

Akihiro Ishikawa <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7747-5133>**Trust and Social Attitudes: A Japan-Russia-US Comparison**

This paper is devoted to a sociological and socio-psychological display the like and the un-like between Russia and Japan in terms of the trust and the people's attitudes toward social norms as well as social engagement, referring to the USA partly. In spite of geographical closeness, Japanese and Russian people are presumably not very familiar to each other. Having such a presumption as a background, in this paper it is attempted to illustrate some sociological data for promoting Japan-Russian mutual understanding. The focus of the analysis is left on «trust» and «social attitudes» in each of these two countries. Trust is divided analytically into three realms. They are trust inside a primary group (non-blood related), trust to the external society and the trust in the public institutions (represented by the government). The level of trustfulness in a primary group and in an external society is almost the same between Russian and Japan, but there is such a significant difference between these two countries: in Russia trust in a primary group is closed in itself and is not extended to the external society and people prefer to take action case by case according a given situation, while in Japan these two realms are related to each other and people prefer to observe general norms in the external society as well. And the Japanese are likely to participate in civic association in the external society quite often, while epy Russians are not. On the other hand, those who trust in government there are many of them in Russia, but few in Japan.

Keywords: trust, observance of standards, situation dependence, civic participation.

Акихиро Ишикава**Доверие и социальные установки: сравнительное исследование выборок из Японии, России и США**

Статья посвящена социологической и социально-психологической иллюстрации сходства и различия людей из России и Японии с точки зрения доверия и установок относительно социальных норм, а также к социальным обязательствам, с частичным сравнением результатов с выборкой из США. Несмотря на географическую близость, японцы и русские, вероятно, не очень знакомы друг с другом. Имея такую презумпцию в качестве фона, в этой статье предпринята попытка проиллюстрировать некоторые социологические данные для продвижения японо-российского взаимопонимания. В центре внимания анализа остаются «доверие» и «социальные установки» в каждой из этих двух стран. Доверие делится аналитически на три сферы. Доверие внутри первичной группы (не связанной кровным родством), доверие к внешнему обществу и доверие к государственным учреждениям (представленных правительством). Уровень доверчивости в первичной группе и во внешнем обществе почти одинаковый у россиян и японцев, но между этими двумя странами существует следующее существенное различие: в России доверие к первичной группе закрыто само по себе и не расширяется до внешнего общества, и люди предпочитают действовать в каждом конкретном случае в зависимости от конкретной ситуации, тогда как в Японии эти две сферы связаны друг с другом, и люди предпочитают соблюдать общие нормы во внешнем обществе. Также японцы чаще и вероятнее участвуют в гражданских объединениях во внешнем обществе, а россияне – нет. С другой стороны, в России много людей, которые доверяют правительству, а в Японии таковых немного.

Ключевые слова: доверие, соблюдение норм, зависимость от ситуации, гражданское участие.

1. Introduction

The country that is geographically closest to Japan is Russia. The distance between the most northern cape of Hokkaido (Japan) and the most southern point of Sakhalin (Russia) is only 43km. In spite of this geographical closeness, Japanese and Russian people are presumably not very familiar to each other. Having such a presumption as a background, it is attempted in this paper to illustrate some sociological data for promoting a Japan-Russian mutual understanding. The focus of analysis is left on «trust» and «social attitudes» in each of these two countries.

The data for analysis are obtained from the international research project «International Comparison of Social Trust» (headed by Masamichi Sasaki) that was carried out in Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, Turkey, Russia and USA in 2010-2012 (Sasaki

eds. 2014). The main analyses in this paper focus on the similarity and the difference between Japan and Russia, and partly about USA in order to clear up the particularity of Japanese and Russian traits. Sample numbers available for analysis are 924 in Japan, 1,600 in Russia, and 1,008 in US.

2. Method

For analysis two main valuables are set up: «Trust» and «Social attitudes».

«Trust» is divided into three sub-valuables, namely «Trust in friends» (trust in a primary group level, but not of blood bond), «Trust in others» (trust in a external social level) and «Trust in government» (trust in a state level).

Concerning to the valuable «Social attitudes», two sub-variables will be analyzed. One is named hereby

«Observance of general norms», which indicates a degree of the attitudinal orientation either to an observance of the social norms shared in a given social circle or to a voluntary action depending on a given particular situation. The other is named hereby «Participation in civic association». This indicates a degree of the voluntary participation of people in a given association for realizing their own interests, desires, wishes or ideas. The alternative feature of this is that people are involved totally in a closed community (not in an open society), or people are depending on the function of a public institution such as the state.

Those valuables above raised will be measured in a following way.

«Trust in friends» is measured by a proportion of the answer «Yes» to the question «Do (or did) you trust in your friend(s)?»

«Trust in others» is measured by a proportion of the answer «Most people can be trusted» to the question «Do you think that most people can be trusted or you must be careful?»

«Trust in government» is measured by a proportion of the answer «Yes, fully» and «Yes, to some extent» to the question «Do you think that the Government of your country can be trusted or not?»

«Social attitudes» will be measured by two aspects: Observance of general norms (normative aspect) and participation in civic association (relational aspect).

The norm-observance valuable indicates to which extent people are ready to observe the social regulation or norms. It is measured by means of a proportion of the answer «Don't agree at all» and «Don't agree so some extent» to the question «Do you agree to the opinion that if most people could get into a movie without paying, they would do it?» The distribution of answers to this question is statistically correlated with that of another question «Do you agree with the opinion that fear of social disgrace or punishment prevents most people from breaking the law instead of conscience?» (Pearson's correlation coefficient is .211 in Japan and .374 in Russia, namely it is significantly related in the level of 1 %), so that only the answer to «movie» will be used in this paper.

The participation valuable is measured by a degree as to how much a given society is differentiated to various associations. In other words, it concerns a frequency of people's voluntary participation in different associations by their own individual interests. This is measured in this paper by a proportion of those who don't answer «I don't participate in any association raised in the list» (see Table 2).

3. Findings

Distribution of the answers to each of the valuables above mentioned is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF THE VALUABLES OF «TRUST» AND «SOCIAL ATTITUDES» IN THREE COUNTRIES

	Trust in friends	Trust in others	Trust in government	Observance of general norms	Participation in civic association
Japan	48.3	26.9	33.2	79.2	79.3
Russia	47.6	28.1	51.7	24.7	47.3
USA	68.5	44.9	55.8	23.4	61.6

Trust in government: Proportion of those who «trust absolutely» or «trust relatively».

Observance of general norm: Proportion of those who «strongly disagree» or «mildly disagree».

Participation in civic association: Proportion of those who participate in an association or more.

Data of this Table indicate the following facts.

Firstly, as far as the level of «Trust in friends» and that of «Trust in others» are concerned, there is no significant difference between Japan and Russia. The proportion of positive answers on «Trust in friends» is 48,3 % in Japan and 47.6 % in Russia, while «Trust in others» is 26,9 % in Japan and 28,1 % in Russia. It means the level of trust in a primary group (non-blood related – hereinafter as well) as well as in an external society is very similar between these two countries, and both countries are significantly different from USA where the levels of trust both in friends and in others are quite high (68,5 % and 44,9 %).

Difference between Japan and Russia can be found in the level of «Trust in government». It is significantly

higher in Russia (51,7 %) than in Japan (33,2 %). The Russian level in this concern is close to the American level (55,8 %).

Russian characteristics regarding the level of trust in friends as well as in others are very similar to the Japanese case. On the other hand, as far as the trust in government is concerned, Russians show a quite high level, different from the Japanese case. For reference, a high level of trust in government by Russian people is shown in another international research, too (Asinimov 2013).

Regarding «Social attitudes», there is a remarkable difference between Japan and Russia.

Concerning a level of «Norm observance», Japan is very high (79,4 %), contrasting to Russia (24,7 %) and USA (23,4). From this finding, Japanese attitudes toward society may be characterized as «norm-observing», while Russian attitudes, as well as American, may be as «situation-dependending».

As for a level of «participation», Japan is very high (79,2 %), followed by USA (61,6 %), while Russia is low (47,3 %). As seen in Table 2, one of the main rea-

sons of a high level of participation in Japan is that the majority of Japanese are members of the neighborhood organization (a semi-formal (or semi-voluntary) inhabitants' self-management body), while in USA, unlike Japan and Russia, more than a few people participate in a religious organization. In most of the cases of association, Russia is located on the lowest level of civic participation, contrasted to Japan and USA. Further, Japanese

are inclined to participate in collective activities such as a club for sports, recreation, hobby or cultural activity. They are rated 30 %, contrasting to Russia (6 %).

Next, the relation between trust and social attitudes in each of three countries will be looked after by means of Pearson's correlation coefficient. Figures in the three tables (Table 3, 4 and 5) show the following traits of each of three countries.

Table 2

PROPORTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN CIVIC ASSOCIATION(S)

	Japan	Russia	USA
Neighborhood organization	55,1	14,5	12,0
Parent-Teacher association	12,7	3,8	8,6
Youth club, Women's club, Seniors' club	10,8	2,2	7,4
Firefighters' association, Voluntary neighborhood watch association	2,8	0,5	3,3
Farmers' association, Fishermen's association, Foresters' association	5,3	1,6	2,8
Chamber of commerce or other professional, entrepreneurial association	6,9	0,9	7,4
Trade union	7,4	7,5	7,2
Club for sports, recreation, hobby or cultural activity	29,8	5,9	18,5
Regional association, Class reunion association, Alumni association	15,7	1,1	7,5
Religious organization	6,7	1,4	30,1
Co-op, Consumer union	12,1	1,5	4,0
Political group, Election Campaign organization	4,1	1,3	7,6
Citizen group or organization	2,4	0,3	5,9
Environmental protection group	1,5	0,9	4,5
Other	1,3	14,1	3,6
RANKING of frequency	1	3	2

% of those who are members of a given organization, association or group.

Table 3

CORRELATION BETWEEN TRUST AND SOCIAL TRAITS (JAPAN)

	Trust in friends	Trust in others	Trust in government	Observance of norms	Participation in association
Trust in friends					
Trust in others	.082* .014				
Trust in government	.003 .927	.047 .168			
Observance of general norms	.067* .045	-.004 .900	.009 .783		
Participation in Association	.022 .496	.038 .260	.061 .064	.034 .311	

Upper number: Pearson's correlation coefficient. Lower number: Significant probability (both sides). **Significant in the level of 1 %. * Significant in the level of 5 %.

Table 4

CORRELATION BETWEEN TRUST AND SOCIAL TRAITS (RUSSIA)

	Trust in friends	Trust in others	Trust in government	Observance of norms	Participation in association
Trust in friends					
Trust in others	.029 .262				
Trust in government	.049 .061	.122** .000			
Observance of general norms	-.011 .685	.047 .078	.014 .615		
Participation in Association	.027 .272	-.006 .819	.050 .053	.007 .785	

Upper number: Pearson's correlation coefficient. Lower number: Significant probability (both sides). **Significant in the level of 1 %. * Significant in the level of 5 %.

The Japanese and the Russian features can be described as follows (see Table 3 and 4).

Firstly, in the case of Japan, «Trust in friends» is significantly correlated with «Trust in others», but not with «Trust in government». This may imply that in Japanese

society the trust in the primary group is extended to the secondary social relations with ‘others’. This is different from the Russian case, where trust is closed inside a primary group, not extended to an external society. In terms of trust relations, it may be said that, contrasting to the Japanese primary group which is openly bound to the relations in an external society, the Russian one is a closed system as a small self-depending universe separated from the external social environment.

Secondly, as mentioned before, a level of the trust in government is high in Russia, but low in Japan. Russian trust in government is correlated with «Trust in others», but not «Trust in friends». In case of Japan, «Trust in government», as seen before, is quite low, without any correlation either with «Trust in friends» or «Trust in others», which means that the government is perceived by most Japanese as a particular realm separate from primary as well as secondary social relations.

Thirdly, the attitudes toward general norm observance, as seen before, are high in Japan. It is significantly correlated with the degree of trust «in friends», but not trust «in others» or in «government». Japanese norm observance attitudes seem to be sustained and reproduced basically in a framework of trustful primary-group relations, and indirectly to extend to the secondary social relations outside. In case of Russia, a level of the attitudes is quite low, as seen before, and it has no correlation with any realm of trust, namely neither in primary group, nor in secondary social relations, nor in government, and the situation-depending attitudes are shared by many people in personal and social life.

Fourthly, both in Japan and in Russia a degree of participation in association is correlated neither with any realm of trust, nor with a level of the attitudes toward norm observance. It means that the members of a given civic association are of variety in terms of a level of trust and a degree of norm observance. This feature both in Japan and in Russia is contrastingly different from that in USA.

As seen in Table 5, three realms of trust are positively correlated with each other in USA. Trusts in primary group, in external society and in public institution are connected in a continuum, and these three realms of trust combine themselves in one dimension. This is different from the case of Japan where, although «Trust in friends» and «Trust in others» are bound with each other, «Trust in government» exists separately from the other two realms of trust, and also from the case of Russia where these three realms of trust are separate from each other. A higher level of trust in both a primary group and in external society in USA is combined with a higher level of situation-depending, maybe pragmatic, attitudes of people in daily life.

In USA, as noticed before, a level of people’s participation in civic association is considerably high. This is correlated with a level of three domains of trust. Besides, it is correlated also with a level of the norm observance attitudes. The American’s high level of associative activities may be ensured by their higher level of trust and vice versa, both sides of which are probably supported by their situation-depending or self-determining attitudes in society.

Table 5

CORRELATION BETWEEN TRUST AND SOCIAL ATTITUDES (USA)

	Trust in friends	Trust in others	Trust in government	Observance of norms	Participation in association
Trust in friends					
Trust in others	.189** .000				
Trust in government	.070* .028	.139** .000			
Observance of general norms	.163** .000	.280** .000	.054 .094		
Participation in Association	.149** .000	.169** .000	.130** .000	.136** .000	

Upper number: Pearson’s correlation coefficient. Lower number: Significant probability (both sides).

**Significant in the level of 1 %. * Significant in the level of 5 %.

4. Discussion

According to some stereotypical views on Russian people and their society, they build a strong fort with solidarity in a primary group to protect their existence, while they are very cautious against outsiders in external society, and put their trust on state authorities (Hakamada 1993, Hollander 1973). Findings in this paper may support this stereotypical view.

Rakshkina (2008) measured Russian social character by using Hofstede’s scale of «Collectivism vs. Individualism», indicating that Russian people are inclined to col-

lectivism but without programming, and therefore their behavior is rather situation-depending. Hakamada (1993), too, characterizes Russian social attitudes as situation-depending rather than as norm-observing.

In Russia there is no correlation between trust in friends and trust in others. This implies that the trust in a primary group does not link itself to the trust in external society.

In Japan, on the other hand, the trust in friends is correlated with the trust in others, which means that the trust in a primary group is extended to the trust in an

external secondary society and the latter is regulated indirectly by the norm-observing attitudes that is fostered in the primary group. Japanese society is often characterized as group-oriented, where the basic features of social order in a primary group are reproduced in a shape of «pseudo-familism» in a secondary group. And a secondary society («seken» in Japanese) is ordered by the people's conformity to general norms («seken-nokimari»). A link of trust between a primary group and a secondary society may bring on a high-rate of people's participation in civic association on the platform of a secondary society.

5. Concluding Remark

As shown before, both in Japan and in Russia the level trust in others is not high, particularly compared to USA. This level was measured by the proportion of a positive answer to the question «Do you think that most people can be trusted (trustfulness) or you must be careful (carefulness)?» In Japan and in Russia the attitudes of carefulness are not few. In this term Japan and Russia seems to be very similar. However the contexts seem to be different between these two countries. The Japanese majority is norm-observing, while the Russian majority is situation-depending. In Japan people seem to compensate a careful social environment by the observance of stable norm in common, while Russian people apt to adapt themselves flexibly to any unpredictable environment by their own assessment in a given situation.

In Japan both 'friends' and 'others' belong to a same social circle, which is apart from a realm of the government. In Russia the relations with 'friends' shape an independent sphere apart from the relations with 'friends' in one side, and 'government' in the other. According to Smith (1976), Russians make a sharp distinction between 'private relations' and 'public relations' and follow different behavioral norms. In our findings from the Russian data, 'private relations' seem to be differentiated into two relations, namely 'with friends' and 'with others', distanced from each other.

Japanese don't trust much in the government, while Russian trust in it largely. This difference might be explained to some extent from the historical backgrounds. Russia has a long tradition of statism in Tsarism and then Communism, and their state-relying mentality is still dominant. Japan, on the other hand, built a strong state-oriented mindedness in the process of a drastic modernization (industrialization and militarization) from the middle of the 19th century. However, after a collapse of the regime of statism by a defeat at World War II, people became more or less skeptical to the government, and their state-relying mentality has considerably tided away in accordance with a development of civil society.

The degree of people's participation in civic associations is conspicuously large in Japan, while small in Russia. The roots of this difference may be found in their historical backgrounds. In Japan various associative activities were wide-spread among ordinary people

even in pre-modern time, while the majority of Russian ordinary people in the pre-socialist time were involved in a closed rural community. Afterward in the socialist time a number of social associations were set up in a collectivistic way by the Communist party, but not based on a civic and voluntary way. In USA, maybe, those activities seem to be carried out mostly in an individualistic or a family-based way, not necessarily by means of participating in a group nor an organization.

The US case is quite different from the Japanese and the Russian ones. All of three realms of trust, the trust in friends above all, are largely shared by people in USA. Besides, the level of every realm of trust is significantly correlated with the level of norm-observance and participation. Matěju and Vytásková (2006: 500) stress that the freedom of association and the civic participation in association lead to an enhancement of social trust. This statement is certainly valid in the case of USA, though necessarily not in Japan and Russia, where a pattern of trust and social attitudes is peculiar in itself.

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