



A Comparison of American and Russian Patterns of Behavior in Buyer-Seller Negotiations Using Observational Measures

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Abstract. The study compares American and Russian patterns of conversational behaviors in the context of a simulated buyer-seller negotiation involving 60 American and 52 Russian businesspeople participating in intracultural, face-to-face bargaining sessions. Each session was tape-recorded, and the tapes were subsequently transcribed, translated, and coded for 20 content analysis categories. The behaviors of the Russians differed in some respects from the Americans, but overall we discovered surprising similarity in the patterns of bargaining behaviors. However, most importantly, the *effects of those behaviors* on negotiation outcomes (i.e., profits and satisfaction) were found to vary substantially across cultures.

Keywords: Russians, buyer-seller, negotiations, content analysis, individualism

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While much has been written about Russian negotiation styles and approaches (see, for example, Volume 1(3) of this journal), few empirical studies of Russian negotiation behavior have been conducted (e.g., Brett et al. 1998, and Graham et al. 1992). Both the Brett et al. and Graham et al. studies employed intracultural negotiation simulations and questionnaires and both reported statistically significant differences between Russian and American outcomes and self-report strategy measures. Wilson et al. (1995: 213) describe a frequent problem associated with such questionnaire measures – “...self-report instruments actually tap the perceived social appropriateness of conflict styles...” rather than the actual incidence of the behaviors. Their conclusion is based on the frequent lack of correspondence between self-reports and observational measures of negotiation behaviors. While Graham et al. (1992) do analyze the content of tape recordings of both the Russians and Americans in their study, only six negotiators in each culture are observed rendering inferences based on statistical analyses impractical.

Observational measures of negotiation processes in the two cultural groups are the focus of this study. The behaviors of twenty-six Russian sellers and thirty American sellers participating in tape-recorded buyer-seller negotiation simulations are analyzed using a new content analysis scheme. Frequencies of behaviors are compared across the two groups. Additionally, the relative influences of the behaviors on negotiation outcomes are also compared.

The remainder of the article is presented in five parts. First, the development of the content analysis scheme is described. The discussion there includes mention of how behaviors might influence negotiation outcomes based on the extant literature. Next, the literature regarding Russian negotiation styles is reviewed, including hypotheses about cultural differences. Third, methods are described. Fourth, results are reported. The final section of the article includes a discussion of the results, the limitations and strengths of the study, and directions for future research.

Negotiation Behaviors and Outcomes: Research Methods, Theory, and Findings

We have found previous applications of content analysis schemes developed by others lacking in some respects. So, a secondary purpose of our study is a “test drive” of a new scheme. With an eye toward the previous literature, we selected Angelmar and Stern’s (1978) content analysis scheme as a starting point for the development of our own approach. Their scheme, specifically designed with marketing interactions in mind, is the most pertinent to buyer-seller negotiations. The left half of Table 1 lists the categories Angelmar and Stern used as applied by Graham et al. (1992). The right half compares

Table 1. A comparison of content analysis schemes [Percentages^a]

Angelmar & Stern's categories	I Americans (n=6)	II Russians (n=6)	New categories	III Americans (n=30)	IV Russians (n=26)
Questions	20 ^{a,b}	27	Questions (4)	21.6	25.1
Self-disclosures	36	40	Informational (4)*	51.7	46.4
Commitments	13	11	Commitments	10.1	10.7
Commands	6	7	Commands/requests*	5.5	9.2
Promises	8	5	Promises*	5.2	2.5
Threats	4	3	Threats*	0.7	0.1
Recommendations	4	4	Recommendations	1.3	0.8
Warnings	1	0	Warnings	0.9	0.4
Negative normative appeals	1	0	Consistency appeals (3) ^x	1.3	2.6
Positive normative appeals	1	0	–	–	–
Rewards	2	3	Rewards	1.3	1.6
Punishments	3	1	Punishments	0.2	0.1

^a See Table 2 for more detail.

^b Read: "20% of the statements made by Americans were questions." The negotiators represented in columns I and II are also included in columns III and IV.

* difference between groups is statistically significant, $p < 0.05$.

^x difference between groups is statistically significant, $p < 0.10$.

aspects of the scheme we have developed with Angelmar and Stern's original version.

Table 2 lists in detail the categories we used to code our data. As the reader can see, we have expanded considerably on the earlier work. In our previous experience with Angelmar and Stern's (1978) content analysis scheme, we have found four areas of weakness. First, speakers will often presume information about listener's circumstances or remind them about past behavior. For example, a statement like, "Last year you bought 400 units," provides information, but does not fit so well under the topic of self-disclosures. So we added "presumptive information about listener" in the information group, although such statements frequently include some instrumental intent. Likewise, we have added "disagreements" to the information group as suggested by Bales (1950). In addition, consistency appeal subsumed by Angelmar and Stern's normative appeals has to do with the speaker's own behavior: e.g., "I *always* stand by my agreements." Finally, repetition or pestering can have a psychological intent beyond just providing information, so we added a repe-

tition category as well. Below are described all the coding categories listed in Table 2.

Questions and Informational Statements

Prominent in the literature is information exchange as a key influence of buyer-seller negotiation outcomes. Based on economic theory, negotiators are presumed to have subjective expected utilities for specific negotiation outcomes. The talk during negotiation accomplishes two basic purposes: (1) Communication describing each negotiator's subjective expected utility; and (2) communication intended to change one another's subjective expected utility. Angelmar and Stern (1978) label the first type as representational (or expressive) communication and the second as instrumental (or manipulative) communication. They classify questions and self-disclosures (information) as being representational/information exchange behaviors. Rubin and Brown (1975: 260) are emphatic about the importance of representational behaviors: "It is this exchange of information, the attributions to which it leads, and the ways in which it is shaped for the purposes of mutual social influence, that represents the fundamental strategic issue in bargaining."

Through asking questions, sellers learn more about buyers' subjective expected utilities for the various potential negotiation solutions, *assuming* buyers respond to their questions. Sellers' questions are the means toward building the essential accurate impressions of buyers' utilities and attitudes as described by Weitz (1979). Questions are also an important aspect of what Saxe and Weitz (1982) call a "customer orientation." The more sellers ask questions and the more buyers respond with information, the more likely both parties will benefit directly by achieving higher economic rewards. Sellers' questions may also enhance buyers' satisfaction levels by demonstrating to buyers that they are interested in an integrative approach to negotiations.

Alternatively, if buyers provide little information in response, particularly in more competitive kinds of negotiations, then buyers may gain an advantage by having *more* information, and by using, with more precision, instrumental behaviors such as threats and promises. That is, information "advantages" can be seen as one important kind of power (Stern and El-Ansary 1982). Thus, information provided by sellers may help as well as harm in negotiations.

Commitments

Concessions or commitments are another fundamental aspect of buyer-seller negotiations identified by Angelmar and Stern. The distinction between commitments and promises (the latter defined by Angelmar and Stern as an instrumental behavior) is that promises are conditional, depending on concessions

Table 2. Percentage of behaviors per negotiation [mean (standard deviation)]

Negotiation behaviors		Americans (n=30)	Russians (n=26)
<i>Questions</i>	% of open-ended questions	4.1 ^a (3.5)	5.2 (3.3)
	% of closed-ended questions	9.7 (5.3)	11.1 (8.4)
	% of initiations	4.9 (3.9)	5.3 (4.5)
	% of questions of clarification	2.9 (2.6)	3.5 (3.8)
<i>Informational statements</i>	% of unsolicited information	33.1 (8.7)	29.9 (8.4)
	% of information given in response	10.7 (6.3)	10.5 (6.8)
	% of presumptive information about listener	6.1* (5.2)	3.0* (3.3)
	% of disagreement with listener's statements	1.8 (1.5)	2.8 (2.8)
<i>Commitments</i>	% of unconditional	10.1 (4.6)	10.7 (4.8)
<i>Commands/requests</i>	% of unconditional	5.5* (2.9)	9.2* (4.7)
<i>Conditionals</i>	% of promises	5.2* (4.0)	2.5* (2.8)
	% of threats	0.7* (1.1)	0.1* (0.3)
	% of recommendations	1.3 (1.9)	0.8 (2.0)
	% of warnings	0.9 (1.3)	0.4 (1.4)
<i>Consistency appeals</i>	% of listener is inconsistent with previous statements, behaviors, agreements	0.2* (0.6)	0.9* (1.6)
	% of listener is inconsistent with current norms/laws	0.1 (0.4)	0.5 (1.2)
	% of speaker is consistent with norms/laws	1.0 (1.6)	1.2 (1.8)
<i>Psychological tools</i>	% of rewards	1.3 (1.3)	1.6 (2.3)
	% of punishments	0.2 (0.5)	0.1 (0.5)
	% of repetition (pestering)	0.4 (0.6)	0.8 (1.8)
<i>Garrulous behaviors</i>	Total statements	86.7 ^x (47.)	64.6 ^x (39.1)
	sellers' profits	43.1 (9.5)	41.0 (11.8)
	joint profits	92.0* (8.1)	86.3* (11.5)
	buyers' satisfaction	15.6 (2.5)	15.0 (2.7)

^a read as "4.1% of the statements made by the American negotiators were classified as open-ended questions."

* difference between groups is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.05$.

^x difference between groups is statistically significant, $p \leq 0.10$.

or commitments made by the other partner. Commitments by sellers may induce reciprocal commitments by buyers, but they are made by the sellers *unconditionally*. Like information given, commitments are a double-edged sword, enhancing sellers' outcomes when buyers reciprocate and having the potential to hurt sellers when buyers do not.

Commands (Requests)

Here, sellers tell (or ask) buyers to take certain actions with no predicted consequences of those actions. The difference between commands (requests) and the instrumental behaviors mentioned by Angelmar and Stern is precisely the lack of predicted consequences, incentives or conditions. Sellers can use commands and requests to control the subject of interaction (e.g., "Let's talk about price now"), to provide buyers with information about their preferences (e.g., "Please give me a lower price"), or to affect buyers' subjected expected utilities (e.g., "Please change your mind about how important delivery is to your company"). When buyers comply, sellers' outcomes may be enhanced. However, buyers' satisfaction may be reduced if such tactics are over used (from the buyers' perspectives).

Conditionals

We include four of Angelmar and Stern's categories under our heading of conditionals – promises, threats, recommendations, and warnings. Threats and warnings, both instrumental behaviors, are quite similar conceptually, because they both predict negative consequences for the buyer associated with a certain behavior. These negative consequences are thought to reduce the buyer's subjective expected utility for that particular negotiation outcome, thereby inducing concessions by the buyer. The difference between threats and warnings is whether or not sellers exercise control over the negative consequence. With threats, sellers do have control; with warnings, they do not.

Rubin and Brown (1975: 293) summarized the pertinent literature in social psychology by stating that the use of threats tends to increase "the likelihood of immediate compliance and concession-making by the other," thus increasing the threatener's profit outcome. Contrarily, because of the strength of threats as an overt influence tactic, clients' satisfaction may be substantially reduced. In their description of a customer-oriented sales approach, Saxe and Weitz (1981) suggest avoiding manipulative and high-pressure influence tactics. So we might expect sellers' admonitions to positively affect sellers' profits, and negatively affect buyers' satisfaction. Alternatively, Frazier

and Summers (1984) suggest sellers' (i.e., manufacturers negotiating with dealers) threats can have a negative influence on sellers' outcomes.

Promises and recommendations are the "good twins" of threats and warnings, respectively. They are instrumental behaviors, but the consequences of buyers' behaviors are positive, not negative. Sellers promise to take certain actions if buyers take certain specified actions – the consequences are in control of the sellers (e.g., "I will deliver in 30 days, if you buy a bigger lot"). In recommendations, the positive consequences are not controlled or provided by the sellers, but instead by the environment or some third party (e.g., "If you buy our products, you'll be able to resell them at a high profit immediately").

The sellers' individual negotiation outcomes can be enhanced, to the extent that the sellers' use of such conditionals affects buyers' utilities and results in buyers' concessions. However, such manipulations may have a negative impact on joint profits and buyers' satisfaction.

Consistency Appeals

In our previous use of Angelmar and Stern's scheme, we have noticed sellers making two types of statements conforming to this category. First, sellers tell buyers that the buyers' behaviors are *inconsistent* with norms, previous statements, or agreements. These behaviors are very close to Angelmar and Stern's category "negative normative appeals." We also see sellers claiming their own behaviors are *consistent* with norms, previous statements or agreements. Sellers use the former tactics to change buyers' behavior and induce concessions, while the latter are used to explain or defend sellers' own behaviors and/or views. As instrumental behaviors, consistency appeals may enhance sellers' outcomes, while perhaps hurting joint profits and buyers' satisfaction.

Immediate Psychological Tools

Angelmar and Stern identify two verbal tactics, rewards and punishments, which we refer to as immediate psychological tools; sellers use these with the intention of manipulating the buyers' emotional states.

We have also added repetition (or pestering) to this category (Lewicki et al. 1994 talk about a closely related concept – persistence). Certainly, much has been written about the positive and negative consequences of repetitive advertising, but this is the first time repetition has been considered as a persuasive tactic in a study of face-to-face buyer-seller negotiations. Repetition may work in three ways: It ensures that buyers actually hear sellers' requests, etc.; it demonstrates sellers' resolve on a particular issue; or, it psychologically tires listeners. This last mechanism we believe to be the dominant one, and

thus we have classified repetition as an immediate psychological tool. Like the other instrumental tactics, immediate psychological tools may result in buyers' concessions and lower buyer satisfaction.

Garrulous Behaviors

Finally, Weitz (1979) and Wotruba and Simpson (1992), among others, suggest that a primary task of sales representatives is to gather information during sales negotiations. This implies that sellers need to speak less and encourage buyers to speak more. The more sellers learn about their customers' needs and preferences, the more likely buyers' satisfaction may be increased. Alternatively, sellers' garrulosity may directly diminish buyers' satisfaction with the negotiation encounter. Smith et al. (1969) include the "talks-too-much" item in their Job Description Index that is also consistent with this reasoning.

Negotiation Outcomes

In practice, outcomes of marketing negotiations are often difficult to measure and compare. Sale versus no sale is one obvious measure of bargaining effectiveness and has been used by Pennington (1968). However, researchers have sought richer measures that make possible comparisons to a variety of effectiveness criteria. In the hundreds of bargaining experiments conducted by social psychologists, an often-used measure is economic reward or profit attained by bargainers in negotiation simulations (cf. Rubin and Brown 1975). Profits (both individual and joint) in negotiation simulations have been used as dependent measures in several of the studies cited previously (e.g., Dwyer and Walker 1981; Pruitt and Lewis 1975). Dwyer and Walker (1981) also suggest that negotiator satisfaction, measured using a post-exercise questionnaire, is a meaningful negotiation outcome. In the present study, *profits* attained by bargainers in a negotiation simulation (i.e., sellers' *individual* and *joint* profits) and *satisfaction* measured using a post-exercise questionnaire are primary dependent variables.

Although no specific hypotheses about the effects of sellers' behaviors on negotiation outcomes are stated here, generally implied in Angelmar and Stern's (1978) article and others are: (1) A positive association between all the listed behaviors and individual outcomes; (2) a positive association between information exchange behaviors (i.e., questions and information) and joint outcomes; and (3) a negative association between instrumental behaviors and joint negotiation outcomes, and particularly satisfaction.

Patterns of American Behaviors

Finally, we do have some information about patterns of American selling behaviors. Frazier and Summers (1984) used survey methods to study relationships between influence strategies and negotiations outcomes. Automobile dealers were asked to rate the influence strategies used by sales representatives calling on them and to rate their agreement with the sales representatives on associated issues. The sales representatives were described as using on the average 49% information exchange, 27% requests, 19% recommendations, 15% promises, 10% threats, and 6% legalistic pleas. They also reported that information exchange and requests were positively associated with interfirm agreement; and recommendations, promises, threats, and legalistic pleas were inversely related to agreements. Finally, information exchange and requests were both found to be inversely related to the use of promises, threats, and legalistic pleas.

The Russian Negotiation Style

A substantial literature exists on Soviet (pre-1990's) negotiation styles; however, it is based primarily on intercultural political negotiations rather than on the intracultural business negotiation behaviors being compared in this study.

Descriptions in the Literature pre-1990

Distributive Bargaining Strategies

Russians have often followed a distributive, rather than a cooperative, approach to negotiations. This reflects the Russian belief that one person's profits are always at the expense of another's. Russian negotiators have been described as: "competitive" (Schmidt 1978); "inflexible" (Gorlin 1979; Stowell 1975); "stubborn" (Sloss and Davis 1987); "confrontational" (Lefebvre 1982; Marquand 1989; Schmidt 1978; Sloss and Davis 1987); "uncompromising" (Lefebvre 1982; Sloss and Davis 1987; Von Czege 1983); "tough" (Carvounis and Carvounis 1989; Goldman 1978; Gorlin 1979; Schmidt 1978); "hard" (Carvounis and Carvounis 1989; Knight 1987; Vlachoutsikos 1986) and "rigid" (Gorlin 1979; Von Czege 1983). Two distinct explanations are offered in the literature:

(1) Several authors suggest that bureaucratic/organizational constraints lead to a more distributive approach (Carvounis and Carvounis 1989; Gorlin 1979; Lipson 1978; Schmidt 1978; Sloss and Davis 1987; Vlachoutsikos 1989). Despite reforms, a labyrinth of government bureaucracies still confronts foreign investors (U.S. Department of Commerce 1994) and contributes to the Russian economy's inherent inflexibility.

(2) Another hypothesis for the Russians' "uncompromising" attitude was posited by Lefebvre: Americans and Russians are governed by two different ethical systems (1982). According to this hypothesis, Western cultures are dominated by the "first ethical system" under which individuals seek compromises to resolve conflicts with both their partners and adversaries, and this is considered positive behavior. Positive behavior for Russians, who are governed by the "second ethical system," is in sharp contrast: Individuals try either to create new conflicts or to exacerbate existing ones with adversaries. Hence, Lefebvre (1982: 7) explains:

The Americans and Soviet people are not similar: their ethical attitudes do not coincide; they evaluate people's behavior differently. Something that an American considers normative positive behavior (for example, negotiating and reaching a compromise with an enemy, and even any deal with another individual), a Soviet man perceives as showing Philistine cowardice, weakness, as something unworthy (the word "deal" itself has a strong negative connotation in contemporary Russian).

Based on an empirical study of Russian emigrants' and middle-class Americans' responses to several hypothetical situations, Lefebvre (1982) concluded, "The majority of former Soviet citizens consider it acceptable to use bad means to achieve good goals ... and ... the majority of Americans disagree with this" (1982: 6).

The literature has been sharply divided on the issue of whether Russians engage in deliberate, (seemingly) irrational and unfair manipulations during the negotiation process (Knight 1987; Sloss and Davis 1987; Stowell 1975; Von Czege 1983), or if such deviancies are system-related and hence inevitable and legitimate (Carvounis and Carvounis 1989; Gorlin 1979; Lipson 1978; Schmidt 1978; Vlachoutsikos 1989). This disagreement is based on repeated observation of such Russian actions as the last-minute cancellation of long-scheduled meetings, provision of little or no clerical and administrative support services to the negotiating partners, frequent changes of agenda and venues, the unexpected switching of negotiation team leaders, using monopoly buyer status as a bargaining leverage, and engaging in overall delay tactics while expecting the other party not only to be on time but also to be straightforward and honest.

Information Hunger

Russians were often characterized as information hungry and detail-oriented. This may have been due to the "desire of the Soviets to learn as much as possible from Western technology" (Carvounis and Carvounis 1989; Gorlin 1979; Schmidt 1978; Stowell 1975). It also may have been directly related to the

complexity of the Russian bureaucracy, which still includes multiple layers of decision-making, ministerial overlap and goal conflicts, tenuous lines of internal communication, specialization and, hence, lack of complete information available to any one individual (Giffen 1971; Gorlin; 1979; Knight 1987; Vlachoutsikos 1989; Von Czege 1983). Some authors suggest that Russian negotiators' "dogged attention to detail" is a means of obtaining approval from their superiors (Lipson 1978; Vlachoutsikos 1989; Von Czege 1983). We think the emphasis on detail is more fundamental still, emanating from deeper cultural considerations, including the Russian educational system. According to Knight (1987: 122), the Russians also view negotiations as tests of potential suppliers and, hence, intentionally complicate and prolong them, believing the companies that survive such ordeals are likely to be better partners than firms which drop out of the talks.

Although Russians ask for much information, they have seemed loath to supply any and are often described as secretive. (It should be noted that Russians also often describe Americans as being secretive.) Vlachoutsikos (1986) traces the Russian penchant for secrecy to historical and cultural origins. Moreover, "The secretiveness of Soviet negotiators may be due to a general xenophobia. It may also be related to the planning system, in which information is power and is jealously guarded" (Sloss and Davis 1987: 149). Von Czege (1983) hypothesizes that Russian secretiveness is a strategic tool designed to control information flows in bureaucratic systems.

Post-1990 Literature

Poe (1993: xiii) certainly provides the direst descriptions as a chapter head: "Russian Mind Games – How to Win against Deceit, Treachery, Thievery, Bribery, Murder, and Other Russian Negotiating Tactics." He goes on to advocate "screaming" and other emotional outbursts as useful tactics against Russians (230). Wilson and Donaldson (1995) provide a more civilized account, but still use terms like zero-sum, struggle, tough, obstinate, and forceful in their descriptions. Kimura (1996) provides a Japanese perspective that is again consistent with the pre-1990s literature. He uses terms like struggle, lack of concessions, lack of initiatives, secretiveness, stonewalling, and repetitiveness. He also argues that despite the substantial changes in the economic and political systems, the values and negotiation behaviors of Russians has remained surprisingly constant: "...many Russians espouse the important role that negotiations play in solving conflicts, and yet they do not have sufficient knowledge about how negotiations are actually conducted in the West." (Kimura 1996: 386)

Holden et al. (1998) interviewed managers from fourteen UK organizations about their negotiations with Russians. The respondents' descriptions

of their Russian counterparts' behaviors were again quite consistent with those appearing in the literature before 1990. Tactics employed included haranguing, digressions, toughness, slowness, and a zero-sum approach. Most interestingly, Holden et al. reported that the Russians lacked good communication and personal selling skills – the latter due to the long history of working in a command economy. The key limitation of all the studies cited above is their intercultural perspective. What we have reviewed so far is foreigners describing how Russians tend to negotiate with foreigners. The work is entirely descriptive, and the descriptions are very consistent. Moreover, little appears to have changed in the decade since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Individualism vs. Collectivism and Related Empirical Studies

More recent studies reveal a different picture of Russians' behaviors *in intracultural negotiations*. These studies are theory-based and empirical. Esteban et al. (1998) compared behaviors in simulated intracultural negotiations across 15 cultural groups, and found that negotiators from four formerly communist cultures (including Russia) behaved more cooperatively than their counterparts in the eleven free-enterprise cultures (including the U.S.). Esteban et al. (1998) explain that the Adam Smith philosophy and values promote individualistic and competitive behavior, while the Karl Marx philosophy and values promote collective and cooperative behaviors in face-to-face negotiations.

Indeed, a comparison of Russian and American negotiation behaviors provides an excellent context for viewing the effects of values on behavior. Hofstede (1991) reports that Americans hold the most individualistic values in his 52-country study. Although, Russia was not included in his study almost everyone classifies Russians high on collectivism (cf. Puffer et al. 1996). Further, these values for individualism vs. collectivism correspond quite closely to what Rubin and Brown (1975) describe as motivational orientation. They posit three kinds of these "attitudinal dispositions toward another" as *cooperation* (negotiators have a positive interest in the other's welfare), *individualistic* (negotiators try to maximize their own welfare without regard for the other's), and *competitive* (negotiators each seek to do better than the other, even by damaging the other). Rubin and Brown (1975) suggest and Esteban et al. (1998) report a direct connection between an individualistic orientation and individualistic negotiation behaviors, and between a cooperative orientation and problem-solving negotiation behaviors.

Graham et al. (1992), in an associated study, report results from analyses of 216 questionnaires completed after simulated intracultural negotiations (i.e., Kelley 1966), and analysis of six videotape recorded interactions (12 negotiators). The survey data suggest that Russian negotiators are more coop-

erative than Americans. The results of the videotape analysis from the earlier study are duplicated in the left half of Table 1. The patterns of behavior listed in the table are quite similar across the two cultural groups. That is, the survey and observational data again are inconsistent with the anecdotal descriptions of Russian behavior in the pre-1990s literature, but the reader needs to recall again the difference in contexts of the studies – intracultural vs. intercultural.

Brett et al. (1998) also used an intracultural simulation to compare negotiation behaviors (i.e., joint gains) and attitudes (i.e., norms about negotiations) across six cultural groups, including Russians and Americans. They also classified Russian culture as collectivist, yet they found the Russians to score lower than Americans on information sharing and joint profits and higher on distributive tactics. Brett et al. explain that the collectivist, high-context communication style of the Russians leads to “indirect and implicit information sharing” in negotiations which apparently might not be captured in their attitudinal measures of that construct. The findings of both the Brett et al. (1998) and Graham et al. (1992) studies are consistent with regard to lower joint profits for the Russians. The differences between the two studies regarding information sharing may have more to do with the nature of the data collection. The Brett et al. (1998) study used attitudinal measures of information sharing, thus being more susceptible to Wilson’s et al. (1995: 213) criticism about “perceived social appropriateness.” The Graham et al. (1992) study compares observed behaviors (i.e., self-reported and third-party observations) and finds the collectivist Russians to use a more cooperative style than the individualistic Americans.

Shikhirev’s and Anderson’s (1994) comments about Russians and Americans are consistent with the more recent empirical studies cited immediately above. In their best selling book in Russia entitled *Dolphins and Sharks, the Psychology and Ethics of the Russian-American Business Partnership*, they convincingly argue that honest/integrative and unethical/distributive bargainers exist in *both* countries. The trick, according to Shikhirev and Anderson, is to determine ahead of time *who* you are dealing with. Likewise, Kremenyuk (1996) suggests that Russians (and other CIS citizens) have succeeded in the toughest negotiation of all – resolving the enormous social, economic, and political issues involved in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Finally, the notions of individualism vs. collectivism provide the seeds of an explanation for the aggressive negotiation behaviors attributed to Russians by so many. We know that in collectivistic cultures group membership is paramount, and people from within one’s group are treated very differently from those outside one’s group (Triandis 1995). Alternatively, for individualistic cultures behaviors toward others vary less between in-group and out-group. The descriptions of aggressive Russian behaviors in intercultural negotiations

fit very well Rubin and Brown's (1975) competitive motivational orientation. That is, one might hypothesize that in out-group negotiations Russians tend to behave competitively, and within in-group negotiations Russians tend to behave cooperatively. And Americans tend toward individualistic negotiation behaviors in either situation. Unfortunately, we cannot test this hypothesis entirely here – we have data collected only on intracultural negotiations.

Hypotheses and Analysis Plan

Because few similar studies have been conducted upon which to base carefully constructed hypotheses, the current research relies on a more exploratory approach to data analysis. First, we consider the direct effects of culture on negotiation behaviors. The following hypotheses are suggested by the pre-1990s and some of the post-1990s literature on Soviet negotiation style:

Russian sellers, when compared to American sellers, will use higher percentages of
H1–questions;
H2–commands/requests;
H3–conditionals;
H4–psychological tools;
and lower percentages of
H5–informational statements.

The commands/requests, conditionals, and immediate psychological tools well represent an individualistic or even a competitive motivational orientation. Likewise, the lack of informational statements also corresponds to an individualistic orientation.

The results of the Graham et al. (1992) study suggest a competing set of hypotheses (compare H3 to H8 and H5 to H7): Russian sellers, when compared to American sellers, will tend toward a problem-solving approach and use higher percentages of

H6–questions;
H7–informational statements;
and lower percentages of
H8–conditionals

Analysis of variance is appropriate for testing these hypotheses.

Second, culture can be conceived as a moderator affecting relationships between negotiator behaviors and outcomes. Because we are on untrodden ground in this sort of analysis, no hypotheses are stated. The applicability of

Russian models for American data (and vice versa) can be checked using a structural equations approach.

The focus of the theory and analyses is on the negotiation behaviors listed above. However, results regarding the entire coding scheme are presented for completeness. This more comprehensive reporting is also consistent with the exploratory nature of the study.

Methods

Participants

The 52 Russian participants in the simulation were businesspeople attending a management seminar in Moscow in 1989 in the then USSR. Their average age was 43, with a range from 25 to 63. Sixty-two percent of the Russians held management positions in a variety of enterprises, 34 percent worked in government ministries or foreign trade organizations and 4 percent represented cooperatives. Most were from Moscow (40 percent) or other Russian cities (38 percent), and all were native Russian speakers. No differences were found between enterprise managers and government bureaucrats in any of the variables considered here (i.e., $p < 0.05$).

The 60 American participants were somewhat younger, with an average age of 32. The American data were collected over a period of six years during the 1980s. Participants included evening MBA students from two West Coast universities and middle managers attending management development programs. All were at least 25 and had a minimum of two years of work experience in the United States. No cross-group differences were discovered among the Americans ($p < 0.05$).¹

Because the context of the study is marketing we considered here only the sellers' behaviors. Buyers' behaviors were also coded, but because the patterns of sellers' and buyers' behaviors are known to vary during negotiations (e.g., Neu and Graham 1994; Leigh and Rethans 1984), we decided not to mix the two. Although focusing on sellers' behaviors reduces our sample sizes to 30 Americans and 26 Russians, analysis of variance and PLS are still appropriate methods of analysis allowing for the determination of statistical significance.

Laboratory Setting

The negotiation simulation, developed by Kelley (1966) and Pruitt (1981), involves negotiating the prices of three products. The participants were allowed fifteen minutes to read the instructions (i.e., either a buyer or seller position

sheet and appropriate payoff matrix) and to plan negotiation strategies. Then participants were seated across from one another at a table, given final verbal instructions, and left alone. When either an agreement was reached or one hour had elapsed, the participants were given the post-game questionnaire. For the Russian participants, the simulation was conducted at the very beginning of their seminars to guard against potential biases.

Measurement of Dependent Variables

All negotiations and game instructions were conducted in the respective native languages. The Russian translations of the materials and the postgame questionnaire were checked by having the translations converted back into English by a different translator and then comparing the two English versions of the questionnaire to resolve the translation discrepancies.

Three negotiation outcome variables were considered in this study. Negotiators' individual profits (range = 28 to 80) and joint profits (range = 56 to 104) were derived directly from the bargaining solution agreed to by the negotiators. Partners' satisfaction with the negotiation was measured using a four-item scale (all items were 5-point, anchored by satisfied/dissatisfied, included in the partners' post-game questionnaires (Cronbach's $\alpha_A = .79$, $\alpha_R = .75$).

Content Analysis Scheme

As shown in Table 2 we coded four kinds of questions, four kinds of informational statements, commitments, commands (requests), four kinds of conditionals, three kinds of consistency appeals, and three kinds of immediate psychological tools from the written transcriptions of the negotiations. The units of analysis were statements – defined as complete thoughts, that is, any one sentence might contain more than one statement. Double coding of ambiguous statements was allowed, but this occurred infrequently. Finally, statements made by negotiators were totaled to derive a measure of garrulous behaviors. See the Appendix for more details regarding transcriptions and coding.

Results

The direct influence of culture on negotiation behaviors is indicated in Table 2. While the overall pattern of American sellers' behaviors is virtually identical to that of the Russian sellers (The columns of means compared, $r = .98$, $p < 0.01$, $n = 20$), differences between five kinds of behaviors were

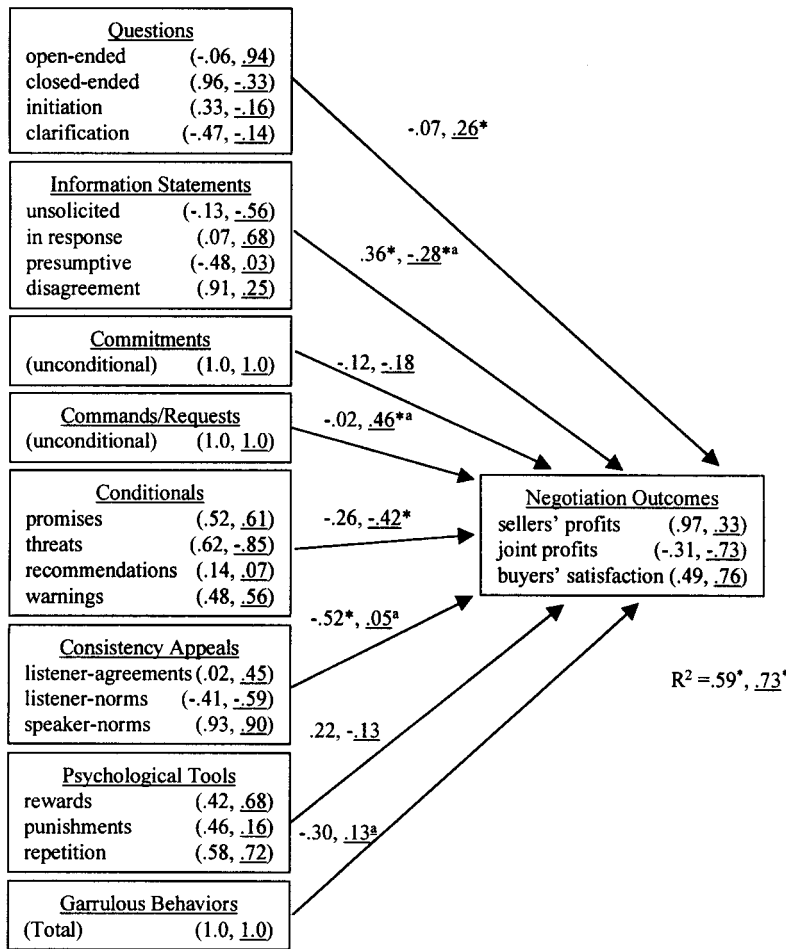
discovered. Consistent with H5, Russian sellers used a lower percentage of presumptive information about buyers ($p < 0.05$), a special kind of informational statement. Consistent with H2, Russians used a higher percentage of commands/requests ($p < 0.05$). Consistent with H8, Russian sellers used lower percentages of promises and threats ($p < 0.05$). Russian sellers used higher percentages of "listener is inconsistent with previous statements, behaviors, or agreements." Additionally, Russian sellers were found to make fewer statements than American sellers ($p < 0.10$), and they achieved lower joint profits in the negotiation simulations ($p < 0.05$).

As mentioned earlier, we have taken a structural equations approach in order to best summarize how culture moderates relationships between negotiation behaviors and outcomes. The parameters of the model presented in Figure 1 were estimated separately for the American and Russian data using Partial Least Squares (PLS). The parameter estimates for the Russian data are underlined in Figure 1. PLS allows us to combine variables into logically consistent constructs (using a formative indicator measurement approach) without concern about internal consistency. See Fornell and Bookstein (1982) and Falk and Miller (1992) for more complete explanations and details regarding PLS and formative indicators. The Latent Variable (LV) Weights are listed in Figure 1.

As can be seen in Figure 1, for the Americans, negotiation outcomes were enhanced when sellers used higher percentages of informational statements (.36), lower percentages of consistency appeals (-.52), and fewer total statements (-.30). For the Americans 59% of the variance in negotiation outcomes was explained by the bargaining behaviors included in the model.

The model works differently for the Russian negotiators. For them negotiation outcomes were enhanced when sellers used higher percentages of questions (.26) and commands/requests (.46), and lower percentages of informational (-.28) and conditional (-.42) statements. The bargaining behaviors considered in the study explained 73% of the variance in negotiation outcomes for the Russians.

The moderating effects of culture are shown by a comparison of pairs of parameter estimates across the data sets. Four parameter estimates were found to be statistically significantly different using t-tests: relationships between negotiation outcomes and informational statements, commands/requests, consistency appeals, and garrulous (total) behaviors. Particularly notable are the opposite effects of informational statements on negotiation outcomes – for the Americans positive and for the Russians negative.



*p<0.05

^adifference between American and Russian parameter estimates is statistically significant (p < 0.05)

Figure 1. A Structural Model of Negotiation [PLS Parameter Estimates (and LV Weights)] Americans n = 30, Russians n = 26, estimates for the Russian data are underlined.

Discussion

Limitations

Perhaps the most important limitation of the current study is its exploratory nature. We do not claim to have proven anything here; the extant literature is simply inadequate to develop well-founded, clearly testable hypotheses in the best traditions of positivism. General theoretical support for the links, culture

→ conversational behavior → negotiation outcomes, exists in the literature. However, precision in construct definitions and operationalizations, a deep understanding of causal mechanisms, and a foundation of previous empirical studies do not.

Others have discussed limitations associated with simulations and particularly with one-shot negotiation encounters. The translation and transcription processes, despite the resources expended, clearly are sources of error in the work; some things simply do not translate well, if at all. Moreover, as one reviewer rightly pointed out, the validity of using a content analysis scheme developed using the English language in the United States on Russians speaking Russian is questionable. The solution to this limitation is, of course, for Russians to develop a coding scheme appropriate for their culture and to translate the English transcripts into Russian and then code. This check is, however, beyond the scope of this study and its resources. The representativeness and comparability of our two cultural groups is a question that can be addressed only in future studies. Focusing on verbal behaviors, we have ignored the perhaps more important nonverbal behaviors which might be captured by videotaping. Finally, our sample sizes are quite small yielding limited statistical power and perhaps unstable parameter estimates.

Strengths

In spite of the weaknesses mentioned, we feel the strengths of the study make it most worthwhile. Using observational methods to study negotiation behaviors is unusual in the literature. Adding a cross-cultural comparison makes our work even more unusual, and the Russian data are rare, too. Use of the observational methods sidesteps important problems associated with survey or in-basket designs – translation and measurement problems, and many issues about causality.

All participants were experienced businesspeople, not students. While we collected the data in the USSR before the dissolution of that state, our data now provide an opportunity for future comparisons with post-USSR Russians to measure effects of the political and economic upheaval on values and behaviors. Moreover, conversational style and largely unconscious behavior learned in early socialization might be expected to be little affected by political changes, even those of the last decade in Russia.

The content analysis scheme employed in the study is the most complete we have come across which is specifically appropriate for use in marketing interactions. The sample sizes are large enough to allow for worthwhile explorations for patterns in the data. For example, we have been able to consider culture as it directly and indirectly affects negotiation behaviors and outcomes, *and* culture as it moderates relationships between behaviors and

outcomes. Finally, several of the findings are consistent with the literature, providing some degree of convergent, nomological, and predictive validity for our measures and constructs.

Substantive Results

The overall pattern of negotiation behaviors is quite similar across the groups. In both cases, the majority of statements are information exchange behaviors – questions and informational statements. Commitments, command/requests, and promises were also used frequently by both the American and Russian sellers. These findings are consistent with Frazier and Summers' (1984) survey findings and Leigh and Rethans' (1984) script-theoretic investigations.

The differences in patterns across the two groups revolve more around the instrumental behaviors. The Americans put greater emphasis on promises and threats than did the Russians. Alternatively, the Russians emphasized commands/requests and consistency appeals more than the Americans. The American sellers used more information behaviors, but that difference is due in large part to their more frequent use of the presumptive-information-about-the-buyer category. The reader will recall that it was a conceptually difficult decision to classify that category of statement as representational or instrumental, so this finding sheds little light on the conflicting hypotheses 5 and 7. That is, in the pre-1990's literature, the Russians are described as "secretive." However, their behavior vis-à-vis the Americans' behavior in our study does not seem to warrant that characterization.

In countries like Russia where collectivism is an important value, interactions with in-group versus out-group associates can take on very different flavors, cooperative versus aggressive (Erez and Earley 1993; Triandis 1995; Hofstede 1991). We believe this to be the salient explanation why our findings are at odds with the pre-1990s and most of the post-1990s literature on the Russian negotiation style. We have considered here business negotiations *between* Russians, and we would expect and, indeed, have observed the display of more cooperative, "in-group" kinds of behaviors. Additionally, most of the earlier literature was based on political negotiations, which given the adversarial nature of the two political systems before 1990, makes Khrushchev's shoe pounding at the U.N. seem quite appropriate. Indeed, recent U.S./Russian cooperation on several international political issues is consistent with such an interpretation.

The two sets of data fit the structural equation model very differently. Culture seems to moderate the effects of behaviors on combined negotiation outcomes in four instances. The most glaring example is, of course, the opposite effects of sellers' informational statements on negotiation outcomes. Americans did better and the Russians worse when they provide more infor-

mation. Our findings suggesting culture as a moderator are consistent with those reported by Graham et al. (1994).

Future Research

This study might also be replicated in Moscow circa 2000 to check for behavioral changes due to the social, political, and economic upheavals in the former USSR. Our prediction is that the negotiation styles reported will persist as Kimura (1996) and Hofstede (1991) might argue. Perhaps the most tantalizing question unaddressed in our study is how Russians and Americans negotiate with one another. Do the Russians remain as cooperative? We believe so if Americans have been careful to establish strong personal relationships and therefore business negotiations are conducted in an "in-group" context.

Our findings, particularly those highlighted in Figure 1, deserve attention in future studies. Other methods, (e.g., surveys or experiments) might further test some of the relationships found to be salient in this study. We are only beginning to see the complexities of face-to-face human interaction in studies such as this.

Acknowledgements

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Note

1. The reader may question the comparability of the two cultural groups based on the age differences. However, both groups consisted of experienced businesspeople. This is a substantial improvement over most published studies of negotiation behavior wherein undergraduate students (with no experience in business negotiations) are often used as subjects. Indeed, Fouraker and Siegel (1963) reported differences in students' and businesspeople's bargaining behaviors. How well the Russian or American participants represent all Russian or American managers is a separate issue. The generality of our findings can be determined only in subsequent studies using other groups of Russians and Americans and other methods.

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Appendix

Transcription and Translation

All the negotiations (30 Americans and 26 Russians) were audiotape-recorded. (some were videotaped as well). The American negotiations were then transcribed. The Russian negotiations (in Russian) were transcribed and translated into English in Moscow. One co-author is an American who has lived in Moscow for 17 years and has native fluency in Russian. Based on her review of the English transcripts of the Russian negotiations, it was decided to redo the transcription and translation process. Obviously, this is a crucial step in the measurement process, especially since few people in the world are more qualified to manage this process and there were too many initial errors to simply "clean up" up the first set of transcripts of the Russian negotiations.

In a previous study, the American transcripts were coded using a somewhat different scheme. To avoid cross-coder bias as described by Graham et al. (1993), we decided to have one person code all 56 American and Russian transcripts using a new scheme. Coding transcripts using a 20-category content analysis can lead to fatigue, a serious consideration in this study. To reduce fatigue biases, the transcripts were coded one pair per day with rotating sequences (i.e., RA, AR, RA, etc.). Care was taken to select a coder uninformed about the purposes and theories of the research. For each negotiator, the codings were summed for each of the 20 categories in the scheme, and each category score was divided by the total number of behaviors coded for that negotiation to derive the percentage for each behavior as in Graham et al. (1992). The results reported in Table 2 (and Table 1) should be read as "4.1% of the statements made by American sellers were open-ended questions," etc.

We thought it worthwhile to briefly record the overall impressions of the two researchers so intimately involved with the transcription, translation, and

coding processes. The author who coded all negotiations found that Russians, in general, behaved “stiffer” than the Americans. This type of negotiation seemed to be unnatural for them. The American participants, however, did not seem ill at ease, but readily made up facts about themselves, the products, the companies, and the relationship between negotiating partners. They came across as “born salespeople” in comparison to the Russian negotiators, who seemed to approach the task more laboriously.

Our native Russian speaking colleague likewise observed what she termed “a Russian formal” conversational style, different from the informal style evident in the American transcripts. She noted that Russian conversational behavior varies substantially between circumstances, e.g., business negotiation versus family gatherings. By comparison, American conversational behaviors are more consistent across contexts. Clearly, the Russian negotiators were using their formal style in the simulated business negotiations, one perhaps more appropriate for an out-group interaction. The same author was also impressed by the generally cooperative behaviors of the Russian participants.

Reliability

The reliability of the codings was checked in three ways. A research assistant, also ignorant of the purposes and theories of the research, coded one American and one Russian transcript. Using Perreault and Leigh’s index as described in Kolbe and Burnett (1991), the interjudge reliability for the American transcript was .79, and .80 for the Russian transcript.

Next, we looked at the correspondence between coders at the level of the pattern of each negotiator’s behaviors. That is, the behaviors coded were summed, percentages were calculated in each of the twenty categories for each of the four negotiators (the American buyer and seller and the Russian buyer and seller), and correlation coefficients were calculated across coders (American_r = .93, Russian_r = .90, n = 40 [2 negotiators X 20 categories] and p < 0.01 for both).

Lastly, we compared our results for 56 negotiators using collapsed categories almost identical to those reported for 12 negotiators in Graham et al. (1992). That is, we compared columns I to III and II to IV as listed in Table 1, and found the pattern of behaviors to coincide well across studies (American_r = .90, Russian_r = .99, n = 11 and p < 0.01 for both).

These three methods provide confidence that our content analysis procedures have produced measures precise enough for meaningful comparisons and analyses.

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