the age distributions of the two subsamples.

TABLE 6: Education of Respondent, by %

<u>Years</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
0	16.57	25.71
1 - 4	38.79	42.06
5 - 8	35.15	23.65
9 & above	9.49	8.58
Total	100.00	100.00

The "0" and "5-8" year categories made large contributions to the Chi-square statistic which was significant at the one per cent level.

TABLE 7: Occupation of the Head of the Household, by %

<u>Category</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
White Collar (mgrs., employees, etc.)	8.69	7.62
Service, blue collar and farm workers	46.87	47.14
Not in Labor Force	44.44	45.24
Total	100.00	100.00

No significant differences obtained in the respective occupational distributions.

TABLE 8: Size of Place of Residence, by %

<u>Population</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
2,500-24,999	29.70	18.73
25,000-99,999	7.88	12.22
100,000-499,999	49.90	17.62
500,000 & over	12.52	51.43
Total	100.00	100.00

The size of the respondents' places of residence in the before and after subsamples was significantly different above the .01 level.

Tables 4 through 8 indicate that there is considerable variation between the respondents interviewed before and after the assassination along three of the five sociological variables selected for this analysis. In comparing the after subsample with the before, we find that it had relatively fewer women, lower education and more urbanization. The differences between the ages and head of household occupation were no greater than might have been expected to occur by chance. On the basis of these findings, the interchangeability of the subsamples remains in doubt.

The sociological variables and the differences they reflect between the subsamples are only important to this analysis to the extent that they are related to, or associated with, the attitudinal items. It may well be that the dependence of the so-called "dependent variables" on the

"independent", sociological variables may be more variable in other, less highly differentiated cultures. In other words, although the subsamples could possibly represent different populations as described by standard sociological measures, both populations might express similar attitudes in spite of the population differences. The differences among the sociological variables may not bear consequences as grave for a Mexican study as they do for a study of American attitudes. This appears to be the case in the present study.

In an effort to clarify the dependence issue, both subsamples were stratified along the sociological variables and each respective stratum in one subsample was compared with the corresponding stratum in the other, e.g., the responses of males in the before subsample were compared with those in the after subsample for each attitudinal item and the cell's Chi-square was computed to test for difference in response. In addition, the mean response for each item was examined for direction of difference, if a difference was found. The results of this analysis appear in Table 9. In the table a positive sign ("+") indicates a Chi-square significant at the five per cent or greater level and a higher mean for the after subsample as compared to the before subsample. Likewise, a negative sign ("-") indicates a significant difference between the response of the respective strata of the before and after subsamples to each item and a negative shift from

the before to after mean response for that item. The absence of any sign indicates that there was no significant difference beyond what might have been expected to occur by chance. The data presented in the right-hand column, "Item" significance and direction, represents that given in Table 2.

TABLE 9: Before-After Comparison of Stratified Sociological Variables by
Attitudinal Items: Significance of Difference, $p < .05$, and
Direction of Mean Shift in Response

Attitudinal Items Measuring Degree of... Or Expressed about...	Sociological Variables*																		Item
	Sex		Age					Education				Occupation			Residence				
	Female	Male	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	0	1-4	5-8	9+	NILF	Blue	White	2500-	25000-	100000-	500000+	
Alienation(I)	1										+	-			-	-	-		+
	2	+		+			+					+					+		+
	3											-				-	-		
	4		-									-					-		
	5																		
	6																		
	7	+			+				+		-								+
Authorita-	1							-				+			+				
rianism(II)	2				+												+		-
	3														+				
Autonomy(III)	1	-										-							-
	2																		
Brth Cntl(IV)	1	-						-				-					-		-
Compart.-	1	+		+					+			+	+		+	+	+	+	+
Intern.(V)	2							-				+			-				
Foreign	1																		
Linkages(VI)	2							+										+	
Future(VII)	1			+															
Property	1							+										+	
Rights(VIII)	2																		
Religious Fa-	1											+							
naticism (IX)	2																		
Religious	1																		
Orthodoxy(X)	2																		
	3							-					-						
	4															-	-		
	5																		
Self and	1	-		-				+				-				-			-
Change(XI)	2		-									+							
	3							-				+							+
Socialism	1	-		-	+			-											-
(XII)	2							+										+	+
	3					+													
	4																		
	5																		+
Status(XIII)	1							+							+		+		
United	1	+	+		+	+	+	+				+	+		+	+	+	+	+
States(XIV)	2	+			+			+	+			+	+		+	+		+	+
	3	+			+						+		+				+		+
	4	+		+	+			+				+	+				+	+	+
	5	+	+		+			+				+	+				+		+

*Sex, Education and Size of Place of Residence were significantly different at the .01 level; Age and Head of Household Occupation were not significantly different for the two subsamples.

This table provides additional support for observations made earlier. The differences in the response patterns between the non-U.S. items and those measuring attitudes toward the United States are readily discernible in terms of the relative number of significant differences and their direction. A tentative evaluation of Table 3 indicated this difference regarding the comparison of the gross responses and implied that attitudes changed in a consistently positive direction with regard to the United States.

There are 738 stratum-by-attitude cells in Table 9. 111 (15.0%) reflect significant differences: seventy-two non-U.S. out of 648 (11.1%) and thirty-nine U.S. out of ninety (43.3%). Table 10 provides the relative distributions with regard to significance.

TABLE 10: Stratified Significant/Not Significant Differences by
Non-U.S./United States Attitudes

	Significant	Not Significant	Total
Non-U.S.	72	576	648
United States	39	51	90
Total	111	627	738

The Chi-square of 61.71, significant at the .01 level, indicates that there is a significantly larger proportion of differences along the sociological strata with regard to attitudes toward the United States vis-a-vis other attitudes than was probable by chance.

Table 9 also specified the direction of change in mean response for each significant difference. Table 11 summarizes the tabulation of this measure, when the non-U.S. and U.S. shifts are compared.

TABLE 11: Direction of Mean Change for Significant Differences, Before to After, by Non-U.S./United States Attitudes

	Positive(+)	Negative(-)	Total
Non-U.S.	38	34	72
United States	39	0	39
Total	77	34	111

The Chi-square, corrected for Yate's, is 24.37 which is significant at the .01 level. The fact that all of the statistically different cell means for attitudes toward the United States were higher after the assassination, whereas the shifts in means for the other items were about equally positive and negative, provides further justification for looking at these groupings separately.

Furthermore, examination of the whole configuration of the incidence of the differences in Table 9 reveals quite different patterns for the two groupings. Horizontally, across the sociological variables, only three of the non-U.S. attitudinal items have at least one entry under every variable; all of the U.S. items meet this criterion. Vertically, there seems to be a common tendency for change along strata in both groupings, i.e., those strata which reflect differences in the non-U.S. items also tend to differ on the United States

items, although the association between the strata and non-U.S. attitudes does not appear to be as strong as it is with attitudes toward the United States. Although these findings are not conclusive, they do suggest strongly that the attitudes measured before and after the assassination were essentially the same or, at least, there was no discernible differential pattern of response, except for attitudes concerning the United States. So, it seems that the assassination did affect urban Mexican attitudes. Given the nature of the data and the mode of analysis employed, however, it is impossible to determine the precise contribution of the assassination to the change in attitudes toward the United States.

Discussion and Conclusion

In summary, we have conducted a "natural" experiment, i.e., exploited a fortuitous event occurring in one social system as an experimental condition to measure its potential effect on an attitude survey midway through the data collection process in the field in another social system. There is little precedent for this type of study within one social system, let alone across socio-cultural lines, despite general recognition of the effect of outside, uncontrolled events on the survey research process as a significant source of problems of validity. In this case, the assassination of President Kennedy was an extraordinary event and the survey was being conducted in urban Mexico. The pragmatic question

arose regarding the possible consequences of the assassination for the larger study. To answer this question was the primary objective of the present analysis.

Perhaps the findings of this and other studies related to deaths of significant persons will be incorporated in a larger context. Two existing bodies of knowledge seem appropriate: the field of disaster research and general systems theory. Given the nature of the data and the cross-cultural setting of the present study and the state of these larger matrices within which this study may eventually be meaningfully integrated, it was not possible to draw formal hypotheses predicting the effect of the assassination on the population of urban Mexico. Rather, two basic, descriptive questions were addressed to the data. Before we discuss these questions, however, let us review factors relevant to the Mexican reaction.

One of the salient findings to emerge from studies of the American public was that basic American attitudes were unaffected by the assassination, in spite of the general personal disorientation and deep, emotional response which characterized the post-assassination period. Observation of foreign publics revealed that they did not achieve as high a degree of cognitive closure regarding the assassination as the American public. Mexico, in addition to being subject to this generalization, lies contiguous to the United States and is highly dependent on it. There is a high amount of intercultural interaction, although cultural boundaries are maintained. Mexico

is relatively the more underdeveloped and homogeneous and less highly differentiated of the two societies and, viewed stereotypically, a "peasant society" with a subsistence economy and characterized by a "volatile, Latin Temperament"; a "banana republic" manifesting, to varying degrees, the implications of this epithet. Mexico is also, nominally, a Roman Catholic society; John Kennedy was a Roman Catholic. This fact, his charismatic personality and championship of Latin American progress were probably all important contributing factors to his popularity in Mexico -- his photograph is still prominently displayed in small shops in rural and urban Mexico. The net result of these observations for this study is the practical impossibility of predicting, or even hypothesizing, the outcome of this analysis. .

In the analysis, the before - and after - assassination subsamples were compared in an effort to answer two focal questions: 1) Is there a difference in attitudes as measured before and after the assassination? and 2) To what extent can the differences in attitude be attributed to the Kennedy assassination? An overall comparison of the attitudinal items indicated that there was little difference in the attitudes of the subsamples, except for their respective attitudes toward the United States. The evidence for this finding was strengthened by the stratification and subsequent partialling of the sociological variables with the attitudinal items. The differences in attitudes toward the United States, as

contrasted with the other attitudinal items, were consistently and highly statistically significant; consistent across sociological strata and uniformly positive. Although it is impossible to isolate and determine the exact contribution of the assassination to these differences, due to the possible contamination of population differences in the two groupings, it seems clear from the pattern and nature of the differences that the assassination did affect the attitudes toward America held by certain segments of the urban Mexican public. The strata which reflected statistically significant differences consistently across the five attitudinal items were: females; respondents aged 30-39 years; those with no education; those not in the labor force and blue collar workers; and those living in cities of 100,000 or more.

The general American reaction, as we have seen, was deep, but variable among population strata. The studies of the American response were designed specifically to elicit and describe that response; we have discussed the shortcomings of the present study in this regard. The statements about the United States, however, do seem to provide an approximate index of Mexican sentiments regarding the assassination. Reference to Table 9 and recall of the American findings as reported earlier from The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public provides an interesting comparison, despite the cross-cultural factor.

The differences among the various strata of prior characteristics when partialled with the United States items agree to a considerable extent with the population differences reported in response to the assassination for Americans. American women were more deeply affected than American men. Mexican women differed significantly on all five items, whereas men only varied on two of the five items. In the age breakdown, nearly all significant differences fall under the age of forty-nine and most fall within the 30-39 category. This observation might support a hypothesis about Kennedy's appeal to the young and their identification with him. Although some samples were restricted by age, age groupings were not compared in any of the American studies. The educational differences concur with the American findings: the lower the years of education, the more affective the reaction; the higher the education, the more cognitive the reaction. The post-assassination respondents with no education agreed more strongly with four of the five items. The item that reflected no change for them changed in the responses of those on the highest level of education. This latter group, as a whole, perceived the United States as being stronger in the wake of the assassination. The "head of household occupation" category yields results which tend to support the educational findings in both populations. The white-collar responses showed no differences, but those in the blue-collar, and not in the labor force (including subsistence farmers) showed a

strong, positive change in response. Finally, the more highly urbanized respondents, living in cities of 100,000 or more, shifted in the positive direction. These differences probably inhere in the characteristics of urbanism, generally, and their manifestations in Mexico, specifically. Among these are more interpersonal contacts; more interaction with Americans; higher level of exposure to and attention to the mass media and, therefore, higher knowledge of world events, including the assassination. So, the attitudes of certain strata could be characterized as having been significantly affected by the assassination. For the most part, then, these differences are in agreement with corresponding findings in the United States.

Social psychology has devoted a great deal of attention to the study of attitudes. Basic attitudes tend to persist individually and collectively. They may change gradually over time, but do not usually change drastically. The literature indicates that it takes an extraordinary event and/or involvement at the "gut level" to bring about a significant change.

It was assumed in Chapter I that a person does not, in his normal round of daily activity, usually have occasion to think about countries outside his own, or more specifically, components of those social system or events occurring within them. If you, the reader, are an American, how often do you have occasion to think about Mexico? the Mexican Government?

the Mexican people? These are probably unfair questions, but consider our relatively higher level of education among other things, our greater knowledge of other countries. The assumption that most people do not think about foreign countries probably held for most of the urban Mexicans interviewed before the assassination. Their attitudes toward America were most likely lying dormant in spite of their apparent high regard for President Kennedy. The assassination, however, forced the United States on the awareness of those who heard about it in the after sample. Their normally dormant attitudes toward America and things American were brought into the conscious and into focus by the assassination.

Furthermore, it seems that the assassination served an integrative function for the American social system - social differences were momentarily forgotten - couldn't this apply to the larger social system and national differences as well?

Such arguments are speculative, but could possibly account for the uniformly significant and positive change in response which is not without face contradiction: assuming the validity of the apparent change, urban Mexicans desired more cooperation and closer ties with the United States and its leaders; evaluated America as stronger, better, and friendlier in the wake of the assassination of the American President.

Methodologically, we might say here that although the merits of a planned, controlled, scientific experiment cannot be denied, ex post facto studies should not be dismissed

merely because they are conducted "after the fact"; they can and should be exploited for their potential heuristic value. The power of the conclusions reached in the present study could have been intensified by the use of matching and/or multivariate analysis, but these techniques were considered beyond the scope of this study, which was viewed as descriptive from the outset.

The findings of the study, at least, may serve as a reminder of the imperative for those who engage in research to attend to events in the wider world. Considering the ubiquity of the mass media and the consequent speed of reportage of events, nationally and internationally, it is in the vested interest of the professional social scientist to be better informed than the lay public. According to most observers, it was largely due to the ever-increasing number of transmitters and receivers and the concomitant attention by and to the mass media that the transition was achieved so smoothly, without apparent disorientation and disintegration. There were no changes in basic American attitudes following the 1963 assassination. There may have been some changes of a cumulative sort resulting from this one and the 1968 assassinations, but we cannot say.

Most investigators apparently assume that (basic attitudes) are too stable to warrant frequent inclusion in interview schedules. A clear lesson from the present research endeavor is that such inquiries should be replicated frequently so as to establish norms of change for a variety of

survey items. Then, when we wish to assess the impact of a particular event, we shall have a better-understood instrument.⁶⁶

Sheatsley and Feldman's observations are appropriate for the present study as well as their own. Their proposal should be implemented to provide safeguards against the methodological problems which arose in this study and plague most ex post facto studies designed to measure attitude change. For the time being, this is impracticable for most countries in the world, including Mexico, but with the relative high frequency of opinion polls and attitude surveys and studies which are conducted in industrialized nations, especially in the United States, the recommendation could and should become policy.

⁶⁶Sheatsley and Feldman, p. 176.

APPENDIX

Attitudinal Items

I. Alienation

1. Sometimes I feel all alone in the world.
2. Real friends are as easy as ever to find.
3. People's ideas change so much that I wonder if we'll ever have anything to depend upon.
4. I often wonder what the meaning of life really is.
5. There is little chance to get ahead in this life unless a man knows the right people.
6. Sometimes I have the feeling that other people are using me.
7. People can be trusted.

II. Authoritarianism

1. I find it easier to follow rules than to do things on my own.
2. Whatever we do, it is necessary that our leaders outline carefully what is to be done and exactly how to go about it.
3. Children should be taught that there is only one right way to do things.

III. Autonomy

1. We should be as helpful to people we don't know as we are to our friend.
2. Everyone should think the same about what is right and what is wrong.

IV. Birth Control

1. Family planning or birth control has been discussed by many people. What is your feeling about a married couple practicing birth control. If you had to decide which ONE of these statements best expresses your point of view?

V. Compartmentalization-Internalization

1. Political beliefs should have nothing to do with a person's work.
2. I always try to keep my political beliefs to myself.

VI. Foreign Linkages

1. It is a good thing for companies and business firms from other countries to do business and have factories in our country.
2. It is a good thing for our young people to marry people from other countries.

VII. Future

1. Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

VIII. Property Rights

1. Property is something which should be shared.
2. Some people have too much property and others don't have enough.

IX. Religious Fanaticism

1. It really doesn't matter what an individual believes about religion as long as he is happy with it.
2. I believe the world would really be a better place if more people had the religious beliefs which I have.

X. Religious Orthodoxy

1. I believe there is real hell where men are punished for their sins.
2. I believe God has a plan for every person's life.
3. I believe in a life after death.
4. I believe there is a devil who tries to make men sin.

5. To me the most important work of the church is saving people's souls.

XI. Self & Change

1. Some people feel that in bringing up children, new ways and methods should be tried whenever possible. Others feel that trying out new methods is dangerous. What is your feeling on the statement which I will now read to you? "New methods of raising children should always be tried out."
2. Some people are more set in their ways than others. How would you rate yourself - do you find it very easy to change your ways, somewhat easy to change your ways, slightly difficult to change, or very difficult to change?
3. I like the kind of work that lets me do things about the same way from one week to the next.

XII. Socialism

1. Health experts say adding certain chemicals to drinking water results in less decay in people's teeth. If you could add these chemicals to your water, with little cost to you, would you be willing to have the chemicals added?
2. Running a city or village or any governmental organization is an important job. What is your feeling on this statement: "Political leaders should be changed regularly, even if they are doing a good job."
3. Some people believe that the government should play a bigger part in training rural youth in agricultural practices. What is your feeling on this statement: "Rural youth who remain on the farm should be given more training to make them better farmers, even if we have to pay more taxes to provide that training."
4. A man who works as hard and as well as he can deserves a comfortable standard of living.
5. The only way to provide good medical care for all the people is through some program of governmental health insurance.

XIII. Status

1. The man who "works with his hands" has more self-respect than the man who does office work.

XIV. United States

1. Our leaders should be working more with the leaders of the U.S.A.
2. Our country should have closer connection and ties with the U.S.A. than we now have.
3. The strongest nations are at the top of the ladder and the weakest are at the bottom. On which step would you place the United States right now as to strong and weak?
4. Where would you place the United States right now as to good and bad?
5. On which step would you place the United States right now in terms of how friendly you feel toward the American people?

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