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Culture is part of us. It is everywhere from what we eat and wear to the way we judge the world around us. It defines the way we are and the way we act. Culture is present in all spheres of life, no wonder that it is connected with politics and economics as well. Culture influences things we buy and things we produce and hence it has an effect on the global market.

In this paper I would like to analyze the way cultural background affects advertisement. My goal is to research the ways culture influences consumer purchasing decisions in Russia and why. To define the topic more precisely, the main focus of this paper is on the connection between Advertisement and Cultural Identity of the Russian nation.

It is a well-known fact that people in different countries have different tastes and preferences in the things they buy. Their purchasing decisions influence the way advertisement is being made in a certain country or region. People in different countries need different cultural aspects to be attracted to a product. These cultural aspects may be rooted in the history of the country and its traditions. This is why global companies often need to develop totally new products for certain regions and to advertise them differently. It is funny, how for example OLAZ, a brand of facial moisturizers offers creams with self-bronzing functions in Europe, since Europeans like to look darker than they are, while in Asia they have to sell the same cream, but with whitening functions, since Asians like to appear white-skinned. That way, only based on cultural preferences of people in these two different regions, two different products had to be created on the basis of the same facial moisturizer which also had to be positioned differently to attract the attention of these two different mentalities.

It is often discussed in International Marketing that advertisement should be tailored to the local culture. Not every advertising campaign has the same effect in every country since mentality and tastes of people are different. In this paper I would like to find out what the typical features of Russian advertisement are, what Russian Cultural Identity is like and how this Cultural Identity influences Russian advertisement.

Thinking about the reasons why Russian advertisement developed the way it did, one comes to the need of researching, why Russian mentality is the way it is and why it requires that kind of advertisement. This is why a large part of the paper is dedicated to finding out what Russian Cultural Identity is and how it got formed throughout the history.

This topic is obviously related to politics as well, since advertising tools used both in
politics and business are the same. Commercial, political and social ads all aim to reach the attention of certain groups of individuals. They use the same tools, colors and visual images. Additionally, cultural background, which is so crucial for culturally differentiated advertisement stands in direct connection to the history, politics, religion and other aspects of a nation. That way connection of the topic with Political Science is obvious. The questions of Cultural Identity, Mentality and National Character are very important in Political Science since they are crucial for diplomatic relations between countries. According to Sir Ernest Barker, for example “He who can understand the psychological groundwork and the general character of nations possesses a golden key of policy”\(^1\).

The choice of this specific topic for the paper can be explained by my personal interest to different cultures and to marketing, both of which I tried to combine in this paper. My focus on Russian Cultural Identity is obvious due to my Russian background and interest for my home country.

Speaking of the structure of this paper, one could roughly divide it into two parts: in the first part Russian advertisement and its typical characteristics will be described. Matching advertisement examples will be provided to illustrate the main tendencies of the Russian advertisement development.

In the second part we will try to explain why Russian advertisement developed the way it did based on the analysis of Russian Cultural Identity. We will follow the process of Russian Cultural Identity development during the history, under consideration of three aspects – Cultural Identity and War, Cultural Identity and Religion and Cultural Identity and Politics.

That way we will be answering the following questions throughout the paper:

1. What is Russian advertisement like?
2. Why is Cultural Identity so important for advertisement?
3. Which historic processes influenced the development of Russian advertisement?
4. Why does Russia need exactly such advertisement?
5. What made Russians the way they are today? Which historical processes and particular events influenced the development of Russian mentality?

\(^1\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. xi
6. Speaking of the Imperial times, can we say that the Nobles and the Serfs could possibly have a common Cultural Identity in spite of their totally different lifestyles? Or did common Russian Cultural Identity not exist during the Imperial times after all?

7. What is the Role of War, Religion and Politics in the formation of a Cultural Identity of a nation?

8. Does common Russian identity exist, unchanged through times and regimes at rule, or does every epoch of Russian history, such as the Imperial times, the Soviet times and the Modernity, possess its own separate Cultural Identity?

This short list of questions should guide the reader through the structure of the paper, making goals of the research better understandable.

As already mentioned above, while researching on the development of Russian advertisement and Cultural Identity, we will concentrate on four different epochs in the Russian history: the Pre-revolutionary or Imperial times, the Soviet times, including the years of the Communist Rule (1917-1991), the short but very important period of Perestroika, and last but not least, the Modernity.

We will research the development of the advertisement during these years and see how the role that the advertisement played during these different epochs mirrors the changes happening in the Russian society.

One should also point out that the biggest part of Russian advertisement’s history belongs to political advertisement and not to economic advertisement, like in the most countries. Since Russia found itself under Communist rule for over 70 years the development of advertisement was partly stopped and partly redirected into the political sphere. What we mostly have to do with during the Communist times is political propaganda. That means that Soviet advertisement for a very large part was actually political advertisement. This fact implies that modern advertisement and Soviet advertisement are basically two different things. On the other hand, economic, or political, advertisement is still advertisement with its core characteristics. Through the development of the role that it played in the society during different epochs of Russian history we can very well see the development of Russian society, and hence of the Russian nation.

Having defined what the basic characteristics of a Nation and hence of a National Character are, we will concentrate our attention on two important factors – Politics and Religion. To summarize the general thought on this point, I should mention, that my theory is
that National Character depends on the elites which are at power during a certain period of
time. Values, which these elites try to communicate, take the central part in the society. That
is why typical traits of Russian prerevolutionary culture differ so much from the Soviet times
culture, for example.

Having researched on the role of Politics in forming of a nation’s Cultural Identity we
will then continue working on the second point – namely, Connection between Religion and Culture. My assumption at this point is that Russian Orthodox Religion played a leading role
in holding the Russian nation together in spite of the political changes that the country had to
face during its transitions from monarchy to communism, and from communism to
democracy.

All in all, one can say that general connection between ads and culture is rather well
researched by sociologists, as well as by marketing specialists. Depending on the focus,
sociological or economical, one can find lots of interesting information on this topic. On the
other hand, works focusing on Russian culture and advertisement precisely are not that
abundant. While quite a few works on Russian advertisement characteristics can be found,
bringing them in connection with Russian historical past and following the mentality
development could still be an interesting research topic.

2. Theoretical Base

According to Stuart Hall, Identification is one of the least well understood concepts. It
is never completed, always “in process”. In “Questions of Cultural Identity” Stuart Hall and
Paul du Gay research means of identity construction. They also discuss the modern tendency
of decline of “traditional” identities which defined the social and cultural world for so long.
These distinctive identities of gender, sexuality, race, class and nationality are declining,
giving rise to new forms of identification.2

The authors give some useful basic information on what identity generally is, why it is
important and how it gets created, which is helpful for our research. So from the point of view
of Hall and Du Gay “… identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some
common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and
with the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation.”3

One can speak of different kinds of identities, referring to different groups of people, starting with nations and ending with different subcultures within a culture. “Identity is always a temporary and unstable effect of relations which define identities by marking differences. Thus the emphasis here is on the multiplicity of identities and differences…”  

Our Cultural Identity also depends on what pattern of social relationships we follow, which is defined through nationality and social class. In this connection, a notion of the “Way of life”, or “Lifestyle”, is worth mentioning. People supporting a certain way of life have a characteristic set of values and beliefs that generate their tastes and preferences. The role of tastes and preferences, according to Pierre Bourdieu, is hard to overestimate. They coordinate our behaviour, choices we make in life, things we buy. That way our cultural capital gets converted into economic capital and back again.

The type of Cultural Identity that we find interesting in this paper is the national Cultural Identity. Our goal is to determine national Russian Cultural Identity, to characterize its own traits and to determine why exactly it developed this way.

An Identity can not exist by itself since it can only be revealed while dealing with other persons. Hall and Du Gay quote Freud, for example, who calls it “the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person”6. Moreover, an identity can only be recognized in contrast to another identity: “…it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the “positive” meaning of any term – and thus its “identity” – can be constructed” 7. That way “an identity’s constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resistant poles – man/woman, etc.” 8

The authors define Cultural Identity as “collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed “selves” which a people with a shared history

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and ancestry hold in common\textsuperscript{9} and which can stabilize, fix or guarantee an unchanging “oneness” or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences.” \textsuperscript{10}

The necessity to identify oneself comes from an uncertainty of an individual person, whether he or she is behaving appropriately in the society: “… one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioral styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other’s presence. “Identity” is a name given to the escape sought from that uncertainty.” \textsuperscript{11} Every country has its own behavioral patterns that might be unacceptable in other countries. So for a person it would be easier to define his own identity as a “Russian”, for example, to be certain that in presence of another Russian his actions will not be out of place, while he might probably need to behave differently in presence of a Chinese, for example.

The question of Cultural Identity has become very topical nowadays, with globalization playing a central role in the modern society. With people moving back and forth around the globe, cultures get mixed and new identities get created. In such an environment it is getting harder and harder for individual people to define which Cultural Identity they bear. Stuart Hall underlines that Identities are constructed from within “using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being…. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation.” \textsuperscript{12}

That way we speak of Identity as constructed from within, using the resources of its own history, language and culture to differentiate itself from the others. Identities are dependent on discourses and practices and they change over time together with the ways the society changes: “Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us ”. \textsuperscript{13} This dependence of Cultural Identity on discourse will be important for us while discussing the role of Communist propaganda in building of Russian Cultural Identity.

One shouldn’t forget that identity is a matter of considerable political significance. As Cultural Identity is one of components making up a nation, it is thus closely connected with politics and with the question of power. The ones having power dictate the direction for

\textsuperscript{9} Hall, Stuart, (1990), Cultural Identity and Diaspora, in J.Rutherford (ed.), Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, London: Lawrence & Wishart, p.222-237
\textsuperscript{10} Hall, S., & Du Gay, P., Questions of Cultural Identity, London: Sage, 1996, p.4
\textsuperscript{12} Hall, S., & Du Gay, P., Questions of Cultural Identity, London: Sage, 1996, p.4
\textsuperscript{13} Hall, S., & Du Gay, P., Questions of Cultural Identity, London: Sage, 1996, p.6
discourse and practices in the society: “discourse itself is a regulative and regulated formation, entry into which is “determined by and constitutive of the power relations that permeate the social realm”\textsuperscript{14} \textsuperscript{15}.

Therefore the ones at power affect the national Cultural Identity a lot and political forces dominating in the country shape the culture and the identity of the people. One can hence notice radical differences between, let’s say culture of the USSR during the Soviet times and the western culture of the same period, with people living a totally different lifestyle and thinking and behaving distinct from one another.

That way such notions as Nation, Cultural Identity and Power are closely connected with our research topic.

On the example of Russia one can perfectly see the way different political directions affected the Cultural Identity of different historical epochs. Here we are mainly referring to the three epochs of our interest – the prerevolutionary Imperial epoch, the post-revolutionary Soviet epoch and the modernity. The transition from monarchy to Communism changed the structure of Russian society radically, creating a different Cultural Identity of the masses.

Speaking of the modern times and of the results of transition from Communism to democracy, one can not be sure if the new post-Perestroïka Cultural Identity already exists. The new tendency to search for the Russian national identity appeared with the begin of Perestroïka, but the Russian society haven’t been able to define its own identity yet, therefore some speak of modern Russia as of finding itself in a sort of an “Identity Vacuum”.\textsuperscript{16}

Leaving the modern Cultural Identity by side due to its immaturity, let us decide, if we can still speak of a common national Russian identity in such a situation? Or can it be that Imperial and Soviet identities are so different that we should talk of two? The goal of the next chapters will be to find this out.

For our own convenience let us from now on refer to theses identities as Imperial Cultural Identity and Soviet Cultural Identity. In the end of this paper we will hopefully come to a conclusion, if these two identities still can be united into one national Russian one.

The different attempts to understand the “mysterious Russian soul” throughout the years lead to creation of multiple notions as “Mentality”, “National Character”, “Soul”, “Self-Image”, “Identity”, “Consciousness”, “Culture”, “Values” etc. But some of these notions are being used in literature more often than the others, such as Cultural Identity, National Character and Mentality. The plurality of terms is often confusing. Let us define what these terms really mean and find out if they can actually be used as synonyms throughout the paper.

- **Cultural Identity**: according to Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, Cultural Identity is “collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed “selves” which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common and which can stabilize, fix or guarantee an unchanging “oneness” or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences.” Such identities are constructed from within “using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being…”

- **National Character**: according to Sir Ernest Barker “… we may… define National Character as the sum of acquired tendencies which a national society has built on the native basis of its racial blend, its territory, and the mass and social variety of its population – the house of thought which men have made that their minds may dwell there together.”

Since this definition sounds a little bit too poetic, let us adapt it to the mood and goals of this paper by mixing it with some other definitions of National Character that one might find in modern literature.

Alex Inkeles, a professor of sociology at Stanford University, defines National Character in his book “National Character: A Psycho-Social Perspective” as referring to “…relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are modal among the

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21 Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 17
adult members of a society”\textsuperscript{22} and “the sum total” of all the \textit{values, institutions, cultural traditions, ways of acting, and history} of a people\textsuperscript{23}.

Inkeles is also mentioning right away that although this definition is widely accepted, it is lacking for purposes of scientific analysis. In exchange, he offers a definition, which is most common among political scientists: “…the national character is epitomized by the dominant, or typical and representative, institutions, particularly those concerned with politics and economics”\textsuperscript{24}.

In this regard this definition goes very well with our research since it even supports our theory about elites and their politics affecting the development of Cultural Identity throughout the history. On the other hand, this definition is only mentioning the political and economical sides of National Character formation, lacking the personal values, culture, history and traditions. These factors are also important for our paper, since we are researching the way political and economic factors influence advertisement, which is very well based on feelings and personal values.

This is why to get a perfectly matching definition of National Character, let us just combine both of the mentioned definitions. This way we will not miss on either cultural and psychological, nor on political and economic factors of National Character formation. That way, we define \textbf{National Character} as:

“…relatively enduring \textbf{personality characteristics} and patterns that are modal among the adult members of a society”\textsuperscript{25} and are “the sum total” of all the \textit{values, institutions, cultural traditions, ways of acting, and history} of a people”\textsuperscript{26}, which is “…epitomized by the dominant, or typical and

\textsuperscript{23} Inkeles, Alex, National Character: A Psycho-Social Perspective, 1997, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, p. 214
\textsuperscript{24} Inkeles, Alex, National Character: A Psycho-Social Perspective, 1997, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, p. 214
\textsuperscript{26} Inkeles, Alex, National Character: A Psycho-Social Perspective, 1997, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, p. 214
representative, institutions, particularly those concerned with politics and economics\textsuperscript{27}.

- **Mentality**: in the Lexicon of Political Science we find a definition of Mentality written by Th. Geiger in 1932, which describes it as: “…Wege des Denkens und des Fühlens als Ergebnis der Gesamtheit der Lebenserfahrungen und Milieueindrücke, denen einzelne Individuen oder eine einzelne Gruppe im Laufe Ihrer Entwicklung ausgesetzt sind”\textsuperscript{28}

In these definitions I intentionally marked the most important points that they have in common. As we see, Cultural Identity/ National Character/ Mentality are actually different words describing the same idea.

Cultural Identity/ National Character/ Mentality are all based on:

- Personal feelings and thoughts of self-realization
- Common culture based on common history and common experiences
- Unchanging unity of thoughts and emotions passed on for generations.

That way, we can see that these three terms are actually expressing the same idea and therefore it will be possible for us to use the terms Cultural Identity/ National Character/ Mentality as synonyms in the context of this paper.

3. Glossary

In this chapter I collected all notion definitions mentioned in this paper. This little Glossary should help the reader to get a systematic overview of all concepts which are important for this paper. The notions are listed in alphabetical order.

\textsuperscript{27} Inkeles , Alex, National Character: A Psycho-Social Perspective,1997, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, p. 214

\textsuperscript{28} Geiger, Th., 1932 quoted in: Lexikon der Politikwissenschaft : Theorien, Methoden, Begriffe. 1. A – M, Nohlen, Dieter, 1939- [Hrsg.] ; Schultz, Rainer-Olaf, 1945- [Hrsg.].München : Beck 2002 Orig.-Ausg., p. 528
Advertisement is “any paid form of non-personal communication of ideas or products in the prime media, i.e. television, the press, posters, cinema and radio, the Internet and direct marketing”.

Cultural Identity - “collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed “selves” which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common and which can stabilize, fix or guarantee an unchanging “oneness” or cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences.” Such identities are constructed from within “using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being…”

„Intercultural advertising, i.e. advertising for a product from one particular social, economic, linguistic, political etc. culture that takes place in and is directed at another social, economic, linguistic, political etc. culture, is a site where much of the cultural difference between societies, regions and nations is played out”.

Mentality - “…Wege des Denkens und des Fühlens als Ergebnis der Gesamtheit der Lebenserfahrungen und Milieueindrücke, denen einzelne Individuen oder eine einzelne Gruppe im Laufe Ihrer Entwicklung ausgesetzt sind”

A Nation “… is a body of men, inhabiting a definite territory, who normally are drawn from different races, but possess a common stock of thoughts and feelings acquired and transmitted during the course of a common history; who on the whole and in the main, though more in the past than the present, include in that common stock a common religious belief; who generally and as a rule use a common language as the vehicle of their thoughts and feelings; and who, besides common thoughts and feelings, also cherish a common will,

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30 Hall, Stuart, (1990), Cultural Identity and Diaspora, in J.Rutherford (ed.), Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, London: Lawrence & Wishart (222-37)
and accordingly form, or tend to form, a separate State for the expression and realization of that will…”35

**National Character** - “…relatively enduring personality characteristics and patterns that are modal among the adult members of a society”36 and are “…the sum total” of all the values, institutions, cultural traditions, ways of acting, and history of a people”37, which is “…epitomized by the dominant, or typical and representative, institutions, particularly those concerned with politics and economics”38.

**Propaganda** is “…im modernen Sinne zur Werbung und Herrschaftssicherung eingesetzte Technik. Entscheidend ist dabei die geschickte Auswahl und gegebenenfalls Manipulation der Nachricht, nicht ihr Wahrheitscharakter. Durch die Monopolisierung der Propaganda in kommunistischen und faszistischen Regimen hat der Terminus einen stark pejorativen Charakter.”39

4. Methodological approach

As we have already mentioned above, in this paper we will discuss the development of Russian advertisement parallel with the development of Russian Cultural Identity.

As we will see in the following chapters, modern Russian advertisement likes to refer to the motives originating from the two distinctive epochs in its history – the Imperial Epoch and the Soviet Epoch. In this regard we will also be talking of the ads based on these motives, which we will regard to as Imperial-Style ads or Soviet-style ads for our convenience.

35 Barker, Emest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 17
To be able to talk about the reasons why such motives originated in the advertisement, it would be important to analyze which values people connect these two epochs with. One might notice that Imperial-Style ads are often referring to products which are chic and expensive while Soviet-Style ads aim at the average Russian consumer buying low-to-middle priced goods for daily usage.

To understand where this connection comes from it would be useful to analyze the Russian mentality of the Imperial times and to compare it with the Russian mentality of the Soviet times.

It is a well-known fact that the Russian Revolution of 1917 caused radical changes in the Russian society. The Russian nation, which had spent centuries under monarchy and the state of serfdom, entered a new era, which turned politics, religion, culture and whole daily life upside down.

In this regard one should recall that Russian history is around 1000 years old. But no form of government during these 1000 years had made a more radical impact on the nation as the Communist rule, which lasted only 74 years. The Communist demand for total power and control over the population went so far, that it didn’t satisfy itself with domination over the bodies of the people; it wanted their souls as well. The years of 1917 – 1991 had herewith a huge effect on thoughts, feelings and desires of the Russian nation. 40

This is where we come to the connection between Politics and National Character. It is obvious that what changed most radically in the country throughout the years were the politics - transition from monarchy to communism and then to democracy. These political changes have without any doubt affected the development of the Russian nation the most. This is why I intend to research the connection between Cultural Identity and Politics in further detail. My theory in short: elites standing on top of political power determine the development of National Character and Cultural Identity. That way, this is our first hypothesis.

The questions that we will be trying to answer in this regard are:

Did Russians living during Imperial and Soviet times have two different Cultural Identities? Or should we anyway talk of the same national Cultural Identity, the same National Character, staying unchanged for ages, no matter how different the Russian nation lived and acted in these two different epochs?

My theory on this topic is as following: These two epochs did differ radically from one another and the Russian folk did change a lot during the years. But the basics, which build up

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a National Character stayed the same. To my mind, Russia possesses a common National Character, basic patterns of which can be recognized in any epoch in spite of the political changes. This is the hypothesis number two.

As far as the methodological approach is concerned, it would be important to mention that while searching for information on the Cultural Identity during the both epochs one can’t help noticing that there is much more information available on the Soviet Union and on the ways Soviet Cultural Identity got formed.

The lack of information on Imperial Cultural Identity can be explained by the fact that firstly, the imperial times date back much further than the Soviet times and lots of imperial memories have been lost. Secondly, Mongolian yoke and serfdom broke the Russian nation’s will in its foundation. Having spent most of its history in a state of unfreedom, the people could not develop a Cultural Identity.

And thirdly, even if the serfs did have some kind of self-realization in those times, this knowledge is mostly lost for us. Most likely peasants could not read or write, which means they did not leave us much information to work on (except for legends, fairy tales and folk songs, spread by word of mouth, analysis of which would not correlate with the focus of this paper though).

Studies on mentality, ways of thinking and personal values, which make up Cultural Identity of a nation, live from psychological research of individuals. Unfortunately we do not possess sources of proper scientific research conducted by the contemporaries on this topic.

If the simple peasants, which represented the largest part of the population didn’t provide us with much proof for existence of their Cultural Identity, maybe the aristocracy could be seen as holders of Russian Cultural Identity in some way? On the other hand the landlords, who made up only about 1.5 percent of the entire population of the Russian Empire 41 could hardly represent the whole country.

Therefore since we don’t have direct sources on development of the Cultural Identity in Imperial Russia, it would make sense to use secondary sources, ones that describe the way life was in those times and the way people thought and felt.

In this connection one could not think of a better secondary source than Leo Tolstoy’s “War and Peace”. This epic novel is considered a recognized classic since generations. It mirrors the life of the Russian society during the Napoleonic Era and contains valuable information on life in 19th-century Russia, that could be of great use for our research.

While analyzing the Imperial Russian Cultural Identity, there is another important question that needs to be answered: Can we consider Russian aristocracy as carriers of Imperial Russian Identity? Or can only the masses represent a character of a nation? On the other hand, the masses, consisting of peasants, were uneducated, broken in their will and living, actually in a slave-equal position of serfdom. Could they actually be carrying the Imperial Cultural Identity? And if neither the serfs nor the nobles can be considered as carriers of Cultural Identity, would that actually mean that a distinct Cultural Identity didn’t exist at all during the imperial times?

My theory on this topic is as follows: Aristocracy could very well represent the Cultural Identity of a nation. The nobles were educated and had a lot of free time to be able to analyze the political situation in the country as well as their own life and feelings. Although the nobles and the peasantry were different social classes with different culture, the Russian Orthodox religion united them and made them to the same nation. In spite of their different way of life, Russian Orthodox religion provided the Nobles and the Serfs with the same values which united them as a nation. This is our third, and last hypothesis.

Let us try to answer the questions, posed in the beginning of the paper and see, if assumptions presented in this chapter will be confirmed or disproved as a result of our further research.

5. An Introduction to Russian Cultural Identity

„Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”
– Sir Winston Churchill

It is not possible to understand another world independently from its cultural and spiritual background, without the knowledge on the country’s history, self-image, dominating mentality and its values.

Searching for information on Russian Cultural Identity, one doesn’t find much. Even Russians themselves find it hard to define it. One often speaks of the “Enigmatic Russian Soul” which is supposedly so hard to understand.

The problem of Russian identity lies in the indistinct nature of Russianness. Many poets and philosophers have characterized Russia as a “Sphinx”, a “riddle”. This “enigmatic Russian soul” was for many hard to understand and define. Russia is often represented as neither West nor East, accentuating its “otherness”. In other words, Russian identity is rather difficult to express.

Many authors have worked on this “riddle”. It is particularly ironic that even Russians themselves characterize their own nature as a riddle, which means that it is not just the foreigners who find it hard to understand the nature of Russianness.  

A famous Russian poet Fedor Tiutchev wrote in 1886 his famous quatrain characterizing Russian identity. It could be translated as follows:

You will not grasp her with your mind
Or cover with a common label,
For Russia is one of a kind -
Believe in her, if you are able...  

According to Tiutchev, rational knowledge is helpless in the face of the mystery of Russian Nature and it is just Belief which can help one to solve this mystery. Russia cannot be understood with the mind, cannot be understood in a rational way. In short, Russian identity cannot be defined with ordinary words. 

As we can see, not just Europeans are finding “The Riddle of the Sphinx” unsolvable. Russian thinkers have also worked hard on this problem. But the question is: can you understand a nation which doesn’t even understand itself? 

Speaking of “the riddle of Russian identity” one doesn’t mean any particular Russian, it’s more of a personification of the collective. Throughout the history one has always been part of the peasant community, of the party etc. The collective has always possessed power over the individual, who vanished in the collective. A famous Russian joke accentuates this phenomenon: there is no noun in the Russian language for the word “a Russian”. In Russian

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it’s an adjective or, translated from Russian an “attachment”. The joke is as follows: “A Russian does not belong to himself, he is always being “attached” to the tsar, to the party, to the state…” This collective thinking has lead to the fact, that Russians themselves became somewhat depersonalized.\(^{48}\)

That’s where such negative character traits as laziness and passivity come from. Russian people hope that the collective will solve their problems; somebody else should come and rescue them. Individual people wouldn’t get an idea of striking or fighting for their rights, they would rather hope that somebody else does it for them. This faith in such abstract notions as the Tsar, the Church, or the Party is useful for getting rid of any responsibility for taking control of their own destiny.

The other question here would be: is it just the Russian nation which is so mysterious? Or are there other nations, natures of which are just as unique?

Why not take the Japanese, which have always been exotic for Europeans? Japanese authors write about the “Mysterious Japanese Nature” exactly the same way the Russians do. The Japanese occupy themselves with the mystery of their nation in the same way as the Russians do.

Or what about the Germans or the French, described as “mysterious” and “puzzling” by philosophers of their neighbor lands?\(^{49}\)

It seems that every country and every nation could be described as exotic or mysterious from a different point of view. Is Russian Cultural Identity really so unique?

To my mind, it wouldn’t be wrong to say that hardly any nation disposes of a distinctive Cultural Identity. Self-realization didn’t have too many development possibilities in most countries. With serfdom being an essential part of many countries’ political systems for hundreds of years the biggest part of the population was in the position near to slavery. Such living conditions could logically never be a good basis for any kind of individual development or cultural self-realization.

The situation in Russia was even worse. The Russian Revolution took place later than the Revolutions in Europe. The Russian nation spent most of its history in the state of


unfreedom, first under Mongolian yoke, then under serfdom. The 20-th century that followed and the Communist rule that it brought turned out to be not much different. No wonder that after centuries of suppression the Individual in Russia ceased to be. The Individual got lost in the Collective. The people no longer saw themselves as individuals, they saw themselves as part of the peasant community, of the church community or part of the communist party. The people had simply never had a chance to consider themselves as individuals.

In such a society, where the Collective dictated the way of life, no need for advertisement was present. This lead to the fact that advertisement in Russia developed much later than in Western Europe. This distinguishing feature is typical for many other Eastern European countries, where the communist rule eliminated any possibilities for advertisement to develop.50

One would officially say that Russian advertisement appeared with the begin of Perestroika just after 1990. But it would be unfair to claim that there was absolutely no advertisement till the 1990-s. Advertisement existed in the tsar times and in the Soviet times as well. The different forms that it adopted and the role that it played in the society will be discussed in the following chapters.

Part 1 – Russian Advertisement

6. Advertisement. Definition and Role in the Modern Society

Before we deepen into detailed characteristics of Russian advertisement, let us define what advertisement generally means.

Advertisement is “any paid form of non-personal communication of ideas or products in the prime media, i.e. television, the press, posters, cinema and radio, the Internet and direct marketing”51

In this paper we concentrate just on visual advertisement, including posters, printed media and commercials. The main point of interest here is “culturally differentiated” advertisement, in contrast to global ads. Culturally differentiated ads not only try to sell


specific products, they are also promoting culture-specific values.\textsuperscript{52}

Advertisement is an integral part of marketing, it is designed to inform and motivate. The objective is to change the thinking pattern (or buying behaviour) of the recipient, so that he or she is persuaded to take the action desired by the advertiser\textsuperscript{53}.

Advertisement also plays a central role in funding of the media. As we know, the role of media is crucial nowadays since they mirror the processes in the society and communicate its central values. The fact that the media are dependant on advertisement since it finances them, makes advertisement crucially important in the modern world.\textsuperscript{54}

7. Advertisement and its National Features

When developing advertisement for global markets it is highly recommended to fit marketing concepts to the symbols and persons which are typical for the target country. Many authors emphasize the importance of a country-specific marketing strategy. According to Klaus Backhaus, for example, the best strategy for entering Eastern European markets is “Think European – Act local”.\textsuperscript{55}

Due to cultural differences same visual or verbal images can be understood differently, so one should make advertisement appropriate for the country’s mentality. Ads in different countries often bear national traits. Americans are known for their aggressive “BUY! BUY! BUY!” tactics, the British stake on delicate humour, intelligence and irony. The French love elegant and sexy images, visual, with minimum words. While Germans emphasize the practical sides of the product, leaving out useless emotionality, Asians love philosophical and meditative images, which are not always suitable for foreign markets.\textsuperscript{56}

Talking about marketing strategies in Russia one should keep in mind basic features of

\textsuperscript{52} Cf. Jeremy Morris, Drinking to the nation: Russian Television Advertising and Cultural Differentiation, EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES; Vol. 59, No. 8, December 2007, 1387- 1403, \url{http://www.jstor.org/pss/20451459} , July 20, 2011, 8:20

\textsuperscript{53} Cf. Advertisement, \url{http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/advertisement-ad.html} , July 20, 2011, 8:15


Russian national character as well. When dealing with Russians, one should emphasize emotionality, softness and sincerity; try to touch the heart of the audience. Commercials based on traditions of friendship, kindness and spirituality and taking reference to traditional society roles are always a success. Russians deeply dislike seeing impudence and immodesty on TV, so aggressive or shocking images are traditionally avoided. Advertisement is expected to be aesthetic, humorous and accompanied with good music. 57 A detailed description of Russian advertisement features follows in further sections of this paper.

8. The Development Process of Russian Advertisement

In this chapter we will try to get a general idea of the development stages of the Russian advertisement. We will analyze the condition of advertisement during different historical periods and observe which of its traits match or differ from western advertisement. The four main historical periods which will be relevant for us in this research, are:

- Pre-revolutionary or Imperial advertisement
- Soviet advertisement
- Advertisement in the times of Perestroika
- Modern advertisement

Pre-Revolutionary Advertisement

Russian advertisement went a long way in its development starting with the shouts of carnival barkers and ending with complex messages we have to deal with today.

The starting point in the development of Russian advertisement didn’t differ much from the beginnings of the western advertisement. Already around the 9th – 10th centuries market sellers were shouting out loud about the positive qualities of their goods, trying to attract the passersby. But it was only in the 19th century when the real characteristics of advertisement, the way we know it today, started forming.

The 19-th century was of critical importance for the development of Russian advertisement since this was the time, when two important things happened: the first manufactories and the first print shops were founded. The emergence of manufactories lead to

the origination of competition and to the necessity of advertisement. As for the print shops, they were now able to print multiple leaflets.

At the same time important economic and political changes took place in the country. Tsar Alexander II undertook following important reforms:

- restructuring of Russian economy according to the western model
- decision to build railway connections throughout the country
- abolition of Serfdom on February 19, 1861

That way with the fast population growth of the cities, development of industry and trade, importance of advertisement increased immensely.\(^5^8\)

It didn’t take long before the effectivity of posters was recognized. For that purpose poster stands were positioned in big cities, which soon became an important part of city life, playing a sort of educational role in development of tastes and preferences of the city inhabitants. This is the time where visual composition of the printed ads and posters gets important, one starts experimenting with fonts and frames.\(^5^9\)

It is interesting, that from the very beginning one experimented a lot with Russian national symbols. Well-fed Russian beauties with red cheeks, dressed in national dresses, Russian national heroes, poets and writers decorated the packaging of multiple goods.

In the end of the 19-th – beginning of the 20-th century a new kind of shops appears – shopping centers and shopping arcades. A new way of shopping was invented – one could have a look at the goods calmly without the intrusive seller in the way. Such shopping centers made show window decoration and packaging even more important.

Elements of Russian national culture were often used in decoration of packaging as well. As for the names of the products, according to the social background and educational level of the target group, one gave the product either an easily understandable Russian name or a foreign name that only higher – class customers could understand.\(^6^0\)

One should mention that Russian advertisement of the 19-th century didn’t have a distinct character; it used the western ads as models.

\(^{5^8}\) Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p. 12-16
\(^{5^9}\) Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p. 16-17
\(^{6^0}\) Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p. 21-22
Most tendencies, set by the Russian advertisement of the 19-th – beginning of the 20-th century continue to be used in modern Russian advertisement. But there are also some aspects that differ from today’s advertisement. One of those aspects is for example, reference to family traditions. In pre-revolutionary times businesspeople tried to earn a good reputation with the quality of their products. They accentuated family traditions and secrecy of recipes. Almost all goods, and this is important, carried the name of the producers. One didn’t shy away from putting one’s own name of the product, it showed that the producer guaranteed for quality with his own name. One also liked to add “and Sons” or “Brothers” to the last name on the package to accentuate that the family business was being run since at least one generation.61

This nice tradition was interrupted during the October revolution. Private businesses were nationalized; nobody took care of quality and customer orientation any more. The new mass-production brought low quality goods with it, along with the fact that nobody could be accounted for the defects in the products.62

Here are some colorful examples of typical Russian ads of the pre-revolutionary times:

**Gogol Caramels, 1900-s,** 63

decorated with a portrait of a famous Russian writer Gogol

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61 Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p. 23
62 Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p. 23
Perfumery Brokar’ & Co,  
Holding the name of Brokar and his partners and showing Russian beauties

Partnership Abrikosov & Sons in Moscow 
Sweets „Duck Beaks“ holding the name of Abrikosov and his sons – reference to family traditions

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64 Picture from [http://chunimani.ru/blog/reklama-tovarov-v-tsarskoj-rossii.html#lightbox](http://chunimani.ru/blog/reklama-tovarov-v-tsarskoj-rossii.html#lightbox), April 05, 2013, 10:53

Veinerovsky brewery plants\textsuperscript{66}
demonstrating a Russian epic hero

Kalinkin brewery, 1903, \textsuperscript{67}
named after its owner and showing a Russian beauty


\textsuperscript{67} Picture from http://chunimuni.ru/blog/reklama-tovarov-v-tsarskoj-rossii.html, April 05, 2013, 10:36
**Soviet Advertisement**

After the October Revolution social and economic relations in the country changed radically. The successful development of market economy was interrupted. The main goal after the October Revolution was to restore the functioning of factories. Mass production was intensively developed since one needed to provide the industrial workers with enough food. This meant unfortunately that the quality of produced goods suffered a lot because of speed and great volumes of mass production.

To make sure that goods produced by the industries were consumed, bigger communities were created – the Cooperatives. It was also hoped to raise work productivity in the agricultural sector with their help, since more workers were concentrated on one spot.

As for advertisement, its whole content changed completely after the October Revolution. By the year of 1920 advertisement went completely into the hands of the government. The advertisement changed its whole essence becoming an instrument of agitation and propaganda used in the ideological fight between socialism and capitalism.

The whole character of advertisement changed, new text compositions and colors were being used. Poets, writers and artists were now the ones working on the innovative ideas.

One of the most famous figures in the advertisement sphere of that time was Vladimir Mayakovsky. In his article “Agitation and Advertisement” Mayakovsky discusses the deficits of Russian advertisement in comparison to its western counterpart. Mayakovsky admits that Russians have a lot to learn from their western colleagues and criticizes dryness and lack of creativity of the Soviet ads: "Ich habe da gerade einen Ausschnitt aus der Werberubrik aus der Zeitung "Izvestija":

“Moskauer Kommunalwirtschaft informiert…”
“Bauverwaltung "Obnovlennoe volokno” erklärt…”
“Bevollmächtigter bringt zur Kenntnis…” etc.

Was für eine Kanzleisprache: informiert, erklärt, bringt zur Kenntnis, gibt bekannt! Wer wird wohl diesem Appell folgen?! Man braucht eine Werbung, bei welcher sogar ein Gehbehinderter aufspringen und kaufen würde!" 

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68 Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p.24-26
Mayakovsky gives then an example of an ad that he once saw in Europe. A firm advertises some special sort of rubber being used for suspenders. A man in Hanover is in a hurry to catch a train to Berlin and he doesn’t notice that his suspenders get stuck on a nail in his washroom. He comes all the way to Berlin, gets out of the train and in that moment the suspenders pull him back to Hanover, because they are so elastic.\(^7\)

Mayakovsky also underlines the importance of advertisement for all sorts of products, even for very good ones: “In der Regel denkt man, dass man nur für schlechte Ware werben muss, da eine gute Ware sich auch ohne Werbung verkauft. Diese Meinung ist absolut falsch.”\(^7\)

One should also mention that advertisement in those times existed only in visual form, in the form of posters and printed media. Many of Soviet posters of those times got very popular and are still seen as an important symbol of those times. Soviet advertisement had very strong political aspects, serving as an agitation tool. Such posters usually presented caricature-type drawings followed by some rhyming lines which were meant to wake the interest of audience for certain topics.

Only in the end of 1950-s the necessity of economic advertisement was realized. It should at least inform the consumers about the existence of new products and services. Till the 1950s economic ads hardly existed since the constant state of deficit caused the fact that people anyway bought everything that was available.\(^7\) But even after the 1950-s advertisement couldn’t unfold for hundred percent, since it wasn’t possible under a totalitarian regime, where supply and demand didn’t have a healthy relation.

One should also point out that as a result of this situation advertisement was unfortunately often used to push the sales of goods which were of bad quality and didn’t sell well. Because of that advertisement soon earned a bad image. Additionally, it was still
strongly associated with the capitalistic system. For this reason people connected it automatically with the “demoralized” West (“zersetzender Westen”\textsuperscript{73}), which did not fit into the Soviet ideal image. “Die Werbung ist die Irreführung des Verbrauchers, marktschreierische Anpreisung minderwertiger Waren, Verkauf verfälschter Waren, als wenn diese vollwertig wären, Ausnützung der niedrigsten Instinkte der Menschen wie Eitelkeit, Erotik, Sensationshascherei usw.”\textsuperscript{74}

Not only the misusage of advertisement for selling low-quality goods, but also its form and content, lead to its bad image. Dryness, lack of emotion and frequent repeating of standard phrases didn’t have much of a positive effect on the masses. Most texts had a purely informative character, simply describing the product and informing that it was available. Superlatives or comparisons were intentionally avoided. On the one hand, the absence of competition made them useless, and on the other hand, ads wanted to avoid being immoral, misleading and hence implausible and similar to the western ads.\textsuperscript{75}

At least the images on the posters were of high artistic value, which compensated a little for the horrible texting. But the pictures served mostly just an aesthetic purpose rather than aiming to perform any influence on the buying behavior.

It is interesting, on the other hand, that although Soviet ads were hardly trying to sell anything; they served as perfect tools for political propaganda. Here we are coming to a very important point, namely that Soviet advertisement “…war dazu bestimmt, einen perfekten Menschen zu erziehen. Verhaltensmuster…, Arbeitsweise…, Gesundheitspflege…, Kindererziehung…, Bildung…und Freizeitgestaltung…wurden von der Werbung thematisiert.”\textsuperscript{76} The goal was the creation of a perfect “homo sovieticus”.\textsuperscript{77}

That way Soviet advertisement had not only economic functions, but also political, social and cultural ones. Among the most important poster-artists of those times one could mention V. Mayakovsky and V. Rodchenko. Here are some examples of Soviet Propaganda Posters with the motives mentioned above.

\textsuperscript{73} Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p.31
\textsuperscript{75} Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p. 31
\textsuperscript{76} Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p.32
Soviet poster
„If you want to be like this - exercise“ 78

Soviet poster
„One child is nice, but two are better!“ 79

Soviet poster
„Know how to rest“ ⁸⁰

Soviet poster
„Don’t wait for a kind uncle to do everything for you. Know how to deal with work and to love different labor.“ ⁸¹

The Perestroika Times

The Perestroika times (1985 - 1991) helped to take the first steps towards the development of Russian advertisement in the direction, which had at least a little resemblance to the true nature and purposes of modern advertisement. But even those little steps were not taken without some horrible mistakes being made along the way.

With the breakdown of USSR and formation of CIS in the year 1991 the world of advertisement was turned upside down. One of the first tendencies with the fall of the iron curtain was the flood of western advertisement in the country. Most of these ads were not adapted to the Russian cultural conditions, which lead to the fact, that the minds of Russian people were suddenly confronted with products, names of which they couldn’t pronounce used in foreign cultural contexts that they couldn’t understand. Summed up with the fact that the country was suffering under heavy deficit of almost all consumer goods of daily use, such western advertisement didn’t bring much beside anger and frustration. 82

Even though TV advertisement existed now, its main characteristics stayed the same – the ads were still very visual with purely informative Soviet-style texts. On the other hand, the choice of motives for the ads changed dramatically. Topics, which were taboo in the Soviet society, were for the first time introduced, shocking the population. The decent and conservative ads of the Soviet times were replaced through provocative modern ads, which were mostly based on primitive feelings such as envy, sex or herd instinct. This lead right away to the fact that the older generation found the ads obscene and couldn’t identify itself with them. On the other hand, younger people aged till 30 coped rather well with the new motives.83

Modern Russian Advertisement and its Typical Features

After the breakdown of Communism in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union these countries became new markets for western enterprises. Since Eastern European consumers had totally different understanding of advertisement as compared to the inhabitants of western countries, it was a big challenge for western companies to adapt to consumer habits and

82 Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p.32-33

83 Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p.33-34
cultural differences which had been developed during the hundreds of years of history and tradition and polished during the Transformation process.84

After hundreds of years of collective way of thinking, modern Russian advertisement can finally address itself to individual people. The modern society finally allows selling goods to an individual, which was not possible before. Emotional moments are used in the commercials to touch the heart of the audience.

During the Soviet Union times the party was dictating the tastes and the fashion. It was expected that people wear a certain sort of clothes, listen to a certain kind of music and spend their free time the way a decent Soviet citizen should. Interests and fashion, literature and music were strictly censored; everything that could bear traces of foreign influence was prohibited. There was simply no need for advertisement, the deficit and lack of choice possibilities caused people to buy everything that was offered in the shops. That way all the important tendencies in tastes were defined by the government, the advertisement’s only function was to inform the audience of the existence of the goods.

The times have luckily changed. Modern advertisement needs therefore much more skill to attract the customer. In the time of modern abundance one has to fight the competitors that didn’t exist before and force one to buy the goods one doesn’t need. Modern advertisement doesn’t have any social connection any more. In the modern societies of freedom individuals are free to change their social status. Social class and consumption patterns are not dictated from above anymore so everyone can make individual decisions on what to buy. That way advertisement is allowed to choose its own audience and the ways to affect it.

If we generally analyze Russian TV- and printed advertisement, we could see four main patterns used in all ads:

1. Reference to traditions and use of national history in advertisement. A special position takes here the nostalgia of the former Soviet times. Utilization of such cultural nostalgia for the past is mostly used in advertisements for vodka, beer and groceries in post-soviet Russia.

2. Reference to the size of Russia, its huge area, pride for its endless fields and forests, or reference to “Eurasia”. The loss of political importance is being compensated with

statements on Russia’s geographical magnitude.

3. Reference to the collective, to the **community**. Emphasis on family, friends, colleagues from work etc.

4. Reference to the **Ethnos** as a whole and its positioning in confrontation to the others. Russia is not Europe and not Asia, not west and not east, it has its own way.

If one would compare modern Russian advertisement with the advertisement of the Perestroika times, one would notice that multiple mistakes made during the learning processes of the Perestroika times slowly became clear. It was understood, for example, that not every western ad would match the Post-soviet mentality. This is why, many of the global companies have learned to adjust their ad campaigns to the local Russian conditions.

One should also not forget that Russian society is finding itself in the process of change at the moment. The Russian nation is in search of its own Cultural Identity and it’s interesting that this search has lead to a wave of Renaissance of the old Soviet times. This tendency is described as “Renaissance des guten sowjetischen Geistes”\(^85\)

A new strategy in advertisement has been developed in this regard. The strategy of contrasting of “good Soviet” and “bad western” goods is successfully used in ads of products of Russian origin. This opposition of “real Russian quality” and of “less qualitative mass-production western” goods is being used to emphasize the advantages of local products. In TV and Radio commercials Soviet culture echoes in song texts, melodies and images.\(^86\)

**9. Ethnic Stereotypes in Advertisement**

Ethnic stereotypes are often being used to add the advertisement some additional informational value. Most often that means to connote foreign products with national stereotypes of the country of origin. The concept of **Intercultural Advertising** is of great importance in this connection. Helen Kelly-Holmes mentions in her essay “Bier, Parfum, Kaas: Language Fetisch, Stereotyping and Identity in European Advertising” that national stereotypes are being more and more widely spread in advertisement. The notion of Intercultural advertising in this context is being defined as: „Intercultural advertising, i.e.

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\(^86\) Cf. Margl, Elena, Visuelle Rhetorik in der russischen Printwerbung, Wien, Univ., Diss., Elena Margl. – 2007, p.36
advertising for a product from one particular social, economic, linguistic, political etc. culture that takes place in and is directed at another social, economic, linguistic, political etc. culture, is a site where much of the cultural difference between societies, regions and nations is played out” 87.

Marietta Calderon discusses the usage of national stereotypes in advertisement in her essay “‘La vita puo essere bella’ und was nationale Stereotypen in Werbewelten dazu beitragen können”.

Such Ethnic stereotyping (“Ethnostereotypisierung”) is being used for building up of a nation-targeted image 88. This kind of advertisement is especially often used for products in Eastern-European countries, since these countries haven’t had a chance to develop any image-building measures because of their plan-based economies during the Communist times. The only thing they can appeal to is the national awareness of their consumers.

As an example one could mention utilization of Communist kitsch in eastern European advertisements. This is especially typical for Russian advertisement as well. In her essay “Communism as Kitch: Soviet Symbols in Post-Soviet Society” Theresa Sabonis-Chafee discusses this phenomenon:

“…most often kitsch elements of communism deeply embedded in the Russian psyche […] are deliberately used today in advertising, campaigning, and contemporary art and music”89. The usage of Soviet symbols and of Communist kitsch serves naturally for Russian products. The target group here is being represented by consumers who either share communist beliefs or still have nostalgic feelings for the old Communist times.90

The same nostalgic flair is also being used for advertising Russian products abroad, e.g. usage of old Soviet-propaganda-posters-style for Vodka-ads in foreign countries. Later in this paper we will analyze such examples of Russian advertisement in further detail.

It is also interesting to mention that the more chronological distance is available from such historic contents, the better they work. "Advertisers play with it a bit, but most concentrate on prerevolutionary kitsch: images of tsars and kingdoms. These symbols, from a much more comfortable and distant past, can be manipulated with less risk. The communist past has been universally accepted as dangerous territory, and people are currently exhausted from their re-examination of the ruins".  

Talking precisely about the Russian case, one can also notice that both Imperial Russian and Soviet symbols are being widely used in advertisements. The usage of traditional Imperial Russian elements is typical for advertisement of luxury goods like furs or expensive drinks. On the image above an advertisement of a fur store is presented.  

92 Picture from http://www.manege.spb.ru/exhibitions/2012/10/30/id91/ , March 3, 2013, 11:45
name of “Tsar Fur” while the symbol of the shop reminds the observer with its shape of the symbol-crown of the Russian Tsars – the Monomakh's Cap. 93

In opposition to this, traditional Communist symbols are being used mostly for products targeting an “average-Joe” kind of customer aged around forty (or a foreigner due to national stereotypes, but we are talking about ads made for Russians now). This is the generation that has lots of positive memories of the former Soviet times and that is likely to get nostalgic due to the Communist-style advertisement while buying such everyday consumer goods as milk, chocolate or low-priced vodka.

On the following images the observer is offered to get nostalgic about the Communist times. A Russian marine is kissing a retro-dressed girl in front of a typical Stalin-time apartment building. 94

On the next photo the taste of vodka with a pickled cucumber is being accentuated. Additionally a typical Soviet-times vodka-glass is being presented together with some Soviet coins, which are supposed to remind the observer of the good old times. 95

Another interesting topic in the context of intercultural advertisement is usage of foreign – language elements. The symbolic value of a language is being used to cause positive connotations in consumer’s mind which result out of stereotypes he has of one or another culture. 96

The usage of English language for example, stands for youth, progress and modernity.


95 Picture from http://vk.com/id39662467 , April 06, 2013, 22:36

Although most of the population of a non-English speaking country may not understand the sense of the words, the purely symbolic value of a foreign language statement may be much bigger than the linguistic value of the words themselves. English language in advertisement can symbolize different meanings: it can mean English, American, European or even global culture or be used for alienation from the own culture\textsuperscript{97}.

10. Russian Consumer Characteristics

To understand the way Russian advertisement works, one should picture a Russian consumer first. Since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Russian economy has been growing immensely. After years of deficit, inhabitants of the biggest country in the world found themselves in a consume rush. The growing middle class and low taxes lead to increasing demand for expensive import-goods.

Clear role-setting in the Russian society defines what, when and how is being bought. The traditional role of men and women, for example, affects the demand and the offer. Women attach a lot of importance to beauty and femininity, while men have to bring material safety and stability to the family.

According to these social roles foreign high-quality brands are being bought. Women treat themselves to make up and skin care products, clothes are mostly short, tight and sexy. Men on the other hand, tend to show-off their status, emphasizing the importance of expensive accessories, cell phones, cars.

In 1991 the borders were opened for the first time for foreign goods. This caused huge enthusiasm for everything imported from abroad. The very first brands which appeared in Russia impressed the people so much, that their names became part of the language. Since then every Copy-machine is called a Xerox, for example, and every sticky tape is a Scotch.

Russian consumers have a clear system of stereotypes characterizing each product according to its producing country. France stands for cosmetics, Germany for cars and household appliances, Japan for entertainment electronics and China for cheap brand copies of poor quality. Russian producers are often mistrusted; foreign goods tend to be more popular and are bought abroad, if possible.

All in all, one can say that Russian consumers see advertisement as an indication of

high quality. Brands are being bought as a status symbol, without any regard to ecological or ethical factors.98

11. Examples of Intercultural Advertising

Now that we have discussed the main characteristics of Russian advertisement, let us provide some colourful examples to support the theoretical knowledge acquired above.

We have already mentioned the four main patterns noticeable in Russian advertisement:

- Reference to traditions and use of national history;
- Reference to geographical magnitude of Russia;
- Reference to the community, family, friends etc.;
- Reference to the Ethnos and Russia’s “otherness”.

Below I chose some examples of culturally differentiated advertisement bearing mentioned characteristics.

Our first category here is reference to traditions. Many products in post-Soviet Russia are being bought out of nostalgia. Nostalgia of the Soviet times, for example, causes people to buy Adidas, Marlboro or Levis’ jeans, since these brands were in the deficit times the best one could get.

Sales of some Russian-made products grew noticeably because of these nostalgic feelings. An interesting fact is that this “nostalgic” way of advertisement works not only in Russia and for Russians, it works abroad too. Memory of Russia’s communist past is still too fresh in the minds of foreign customers, so this stereotype is used successfully. It concerns mostly Vodka, chocolate and some other edibles.99


In this international advertisement of vodka “Stolichnaya” the Communist image of Russia is being used. The image shows a Russian-looking woman in a typical service-cap, the vodka etiquette is designed in a traditional Communist poster style and even the slogan is written in a matching font. This is how foreigners imagine Russia and this is the kind of ads they get.

One should not forget that a nation’s image abroad doesn’t have to match with the way the inhabitants characterize themselves. For its own citizens vodka “Stolichnaya” has a following ad:

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The image is showing one of Moscow’s famous Stalin-time buildings, which every Russian associates with Moscow of the Soviet times.\footnote{Picture from http://profimages.ru/catalog/foto1171336/, April 07, 2013, 14:25} The goal is to give a feeling of good old times and of traditional taste, an image which is attractive for a Russian man after forty – a typical vodka purchaser. On the other hand, such an advertisement would not be appropriate for foreign market, since a picture of a Stalin building does not mean anything to a foreigner.

Alyonka is a typical Russian girl name. On the package a little peasant girl is pictured to give us a feeling of “good old times” again. The difference to the vodka example above is that the producer is referring now to Russian culture in general, to the Ethnos as a whole. “Alyonka” chocolate and the “Little Country House” milk are referring to a typical Russian village and to traditional Russian life.

The following is an example of reference to community and to the Ethnos at the same time:

The “Slavic” vodka\textsuperscript{104} already in its name contains a reference to the “Slavic brotherhood”. The slogan and the image are informing us that this vodka is meant for leisure time and fun with family and friends.

The following example demonstrates the important role of Russian Orthodox Church in the Russian culture. On the packaging of famous Russian chocolate, called “Russkiy Shokolad”, meaning “Russian Chocolate” we see a picture of a Russian Orthodox cathedral. Although chocolate obviously has nothing to do with religion, we see the way the producers of this chocolate brand strived to find a picture of something really Russian to go with the name of “Russian Chocolate”. The fact that a picture of a Russian Orthodox cathedral was chosen, shows how deeply Russian Orthodox Church is embedded into the culture of the country.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{104} Picture from http://www.sostav.ru/news/2007/07/20/r1/ , April 02, 2013, 15:00
\textsuperscript{105} Picture from http://www.uniconf.ru/ru/catalog/?gid=1322&id=6977 , March 12, 2013, 18:28
One should also mention that many of Russian ads are rather sexual. This fact can also be explained by cultural reasons. During the Soviet times women were treated equally with men, since they were important labor force. Additionally women had to overtake all manly jobs during the war, that way in Russia there was no need for emancipation movement like in Europe, for example. Russian women have never felt oppressed by the men, on the opposite, in Russian culture one often speaks of the strength of the Russian woman, who can “stop a running horse and enter a burning house”. This is one of the reasons why Russian women enjoy their sexuality and don’t feel offended by sexual advertisement. Here are some examples:

On this advertisement of the shoe-store chain „Centro“ naked models demonstrate that they don’t want to have anything on except for the beautiful Centro shoes. In Europe such advertisement might not have been treated as liberally as in Russia.  

As for sexual motives, they are being used in any context, that way even beer ads are not safe, as we can see on the following ad, where two cans put together look like lace stockings.  

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One last example is an ad of a Snickers chocolate bar.\textsuperscript{108} I found it especially interesting since it shows us the way international brands get differently positioned according to the country. The Mars Company has managed to produce a very successful TV-spot, where the product characteristics were successfully combined with the national image. The result is funny and effective. The basic message of the commercial is that Snickers satisfies your hunger. "Snickers, handles your hunger so you can handle, well…anything."

In the Russian variant Russian epic heroes have to fight a horrifying dragon. The insatiable creature gets defeated with the help of a Snickers candy bar which has great hunger satisfying qualities.\textsuperscript{109}


I would like to finish this chapter with a little story, explaining my motives for the research on Russian advertisement and giving a last example on Intercultural Advertising.

As I first moved to Austria three years ago, I had to deal with a cultural change. This difference between Russian and Austrian mentalities was visible in many little details. One of my first experiences, which really caught my attention, brought me to an idea of writing this paper. I once heard the advertisement of the electronics-chain Saturn on the local radio. This advertisement implied that one should economize on the prices following Saturn’s slogan “Geiz ist geil” – “Greed is Cool”. This immoral, for my Russian mentality, slogan, shocked me a little. Having asked around, I discovered, that given the mentality of the German –
speaking countries, famous for their discipline and ability to economize, this slogan wasn’t out of place after all.

The following occurrences confirmed me in my doubts. Some months later I learned that the first Saturn store was being opened in Moscow. For its launching the whole German-speaking advertisement concept was simply translated into Russian. This caused the fact that the slogan “Jadnost – eto kruto!”110, “Greed is Cool” became the basis of the Russian advertisement campaign as well. One can read about the reaction of Russian consumers to such a slogan. Russian customers wrote in blogs and articles, how horrified they were by this phrase, playing with the lowest feeling of greed. One has to take into consideration that in the Russian mentality, greed is considered one of the worst and indecent qualities. Russians are very dependent on the foreign opinion and try to appear hospitable and rich in the eyes of the others, even though they might not be so. Buying at Saturn would thus mean to publicly accept being greedy. “I doubt that this strategy will have success. Who wants to confess being greedy or envious? “111 – journalist Tatiana Poliakova is wondering.

This little range of examples has hopefully helped the reader to get a better idea of Russian advertisement. One shouldn’t forget what a great role culture plays in the success of advertisement in different world regions.

An average Russian, for example, is not very interested in healthy lifestyles, living long and being active in his old years. So a spot, advertising, let’s say, mineral water with wellness characteristics will not necessarily attract the average Russian’s attention. A healthy-looking American pensioner talking of, let’s say, pensioner insurances and saving

Part 2 - Russian Cultural Identity

Now that we have a general idea on the way Russian advertisement works, let us try to understand, why it became like this. Finding out what Russian Cultural Identity is like will help us to understand the way the Russian mentality functions and why this country needs exactly the type of advertisement described above.

We will research the Cultural Identity of the Russian nation during two different epochs – the pre-revolutionary epoch and the Soviet epoch. Our goal is to find out, if there is such a thing as a common national Cultural Identity, which stays unchanged for ages.

The second question that we will be trying to answer is, if Cultural Identity of the Russian nation can be common after all, in spite of the differences between social classes. In the Soviet Union, where Dictatorship of the Proletariat prevailed and cultural differences were less obvious. On the other hand, during the imperial times the distinction between the serfs and the nobles was enormous. Could Serfs and Nobles have a common Cultural Identity? Or were there two different Russian Cultural Identities, or maybe, even none?

To answer these questions, let us proceed in temporal order, starting with the imperial times and continuing with the Cultural Identity of the Soviet times.

12. Tolstoy’s War and Peace and Russian Cultural Identity

Before we start with the analysis of the Imperial Cultural Identity, I would like to point out an important argument – Cultural Identity of a nation often awakens as a result of exceptional stress and conflict situations such as wars or revolutions. These are the moments when a country realizes its unity in the face of the enemy. Cultural Identity of a country is strongly realized and underlined. In the case of foreign intrusion, for example, the own Cultural Identity is being realized in comparison and in contrast to the cultural Identity of the enemy.

That’s the reason why it is so important for us to analyze Russian historic past and to understand what exactly lead to the way the Russian Cultural Identity is today. During the Napoleonic Invasion to Russia in 1812, for example, Russian identity was artificially created for the first time. Patriotic feelings were propagated by the tsar to make the simple folk fight for its country. Artificially created or not, the collective Russian identity was given a start.

Referring to this connection between Cultural Identity and war, we again see how well Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” matches the subject since it pictures the Russian National Character in the times where Russia’s integrity and its destiny as a nation was in danger.

War and peace, one of the greatest novels in Russian literature written by Leo Tolstoy describes historical events and private life unfolding in 19-th century Russia during the Napoleonic wars. This epic work, consisting of four volumes provides a unique portrayal of Russian society, describing in detail multiple aspects of Russian life. Hundreds of different characters populate the pages of “War and Peace”, providing a truthful picture of Russian society of those times.

The writer describes historical events parallel with private family life and society life mirroring processes happening in the society during this important epoch. This is also one of the few sources describing not only facts but also realistic feelings of people based on real research. The portrayal of the general moods of the society is based on detailed research that Tolstoy conducted while preparing for writing this novel. Tolstoy interviewed multiple contemporaries and read tons of letters describing those times and the way people felt about those events. For research on the novel Tolstoy “accumulated a whole library” of historical material on that period, “studying letters, diaries, and traditions”, and interviewing survivors of the battles.

In this case one could imagine, that information on life in Imperial times, provided by Tolstoy in his works is rather realistic, it reproduces the mood of the epoch and can without any doubt be used as a secondary source for this paper.

While Tolstoy with no doubt had enough information for picturing the way of life of the upper class, since he was a count himself, one might have doubts, if he could be as

113 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, Biographical Note, p. v.
115 Cf. Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, Biographical Note, p. v-vi
competent for picturing the life of simple people. With regard to this it would be important to mention that in those times Tolstoy could be considered as the perfect example of a landlord having understanding for the problems of ordinary people. He devoted lots of his time to improving the condition of his serfs, which he later liberated and opened a school for. Towards the end of his life he got deeply interested in religion and adopted an ascetic mode of life, dressing like a peasant, devoting his time to manual work and shoemaking. 116 That way one could imagine that in spite of his noble status Tolstoy did have a better idea of peasant life than many of his noble contemporaries, which helped him a lot in picturing realistic scenes of peasant life in his novel.

In his work „Understanding Tolstoy“ Andrew D. Kaufman accentuates Tolstoy’s „...lifelong striving to capture the truths of human nature as they manifest themselves in the ever-changing details of everyday life“117. Kaufman supports this argument right away citing Tolstoy himself: “The hero of my tale – whom I love with all power of my soul, whom I have tried to portray in all its beauty, who has been, is, and always will be beautiful – is Truth.“118 Tolstoy’s strongest weapon is his fine intuition and amazing capability of psychological analysis, which permits him to express his vision of life in every detail. 119 No wonder that Tolstoy’s “realist” technique brought his masterpiece the reputation of a “national novel” the way Russians see it today.

“War and Peace” aims to portray life in all of its dimensions and to show the Russian folk as a whole the way it unites in the face of the French enemy. The novel serves as a perfect representation of both peasant and aristocratic Russian life. So let us have a look at some of the main characters of the novel and see what we can learn about Imperial Cultural Identity from their fictitious but yet realistic relationships.

13. The Rostov Family – personification of Russianness

Let us first concentrate on the central family “clan” of the novel – the Rostovs. The Rostov family displays the essence of Russianness, being a typical Russian family with its values and relationships. In spite of the fact that the Rostovs are aristocrats, the family is

116 Cf. Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, Biographical Note, p. v-vi
117 Kaufman, Andrew D., Understanding Tolstoy, The Ohio State University Press/ Columbus, 2011, p.17
118 Kaufman, Andrew D., Understanding Tolstoy, The Ohio State University Press/ Columbus, 2011, p.17
119 Cf. Kaufman, Andrew D., Understanding Tolstoy, The Ohio State University Press/ Columbus, 2011, p. 18-25
living a rather simple life in their estate, far away from the intrigues of social life of St. Petersburg. Their children grow up unspoiled by the city, being brought up in the sense of family life and Russian traditions. One could imagine, that based on his own experiences with peasantry, Tolstoy supports the point of view, that not only simple peasants can be considered as typically Russian. Good education and expensive way of life of Russian nobility doesn’t necessarily stand in the way of them keeping those typical Russian traits.

The Rostovs are very kind and warm-hearted, generous and simple people. Sometimes even too simple and generous, which leads them to financial problems. As many Russians, the Rostovs value the way they are seen in the eyes of the others, so even when the old count Rostov realizes his financial crisis, he finds himself not capable of changing his lifestyle. It is just too important for him to have a reputation of a generous and hospitable host. “…few men new so well how to arrange a feast on an open-handed, hospitable scale, and still fewer men would be so well able and willing to make up out of their own resources what might be needed for the success of the fête.”

Old Rostov’s generosity and his living for others becomes his own trap. The old count loves inviting people to his weekly dinners and celebrations. He is not able to change his lifestyle even when he knows that he can’t afford it any more, the thought not to have a reputation of a generous man any more is unbearable for him. “…the old habits of life without which the old count and countess could not conceive of existence remained unchanged. There was still the hunting establishment… the same expensive presents and dinner parties to the whole district…there were still the count’s games of whist and boston, at which – spreading out his cards so that everybody could see them – he let himself be plundered of hundreds of rubles every day by his neighbours, who looked upon an opportunity to play a rubber with Count Rostov as a most profitable source of income.”

The Rostovs treat people who work for them as family, eating at the same dinner table with them, and letting them live in their house. Many of those exploit the generosity of the old count simply living at his costs. “It was not necessary to entertain so freely…but still the enormous house and its lodges were full of people and more than twenty sat down at the table every day. These were all their own people who had settled down in the house almost as members of the family…the musician and his wife..., …the dancing master and his

120 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p. 169
121 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p. 291
family... an old maiden lady... and many others such as Petya’s tutors, the girls’ former
governess, and other people who simply found it preferable and more advantageous to live in
the count’s house than at home.” 122 That way the Rostov family bears such positive Russian
traits as generosity and kindness, but unpracticality and dependence on opinion of the others
are characteristic for them as well.

The daughter of the Rostov’s, Natasha, is Tolstoy’s favorite character. She embodies
the happiness and purity of youth. Although Natasha is a countess, Tolstoy underlines that she
“yet was able to understand all that was... in every Russian man and woman” 123. In a famous
scene where Natasha visits her favorite uncle and dances a Russian folk dance in front of her
family, everybody gets to see, that in spite of her ballroom dancing lessons and a French
nanny who was educating her, this Russianness in her was still there. Natasha can still feel the
spirit of the Russian folk through its songs and dances, for although no one has ever taught
her that, it is simply in her blood. “Where, how, and when had this young countess, educated
by an émigrée French governess, imbibed from the Russian air she breathed that spirit and
obtained that manner...? But the spirit and the movements were those inimitable and
unteachable Russian ones that “Uncle” had expected of her”. 124

As the evening at the “Uncle’s” goes on, the “Uncle” starts playing his guitar and
singing Russian folk songs. Tolstoy underlines, that although “Uncle” was a noble, he
also“...sang as peasants sing” 125 with his whole soul, forgetting the meaning of the melody
and just concentrating on the words.

To my mind, the Rostov family is a good example of the typical Russian character, in
spite of their noble status. On the example of the Rostov family Tolstoy demonstrates that it is
not just peasantry that can represent the real Russian spirit. Goodhearted Russian people can
be found at any social level, and European education of Russian aristocrats together with their

122 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The
great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p. 291
123 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The
great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.289
124 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The
great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.289
125 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The
great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.290
great disposition to everything French, according to the fashion of those times, didn’t necessarily have to alienate them from everything Russian.

14. Platon Karataev – Personification of the Russian folk

A comprehensive picture of a typical Russian peasant was an inevitable part of the novel as well. While many different characters represent the simple folk in the book, one figure, namely the one of Platon Karataev stands out the most. The reader gets acquainted with this character during the description of war events. Pierre, one of the central positive characters of the book, who is a noble too, gets captured by the French. During his captivity he has to share the room with an ordinary Russian peasant soldier, Platon Karataev, who changes his way of thinking for ever.

Pierre, a rich landlord who had spent his whole life searching for the life’s real sense, who had tried himself in philosophy and religion but never found his inner peace, realizes that the simple truth that this little peasant man is speaking, is the most inspiring and wise that he had ever heard in his life. Pierre returns as a new man from the French captivity thanks to the simple peasant philosophy of his neighbor – Platon Karataev. According to Pierre, “Platon Karataev… remained in his mind a most vivid and precious memory and the personification of everything Russian, kindly and round.”

The author underlines how soft, round and pleasant everything was about Platon. His soft voice, his face and his movements, everything about him was round: “His head was quite round, his back, chest, shoulders, and even his arms, which he held as if ever ready to embrace something, were rounded, his pleasant smile and his large, gentle brown eyes were also round”.

This is the description of silent quiet strength, more of a spiritual strength of the Russian simple folk. This simple wisdom of an ordinary man impressed Pierre so much, that for the rest of his life he will be weighing his thoughts and actions by considering what Platon would have done in this situation.

While Platon is with no doubt a very positive personification of the Russian folk, he bears some of negative Russian traits as well. The famous Russian passivity is his second

126 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.554
127 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.554
nature: “...things happen not as we plan but as God judges”. 128 Everything happens according to god’s will. Platon himself was torn away from his family and forced to be a soldier. But he sees this positive: “we thought it was a misfortune but it turned out a blessing!”129 If he hadn’t been taken as a soldier, another member of his family would have been taken – his brother, who has a wife and five children. That way Platon thanks god for doing the lesser evil to his family since he only left his wife behind in contrast to his brother who would have left his five children alone. Platon never even comes to an idea to think how he could change his life or make it better – typical behavior for a Russian. “Suffer an hour, live for an age”130 – is his motto.

Platon also describes Moscow as “mother of cities”131. This reference to the homeland as a mother is typical for the Russian people and is connected with the expectation that the “mother land” should take care of its “children”.

As Tolstoy’s goal was to represent life as truthfully as possible in his books, Platon Karatayev is for him “an unfathomable, rounded, eternal personification of the spirit of simplicity and truth”132

15. Cultural Identity and War

When the French intrusion begins, Tolstoy’s characters, belonging to the two different social classes – nobility and peasantry, unite in the face of the common enemy. As already discussed above, a national Cultural Identity often opens up in its full strength during a war and in the face of the enemy. The people realize that they need to protect their own culture from the culture of powerful intruders. The soldiers feel “the attraction and charm of rage”133 for the first time.

128 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.553
129 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.553
130 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.552
131 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.553
132 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.555
133 Donna Tussing Orwin, Chapter 4, Leo Tolstoy: pacifist, patriot, and molodets, in “Anniversary essays on Tolstoy, edited by Donna Tussing Orwin”, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.88
So let us discuss the cultural reasons why Russian soldiers go to war. With regards to this topic Donna Tussing Orwin differs „necessary wars“ from „unnecessary“ ones. Wars which are not „national“ do not gain the consent of people.134 During such „unnecessary wars“ „... decent soldiers fight from fear or from sense of duty that is not the same as informed consent“135

Events being described in „War and Peace“ are a good example referring to this topic. Let’s take a look at the reasons why Tolstoy’s characters go to war. The first reason here would be the great popularity of the young Emperor Alexander I, who was adored by the whole Russian upper class. The Emperor gets portrayed through the eyes of Nikolay Rostov, the young son of the Rostovs, who “...with his whole soul ... shared the adoration then common in Moscow for the Emperor, who was spoken of as the “angel incarnate””.136

Meeting the Emperor is a great dream of the young Rostov, which comes true during the review of the Army by the Emperor: „“Oh God, what would happen to me if the Emperor spoke to me?“ thought Rostov. „I should die of happiness“...137. When Rostov finally sees his idol “...instantly every thought of himself had vanished. He was filled with happiness at his nearness to the Emperor... He was happy as a lover when the longed-for moment of meeting arrives...as he drew near everything grew brighter, more joyful, more significant, and more festive around him.”138

But it’s interesting that not just the nobles share the fascination for the young tsar. All soldiers, no matter what their social class is, share this love and readiness to die for the Emperor. “Rostov ... experienced the same feeling as every other man in the army: a feeling of self-forgetfulness, a proud consciousness of might, and a passionate attraction to him who was the case of this triumph.”139

134 Cf. Donna Tussing Orwin, Chapter 4, Leo Tolstoy: pacifist, patriot, and molodets, in “Anniversary essays on Tolstoy, edited by Donna Tussing Orwin”, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.88-90
135 Donna Tussing Orwin, Chapter 4, Leo Tolstoy: pacifist, patriot, and molodets, in “Anniversary essays on Tolstoy, edited by Donna Tussing Orwin”, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.90
136 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.169
137 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.136
138 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.141
139 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.136
In this “necessary war” against Napoleon, where the national integrity was in danger, the Russian nation needed a symbol and an inspiration. The young and pleasant Emperor becomes this symbol, personifying all positive qualities, often even unreal, but still motivating the people to fight for the tsar. In this case the tsar personifies whole Russia, he is the father of the nation, Moscow is mother of the cities, and soldiers, Russia’s children are ready to die for their “father” and their “motherland”.

16. Russian Aristocracy – Carrier of Imperial Cultural Identity?

Let’s go back to the discussion, if the nobles can be considered as Cultural Identity carriers. Can the 1,5% of the population really represent the whole nation? Shouldn’t peasant culture be considered as Russian national culture due to its quantitative dominance and aristocratic culture be seen just as exception from the general rule?

Let us speculate a little. The nobles’ nearness to the tsar helped them to develop sympathy or even admiration toward him which was a good basis for their patriotism. Aristocrats were also well educated, which made them able to realize the processes happening in the country, estimate the situation and take educated decisions.

In Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” we can see this deep empathy of the upper society circles toward their tsar and their patriotism based on this empathy. Young nobles strive to go to the army to be able to serve the tsar and to show him their affection and deep love.

The simple peasants on the other side, were uneducated, could not understand complicated political facts and had never even seen the tsar. This is why one could imagine that they could not really have any strong patriotic feeling or any strongly pronounced cultural identity. Most of the peasants couldn’t read or write and had never left their home village in their whole life. This is why they developed their own peasant culture, which logically was very different from the culture of the nobles, since the ways of life of these two social classes were totally different.

So the question is: should we consider the nobles and the peasants as two different worlds with two different Cultural Identities or are these two social classes just two different sides of the same coin? Did the common Russian Imperial Identity exist after all?

To answer these questions one should first define the components building a Cultural Identity of a nation. In this regard let us refer to Sir Ernest Barker, who researched the question of the National Character development in his book “National Character and the factors in its formation”. Let us not forget that we have agreed to use the notions “Cultural
Identity” and “National Character” as synonyms throughout this paper. Concerning this matter the next chapter will be referring to the “National Character”, the way Barker names it, but the reader should keep in mind that these ideas can be equally applied to the term “Cultural Identity” as well.

17. The National Character

In his book “National Character and the factors in its formation” Sir Ernest Barker, an English political scientist of the first half of the 20-th century, speaks of the importance of study of national character for Political Science. “…it is a matter of the art of politics as well as of political science. He who can understand the psychological groundwork and the general character of nations possesses a golden key of policy”\(^{140}\). The study of national character, or “international psychology”, the way he calls it, is as important as it is simple: “Each nation lives in a set of ideas (and of emotions associated with the ideas and even with the very words used to express the ideas), which is peculiar to itself”\(^{141}\). These peculiarities are exactly what we are interested in in this paper.

To be able to define, what a Nation and its National Character are, one should first examine, under which conditions a nation and its character are formed.

According to Barker, a nation, and hence a national character consists of both material and spiritual components.

The material components are:

- Race
- Territory and climate
- Population and its occupation

The spiritual components, on the other side, are:

- The political factor
- The religious factor
- Language, literature and thought
- Ideas and systems of education\(^{142}\)

\(^{140}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. xi

\(^{141}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. xi

\(^{142}\) Cf. Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 2-17
Barker asks himself: “Is national character a constant, or is it a variable factor, engaged in a process of change?” He compares the national character with a character of an individual person. It is subject to constant development and change: “Not only is national character made; it continues to be made and re-made. It is not made once and for all: it always remains, in its measure, modifiable. A nation may alter its character in the course of its history to suit new conditions or to fit new purposes.”

This means that there is not such a thing as individual or collective destiny, “Each nation makes its character and its destiny.”

It is a well known fact that some countries due to climate, religion and national mentality traits are economically more successful than the others. Does this mean that if a nation really wants, it can change its behavioral patterns and become more economically effective? If there is a possibility to change the national character, why don’t nations modify and improve it, having learned from the problems they had to face?

According to Barker, these “profound and abiding permanences in a nation’s character” have been formed over long ages of historical development. This history, this past is still affecting the nations: “The past that matters is still alive in the present, and it makes us, in very large measure, what we now are. It is a living past, walking among us, and part of our life.”

The nations cannot simply throw away their past and forget it, for it is still affecting them in many spheres of their lives. And as an individual person, changing and evolving during his life, but still keeping his core basic characteristics, a national character stays constant over year and even ages, although smaller changes do take place.

That way, having defined the main components building a nation and its character, we can now define the notion of a Nation, which is central for our research:

A Nation “… is a body of men, inhabiting a definite territory, who normally are drawn from different races, but possess a common stock of thoughts and feelings acquired and

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143 Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London: Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p.xii
144 Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London: Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p.7-8
146 Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London: Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p.8
147 Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London: Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p.9
transmitted during the course of a common history; who on the whole and in the main, though more in the past than the present, include in that common stock a common religious belief; who generally and as a rule use a common language as the vehicle of their thoughts and feelings; and who, besides common thoughts and feelings, also cherish a common will, and accordingly form, or tend to form, a separate State for the expression and realization of that will...”149

As we see, the non-material components, such as thoughts, feelings, religious belief or common will are dominating over the material factors such as race, territory or population. A nation can change its territory or its occupation but the common will and values will still keep it as a whole.

If we now think about the Russian case again, there are two specific nation-building and character-building factors, which are especially interesting to us. As we have seen, it wasn’t race or territory, or population that changed radically over the years. There were naturally some minor changes in those factors as well, but none of them became crucial for the country’s destiny. What really mattered were the political and the religious factor.

It was the change of power that revolutionized the lives of Russians with the begin of the Communist Era and with its end. And it was the Russian Orthodox Religion that held this huge nation together for hundreds of years till the Communists came and claimed to replace Religion with the Communist ideology.

Religion and Communist Ideology seem to me very similar in this case. They are both based on belief. Religion is based on belief in holy ideas while Ideology refers to political ideas. But both of them serve as a frame that lets people evaluate their actions and thoughts and adjust them according to the common idea of what is right, wrong, acceptable or unacceptable in the society.

In the case of the Soviet Union the Communist Ideology even made an attempt to replace religion and the fact that this actually worked in some cases, shows us how close religious factor and political factor of nation building lie to each other.

Let us therefore focus a little more on political and religious aspects that formed the Russian nation and its national character.

149 Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 17
18. National Character and Religion

To my mind, the Role of Russian Orthodox religion was crucial in forming and maintaining of the Russian Cultural Identity. In the beginning of this paper we made a guess that “although the nobles and the peasantry were different social classes with different culture, the Russian Orthodox religion united them and made them to the same nation. In spite of their different way of life, Russian Orthodox religion provided the Nobles and the Serfs with the same values which united them as a nation.” Shortly, Russian Orthodox religion served as a defining element of Russian Cultural Identity, holding different Russian society members together, having an immense impact on the way of life, culture and values of the people.

Let us see if we can support this theory with the help of other authors, who also might have had a few thoughts on this question.

In his chapter on “the Religious factor and the influence of Churches” Barker is also wondering: is common religion a necessary basis for a common national character? He presents us two contradictory examples.

During the times of the British Queen Elizabeth, for example, one wasn’t considered a full member of the nation unless one didn’t belong to the national church. On the other hand, Germany, for example, belonged partly to the Roman and partly to the Protestant churches which still did not prevent it from staying a single nation. Barker comments on the German case, that in spite of these two different religious directions, the German people still had a large common basis of Christian thought and felling. And the common Christian basis was the one that mattered. “…if we take any large view of history, we must also recognize that nations long drew for their national unity on some common fund of religious ideas…These are the fundamental ideas which affect conduct and social life, and thereby determine national character in nobile ways and to noble issues.”

He also underlines that even a secularist nation can never entirely lack the presence of religious ideas, for they “… have largely shaped its character in the past, and are not entirely gone from it in its present”.

Let us take Russia as a good example for such a situation. The Communists, who strived to create a fully atheist society, still didn’t manage to erase Russian Orthodox past, since it was accumulated during hundreds of years of religious tradition. While churches were...

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being closed and priests killed or arrested, this only caused people to hide their religious feelings. It is true that there were some young people born in these times who did manage to be brought up in the sense of atheism, but this did not change the religious direction of the whole country. In addition, many of those self-called atheists came back to their Orthodox roots as soon as the Communist rule fell. The largest part of the people, who were hiding their faith, but did not forget it, caused a wave of so-called Renaissance of Russian Orthodox Religion in the 1990-s.

In his book “Rußland verstehen : Schlüssel zum russischen Wesen” Alexander Litschev analyses different aspects of Russian life and of Russian mentality. In the chapter dedicated to the role of the Orthodox religion, he speaks of the Russian strong need and desire to passionately believe in something. He also quotes Russian philosophers Ivanov and Berdyayev, who confirm that “das religiöse Bewusstsein der russischen Seele angeboren sei”\(^\text{152}\) and that “das Russische volk in seinen psychischen Grundstrukturen religiös sei”\(^\text{153}\).

This constant urge for spirituality and the necessity to have something to believe in explains the fact that in Russia even Atheism, Nihilism and Communism were followed in a religious way.\(^\text{154}\) If one tried to take Russians their religions away, they found something else to believe in. That way in my eyes even convinced Atheists and Communists weren’t people without religion, Atheism and Communism was their religion.

As already discussed above, although religion was forbidden during the Communist times, it still couldn’t be totally erased. “Die russischen Menschen aus dem Volke, aus der Arbeierschaft hörten auch, nachdem sie der Orthodoxie den Rücken gekehrt haben, nicht auf, Gott und die göttliche Wahreheit (prawda) zu suchen…” Selbst die eingefleischten Kommunisten “ haben in der Tiefe ihrer Seele eine Schicht, die von der Orthodoxie geprägt ist”.\(^\text{155}\) - Litschev quotes the thoughts of Berdyayev again.

Russian Orthodox Church served as basis and model of Christian values and played an important role in the shaping of Russian culture. The Russian nation developed during hundreds of years in belief of Moscow as “the third Rome” and in confidence that Orthodox


Christianity was the only right faith. As carriers of the only true religion, the Russian nation became a “Gottsträgervolk”\(^{156}\) in their own eyes, “the only carriers of God”. From the point of view of medieval Moscow, all the other Christians, such as Catholics or Protestants, were considered heretics and Non-Christians.

This myth of “Holy Russia” in the eyes of many Russian philosophers served as a base for formation of the Russian nation and of its cultural background.\(^{157}\) “…die russische Orthodoxe Kirche als Garant der Einheit des Volkes in seiner Geschichte”\(^{158}\) and “…der Mythos vom “Heiligen Russland” als einzigem Träger und Hüter der Reinheit der Orthodoxie und somit des ursprünglichen christlichen Geistes”\(^{159}\) made the Russian nation and the Russian national character the way they are today.

No wonder that the 74 years of the Communist rule didn’t manage to destroy the Russian religiousness and actually contributed to an even more intensive explosion of religious feelings after the collapse of the Soviet Union. We see that Russian Orthodox religion is indeed a very important factor that played a huge role in the creation and maintenance of the Russian national character. This practical example confirms the theoretical knowledge that we extracted from the works of Barker and Litschev. It also shows that nations and their characters are indeed very constant in their core, since research conducted on them almost one hundred years ago by Barker, for example, still can be applied by us today and bring us to the same conclusions.

19. Connection between Russian Orthodox Religion and Russian Cultural Identity

So let us now come back to Tolstoy again. In Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” the war against Napoleon gets portrayed as a “holy war”. The Russians are fighting against their Catholic enemies. Their different religion, language and behavior awake sleeping patriotic feelings in the folk, creating a collective Russian Identity in the face of the enemy.


According to Tolstoy aristocrats and peasants are both carriers of the Russian cultural identity. He is persuaded that it’s not just ordinary people, like peasants and soldiers, who build a nation. A nation is a unity of all social classes, aristocracy included. While the simple folk represents the strength of the masses, aristocracy can give its education and knowledge to lead these masses. Especially in times of war you can see that aristocrats and peasantry all fight for the same goal. This is why during the Great Patriotic War of 1812 Tolstoy’s nobles feel the same “warmth of patriotism” as simple peasants and soldiers do.

With the entry of the French into Smolensk, the so-called “partisan war” begins, which allows simple Russian peasants to prove themselves, not depending on the orders of generals. The folk takes the destiny of the country in its own hands. That way Tolstoy underlines the irrelevance of great heroes, generals or tsars taking decisions during the war, for only the folk in its mass can decide the war’s outcome.

In this connection Tolstoy is also talking of such notion as “the spirit of the army”. “… the spirit of the army, that is to say, the greater or lesser readiness to fight and face danger felt by all the men composing the army, quite independently of whether they are, or are not, fighting under the command of a genius, in two- or three-line formation, with cudgels or with rifles that repeat thirty times a minute. Men who want to fight will always put themselves in the most advantageous conditions for fighting.”\textsuperscript{160} That way he underlines that no matter what talented leaders stand on top, if the masses don’t feel the right enthusiasm, the affair won’t have success. In the epilogue Tolstoy discusses this in further detail: the moving force of every event is not the great leader, a tsar, or a hero, but the folk mass that is directly taking part in the event. For only if the masses are convinced of the idea, it can be successfully put into practice. That way Tolstoy is offering us the equation Power = collective will : “…historical personages have power only because they fulfill the will of people which has been delegated to them”\textsuperscript{161}, and then “Under what condition is the will of the people delegated to one person? On condition that that person expresses the will of the whole people.”\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{160} Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.590

\textsuperscript{161} Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.682

\textsuperscript{162} Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.683-684
The spirit of the army blossoms during the “partisan warfare” which “flamed up most fiercely”. The Cossacks and peasants who crept in among the French now considered everything possible. And the best in such “guerilla warfare” was a peasant named Tikhon, who impersonates the active and sharp-witted side of the Russian national character, that however gets unveiled only in extraordinary situations, where the question of life-or-death comes into play. Tikhon “…was the bravest and most useful man in the party. No one found more opportunities for attacking, no one captured or killed more Frenchmen…”

That way Platon and Tikhon – two peasant characters in the novel, represent the opposite qualities found in every Russian – passivity on the one side, but also capability to fight fearlessly, although only if driven into a corner.

Heroic behavior during the French intrusion contrasts the behavior of Russian soldiers during “unnecessary wars”, namely during their participation in foreign campaigns while performing their official allied obligations. The people do not understand what they are fighting for and what they are doing on foreign land. That’s why they start to flee when the opportunity occurs: “Why did we lose the battle at Austerlitz? …because we had nothing to fight for there, we wanted to get away from the battle field as soon as we could… “We’ve lost, so let us run”, and we ran.” The following attitude spoils the fighting spirit of the army: “…here we stand in the middle of a field without rhyme or reason. It’s all those damned Germans’ muddling! What stupid devils!”

Prince Andrew, one of the central positive characters in the novel, decides to go directly into battle, although he would have had a chance to sit in a safe place taking strategic decisions. This is how he speaks of the role of the masses in the outcome of the war: “… if things depended on arrangements made by the staff, I should be there making arrangements, 

163 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.591
164 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.591
165 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.591
166 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.595
167 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.441
168 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.151
but instead of that I have the honor to serve here in the regiment with these gentlemen, and I consider that on us tomorrow’s battle will depend and not on those others…Success never depends, and never will depend, on position, or equipment, or even on numbers, and least of all on position.” On Pierre’s question, on what then, Prince Andrew answers: “On the feeling that is in me and in him…” pointing on some random man, “…and in each soldier”.170

This way Prince Andrew symbolizes the unity of aristocracy with the simple folk while fighting for the good of their country and protecting their common Cultural Identity.

Hence we come to a conclusion, that in spite of the class differences and different ways of life, nobles and serfs of Imperial Russia still had a common national Cultural Identity. A huge role in this concern played the Russian Orthodox Religion, which united all different members of the Russian society, providing them with the same cultural set of beliefs and values. An additional push to this unity was given by the war against Napoleon, which forced the folk to unite against the enemy.

Referring to our former conversation on the question, why soldiers go to war, we can draw a conclusion that participation in war is one of the most important indicators of patriotism, and thus of realization of national unity and of common cultural identity. As we see, it’s the total sum of all social classes, that makes up a people and a people’s cultural identity. Any national idea becomes really national only after surviving its suitability check by the masses. That is why it would be not right to differ noble and peasant culture, because it is still Russian culture and still the same Cultural Identity. Different social classes may vary from one another and have their individual features, but the basics that really matter, as language, religion and values, stay the same.

169 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.441

170 Tolstoy, Leo, “War and Peace”, translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, the University of Chicago, The great Books, twenty-sixth printing, 1984, p.441
20. National Character and Politics

According to Barker “…law and institutions are, in their ultimate nature, ideas; and ideas do not grow – they are made by human minds”\(^{171}\). That would mean that laws and institutions are products of national character but to our surprise it is not quite so. Laws and institutions could emerge as an accident or through an influence of a neighboring country, all in all “They are not something which flows inevitably from a national genius…”\(^{172}\)

Once laws and institutions are established “…they become, as it were, encompassing banks… in which the stream of national life must henceforth flow. They are given and determining facts; and they affect the direction of national movement.”\(^{173}\)

That way institutions exercise a much greater influence on national character than vice-versa.\(^{174}\)

These thoughts of Sir Ernest Barker serve as a confirmation of our theory as well: “A nation too has a character, which is the sum of acquired tendencies built up by its leaders, in every sphere of its activity, with the consent and the co-operation – active in some, but more or less passive in others – of the general community.”\(^{175}\)

In the Russian case the character of imperial Russia was built up by the tendencies set by the tsars, while the character of the 20th century Russia was built by the tendencies set by the Communists. Both of these epochs left their imprint on the country’s history and made the Russian character the way it is today.

Ernest Barker’s book on the national character was written in the year 1927, but already in those early years he is mentioning a notion that was about to become the core of the Soviet politics – the Propaganda. This “…modern invention which goes by the name of propaganda”\(^{176}\) is of great importance in Barker’s eyes, since “History may be taught with a view to inflaming national pride or stimulating national resentment; and the presentation of a

\(^{171}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 116
\(^{172}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 117
\(^{173}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 117
\(^{175}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 263
\(^{176}\) Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 118
nations past from a particular angle may deflect its character, for the time being, in the
direction of that angle.”\textsuperscript{177} That means that the national character gets influenced by the ways
the information gets presented in the eyes of the population and “That influence, flowing
unconsciously and by indirect channels, may pour its waters through many tracts of the
national life.”\textsuperscript{178}

Propaganda was one of the strongest weapons of the Soviet regime. The reason why
we speak of propaganda in this paper is the fact that Soviet propaganda was the closest
relative of modern advertisement in Russia. That is why it is of special interest for us to
research the development process that advertisement in Russia had to undergo while rising
from the misuse for political purposes to its actual meaning and function.

Let us herewith say a few words about Propaganda. According to the Lexicon of
Political Science Propaganda is “…im modernen Sinne zur Werbung und
Herrschaftssicherung eingesetzte Technik. Entscheidend ist dabei die geschickte Auswahl und
gegebenenfalls Manipulation der Nachricht, nicht ihr Wahrheitscharakter. Durch die
Monopolisierung der Propaganda in kommunistischen und faschistischen Regimen hat der
Terminus einen stark pejorativen Charakter.”\textsuperscript{179}

This means that we have to do here with a manipulation tool, which with the help of
accentuation of information influences the thinking patterns of the masses.

Birgit Chmel comments on this topic in her book „Zeichen und Symbole“ : „Dem
Politischen haftet der Aspekt persuasiver Kommunikation an, denn Politik versucht Menschen
zu bewegen, zu beeinflussen und deren Aufmerksamkeit zu erregen.“\textsuperscript{180}

The language of pictures is being used in politics to be able to communicate
information which would be hard to describe in words. That way the vision is in the center of
attention. While the picture has often nothing to do with politics, it is already enough that it
reminds the audience of something or contains small elements which might affect the
observer without him even noticing it. „Die symbolische Dimension von Politik, hat eine
große Bedeutung für das gesamte politische Geschehen.“\textsuperscript{181} That way, pictures, and herewith
Soviet propaganda posters can be considered as a perfect tool for psychological manipulation
and hence, for propaganda.

\textsuperscript{177} Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 118
\textsuperscript{178} Barker, Ernest, National Character and the factors in its formation, London : Methuen 1939, 3. ed., p. 119
\textsuperscript{179} Lexikon der Politikwissenschaft : Theorien, Methoden, Begriffe. 2. N – Z, Nohlen, Dieter, 1939- [Hrsg.];
Schultze, Rainer-Olaf, 1945- [Hrsg.],München : Beck 2002 Orig.-Ausg., p.752-753
\textsuperscript{180} Chmel, Birgit: Zeichen und Symbole; Wien 2007; p.11
\textsuperscript{181} Chmel, Birgit: Zeichen und Symbole; Wien 2007; p.86
Gustave Le Bon claims in his book “Psychologie der Massen” that the behaviour of masses is not difficult to affect. An individual inside a mass of people loses his capability to critically analyze things. It is only important to find a good instrument to persuade the masses since they are not always keen to change. Propaganda posters, which were typical for Soviet advertisement, are in this case a perfect tool to reach the masses and to persuade them in things that the people at power want them to consider.\textsuperscript{182}

That way our theory on the influence executed on the Cultural Identity by the people at power is fully confirmed from all sides. In the Imperial times it was the tsar and the system of serfdom which influenced the Russian Cultural Identity, during the Soviet times it was the collective culture and the Communist propaganda that determined the direction of its development. During the both epochs decisions taken above by the people at power affected the culture, the everyday life and the thinking patterns of the people.

\textsuperscript{182} Cf. Le Bon, Gustave, Psychologie der Massen, Stuttgart : Kröner, 1982, 15. Aufl., p. 9-18
21. Conclusion

In this paper the connection between Cultural Identity and advertisement in Russia was analysed. With the breakdown of Soviet Union, Russia became part of the global community. Goods are getting imported and exported, the economy is growing. Used to total absence of competition in the Communist years, Russian people have to learn to sell and to compete. Marketing and advertisement basics need to be implemented in every business action.

During this research I tried to analyse the connection between Russian Cultural Identity and advertisement. The main motives of Russian national character can be very well seen in the Russian advertisement which shows us the main values and thinking patterns of Russian people.

Having gone through the basic characteristics and development history of Russian advertisement we noticed that usage of nostalgic motives is very widely spread in Russian ads. The nostalgic motives mostly have to do with two periods of Russian history – the nostalgia of the Imperial times and the nostalgia of the Soviet times.

The Soviet nostalgia, for example is used for everyday consumer products bought in daily life. One should also not forget that the Soviet times lie not that far away in the past which causes the fact that almost every Russian adult was born and lived in the Soviet Union and hence has tons of memories and associations with the old days which can serve as a perfect background for advertisement motives.

One can also notice that imperial motives are mostly used to advertise products associated with luxury and high culture like gold, furs, restaurants or expensive food and drinks. That way the imperial epoch is often associated with the high culture of Russian aristocracy. But one shouldn’t forget that it is not just the nobles who have made an important impact on the development of Russian culture. Much more important is the culture of the simple folk, which in the 19-th century consisted almost to 90 percent out of peasants. The images of typical Russian life in a village, the endless fields, the beauty of nature and the importance of family and friends are accentuated in this regard. These images are often used for advertising of milk, meat and other products of “natural” and “traditional” origin.

That way we see that Imperial times get associated with two things – with the high culture of the nobles – used in advertising of luxury goods and with traditional life of Russian peasants used for typically Russian products. In the sphere of ordinary consumer goods the
heritage of two epochs is hence being applied – the typical Russian peasant cultural heritage and the heritage of the Soviet proletarian culture.

The two epochs – the Imperial epoch and the Soviet epoch thus get associated with different things which leads us to the thoughts that these two historical epochs could have two different Cultural Identities. That was the reason why analysis of these two epochs was so important for us. It showed us how these associations and nostalgic feelings appeared and which qualities, present in the modern Russian nation arose from these historical epochs.

Speaking about the basic characteristics of Russian peasant life before the Revolution, one should say that one of the most important factors of Russian pre-revolutionary life was serfdom. Various Russian historians argue about the impact of serfdom on the Russian national character. Some claim that serfdom affected Russian mentality for ages, having caused in Russians the “mentality of serfdom”, which typical traits are being described as passivity and lack of individualistic thinking.

While one could quarrel with the fact that every Russian has left-over serf mentality in him, there are some mentality aspects which could really be explained through serfdom.

One can notice that one of widely spread motives in Russian advertisement is reference to community, family, friends etc. So often in an ad of tea, for example, one wouldn’t refer to the taste of this particular tea sort, but one would accentuate the fact how one could spend time together with his loved ones, while drinking tea together.

Another Russian quality, already mentioned in our analysis of “War and peace”, is great importance of reputation, of being seen positively in the eyes of the others. Hence, the way community estimates the person is sometimes more important than personal discomfort caused through it. One would for example spend a lot of money for serving loads of expensive treats for the guests sitting on the table, but not attach any importance to the quality and taste of food, eaten by oneself in his everyday life, since nobody can see it.

This great importance of community is rooted deeply into the peasant culture. Pre-revolutionary Russian peasants lived in villages. Each village built that way a community, all important questions in which were solved together, by the collective. Russian peasants were “…tightly clustered in villages and heavily dependent on the community. Typically, their big families were “swaddled” through the long winters in the tiny “light area” of their homes.”

That way given the structure of the village life and relationships, Russian peasants were used

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to living in a community and to think in terms of “us” against “them”-other people, foreigners, nobles, peasants from other villages etc.

This self realization of “us” as a community on the other hand lead to the vanishing of the Individual self, and to the lack of longing to think and act as an individual. One would be afraid to turn against the traditional ways of thinking out of fear that the community wouldn’t support such self-sufficiency.

Speaking about the already mentioned above tendency to see the tsar as the father of the nation and to expect him to take care of his “children”, we come to another important point. This point unites both political and religious aspects of nation building. As we know, pre-revolutionary Russians were a rather religious nation. The belief in the absolute Monarchy by divine right and the motto "God Save the Tsar!" (Bozhe, Tsarya khrani) was rooted into the Russian Orthodox mentality. The lyrics of the Imperial Russian anthem accentuate the positioning of the tsar as the „God chosen“:

„God, protect the Tsar!

Strong and majestic,

Reign for glory, For our glory!

Reign to foes' fear,

Orthodox Tsar.

God, protect the Tsar!“

The deeply religious Russian folk was united by the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the Tsar, whose power was confirmed by god. That way the state of serfdom was seen as a God-given reality with values and behaviour patterns being dictated by the Church and by the Tsar simultaneously.

After the 1917 a new era begins for the Russian nation. The proletariat with its new Soviet culture moves to the fore. The industrialization and the rapid origination of the working class cause thousands of peasants to come into the cities and to build the new urbanized working class. The new “Homo Sovieticus” is about to arise.

While talking about the characteristics of the Soviet Cultural Identity, one should not forget that some of its aspects were inherited from the peasant culture, brought by the peasants to the cities. One of these characteristics is the above mentioned aspect of collectiveness. Russian peasants, who had already been used to living in the community, continued doing this in the city. This also was connected with the scarcity of flats in the cities, which caused the phenomenon of collective living.

Only several hundred thousand apartments were available to the millions of proletarians in the cities, hence each family, consisting of about five to seven people, had to share one room. That way one toilet, stove, corridor, mailbox and telephone was being shared by 30 to 40 people living in the same flat day after day, for years.\(^{186}\)

Such living conditions helped some typical Russian character traits to develop. First, the community factor was strengthened even more. With people living closely together, their socialization improved immensely. Relationships between room neighbors brought even closer ties between the families. On the other hand, such collective living also had its negative aspects.

Living in a tight social environment of the collective apartment turned out to be a psychological challenge. Surviving in this state of constant competition for the usage of the bathroom or the stove required special skills. One’s physical, financial or intellectual powers were not enough – the support of others, and hence building of one’s social pyramid became a crucial necessity for the survival. As a result, the politization of life occurred, with the community fragmenting into diverse groups of family, friends, peers, enemies and so on.\(^{187}\)

A certain level of suspiciousness and mistrust developed among the Soviet people. As we see, this mistrust was based on the conditions which did not suddenly appear in the Soviet Russia, but slowly migrated from the peasant sphere into the urban reality. “This distrust [toward other people] is inside us; it doesn’t come from the outside, it is older than Stalin, older than Communism, maybe older than the czars”\(^{188}\) – S. Jacoby is quoting a Soviet writer’s reflections.

One should point out that in the Soviet epoch collectiveness was one of the most important aspects, present in all spheres of daily life. It was not just collective living but also the realization that everything, including factories, shops and infrastructure was collective


\(^{188}\) Jacoby, S., (1972), Moscow Conversations, Coward, McCann and Geoghan, New York, p.249
property, it belonged to the folk. This collective psychology of the folk being the owner of collective property was supposed to motivate the proletariat to work better on their “own” factories, but it also brought the lack of feeling of private property. One would never care of something public as much as one would care about something he owns personally.

As already mentioned above this had its implications on the quality of the produced goods since thousands of workers were occupied with the production process and nobody could be made personally responsible for the defects of production.

*The Soviet propaganda* played an important educational role in the new society as well. The former peasants, who were lacking education and basic knowledge, needed to be adapted to the life in the cities, which was not always an easy task, given the fact that many of them could not read. This is when the art of the Soviet poster started flourishing. The Soviet propaganda posters gave clear instructions to different spheres of daily life such as education, personal hygiene or free time recreations. The propaganda posters were a kind of political advertisement, one of the few advertisement forms available in Soviet Russia, due to almost full absence of economic advertising.

Only very few economic ads which were present, bore the sole function of informing the population about the availability of the product. Due to the propaganda of Soviet values and patriotism, it was possible to raise a generation of people who really believed in the greatness of the Soviet Union and in its superiority over other countries. That concerned the conviction in the high quality of the Soviet products as well.

This conviction is one of the strongest reasons why people of the older generation still keep buying domestic brands which they remember from the former Soviet times. They strongly associate Soviet brands with quality and are not willing to even try their foreign equivalents.

That way the importance of Soviet propaganda in the formation of the Russian national character can’t be underestimated.

After this short summary of the main ideas of the paper, let us come back to the central questions, specified in the introduction one more time.
What is Russian advertisement like?

During our research we could notice that although Russian advertisement did use elements of western advertisement as a model, its development ran totally different. The development of Russian advertisement was much more affected by its constant opposition to its western counterpart and by its attempts to be different from the “immoral west”.

Unfortunately Russian advertisement was misused for political purposes during a long period of time, which didn’t allow it to unfold its whole potential. Except for the Communist propaganda influences, Russian advertisement also used motives of national folklore, literature and history.

That way modern Russian advertisement can be described as a mixture of western practices combined with national motives.

Why is Cultural Identity so important for advertisement?

On the examples of intercultural advertising we demonstrated how important it is to adapt advertisement to local conditions. Successful foreign ads will not necessarily have the same effect in Russia, this is why they need to be reviewed according to the political, cultural and historical heritage of the country. The positive example of a culturally adapted Snickers ad was provided to contrast the unfortunate Saturn advertising example.

Which historic processes influenced the development of Russian advertisement?

In this regard we followed the development of Russian advertisement, beginning with its birth during the Imperial times in the 19-th century, following the longest phase of its existence during the Soviet times and finishing with the Modern times.

Why does Russia need exactly such advertisement?

What made Russians the way they are today? Which historical processes and particular events influenced the development of Russian mentality?

To answer these two questions a necessity of Russian Cultural Identity analysis was detected. We had noticed that all values presented in ads for the Russian market have either to do with values acquired through the long Imperial history or through the experiences of the Soviet epoch. This is why we decided to analyze these two epochs in further detail and find out whether either one had a greater impact on the Russian Cultural Identity.

As a result, we have come to the conclusion that the importance of these two epochs for the development of Russian Cultural identity is equal. One cannot say that one period
affected the Russian minds more than the other. Although serfdom lasted longer than the Soviet era, it also lies further in the past and is getting more and more forgotten. The Soviet reality, which in many cases is still very fresh in the memories of the contemporaries, still influences Russian thinking immensely. That way, to my mind, one cannot associate Russian culture only with the cultural heritage of the serfs. Serfdom did have its impact on Russian Cultural Identity, but it is not more important than the Soviet impact.

• Speaking of the Imperial times, can we say that the Nobles and the Serfs could possibly have a common Cultural Identity in spite of their totally different lifestyles? Or did common Russian Cultural Identity not exist during the Imperial times after all?

To answer this question we had to deepen into the details of the pre-revolutionary way of life. For this purpose Tolstoy’s “War and Peace” was used as a secondary source describing the Imperial Russian Cultural Identity. The following hypothesis was made in this connection:

**H3: Aristocracy could very well represent the Cultural Identity of a nation.** The nobles were educated and had a lot of free time to be able to analyze the political situation in the country as well as their own life and feelings. Although the nobles and the peasantry were different social classes with different culture, the Russian Orthodox religion united them and made them to the same nation. In spite of their different way of life, Russian Orthodox religion provided the Nobles and the Serfs with the same values which united them as a nation.

In the process of further research this hypothesis was confirmed as well. As a result we came to the conclusion that both the Serfs and the Nobles could be considered as carriers of Russian Cultural Identity of the Imperial times. It is only the mass of all the people and the combination of different social classes that combine their strengths to build a society and realize their unity.

At this point we came to the next question in our research:

• What is the Role of War, Religion and Politics in the formation of a Cultural Identity of a nation?

We noticed the importance of war as a nation-building factor, as we saw the way all Russian people in Tolstoy’s “War and peace”, not depending on the social class, united in the face of the French enemy and realized their common Cultural Identity.
We have also seen what an important role Russian Orthodox religion played in holding the Russian nation together throughout the history and providing it with a common set of cultural values.

Last but not least, the central question for our paper can finally be answered:

- Does common Russian identity exist, unchanged through times and regimes at rule, or does every epoch of Russian history, such as the Imperial times, the Soviet times and the Modernity, possess its own separate Cultural Identity?

In that regard we made two hypotheses:

**H1**: elites standing on top of political power determine the development of National Character and Cultural Identity.

Culture and role of advertisement depends on people staying on top and depending on what values they want to communicate. The changes that Russian advertisement went through during the Imperial and Communist times mirrored the general changes that happened in the society during these times.

We could see the way Monarchy and the system of serfdom, connected to it, influenced the development of the Russian nation for ages. The monarchy also prepared the basis for the later Soviet Cultural Identity. The major aspect of Soviet culture – the communal aspect, is not an independent factor which appeared all of a sudden, but the result of the peasant culture, adapted to the city life.

The later Soviet propaganda combined with the communal way of life brought further changes to the Russian mentality. Soviet Elites used advertisement to spread political ideas. Their goal was to affect culture and thinking patterns of the Soviet people. People’s attention was drawn to important topics, such as work, education, moral qualities and even family planning.

**H2**: The epochs of the Russian history – the Imperial times, the Soviet times, and the Modernity, did differ radically from one another and the Russian folk did change a lot during the years. But the basics, which build up a National Character stayed the same. To my mind, Russia possesses a common National Character, basic patterns of which can be recognized in any epoch in spite of the political changes.
Our conclusion on this question should be as following: Both imperial and Soviet experiences influenced the Russian Cultural Identity immensely, but none of these factors can be considered as central for its development. That way I support the point of view of Ernest Barker, claiming that a character of a nation evolves throughout the time. Soviet proletarians cannot be associated with the pre-revolutionary serfs, same as modern Russians cannot be equalized with their Soviet predecessors.

This hypothesis was thus not confirmed. Although Russia did possess a common national character in the past, its modern traits don’t have much to do with the past. The experiences of Imperial and Soviet times have affected the Russian national character greatly. Many of the typical character traits still can be found in the modern Russians. But one can already notice the tendency of individualization of people. After ages spent under the system of collective thinking Russian people start realizing themselves as Individuals. The modern Russian advertisement, which is not being limited by the ideological and political motives any more, is now offering goods for every taste. The collective patterns are not dictating the buying behavior any more. Russian people can compare and choose goods from the competing offers and realize their personal tastes and preferences.

That way a third and separate Cultural Identity has developed after the Perestroika – a new way of Russian thinking has appeared, a national character free from the stereotypes and limitations of Serfdom and Communism.
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26. Abstract (English)

In this paper connection between Russian Cultural Identity and Advertisement is being researched. The goal is to find out the way Russian mentality influences the formation of tastes and preferences and the perception of advertisement in Russia. In the first part of the paper the main development tendencies of Russian advertisement are being discussed. The focus is on four important historical periods – The Imperial times, the Soviet times, the Perestroika and the Modernity. Having found out what the main characteristics of Russian advertisement are and what role it played during different periods of Russian history, we then proceed with analysis of the Russian Cultural Identity.

In the second part of the paper, finding out what Russian Cultural Identity is like will help us to understand why Russian advertisement developed the way it did and why this country needs exactly such kind of advertisement.

Russian Cultural Identity is being researched with focus on the role of War, Politics and Religion as its forming factors. Under consideration of these factors we come to the conclusion that in spite their different ways of life, serfs and nobles of Imperial Russia did have a common national Cultural identity which got formed as a result of great influence of Russian Orthodox religion, as well as politics and wars, which united the nation together.

Comparison of Cultural Identity elements of Imperial, Soviet and Modern times also help us to understand that these periods can be seen as three different Cultural Identities of the Russian nation due to the radical changes in the thinking patterns of the people. Transitions from monarchy to communism and from communism to democracy affected Russian society at its core, creating a new national identity every time.
27. Abstract (German)


Der Vergleich der Elemente der Russischen Identität der Zarinischen, Sowjetischen und Modernen Zeiten hilft uns zu verstehen, dass diese drei Epochen drei verschiedene kulturelle Identitäten besaßen, die durch die radikalen gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen ausgelöst wurden. Die Übergänge von Monarchie zum Kommunismus und vom Kommunismus zur Demokratie haben die Russische Gesellschaft stark beeinflusst und kreierten hiermit jedes Mal eine neue nationale Identität.
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