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### РАЗРУШАЯ СТЕРЕОТИПЫ

В работе представлены результаты небольшого социологического исследования подростков, проведенного в американском летнем лагере Camp Pontiac, NY, Copake с целью выявления их интересов, планов на будущее, любимой музыки, фильмов, книг и их отношения к спорту. Это было сделано путем анкетирования. Отдельно ставилась задача исследовать сленг американской молодежи в США. Обосновывается важность проведения подобных исследований.

Stereotype is a very firm and simple idea about what a particular type of person or thing is like.

Stereotypes are easy to form and difficult to break because of the lack of true information, because of people's laziness to search for such information, because of the lack of opportunities for many to get a personal image about the object of interest. As for American studies during the Cold War it was the subject of ideology rather than social studies. Soon after its end the tendency to praise everything American became overwhelming in Russian mass media [1].

But this has nothing to do with people's lifestyles, interests and beliefs. Sociological studies which reveal the truth about any aspects of lives of Americans break some stereotypes at the same time. The results of one of such studies [2] represented in table 1 are telling:

Table 1.

	Stereotypes	Results of the study
1	Because mental ability declines with age, older people are less productive than younger ones.	On most measures of productivity, older workers are as productive as younger ones, despite some decline in their perception and reactive speed.
2	Because Americans have the highest divorce rate in the world, marriage must be losing its appeal in the United States.	Marriage remains popular in the United States. Even divorced Americans are likely to remarry. To most Americans, divorce means rejection only of a specific partner, not of marriage in general.
3	Unlike the Japanese, Americans do not work hard, because they are more interested in having fun.	Most Americans work hard, but they try to enjoy themselves more on the job as well as off.
4	Most of the young people who join cults are different from their conventional peers. They, at the very least, have some problems with their parents.	The young people who join cults are mostly normal and come from warm, loving families.
5	Because Big Business dominates the United States, most Americans work in large companies with more than 1000 employees each.	Only a minority of Americans work in large companies. Most work in small firms, especially those with fewer than 100 employees.

My investigation is based on surveying teenagers (13-15 years old) who spent their summer holidays in Camp Pontiac, NY, Copake. They are from very wealthy families and they are students of public schools.

We were interested in their favorite school subject, book, song, movie, sport, free time activities and some other aspects of lives of American teenagers. We hoped also to pick up some youth slang words and expressions, asking them what you usually say when life is going great and when you are extremely disappointed. The task of searching youth slang is challenging in any country and culture, as the authors of recently published Dictionary of Russian Youth Slang convincingly explained [3].

Although we have didn't break new grounds in exploring youth slang we managed to pick up some interesting expressions of live young language. For example:

when life is going great: *yeah, awesome, that's great, life is good, I'm very fortunate, wow!, Yay, fantastic!;*

when you are extremely disappointed: *life is bad, fuck, shit, life sucks, just kill me now, damn, ugh.*

The questionnaires containing these questions were given out to the teenagers. Their answers are summarized below. We could notice the correspondence between a students' favorite subject and the field they'd like to work in the future (mathematics- business, science- genetics engineering, oncology or other type of surgery, literature- law or mass media).

It's reasonable that a student likes a subject if he/she is good at it. What surprised me is that I didn't get other answers to the question.

Leisure time activities:

Table 2.

Possible stereotypes	Student's answers
TV addicts	1-2 hour per day (evening news: BBC, News or scientific program: Wild Nature, Discovery)
Favorite films- horror films	Soap operas: «Friends», «Charmed» and «Law and order»
Favorite reading- comics	J.K.Rowling «Harry Potter», Daniel Defoe «Robinson Crusoe», Lewis Carroll «Alice in wonderland» and Shakespeare «Romeo and Juliet»
Playing computer games	Hanging with friends, eating, relaxing
Favorite cartoons	«Tom and Jerry», «Anastasia», «Simpson's»
Favorite music-only rap	Pop: Britney Spears, Maroon 5, John Mayer, 50 cent

We know that attitude to sports in American high schools and colleges is very different from the one among Russian teenagers [4]. Schools have institutionalized team sports young people. Teenagers from camp Pontiac have a team for each of these sports: *football, basketball, baseball, tennis, gymnastics, swimming, hockey, volleyball, soccer and golf.* They go in for sports about 2-3 hours a day, on average 12-18 hours a week. Our study proved this completely.

We had paper questionnaires this year which could account for relatively small number of participants. With an electronic version already at hand we hope to have the results of future similar studies more statistically sound.

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