

# RUSSIAN CULTURAL VALUES

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STEREOTYPES- FROM FILMS- “ALWAYS QUARRELLING LOUDLY”

SEE EXPLANATIONS FOR 1. EMOTIONALITY 2.HIGHLY JUDGMENTAL 3.FATALISTIC 4. IRRATIONALITY 5. DEEP MISTRUST BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND THE PEOPLE 6. GENERAL PESSIMISM 7. LACK CRITICAL THINKING AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS 8. NO OR LITTLE RESPECT FOR LAWS & RULES 9. DEEP-ROOTED PRACTICE DECEIVING HIGHER AUTHORITIES, COLOURING THE TRUTH AND USING ROUNDABOUT WAYS AND 10.MISTRUST OF COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES. **OFTEN FEEL SENSITIVE, VULNERABLE AND ANGRY TOWARDS WESTERN CULTURAL IMPERIALISM- “NO COUNTRY HAS EVER EXPERIENCED SUCH MASSIVE CHANGES AND SUFFERING TRANSITIONING FROM THE SOVIET ERA.”**

# Differences Russian & American Communication

## Russians

- Value solidarity
- politeness > deferential
- Express > emotive data
- Use more justifications
- Directness with familiars
- assoc with sincerity
- Ru expressions = warmth & closeness w fams
- Friends = intimates
- More polite with friends
- (Wierzbicka '92)

## Americans

- Pay more attention to negative politeness
- More indirect requests
- Preface with + remarks
- Dwf assoc with imposition on freedom
- Translate into offensive & patronising words
- Friends = familiars
- More polite with strangers

# Russian

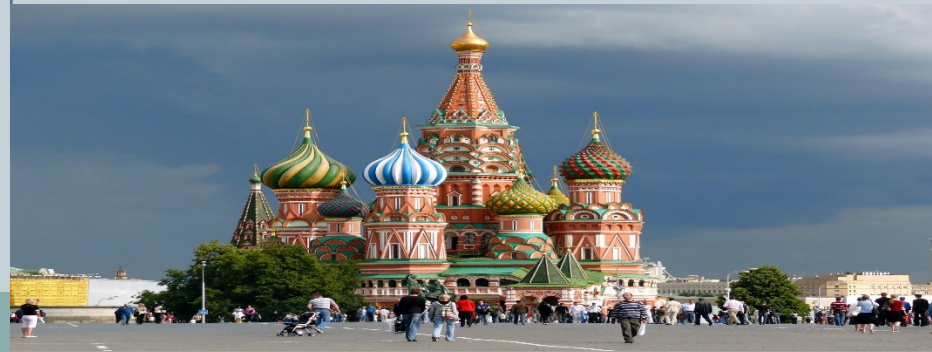
- 1. not targeted at reaching a consensus  
turn taking conversation begins with “njet”
- 2. offering wrong, no answers or knowing better what you need- judgments or good advice responses to information-seeking eg “Person X in town y will better suit your activity Z”
- Motive- a desire to help eg “ Why do you use this chair? It’s bad for your back!”
- 3. responsibility for getting information is the enquirers ie need for additional urging “ you need this, you find a way to get it” Info likely to be inexplicit and incomplete cf US & German style- full, explicit and comprehensive. Eg You ask for a phone no. but require an additional regional code so no success.
- “Why didn’t you tell me? You didn’t ask.”

# Communication styles

- 4. Potential mistrust of “objective truths” eg introducing new software to a Russian company. Why should we change anything? “The old one works pretty well.” May be perceived as argumentative & irrational.
- 5. Parallel processing of information- multi-focus time orientation leads to misinterpretations of behaviours by single-focus US business people eg dislike of agendas & many persons speaking at once.

Russia is...

- “ a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma..” (Winston Churchill) but major societal changes have taken place in the last
- three decades producing a new culture, a new national identity and a new business culture.



# Western and Russian Attitudes



**Russians don't know how to work hard**

**Business problems are simple in Russia**

**Change is impossible in Russia**

**Russians lack experience and know-how**

**Russians must follow the**

**Western consultant's advice**

**Russians rely too much on an intuitive approach**

**Westerners have no appreciation of recent social changes**

**Ws don't know how to teach and transfer skills to R.**

**Ws have failed to manage relns with Russian partners**

**W's have no interest in the Russian mentality**

**Relnship management must be based on equivalence**

**Russians still feel undervalued, underutilized and discriminated against.**

# Russian Culture Models



## Western-oriented

## Soviet Traditional

I/We orientn

Individual

Group

Group

Relationships

Individual

Ranked

Group

Activity orientn

Doing

Pretending to do

Being

Time orientatn

Future

Future/ Past

Present/ Past

Relation to nature

Control

Control/ Abuse

Yielding/ Conforming

Form/ substance

Style is important

Outward form

Inner substance imp

Progress

Progress is good

(Trad) outward appearance deceiving, need to look into one's soul

(S) Tech progress good Social changes bad (T) Tech progress dangerous because -> bad social changes

Ideology -> history Only means->end

History

Linear & good

Respected for discipline

Spiritual value

Education

v important but must ->well-paid profession & prestige

skills and status

and= cultured

Age

Higher position

Old live in past

Old to support due suffering

youth not trusted because no experience

Money

Easy to earn brings decent lifestyle

Wealthy = criminals Pursuit of money corrupts

Work

Workaholics rare & high stress

Not a means to an end Means to an end only

Moral superiority

Nothing special about Russians, survived hard

Moral smugness Russians special values & conditions unique

conditions, seek to catch up to West.