Social Class Communism did away with social classes stating everyone was equal doing away with the noble-peasant class separation. This was except for the Communist Party members, Politburo and the Central Committee who received economic favors and only made up 7% of the population. Today Russian citizens appear to be more egalitarian (equal) in their political and social views. A new socio-economic group of entrepreneurs has begun to emerge creating new businesses opportunities. This group is suspected of large contributions to Putin’s campaign.

Religion Under tsarist rule the tsar was also the head of the Russian Orthodox Church (Catholic). Under communist policies of the Soviet Union religion was prohibited (not allowed) and became an atheistic society. Yeltsin encouraged the Russian Orthodox Church to reestablish to demonstrate the break from communism. Many Russian citizens are still largely nonreligious, but do have some groups such as Muslims, Jews, Roman Catholic and Protestants. The government and political parties attitudes toward religious citizens are still unclear.

Yeltsin-Putin After the 1991 revolution Boris Yeltsin moved government to a western style democracy destroying the Soviet structure. The 1993 constitution created a 3 branch government with a president, prime minister, Lower house legislature (Duma) and a Constitutional Council. Government moved to a market economy that did not respond well. Yeltsin was an alcoholic and often sick that caused him to act irrationally, hiring and firing many prime ministers, the last of which was Vladimir Putin.

Nationality The most important fact that troubles Russia is its many nationalities. The Russian Federation is made up of autonomous regions, republics and provinces. Many groups are part of the federation such as Tatars, Ukrainians, Chuvashes, Bashkis, Byelorussians modavians and Chechnyans. Many want their independence. Chechnya presents the most concern for the Russian government. A mostly Muslim region where there have been many conflicts. Russia fears if Chechnya is successful other independence movements will occur.

Citizens and State During the time of the Soviet Union citizen beliefs and attitudes toward government were molded by Communist Party doctrines (a policy taught and enacted to all). Marxism supported this belief and that Russian ways would prevail. This system promised an end of oppression and poverty. Under Stalin citizens saw a return to the old tsar ways where citizen’s rights were repressed and a more absolute form of government. With the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been much hostility directed toward the government that is still visible today.

Rural v. Urban Since the industrialization under Joseph Stalin has seen a move in population from rural (country) to urban (cities) areas. 77% of Russians now live in cities mainly in the western part of the country. Economic differences are wide between these two groups. Current economic problems hurt the people in both areas. Urban dwellers are more westernized. Political differences between the two groups are still not well established as of yet.

Statism Despite citizen mistrust of government they still expect the state to take an active role in their lives. Throughout their history citizens have been treated more as subjects rather than participants in government. In the days of the Soviet Union much government control was placed on many aspects of citizen’s daily lives. Even though present day Russian citizens are disappointed in the reforms by their government they still expect a lot from their government.

Mistrust of Government Political opinion polls are a new development in Russia. Little information about citizen attitudes and beliefs toward government are not well known. While most polls (public surveys) indicate more democratic ideals by citizens like free elections, involvement in interest groups, civil rights and liberties many feel alienated (excluded) from these ideals. Most citizens do not trust government officials or its institutions which may be why they demonstrate little political participation.

Yeltsin-Putin Nationality

1. a.
2. b.
3. c.
4. d.

Religion Social Class

1. a.
2. b.
3. c.
4. d.

Rural v. Urban Citizen and State

1. a.
2. b.
3. c.
4. d.

Mistrust of Government Statism

1. a.
2. b.
3. c.
4. d.