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Organizational Psychology: The Entrance to, Residing in, and Exit from Sensitive Positions

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Title: Organizational Psychology: The Entrance to, Residing in, and Exit from Sensitive Positions

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One trans-cultural phenomenon throughout human history is potential and actual violation of trust. This can occur in one's personal life; socio-cultural context of family, community; and polis. All three have a bearing on violations of trust within organizations.

Entrance to. One is usually assessed by a number of imperfect predictors of the maintenance or violation of trust. Each predictor is a social construct and common, overlapping examples include degree of influence by entities external to the organization; sexuality; financial status; psychoactive substance use and abuse; personality characteristics; and prior history of illegal, unethical, or immoral behavior (cf. 1). Problems in identifying the right people to enter sensitive positions within an organization include (a) individual decisions based statistical averages from groups; (b) social transformation of knowledge wherein the predictive validity of a social construct varies through time; (c) incomplete collection of relevant information per specific candidate; (d) disagreement on which specific behaviors should be included within each social construct; (e) differences in meaning and intention ascribed to specific behaviors by specific candidates for sensitive positions; (f) variations in training and development and maintenance of expertise for personnel security adjudicators; and (g) degree of subversion of the personnel security system by personal, socio-cultural, and political biases of organizational authorities. Some concrete conundra include the very wealthy desperate for even more money, and the barely making it feeling rich; degenerates proud of degeneracy and the absolute straight arrow living in shame; possessors of all admirable capabilities ever more formidable in beating the security system (cf, Bill Hayden in John Le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2)), while those just meeting minimum standards cheerfully and proudly dying rather than violating trust (cf. Sydney Carton in Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* going to the guillotine to protect others and murmuring "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (3) .

Residing in. Contingent on resources, re-adjudication of personnel already in the sensitive position may not occur often enough to pick up significant changes in potential to violate trust as well as actual violations. Evolving cyber capabilities may facilitate an approximation to continuously monitoring personnel by the above social constructs. However, these same cyber capabilities may facilitate violations of trust by those so inclined (cf. Bradley/Chelsea Manning (4). There also needs to be a congruence between the psychological and professional developmental stages experienced by personnel, a formidable challenge for human resources management. Of special concern are unplanned-for stressors such as marital divorce; health tragedies of one's children; being passed over for promotion; concluding one's life is meaningless and failing; and just some plain very bad decisions.

Exit from. Personnel retiring, being fired, or voluntarily ending employment via pre-retirement from a sensitive position do not always or ever forget the sensitive that they know. Their feelings about the organization and about what seems to be waiting for them in a next life are crucial in addressing post-employment violation of trust. Yet another challenge for the organization's leadership and human resource management, as if the organization owns personnel for life

Conclusion. Unfortunately, many current approaches to personnel security seem to be correctly typed by that fictional, serial, cannibalistic, murderer Hannibal Lecter who states, "Oh Agent Starling, you think you can dissect me with this blunt little tool (5)"? More valuable are the narrative approaches of psychobiographers like Todd Stern (6) and psychiatrists like David Charney (7). They identify life motifs based on aggregated dispositions and stressors as yielding more appropriate estimates of who to trust, who not, and when. Instead of looking for the love that dare not speak its name (8), we should look for the telltale heart of the true blue (9).

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Keywords: Espionage. Insider Threat. Organizational Psychology. Personnel Security. Traits. Trust. Violations.

Abstract/Description: This article identifies psychological problems and promise in identifying those in sensitive positions within organizations who may betray, are betraying, and have betrayed trust.

Disciplines: Other Psychology, Philosophy, Political Science, Other Political Science, Psychology, Defense and Security Studies, International Relations

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