LIVING IN RUSSIA: CROSS-CULTURAL ISSUES

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What do “cultural differences” mean?

- **Culture** is the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others”. (G. Hofstede)

- **Cultural dimensions** are value constructs, which can be used to describe a specific culture.

- **Values** are a “desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity”. (Sh. Schwartz)
HOW TO “MEASURE” A CULTURE?
HOFSTEDE’S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

- **Power distance (PDI)** is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.

- **Individualism / Collectivism (IDV)**: The fundamental issue here is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members.

- **Masculinity / Femininity (MAS)**: The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (masculine) or liking what you do (feminine).

- **Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)** is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these situations.

- **Long (short) term orientation (LTO)** is the extent to which a society shows a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historical short-term point of view.
PLACE OF RUSSIAN CULTURE IN THE
HOFSTEDÉ’S “WORLD OF CULTURES”

Source: http://geert-hofstede.com/russia.html
INGLEHART’S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

- **The Traditional/Secular-rational values** dimension reflects the contrast between societies in which religion is very important and those in which it is not.

- **The Survival/Self-expression values** dimension reflects the shift of priorities from an emphasis on economic and physical security toward an increasing emphasis on subjective well-being, self-expression and quality of life.
PLACE OF RUSSIAN CULTURE IN THE INGLEHART’S “WORLD OF CULTURES”

Source: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_54
Why do these all matter?
Applications to university every-day life

- Teachers, but not students usually take initiative in class (high PDI, low Self-expression values).
  - Don’t be surprised, if class answers with the silence to teacher’s question. Break the silence, and go first.

- Russia has one of the most complex bureaucracies in the world (high UAI, high PDI).
  - Be ready to prepare a number of documents for different purposes. Try to keep calm, and carry on.
Why do these all matter?
Applications to university every-day life

- Group is often spending time together during the breaks, preparing together to exams (high COL)
  
  - Try to communicate more with your group mates: having Russian friends is fun!

- Norms of emotional expression are different here: looking happy is not a must (high Survival values and low subjective well-being)
  
  - If people don’t smile or don’t try to be nice to you, it doesn’t mean they don’t like you. Take it as an inevitability of Russian reality. Like a weather 😊
WHY DO THESE ALL MATTER?
APPLICATIONS TO UNIVERSITY EVERY-DAY LIFE

- Caring about others and atmosphere in the group is more important than individual achievements (high FEM, high COL)
  - *Students sometimes voluntarily help their group mates with homework or tests, even if they don’t have time or may get a lower grade because of that. It’s up to you whether you want to join them or not.*

- Things may change unexpectedly, and you may be informed about it when there is not much time left to do something (low LTO)
  - *Don’t be frustrated if you get to do something very fast, without being informed in advance – not everything is planned here beforehand.*
**WHAT DO WE OFFER?**

- **Courses within the MA program “Applied social psychology”**

| Cross-cultural psychology  
(1 semester, instructors – prof. N. Lebedeva, L. Grigoryan) | Methodology of cross-cultural research  
(1 semester, instructor – L. Grigoryan) |
|---|---|
| • Introduction to cross cultural psychology  
• Measuring and mapping cultures  
• Culture and cognition (perception, memory, intelligence, emotions across cultures)  
• Personality across cultures  
• Communication and culture  
• Migration and acculturation (‘culture shock’, psychology of acculturation)  
• Culture and organization. | • Measurement instruments for intercultural relations, ethnic identity, acculturation, and cross-cultural differences  
• Methodological issues of comparative studies  
• Designs of cross-cultural studies  
• Data analysis in cross-cultural research  
• Bias and equivalence  
• Cross-cultural adaptation of psychological tests and measures |
WHAT DO WE OFFER?

- **Short courses of Invited professors for Fall-2013:**
  - Psychology of immigration (within “Cross-cultural psychology”, 08-15.09). Eugene Tartakovsky, University of Tel-Aviv
  - Economic psychology (22-27.09). Marcel Zeelenberg, Seger Breugelmans, Tilburg University
  - Basic human values: Theory and measurement (within “Cross-cultural psychology”, 01-11.10). Shalom Schwartz, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, HSE
  - Leadership (08-22.10). Rolf van Dick, Goethe-University Frankfurt
  - Meta-analysis (within “Methodology of cross-cultural research”, 04-09.11). Sebastian Bamberg, University of Applied Sciences in Bielefeld
CONTACTS


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Don’t believe in stereotypes,

Explore the real culture 😊