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Indulgence Versus Restraint: Exploration of A New Cultural Dimension in Context

Elena Chudnovskaya[1] iD & Laura L. S. O'Hara[2] iD
Texas Tech University, US & Ball State University, US

Abstract: This study examines the intercultural experiences of eight Danish expatriates in Russia. In-depth interviews revealed three characteristics of Hofstede's dimension: Indulgence verses Restraint (IVR). This study allows us to understand communication between restrained cultures (e.g., Russia) and indulgent cultures (e.g., Denmark). This carries implications for specific and in-depth workplace training to help managers improve intercultural communication within the Russian workplace.

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Corresponding Author:

Laura L.S. O'Hara
Professor of Communication Studies, Ball State University, United States
lohara@bsu.edu

1. Introduction

I remember the first time I came to Russia. I landed at Sheremetyevo airport. In terms of architecture and color. . . and the lack of smiles on people's faces, which I can see every day—which is normal in Denmark—and I felt. . . some kind of hostility, lack of friendliness from the environment.

Casper-

[When I hear the word Russia or Moscow], something familiar and nice [comes to my mind], and for many, many years, I think my three years [in Russia] were the best time in my life. It was a very, very good experience. Even now, when I hear the language on the television, I try to understand what they are talking about. I enjoy it when I catch words, and I comprehend what they are talking about. For me, it brings lots of positive feelings.

Casper-

The first reflection above, from a Danish expatriate working in Russia, offers his initial impressions of his host country. The second reflection reveals the perspective of the same manager who had learned to negotiate many of the communication challenges he encountered during his three-year sojourn in Russia and who now had great affection for the culture. The mission of expatriate managers, whether in Russia or elsewhere, can be extremely challenging. By understanding cultural patterns in the country in which they are working and how these patterns manifest in the communication of those in that country, expatriate managers can develop strategies for communicating more appropriately and effectively in their host community, as well as adjust psychologically to the cultural differences. Additionally, multinational companies (MNCs) can cultivate more "expatriate-friendly" organizational cultures in host cultures.

As someone with extensive experience working with Danish expatriate managers, the first author saw first-hand the communication challenges in interactions between Danish expatriate managers working in Russia. Questions about these challenges led to the current study, which employs a constructivist approach to examine specifically how a group of Danish expatriate managers worked to understand and respond to the communication characteristics demonstrated by their Russian associates.

Much cross-cultural management research has employed large-scale surveys. While such research provides excellent "broad stroke" cultural analyses of these differences, it is critiqued for essentializing cultures as monolithic and static (Holliday, 2011; Piller, 2011). Qualitative analyses (as in this study) can strengthen our understanding of cross-cultural communication by providing deeper knowledge of how broader cross-cultural patterns are enacted and perceived by those working within multicultural organizations (Peterson, 2008).

[1]Department of Professional Communication, Texas Tech University Box 43082 Lubbock, TX, USA 79409, United States. Email: ev-chudnovskaya@wiu.edu

[2]Department of Communication Studies, Ball State University, Letterman Building, 364, Muncie, IN 47306, United States. (765) 285-1998 or (765) 285-1882. Email: lohara@bsu.edu

2. Literature review
2.1. Expatriate managers

If MNCs wish to "succeed internationally, they must navigate interculturally" (Bülow, 2011, para. 1). Expatriate managers are key in this enterprise, as they coordinate various in-person and virtual international teams to implement projects (Zając, 2013). Expatriate managers must understand prominent communication characteristics in their host culture, which allows them to foster a strong "team culture" in professional international environments, thus increasing success in international projects (Zając, 2013).

However, expatriate assignments can be difficult, and many expatriates do not complete their assignments, resulting in career disruption, psychological harm, and hardships for families and co-workers (Wasson, 2004). Financial, cultural, and reputational costs can also harm the organizations for which the failed expatriates work (Black & Gregersen, 1999). Intercultural communication differences are often the biggest hurdles for expatriates as they adjust to new work cultures and to new ways of living and communicating in an unfamiliar environment (Lauring, 2011).

2.2. Business expatriates in Russia

Russia occupies an unusual position in the world because of its long political, social, and economic isolation during the Soviet Union period (Freeze, 2009). However, after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia began to open its economy and to attract foreign investors, including high-tech giants Intel and Microsoft, industrial leaders Ford and Nestlé, and financial power houses Ernst and Young, and Deloitte (Puffer & McCarthy, 2011). Recently, Russia has been a global leader among developing economies, boasting large retail growth in Central and Eastern Europe (Belaya & Hanf, 2010; Li, Croucher, & Wang, 2020). Although researchers have analyzed the experiences of expatriate managers in many countries (Larsen, 2014), few have examined the experiences of expatriate managers in Russia. Understanding these experiences can inform both Russian business interests and those expatriates working in Russia.

Among the few studies examining expatriate managers in Russia is a work by Morley and his associates (1997; 1999), who examined how job-related factors (e.g., role ambiguity, role overload, role conflict, and role discretion), and less clearly job-related factors (e.g., pre-departure training and family situation) affected Irish expatriate managers' satisfaction and adjustment during their assignments. The authors found that Irish expatriate managers' satisfaction with their assignments was influenced by their job and organizational factors. Suutari (1997, 1998) compared the experiences of Finnish expatriate managers who worked in western European countries with Finnish managers who worked in eastern European countries. Suutari used Hofstede's (1980; 1991) original cultural dimensions to frame his findings about the various types of cultural pressures expatriate managers encountered in their host country, the differences in leadership behaviors between expatriate managers and host nationals, and the degree to which expatriate managers' leadership styles shifted. The only fairly recent study is by Kittler, Rygl, Mackinnon, and Wiedemann. (2011), who investigate how four key aspects of work role (role clarity, role conflict, role flexibility, and role novelty) influence German expatriate managers' level of adjustment in five eastern European countries, including Russia. These authors found a negative relationship between expatriate adjustment and role conflict and a positive relationship between expatriate adjustment and role clarity.

Empirical research about expatriate managers in Russia is quite small and somewhat dated. Many developments have happened since much of this work has occurred. Moreover, a number of the studies do not focus exclusively on Russia. Rather, they span a variety of central and eastern European countries. Finally, most of the existing research relies primarily on positivistic studies using quantitative methodologies that assume cultural essentialism see Holliday (2011) and Piller (2011) for excellent discussions of this trend. However, as a number of scholars (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012; Holliday, 2011; Parry, 2003; Piller, 2011) argue, "the world with which we deal is essentially socially constructed" (Gioia et al., 2012: p16). Thus, we have adapted a constructivist approach, which enables us to focus on the particular ways Danish expatriate managers understand the communication characteristics of their Russian counterparts and in turn, how they respond to these.

3. Conceptual Framework

Hofstede (1980, 2010) and his colleagues articulated six cultural dimensions, demonstrating major similarities and differences in cultural patterns: *Power Distance*, *Uncertainty Avoidance*, *Individualism versus Collectivism*, *Masculinity versus Femininity*, *Long-Term versus Short-Term Time Orientation, and Indulgence versus* Restraint. Hofstede's work has long been "considered a reliable proxy by numerous researchers in [numerous fields]" (Pikhart & Koblizkovam 2017: para. 14). Despite its significance and widespread use in cross-cultural business and management, and intercultural communication (e.g., Gut, Wilczewski, & Gorbaniuk, 2017; Yi 2018), Hofstede's work has been criticized for issues related to research design and sample (Baskerville, 2003), age of the data (McSweeney, 2002), Western-centric assumptions (Kim, 2007), oversimplification of cultural differences, and broad framing of nations as cultures (Orr & Hauser, 2008). For example, Holliday (2011) argues that Hofstede's conceptualization of cultures as nations with clear boundaries and static cultural traits can easily lead to stereotyping, which can actually decrease intercultural understanding. Nonetheless, Hofstede's work carries great potential as a frame for conceptualizing and articulating cultural characteristics (Rapp, Bernardi, & Bosco,

2011; Søndergaard, 2008), as well as providing practical insights relating to cross-cultural training in myriad industries (Coene & Jacobs, 2017).

3.1. Indulgence versus Restraint

The Indulgence versus Restraint dimension (IvR) was first conceptualized when Minkov isolated and correlated three key items from the World Values Survey (WVS): Happiness, life control, and the importance of leisure (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Rehman & Dzionek-Kozłowska, 2020). Additionally, Minkov identified two other values found on the WVS: Placing high importance on having friends and placing relatively low importance on choosing thrift as an important value to teach children. Taken together, these five items "defined a strong common dimension" (p. 281), which Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) articulate as follows:

Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms. (p. 281)

Hofstede et al. (2010) outline numerous IvR characteristics that can be seen in any given culture, which demonstrate the extent to which it adheres to restraint or indulgence. Despite the call from Hofstede et al. (2010) that IvR needs much more study, to date, few scholars have examined IvR, and most of these include IvR as part of a larger analysis of Hofstede's six dimensions within national or organizational contexts (e.g., Luria, Cnaan, & Boehm, 2019; Ruiz-Equihua, Romero, & Casaló, 2020).

At first blush, Hofstede's work may not appear to be the foremost choice of theoretical frame for a constructivist analysis. However, Søndergaard (2008) argues that Hofstede's dimensions are useful for constructivist analyses because they help to "classify and to explain the influence of culture on the research topic" (p. 42). As Søndergaard observes, this "paradigmatic approach" to Hofstede's work has increased as scholars from many disciplines have used it to tease out interpersonal interactions within multicultural contexts (e.g., Kaur & Noman 2015; Paulus, Bichelmeyer, Malopinsky, Pereira, & Rastogi, 2005), rather than providing only general snapshots of cultural traits. We adapt this approach in the current study, using the IvR dimension to enhance our understanding of how Danish expatriate managers working and living in Russia experienced differences in cross-cultural communication characteristics, and how they reacted to these differences.

3.2. Purpose of the study

In the current study, IvR serves as a framework for a more in-depth constructivist analysis of how a specific group of Danish expatriate managers interpreted their understanding of organizational life in Russia.[3] Hofstede et al. (2010) measured IvR in 93 countries, ranking each country on a scale from one (the most indulgent) to 93 (the most restrained). Denmark ranks 12-13 on the IvR scale (highly indulgent), and that Russia ranks 77-80 on the IvR scale (highly restrained). A look at the rankings suggests that there might be quite a large cultural distance to be negotiated between Danish expatriate managers and Russian nationals along IvR dimension. A deeper understanding of IvR may contribute substantively to these managers' intercultural communication competence, creating a more productive and healthy business environment for members of MNCs. We begin this task by posing the following two research questions:

RQ 1: What, if any, IVR characteristics do Danish expatriate managers perceive during their life and work in Russia?

RQ 2: How do these IVR characteristics manifest in the communication between Danish expatriate managers and their Russian colleagues?

4.   Methods
4.1. Participants

The first author worked closely with Danish expatriates within Russian organizations for several years. Her social network allowed her to select those participants who would help her achieve the objectives of her research. Once the first author gained access to the initial participants for this study (*purposeful sampling),* they in turn, recommended other Danish expatriate managers (*snowball sampling).* Through these sampling processes, the first author recruited eight male Danish expatriate managers who had worked in Russia for at least two years (Appendix A). Although some participants had extensive personal and/or professional international experience before they came to Russia, their adaptation to Russian culture was challenging because they had little to no training about Russian culture before their expatriation. During their Russian expatriation (1988-2011), participants ranged in age from their mid-twenties to their early forties. All participants were high-level managers in the construction industry, working for Danish companies within various Russian organizations. Three of the eight expatriates continue to work with companies in Russia. Because only a very limited number of Danish

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[3]If readers wish to compare/contrast broad Russian and Danish cultural patterns, please see Hofstede's cultural comparisons at https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/. Similar comparisons can be found in the work of House and his colleagues, (2004), Schwartz and his colleagues (2010), and the World Values Survey (2017).

enterprises operate in the Russian construction industry, we will preserve participants' confidentiality by withholding further information about the specific types of corporations in which they worked and by providing pseudonyms for all participants (Appendix A). Eight participants seem like a small number. However, it is actually robust, given the very small "universe" of this context and the research goals articulated above.

4.2. Data collection

The first author conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews. This allowed her to collect retrospective interpretations by those who had actually experienced the phenomenon of our interest. This approach also placed focus on participants' own voices, allowing them to articulate their understanding of organizational life in Russia. All the interviews were conducted using Skype (three video calls and five audio calls). Although participants completed IRB consent forms in both Danish and English, the interviews themselves were conducted in English. Interviews ranged from 45-90 minutes. The first author conducted another short interview with one of the participants and sent follow-up emails to two other participants in order to clarify some of their initial responses.

4.3. Data description

After transcribing the audio-recorded interviews verbatim and incorporating the email messages into the data set, the first author had 170 pages of transcriptions. The first author analyzed these transcriptions repeatedly, using an approach adapted from Gioia et al. (2012; Appendix B). The very clear structure in Gioia et al.'s approach allows a mapped path from initial data to final themes. Therefore, conclusions made by researchers adopting this approach are systematically and powerfully supported. Thus, the first author organized her initial insights from the transcriptions into those that cohered into six sets of "first order concepts." From this formative analysis, the first author identified five "second order themes," each of which described a feature of the Danish expatriate managers' experiences in Russia. Both authors performed confirmatory coding of the second-order themes to ascertain whether or not they had identified all examples of these themes and whether or not they agreed on interpretations of these themes. They organized these into three "aggregate dimensions." During this process, the authors engaged in a type of "abductive" research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007), in which they considered their emerging findings in light of any existing literature that might explain these findings. After this exercise, it became clear that a number of the IvR characteristics provided an excellent conceptual framework for the aggregate dimensions, helping us to explain Danish participants' perceptions of communication challenges between themselves and their Russian counterparts.

5. Findings

5.1. Lack of smiling faces: Friendly or not?

One characteristic of the IvR dimension noted by Hofstede and his colleagues (2010) is that—depending on the context—smiling can seem suspicious within highly restrained cultures. In our study, some participants had difficulty during their initial phase in Russia because of the lack of smiling faces they encountered in their public interactions with others. Indeed, they had been used to giving—and receiving—smiles from strangers in public places in Denmark. Paul and Casper considered the Russians' relative lack of smiling to be brusque, which was stressful in the beginning of their stay. Kristian discussed the differences between Russians and those from other countries in which he had previously worked. He noted that in [his former expatriate location], "it is more easy-going, relaxed, fun-loving people. They are not as hard as the Russians." Continuing his contrast between Russia and other countries, Kristian remarked:

Russians [seem to be] quite brutal people, especially the men, in terms of their communication style and their appearance. If you look at other countries in Europe, you know, the French may [be perceived] to be a little bit more sophisticated [whereas] Russians are a little bit bigger fist…a little bit tougher in the approach.

Eric explained that expatriate managers needed a certain amount of emotional strength to respond to this aspect of Russian communication, recalling that, "You need to be a little bit of a tough guy—tougher than in other places. It is not like walking in the streets in the States as far as I know."

As these participants' accounts suggest, one of the most embedded perceptions that outsiders have about Russians is that they seem to be terse and unfriendly (Bohm, 2011). Indeed, as Hofstede et al. (2010) have noted in their discussion of IvR, "a broad smile at a stranger does not work in Russia" (p. 294). Similarly, Koren (2014) observes that in Russia, it is uncommon to smile when conducting business. For example, smiling during business meetings or when dealing with people in more mundane service situations often communicates ignorance, insincerity, or distrust of partners' words. Another explanation for this "non-smiling" communication norm comes from Matsumoto (2011), who observes that members of collectivist cultures (of which Russia is one) often neutralize their emotional affect or mask their expression with one another—especially with strangers or in public because controlling emotional displays reinforces the borders between friends and strangers, which in collectivist societies tend to be more impermeable. Others (Bohm, 2011) explain that Russians' public reservation derives in large part from its history, which includes numerous wars and abrupt economic and political changes—all of which have wrought long-term difficulties on many of its citizens.

Although some participants had negative reactions to this aspect of Russians' communication style, others responded quite well to it. For example, Kristian acknowledged that this "hard" style was quite useful in the workplace. "You know you can be direct with people and say your opinion [and] it would not be taken personal[ly]. Sometimes in Danish culture, you should be a little bit careful of how you phrase your words." Similarly, Kristian grew to admire what he termed a more "straight-to-the-point" communication style, noting that upon his return to Denmark, he was frustrated with the "very soft" communication style among his colleagues. As he recalled, "I wanted to be more direct. 'Come on! Let's make a decision! Come on! And let's go!'"

While participants sometimes observed "coldness" and "seriousness" from their Russian business partners, participants also experienced great hospitality and generosity from their Russian counterparts—even during the initial stages of business. In fact, Jacob favorably compared Russians' hospitality to Danes', noting that "Danes are more European, a little bit closed, and it takes some time before we allow strangers to come into our life. . . . [Russian] people are much more open." Casper also emphasized that Russians expressed high levels of "hospitality" to foreigners, which, according to him, is much less prevalent in Denmark.

Being a foreigner in Russia made things a little bit easier. When I came to the … ticket office . . . I always felt [peoples'] willingness to help. Sometimes I felt I got a little bit better treatment than many Russian colleagues because I was a foreigner. I consider Russians to be hospitable people. Every time they tried to help. I sensed their wish to do their best as possible.

Frederic made a similar observation related specifically to the business context:

In Russia. . .when you are together with the business partners. . .you would probably get gifts. . .a book of the city . . . . Yes, it is a good mentality. I like that mentality. . . . And they will show you the city even if they are very busy. There [is] much bigger hospitality than there is here in Denmark.

The literature supports these expatriate managers' perceptions in that hospitality towards guests is important to the Russian people, who show special generosity and goodwill to guests from other places (Master Russian, 2013). Additionally, despite clear cultural norms that restrain overt emotional displays in public places, Russians are quite openly expressive and fun-loving as they become acquainted with co-workers (Kore,n 2014). This aspect of Russian communication was apparent to a number of participants, who found their workplaces to be supportive and communal. Collin emphasized that:

We had very good relationships in our company. It was a nice place to go to work. All of us, or most of us, were happy to work. We had a very good attitude in our work life. . . . You had this feeling of family, where the company supports you and takes care of you, and it was very important for me.

Frederik recalled that he felt very comfortable because of the "absolute open assistance from all the [Russian] employees and colleagues in the company" at which he worked, asserting "that [Russians] are your friends for life, once you know them." Eric noted that he and his co-workers "just wanted to be together, and we used [to spend] a lot of time together." Casper observed that "it was more than just a clinical working, more than a job, I think. It was also a good place to work." Paul revealed that even now, he is "still in contact" with many of his Russian friends, "who send me wishes for my birthday [while] my Danish friends forget." Expatriate managers observed that warm relationships with their Russian co-workers fostered open communication and a great sense of teamwork. Paul observed that "[w]ith the Russian team, I felt that we. . . . are really trying to do [things] as a team." Collin, too, recalled the team culture, noting that it transcended nationality:

One of the exciting parts of my work in Russia was that we were able to build a real team. We had a very strong corporate culture. We were not really Danish, we were not really Russians. We were a corporate culture.

Kristian provided what was perhaps the best description of the distinctions between Russians' public personae and their private personae, as well as an encapsulation of an important cultural lesson learned by the Danish expatriate managers:

People in Russia are extremely friendly when you get to know these people. They are extremely warm people, but when you [meet] on the street, people do smile and do not even look each other in the eyes. You just need to understand it.

5.2. Communicating order: The imposition of bureaucracy

Hofstede et al. (2010) note that those in "more restrained societies are more likely to see the maintenance of order. . . . as an important national goal superseding other goals. . . ." (p. 295). Participants revealed that maintenance of order was communicated throughout numerous bureaucratic procedures—most of which they—as members of high indulgence cultures—found difficult. Collin warned, "[Y]ou will not like that bureaucracy, filling out lots of papers, that registration, passport system, all [those] old structures." Kristian was frustrated by the Russian system of attaining work permits for foreign workers:

 [T]here is a lot of paperwork you have to fill out . . . . There is just a lot of time spent on that. . . . Every time when you are coming back from the business trips, you have to register yourself again. . . and sign all these documents.

Such stringent bureaucratic procedures created difficulties for the expatriate managers' administration of work life. As Kristian noted, "[t]his endless bureaucracy. . . . Paperwork and "spravka" [official documents], insane work. . . makes no sense." The frustrations he experienced included dealing with necessary inspections:

Going [to an inspection office] every year to represent the company and then they . . . find something that can. . . in a little bit funny way [go wrong] and you have to drive back to another side of the city and then come back another day. . . . I thought that was really stressful and annoying, as it was not absolutely value-adding.

Eric was dismayed to discover "that the finance department [of the organization in which he worked] use[d] 50% of their time filling in papers for the state office." Interestingly, however, he found that the punishment for *not* following bureaucratic regulations was *less* painful than following the rules when he instructed the workers in the finance department to flout the rules and be prepared to pay large fines. Eric recalled, "suddenly we realized that nothing happened." Eric's response to this situation, as well as his comment, are consistent with the characteristic of a more indulgent society in which one perceives they have more personal control to critique and to change institutional bureaucracies.

Although frustrated about the numerous bureaucratic procedures imposed upon them, after some time, participants responded pragmatically to this reality. For example, Casper commented that "[you must] get your papers in order, your residence permit, visa, all [this] paperwork. If it is in order, you are pretty much set in Russia." Participants also underlined the importance of the support they received from their Russian colleagues, who helped them to navigate the local rules and to handle the high volume of paperwork. Kristian acknowledged, "My dearest [Russian colleague] helped. If it was not her, I would lose all my hair. . . [laughs]. Without [Russian employees who helped me with this paperwork], I would never make it. I would leave a long time ago." Indeed, Casper gave the following recommendation to any manager considering working in Russia, "Get somebody [local] doing [paperwork] for you. If your company has operations in Russia, get them to help you." Despite their frustrations, some participants noted that some of the heavy bureaucracy seems to be lessening in Russia. As Collin shared:

[In the late 90s], there were many old structures, where there was a lot of bureaucracy, a lot of paperwork, and a lot of strange rules. It was annoying. . . . But when I was back two or three years ago [2007-2008] [I saw that] a lot of things have changed—in a better way.

The origins of Russian bureaucratic procedures that confounded the Danes relate clearly to the hierarchical social structure found there. Grachev (2009) explains that the "strong centralization of power in the hands of the state" (p. 6), characterized life before the Soviet revolution. Although the post-Soviet wave of democratic reforms might have potentially given Russian citizens a higher level of economic freedom and competition, bureaucracy can still be observed in many areas of business life in Russia (Petukhov, 2007). Denmark, on the other hand, has evolved into a more egalitarian society in the last three centuries. One of the key events in this evolution was the agrarian reforms of the 18th century, during which farmers, laborers, and other members of the lower socioeconomic levels gained the ability to participate more freely in government (Østergaard, 2006). Additionally, as a nation, the Danes have had to embrace numerous compromises with other political powers, which resulted in a culture where consensus was valued. These and other socio-historical events have contributed to very low levels of bureaucracy, which has made it relatively simple for those doing business in Denmark (West, 2011).

5.3. Varying attitudes towards leisure

Our findings supported another characteristic of IvR—that highly restrained cultures place less importance on leisure while highly indulgent cultures place more importance on leisure (Hofstede et al. 2010). Participants were surprised that work is the main priority for their Russian colleagues, observing that they were extremely dedicated people who were ready to work "after hours" to complete projects and honor deadlines. Eric remembered, "It was a surprise for me when I was working hard, and the secretary was still sitting until eight o'clock in the evening … [in case I need some help]." He explained his surprise at the difference in cultural attitudes towards leisure and work balance between Denmark and Russia, "I come from society where people go home after five, six o'clock. In Denmark, you run. . . to your family." Paul added, "Danish colleagues are very family oriented. They try to spend as less time as possible at work and as much time as possible with [their families]."

Collin noted, "normally, many of my Russian colleagues were sitting until nine p.m. in the evening." He indicated that he responded quite well to this characteristic and that he and his co-workers "spent many-many hours working together, [sometimes] working during weekends or even holidays." Collin acknowledged that his Russian colleagues were working overtime not only because they prioritize their work over leisure time but also because they were very dedicated employees who cared about organizational goals. In response to this knowledge, Collin forged a very strong work team. As he noted, "In Russia, I had a very rare chance to build my team … from the beginning. It is a fantastic feeling… It was something very special. All of us, or most of us were happy to work, we had a very good attitude in your work life… We were team people."

Although Russians value free time and recognize the benefits of leisure activities, they still give the highest priority to work. Sedova (2011) posits that frequent political and economic crises have created some level of uncertainty and fear of the future. In turn, many Russians place high importance on material security and may view excessive leisure as a threat. Contrastingly, Danes guard free time and place a high rank in work-life balance. Danes enjoy a high degree of flexibility at work, often scheduling their own working hours and often telecommuting (Expat in Denmark, 2010).

6. Discussion
6.1. Summary of findings

The present study examined how eight Danish expatriate managers who were working in Russia perceived communication differences between themselves and their Russian counterparts during their work in Russian organizations, as well as how they reacted to these perceptions. Our analysis revealed three clear characteristics of Hofstede et al.'s (2010) dimension of IvR: 1) smiling in certain contexts is viewed with suspicion in highly restrained cultures; 2) maintenance of order is prioritized in highly restrained cultures; and 3) that highly restrained and highly indulgent countries view the importance of leisure quite differently. Our study provides theoretical understanding for scholars of intercultural communication, as well as practical insights for managers within MNCs who seek to develop intercultural competencies.

6.2. Implications of findings for training in intercultural communication competence

Scholars and international business practitioners stress the importance of intercultural training for expatriates. As a qualitative study with a small number of participants, our findings are not meant to generalize to the greater population. However, business expatriates and managers working in similar contexts can enhance their training efforts by providing contextually grounded support for larger cultural patterns. First, this study revealed that *a lack of smiling faces* within business contexts does not necessarily communicate a "rude" attitude in Russia. Rather, this "straight-to-the-point" non-verbal communication strategy is often used by Russian partners to demonstrate their serious attitude towards business. A practical implication is that expatriates from more indulgent cultures should be prudent about their use of humor in Russian organizations. Humor is often associated positively with creativity, trust, stress reduction, and satisfaction in organizational settings (e.g., Kurtzberg, Naquin, & Belkin, 2009). In more indulgent Denmark, where most organizations have a lower power distance, management experts recommend that leaders use humor and irony to establish trust with the members of the organization (Lundquist 2014). Given, however, that Russians generally have a serious attitude towards business—, particularly during the early stages of business relationships—a Dane (or any expatriate from a more indulgent culture) should weigh carefully decisions to use humor in business communication with Russian partners until he or she is more acquainted. This will help them gauge when humor is/is not appropriate and welcome.

The findings also revealed that Russian organizations maintain order through a complex system of procedures and copious amounts of paperwork. An implication from this finding is that, although expatriates from highly indulgent societies might find it frustrating to deal with such "spravka" (Camiah & Hollinshead, 2003), they nonetheless should take care to have all the required permits and paperwork in order. Additionally, as the participants suggested, it is important to find trusted members of the host culture to assist expatriates in these procedures and reduce associated stress.

Finally, this study revealed that Danish expatriate managers and their Russian associates have varying attitudes toward work and leisure. Specifically, the representatives of restrained societies such as Russia tend to concentrate on work and value their leisure time less than do their counterparts from more indulgent cultures such as Denmark. This finding implies that expatriate managers from indulgent societies should consider professional development, rather than leisure activities, as a more effective motivational strategy for their employees, given that job security is one of the strongest motivators for Russian employees (Bollinger, 1994).

This study and the implications derived from it can contribute to powerful training in intercultural communication competence for both expatriate and host culture managers. Participants of this study acknowledged the lack of or poor cultural training provided by their companies before they went to Russia. They emphasized the importance of pre-departure cross-cultural training "to prevent failure" and recommended that this training should consist of experiences of management expatriates who are working/have worked in Russia, including clear, specific examples and case studies. Indeed, while a number of participants (unprovoked) touted learning about Hofstede's dimensions as an excellent starting point for training about doing business in Russia, they also voiced a need for training derived from the specific experiences of others who have been working in Russia (and, we would add, from Russians themselves) in order to avoid cultural generalizations. For example, returning to the example of the "cold" Russian, not all of the participants experienced "coldness" from the Russians. As this example suggests, training about the ways in which expatriates' and hosts' experiences are consistent with/divergent from broader cultural patterns allows for a richer, more nuanced, more insightful contextualization of what the theory suggests.

These recommendations align with previous research. For example, Javidan and Walker (2013) recommend that organizations use case studies derived from real-life, contextualized scenarios to help expatriates develop these important skills. Scenarios from this research could be easily adapted into very clear and contextualized case studies of how Danish expatriate managers perceived and reacted to their Russian business colleagues and to specific Russian business practices. Discussion questions accompanying the cases could be designed specifically to help trainees analyze their own intercultural competencies in this specific context. However, we issue a caveat—expatriates must exercise caution when applying "general cultural patterns" to those in the host culture. While cultural patterns provide an excellent place to *begin* one's inquiry into a host culture,

understanding only the broad strokes of cultural patterns runs the risk of enforcing cultural generalizations, limiting understanding, and potentially undermining business success.

6.3. Strengths and future directions

Our research provides one of the few studies available about IvR, which as Hofstede et al. (2010) note, "is a truly new dimension that has not been reported so far in the literature" (p. 281). To date, only a few scholars have examined IvR specifically. One of the strengths of the current study is the methodology we have employed. Specifically, in-depth interviews with management expatriates who worked in Russia for at least two years allow for a much more "fine-grained," grounded explanation of how a group of expatriate managers responds to the cross-cultural communication differences between themselves and their counterparts from another culture. This work enhances the corpus of research employing Hofstede's dimensions because the overwhelming number of studies using Hofstede's work has relied on quantitative methodologies (e.g., Gut, Wilczewksi, & Gorbaniuk, 2017; Yi, 2018). Such analyses, although they permit excellent broad views of these cultural patterns, typically provide few detailed insights from the perspectives of the participants about how these cultural patterns are enacted in context.

Although the current study focuses quite specifically on how Hofstede et al.'s (2010) IvR dimension can help us understand the perspectives of a group of Danish expatriate managers working in a Russian organization, it does not reveal the full range of IvR characteristics that Hofstede et al. posit. This is not surprising, given the small size of participants (eight) and the particular group of participants (managers). However, we make no apologies for the size of our sample: Participants were part of a small and elite group who may have perceived high risks for participating in the study. Similarly, we make no apologies for the fact that the experiences of the participants we interviewed did not reveal more IvR characteristics. Similar to Parry (2003), we argue that our job was to answer our research questions "through detailed scrutiny of how phenomena work in particular contexts" (p. 256). Three IVR characteristics emerged clearly in this particular context.

Other analyses of other participants in the same organizations (or in other organizations) might reveal more or different IvR characteristics. For example, in the current organizations, researchers could analyze IvR from the viewpoint of Russian employees managed by Danish expatriates. This analysis might reveal communication characteristics of IvR untapped in the current study, as well as more in-depth explanations of such characteristics. It would also be fruitful to conduct studies of Russian employees who have had experience working in both Russian and Danish companies and compare their evaluation of the management systems in each of these organizational settings. Moreover, because history moves quickly and cultures shift, the further inquiry could be directed toward researching Danish expatriates who are working in Russia presently in order to obtain more current information about cross-cultural communication challenges encountered by expatriates working in Russia. These data could be compared to the findings of the present study in order to evaluate the current dynamics of cross-cultural communication between Danish expatriates and their Russian colleagues. More broadly, scholars could conduct similar studies in cultures where there are presumed to be large differences along any of Hofstede's dimensions (e.g., power distance, masculinity vs. femininity) to tease out how particular communication characteristics manifest in different settings and among different groups. As we have shown, because such differences are in reality, often quite shaded, it is important for scholars, management expatriates, and cross-cultural communication trainers to understand these nuances.

7. Epilogue

The purpose of the present study was to use Hofstede et al.'s (2010) IvR dimension to examine Danish business managers' experiences in Russia as they perceived and responded to the cross-cultural communication differences between themselves and their Russian counterparts. Understanding cultural differences and being able to adjust appropriately to such differences was a key factor in the Danes' interactions with their Russian colleagues, which, in turn, resulted in their success. If at the beginning of their stay, many participants felt overwhelmed by the challenges of developing Russia, after understanding cultural differences, they found their experiences in Russia to be "fantastic," "great," and "ground-breaking." Other participants expressed their desire to return to work in Russia. For example, Hans acknowledged that "at the moment, I am in an active search for employment in Russia, as I believe it is the place where I can realize my full potential." Finally, participants also expressed strong and positive memories of their time there, as reflected by Collin:

When I hear Russia. . . the first thing that comes to my mind is the [light] color of the building [where I worked], which was a positive color. . .. [A]nd I am walking into the office. . .. [I]t is a warm feeling. It is a good feeling. It is a feeling about the country which is developing.

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About the Authors

Elena V. Chudnovskaya (Ph.D., University of Miami, 2017) is an online lecturer of Business Communication at Texas Tech University, Department of Professional Communication. Her research has focused on organizational, intercultural, and health communication. Her work has been published in the Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, the Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, Health Promotion Practice, Communication Research, HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research, Public Understanding of Science, and the Journal of Bullying and Social Aggression.

Laura L.S. O'Hara (Ph.D., Ohio University, 1998) is a Professor of Communication Studies at Ball State University, where her research has focused on mentorship of graduate students, physician-patient communication in health-care contexts, intercultural business communication, and gender and culture in educational contexts. Her work has been published in the International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, the Qualitative Report, the Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, Communication Studies, Communication Education, Gender & Communication in Applied Contexts, Health Education & Behavior, Healthcare, Information & Communication Technologies, the Journal of Intergroup Relations, the Ohio Communication Journal, and Southern Communication Journal.
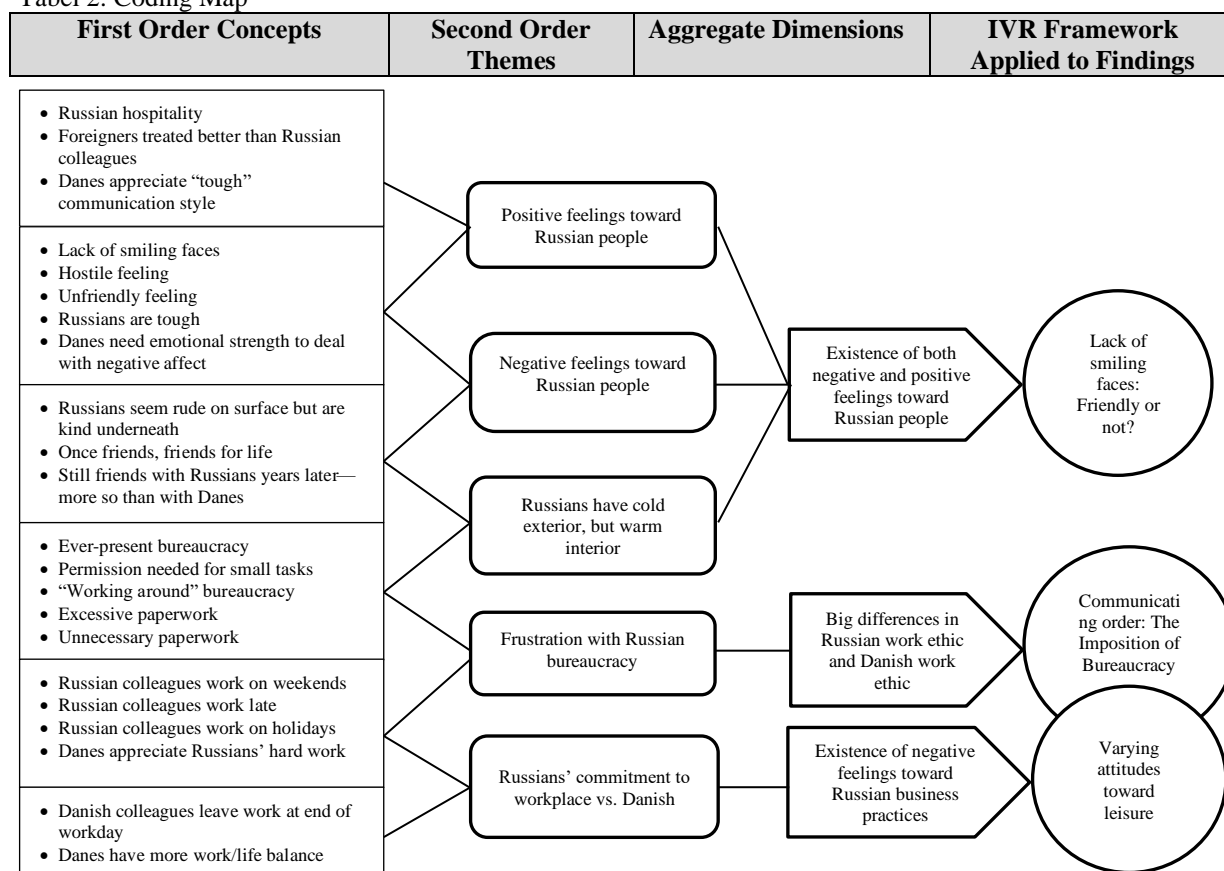
Appendix A

Table 1: Danish participants' length of stay in Russia

Participant	Years of work in Russia
Frederick	1988-1990; 1992-1998
Collin	1995-2000
Casper	1996-1998
Hans	1998-2001
Eric	1998-2003
Jacob	2000-2011
Paul	2005-2008
Kristian	2007-2011

Appendix B

Tabel 2: Coding Map

First Order Concepts	Second Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions	IVR Framework Applied to Findings

- Russian hospitality
- Foreigners treated better than Russian colleagues
- Danes appreciate "tough" communication style

- Lack of smiling faces
- Hostile feeling
- Unfriendly feeling
- Russians are tough
- Danes need emotional strength to deal with negative affect

- Russians seem rude on surface but are kind underneath
- Once friends, friends for life
- Still friends with Russians years later—more so than with Danes

- Ever-present bureaucracy
- Permission needed for small tasks
- "Working around" bureaucracy
- Excessive paperwork
- Unnecessary paperwork

- Russian colleagues work on weekends
- Russian colleagues work late
- Russian colleagues work on holidays
- Danes appreciate Russians' hard work

- Danish colleagues leave work at end of workday
- Danes have more work/life balance

Positive feelings toward Russian people

Negative feelings toward Russian people

Russians have cold exterior, but warm interior

Frustration with Russian bureaucracy

Russians' commitment to workplace vs. Danish

Existence of both negative and positive feelings toward Russian people

Big differences in Russian work ethic and Danish work ethic

Existence of negative feelings toward Russian business practices

Lack of smiling faces: Friendly or not?

Communicating order: The Imposition of Bureaucracy

Varying attitudes toward leisure

Source: adapted from (Gioia et al., 2012)