

Svetlana D. Gurieva,
PhD, Professor;

Maria M. Borisova,
Bachelor, graduate student,
Saint-Petersburg State University

The Social Perception of Trust and Betrayal: Cross-Cultural Aspects

Key words: *trust, trust relationship, betrayal, cross-cultural differences.*

Annotation: *The study of the problem trust and betrayal is important research in different disciplines. This article contains the results of the cross-cultural research of the perception of trust and betrayal, and that of the impact of gender and region of residence on the social perception trust and betrayal.*

Over the last decades, the study of the problem trust and betrayal is one of the most important research topics in different fields of scientific knowledge. The key lies in the global change of interaction at all levels: interpersonal, social, national, and international. According to Francis Fukuyama, trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community (1).

The phenomenon of trust is rooted in the fundamental social values — understanding of God, justice, and professional standards of organizational behavior, i.e. corporate codes of honor. The author has studied the problem of trust in the cultural and historical context and developed models of trust for different countries. For example, American, German, Japanese, Korean, Italian and Chinese models of the emergence of trust have been distinguished. These trust models are based on the development patterns of these peoples, taking into account the worldly, religious, economic and political customs and beliefs. Relying upon the philosophy of Fukuyama, we believe it is important to pursue a cross-cultural study of the perception of trust and betrayal, and that of the impact of gender and region of residence on the social perception of trust and betrayal.

We have interviewed 30 men and 30 women from different Russian cities, as well as 30 men and 30 women from the United States — all aged 20 to 30 with secondary, incomplete or complete higher education. Subsequently, we conducted a content analysis of their responses and marked the main elements most frequently mentioned in defining trust. Content analysis tends to regard a document as message and distinguish a system of basic concepts therein (analysis categories), to find their indexes — the units of analysis (these may be words, judgments or phenomena), and to process the data statistically (2).

Table 1.

Perception of trust in Russia and USA.

Perception of trust	Women, Russia, %	Men, Russia, %	Women, USA, %	Men, USA, %
Feeling, emotion, sense	67.44	48.83	45.65	50.00
Determined by object features	13.95	4.65	2.17	2.50
Determined by relationship	11.62	13.95	13.04	7.50
Predictability	53.48	60.46	39.13	40.00

Statistically significant differences in the perception of trust were identified. The respondents from Russian cities more often referred to object predictability as an important condition for trust: trust is contingent on how expectations of the object and its behavior are met. For all the categories of respondents, attention is mostly paid to feelings, emotions, awareness in the interaction, while in Russia emotions are mentioned more often by women, and in the USA — by men. The opposite trend is seen in the preference for the formal characteristics of the relationship (mutual obligations and relationship status): in Russia, this perception is more common in men, and in the USA — in women. Russian women described specific features of the object needed to trust it. Interestingly, in the other sampling categories, this criterion was much rarer.

Thus, we see a complex system of differences in the perception of trust. The differences are not purely cross-cultural in nature — they are found in the consideration of gender differences. Obviously, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive studies of the factors affecting the perception of social phenomena.

Table 2.

The perception of betrayal in Russia and USA.

The perception of betrayal	Women, Russia, %	Men, Russia, %	Women, USA, %	Men, USA, %
Feeling, emotion, sense	13.21	6.45	0.00	0.00
General characteristics, i.e. inevitability, unacceptability	18.87	0.00	0.00	8.70
Using trust	9.43	32.26	42.42	39.13
Not meeting expectations	30.19	61.29	39.39	39.13
Break in relations as a consequence	28.30	0.00	18.18	13.04

According to the analysis, the most common perception of betrayal is associated with the fact that expectations for the object are not met. In their perception of betrayal, the American men and women did not mention feelings or emotions, while in the Russian sampling, women

mentioned the emotional sphere more often than men. These pessimistic views can be associated with a frequent women's expectation of negative consequences of betrayal, namely the break in relations. In this, the pragmatic aspect of the matter was paid attention to mainly: betrayal as a way to benefit from trust of the other person.

In general, we can say that Russian women tend to place more importance on betrayal and its consequences, while men are more focused on benefits of betrayal. In the American sampling, the differences between the mens' and womens' perceptions are less significant.

In conclusion, it may be said that the perceptions of betrayal and trust are largely determined by culture. In our view, cross-cultural research of these socio-psychological phenomena is needed for the development of scientific beliefs about them and practical factors for working with trust in the society. The data obtained can be used in the planning and implementation of international cooperation.

References:

1. *Fukuyama F. Trust: The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity: translated from English. Moscow, AST: AST MOSCOW, 2008; 730.*
2. *Chiker VA. Methodology and methods of socio-psychological research. Schoolbook. St.Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University Publishing House, 2010; 135.*

