

ABSTRACT

„It's terrible. You can't trust anyone anymore.“

- Dawn Butler

In this dissertation I concern myself with a phenomenon of betrayal within field of psychology. Despite the fact that examples of violations or betrayals of trust are manifold, relatively little theory exists regarding dynamics of trust, context-specific perception of betrayal or ability to predict violation of trust before it actually happens. Overall there is significant gap in our knowledge about betrayal, despite its obvious prevalence in human behaviour.

There are several approaches to betrayal ranging from evolutionary psychology to organizational psychology. Nevertheless this area lacks some unified approach and grasp of the problem. In my work I try to explore and build upon all these theories to answer following questions: (1) Is betrayal context-specific? Does certain context trigger perception of certain behaviour to be viewed as betrayal? (2) What role does intentionality play in perception of betrayal? In what contexts is intention even relevant? (3) Are we able to predict betrayal? Are there some emotional or communicational clues of upcoming betrayal?

In the research part of this thesis I further examine betrayal in four different ways. I ask about colour-association to betrayal to examine their prevailing emotion connected with betrayal. I run interviews to find out more about people's attitudes and experience of betrayal. I use questionnaire to let respondents assess level of betrayal in certain situations and finally I run a Diplomacy game simulation betrayal-friendly conditions in small groups which regularly rate each other on frequency of communication and mutual sympathy.

Results show that the most preferable colours associated with betrayal and red and black (or rather dark in general).

Further, I have identified the most dominant topics of betrayal to concern with emotions, descriptions and or contexts of betrayal. I propose a provisional

list of betrayal situations as well as map what either triggers or on the other hand blocks betrayal from happening. Finally I propose more layman definition of betrayal as an act of intentional violation of expectations by an abuse of a weak point of other person with harmful consequences or other losses.

In the following research a significant part of my hypotheses was confirmed which suggests that the betrayal is indeed context specific and that certain acts are perceived as treacherous in either partnerships, friendships, affairs or alliances but not in the others.

In my last herein presented research I was able to identify certain predictive power of communications within group members in context of betrayal. Nevertheless the possibility of its application outside of the experimental situation remains limited.