



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

# **“Gender, Trust, and Interpersonal Relationships”**

(A Study of trust types in same-sex relations in private settings)

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## **Abstract**

This paper aims to analyze trust types in private settings, that is to say, in personal contexts. To this aim a series of tables have been constructed as well as interviews conducted with twelve individuals with different cultural backgrounds. These case-individuals have been selected to include both males and females. The cultural context has been set to cover Swedish and Iranian individuals so as to enhance diversity.

In this study a certain emphasize will be placed on men-men and women-women interpersonal trust, in order to see what “types of trust” are found in such relationships at the presence of gender difference.

*Key words:*

*Gender trust, interpersonal trust, trust types, men-men relations, women-women relations.*

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## 1. Introduction

“I trust you because you were always a listening ears and emotional support to me”. “I told him my secret but he didn’t keep it”. “Now I can trust him blindly, he is a true friend”. “I am really scared to trust again, just because of one person experience”. “I regret ever having trusted you.” “Nowadays, it is hard to trust people.”

These are familiar expressions in our everyday life. Trust is an important element in human communication. It starts in the closest form between mothers and newborns, develops in the family and later it extends to society. The existence of any relationship without some levels of trust is almost impossible. Trust underlies all human achievements ever made. It is essential in friendships, love, families, organizations, and societies. It also plays a major role in politics and economy.

The core of a safe society is having a successful interaction and communication between people of that society and here trust plays a central important role that guaranties the success of an interpersonal relationship. Although trust is an inevitable part of any society, it always involves some levels of doubt and risk taking. In other words, risk taking behavior, crucial for the success and the progress of human being, is always accompanied by trust.

For an interpersonal relationship to last, trusting and being trustworthy play a major role. This includes all types of relationships; friendship, family, matrimonial, etc. Therefore trust is not only a psychological thing within a person; rather it is a systematic social and interpersonal phenomenon. In interpersonal trust, individuals and groups are expected to remain faithful to their commitments. Mutual faithfulness is the base of all social relationships and trust is the most essential element in building social stability and safety. In contrast lack of trust is the underlying factor in social instability, conflicts, and enmity. In fact trust is more important than moral commitments for the stability and solidarity of a social system.

Undoubtedly trust plays the most important role in dynamics of societies, if weakened; it would lead to the decadence of a society. In other words, trust is the heart of social order lack of trust would lead to social deterioration. It can be claimed that, in a social or political system where members are interacting with conformity and compatibility and their expectations are met, all

members will feel safe and are hopeful to a bright future.

It is clear that once the trust is impaired or reduced in interpersonal relationships, the most important goal of therapies is to rebuild and retrieve the trust, which is always costly, time and energy consuming. Therefore there is money to save in such studies. Unfortunately when distrust is prevalent in a society, behaviors such as lying and hypocrisy will emerge. In such situations even traditional institutions founded based on morals, religions or customs, which are supposed to build trust, will fail to function properly.

Due to the importance and relevance of the interpersonal trust in the realm of communication studies, such researches might not only increase the awareness of people about this crucial phenomenon, but also help the society to prevent the threatening elements that can reduce trust degree in people interaction, and in a broader scale in all layers of society.

The nature of trust is not fixed and independent; in fact, it is subject to change over time, conditions and contexts. Perhaps to present, little attention has been directed to the study of development of different types of trust in interpersonal relationships. While a great deal of attention has been given to types of interpersonal trust and its developmental process in organizations, groups, and teams, there has been less interest in the study of interpersonal trust in more private settings. Furthermore most of such studies to present were more focused on interpersonal relationships among women-men. Therefore, this study will be one of the few studies to investigate same-sex interpersonal trust.

## **2. Research Question**

The following research question framed this study:

What type of trust do men show (characterize) in their interpersonal relationships with other men, compared to women with other women?

### **3. Purpose**

Trust is one of the essential elements of social behavior. Type of trust in interpersonal relationships differs based on people's cultural, cognitive, affective, and gender differences. The influence of gender has been examined from different points of views in several studies. Gender trust is one of the most talked about issues in the recent years. Since both the nature and the nuance of the word "Gender" involves segregation, bias, and focusing on differences between men and women, most of previous studies emphasize on differences. Here in this paper, we aim to study gender trust by focusing not only on differences but also on similarities.

Most of the gender trust studies on interpersonal relationships have been done on men-women relationship. There are few studies on interpersonal trust between two individuals from the same gender. Therefore, we felt the time was ripe to have a close look at the issue of men-men and women-women interpersonal trust in order to see what types of trust are found in such relationships at the presence of gender difference.

Five types of trust will be studied in this paper. "Affective trust" is the kind of trust which is based on the trustor's feelings towards the trustee. Some people use their wisdom, logic and cognition in order to trust someone, this type of trust is called "Cognitive trust". To trust, others use their own experiences. This type of trust is called experience-based trust. "Identification trust" is another type of trust that occurs when both parties share the same values, interest, motives, and desires. The last type that will be analyzed in this paper is "distrust" which is not necessarily the absence of trust; rather it can be a range of negative expectations, suspicions, and a complete lack of trust.

This paper aims to examine different types of trust and their development into private settings, specifically in men-men and women-women relationships and identify the perception of trust among same-sex relationships. Finally we try to offer useful categorization/ taxonomy for interpreting the similarities and differences in male and females' perception of trust. If possible we try to offer any possible male or female tendency toward some trust categories.

#### 4. Earlier studies

So many studies have been done on interpersonal trust in different contexts. Interpersonal trust in health care system, teacher-student interpersonal trust, parents-children interpersonal trust and men-women interpersonal trust. Also so many studies have been done on developing different types of interpersonal trust that is mentioned in theoretical framework, in organizations, companies, teams, and groups. These types of interpersonal trust have been examined in some other areas such as seller/buyer interpersonal relationships, customer services, consumers and their financial advisors, management, marketing, negotiation, networks, e commerce, e business, and e services.

Here are some studies that have been done about cognitive and affective type of trust in different contexts. For example Devon Johnson and Kent Grayson (2003) have examined Cognitive and affective trust in service relationships. They claimed that “interpersonal trust in consumer-level service relationships has cognitive and affective dimensions” (p.501). They also “examined the relative impact of service provider expertise, product performance, firm reputation, satisfaction, and similarity in influencing customer’s perception of these dimensions of trust in a service provider.” (Johnson, D, & Grayson, K. 2003, p.501)

Another example is studying the relationship between *affective* and *cognitive* based trust, decision making and conflict management in organization interpersonal relationships. Satyanarayana Parayitam and Robert S. Dooley (2006) mentioned that “Multi-informant data from 109 hospitals revealed that cognition-based trust is a moderator in the relationship between conflict and outcomes whereas affect-based trust does not moderate the relationship.” (p.789).

Sonnenwald, et al. (2003) Who has studied these types of trust in “multi-institutional R&D organization, called the conceptual organization” believes that “Tightly coupled collaboration appears to only emerge in situations where high cognitive and affective trust simultaneously exist, and no collaboration will emerge in situations with high cognitive and affective distrust exist.” (p.16).

Morrow, Jr et al (2004) believed that cognitive and affective elements form the general trust in cooperative organization and lead the organization to performance satisfaction.

In teamwork trust plays an important role in keeping interpersonal and team relationships. Sheila Simsarian Webber (2008) studied the development and impact of cognitive trust and affective trust in long-term teams. Some of her findings are: “affective trust has a stronger positive relationship with team performance than cognitive trust.”(p.746).she also claimed that “Teams that never have the opportunity to distinguish affective from cognitive trust may have more difficulty successfully coordinating and communicating.”(p.764)

Andrew Zur, et al (2011) studied “the impact of trust on relational exchanges between buyers and sellers in an international context”. in this empirical marketing study two types of trust have been analyzed. Affective trust and cognitive trust. Here are the outcomes: “Shared goals are a common antecedent to both dimensions of trust. Perceived cultural distance and reputation are the unique antecedents to cognitive trust while total interdependence is the unique antecedent to affective trust.”(p.73)

Another type of interpersonal trust is *experience-based trust*. Nathan Griffiths (2005) claimed that experience-based trust decreases uncertainty degree in ‘cooperation among autonomous agents’. He explored, “Experience-based trust is the simplest approach, where agents delegate tasks to others and update their trust models according to task outcomes.” He also described “experience-based trust can be used to minimize the risk associated with cooperation.”(p.1). Minghong Wang et al, (2010) believed that “Experience-based trust has been, is & will be a critical issue for development of e-commerce, e-business, e services, and also in traditional commerce, business & services in many countries.”(p.361).

Some other studies have been done on the influence and development of *Identification-based trust* in interpersonal relationships. Daniel J, et al (2006) claimed that Identification-based trust is a sort of trust which is “found upon knowledge of shared values and commitments, provides impetus for reliance and support, as do emotional bonds among relationship members (affect-based trust).”(p.5). They believed that IBT (Identification-based trust) in the interpersonal relationships of a group or team “would be direct predictor of reliance upon teammates and task

assistance behavior.” (p.5). They maintained that “IBT and ABT ( Affective-based trust) should uniquely predict self-disclosure and socio-emotional support provision within teams.” (Daniel J, et al, 2006, p.5). Edmondson, (1999) mentioned that “The security of close trust relationships provides the environment in which personal disclosure can take place.” (Daniel J, et al, 2006, p.5). This research took place in three different organization-based relational settings: trust among peers, trust in supervisors, and trust in subordinates (p.6). The potential for disclosure increases when relationship partners have strong shared values (IBT) and are bound together by reciprocated care and concern (ABT).” (p.5)

*Distrust* has been examined in different areas as well. For example Lewicki and Wiethoff (2000) analyzed how trust and distrust could influence interpersonal, intergroup and international relations. Their study focuses the role of trust and distrust on conflict resolution. This study also includes the role of distrust and trust in management, leadership and negotiation.

Deutsch, Morton et al, (2000) claimed, “. . . *Most relationships are not purely trust and distrust but contain elements of both.* These relationships are characterized by ambivalence and depend upon how individuals internally deal with conflict and outwardly handle conflict with others. This is more common in relationships than to see high trust or distrust.” (R. J. Lewicki & C. Wiethoff, 2000, p.3).

Pamela Qualter et al, (2009), studied the link between loneliness and interpersonal distrust. Their analyses showed “a direct relationship between alexithymia and social, family, and romantic loneliness” (p.1461). They also found that “interpersonal distrust partly mediates this relationship, and that alexithymia and interpersonal distrust interacted to predict social and family loneliness.”(p.1461)

Interestingly some scholars found the positive outcomes of interpersonal distrust in some specific contexts. For example Stacey M. Conchie, et al. (2006) believed that “the presence of distrust may improve the effectiveness of an organization’s safety system while too much trust may damage it.”(P.101). They analyzed safety-specific interpersonal trust and distrust in inter-group and organizational level.

Here we will take a look at previous trust studies in different fields of interpersonal relationships. For instance: Men-women interpersonal trust, Interpersonal trust in the health care system, teacher-student interpersonal trust, and also parents-children interpersonal trust. We will have an overview of the research outcomes and results.

*Men-women interpersonal trust:* One of the variables that can affect our research outcomes in this study is, gender. We don't take gender as a concept that discriminates our informants rather, having both male and female participants could help to validate our outcomes.

Based on what we discussed it could be a good idea to take a look at findings from previous studies and researches in gender trust. There are some similarities with the findings and it might form some stereotypes in the study of gender differences. Here is some research outcomes in the influence of gender on interpersonal relationship and trust behavior: Chaudhuri and Gangadharan (2007) believe that, men exhibit greater trust than women do. They also claimed that women reciprocate more than men. On the other hand Garbarino and Slonim (2009) observed that both men and women trust women more than men. In addition they claimed that for the team composition so as to obtain the highest efficiency, a manager will choose to work with a man rather than a woman. (Slonim and Garbarino 2008). Also Schubert et al., 1999; Dwyer et al., 2002; Croson and Gneezy, 2004 mentioned, "Men are assumed to be more risk-taking than women and more keen on gambling." (Christiane Schwierien, & Matthias Sutter, 2008, p.494).

Ortmann and Tichy (1999) explored that, women are more relationship-oriented, and therefore react stronger to the behavior of others. Eckel and Grossmann (1996) found women more interested in a fair outcome. Gneezy et al., (2003) claimed women are (expected to be) more cooperative— or at least less competitive.

Nancy R. Buchan, et al, (2005) found that: "men trust more than women, and women are more trustworthy than men"(p.466). They believe that "men view the interaction more strategically than women because the relationship between expected return and trusting behavior is stronger

among men than women”(p.466). Another point that they mentioned based on gender differences is: “Women felt more obligated both to trust and reciprocate”.(p.466)

Obviously the nature of men and women is different and forms different behavioral characteristics that could affect trust behavior. For instance Francis, 2000; Irvine, 1986; Kokkinos et al., 2005 explored that, “women in their nature are more internalizing and emotional, But men are more externalizing and antisocial” (M Van Houtte, 2006, p.828). Trust studies from gender point of view, are linked with gender stereotypes. Being aware of such stereotypes is a great help in gender studies, including gender difference in trust.

*Interpersonal trust in health care system:* So far some studies have been done about interpersonal trust in health care system.

They have studied 3 main objects of trust in the health care setting: (1) health care providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants), (2) health care institutions (hospitals and clinics), and (3) health care payers (managed care plans, private insurers, government insurance). In many researches they have shown that there are multiple dimensions of trust. Most studies suggest that at least 4 dimensions are important. These include “agency/fidelity, competence, honesty, and confidentiality.” (Leonard E. Egede, 2008,p.808)

In some other researches they have found significant correlation between race/ethnicity of health care providers and patient trust (Nancy Lynn Sohler et al, 2007).

There are some other study results such as:

“There is a correlation between the multidimensional scale of trust and patient-level health outcomes, including patient-centered care, locus of control, medication nonadherence, social support, and patient satisfaction. For instance: Patients who receive patient-centered care are more likely to have trust in the health care system.” (Leonard E. Egede, 2008, p.814)

The importance of interpersonal trust studies in this area is because of the direct relation between patient trust or distrust and successful health outcomes for patient.

*Teachers- students interpersonal trust:* As we mentioned at the beginning of this part, several interesting studies have been done on teachers-student interpersonal trust. In some studies they have found the influence of gender on trust degree. They also analyzed the association between teachers gender and teachers trust . Here are some outcomes of interpersonal trust studies with consideration of gender differences in both teachers and students.

Based on Schneider and Coutts (1979) findings, “Female teachers have less trust in their pupils than male teachers have”. (M Van Houtte 2006, p.826). “Teachers’ trust increases with the proportion of girls at school”(p.826). “A significant interaction effect indicates that male teachers seem to prefer female pupils”(p.826). “A significant interaction between gender context and teacher gender shows that gender context influences female teachers’ trust less than it influences male teachers’ trust, confirming the pupils’ judgment (Myhill & Jones, 2006) of female teachers being more fair.”(M Van houtte, 2006, p.835)

*Parents-children interpersonal trust:* There are several studies about Parents-children interpersonal trust. Based on study results some factors are more important in this mutual trust. For instance “The more children tell their parents about their feelings and concerns, the more trusting they believe that their parents are”. “Knowledge of daily activities emerges as the most important link to parental trust.” I other word more knowledge about day to day experiences leads parents to more they trust the child. Considering the fact that the information itself do not play an important role in trust, rather “the willingness to share information makes an important contribution to trust, over and above the information that it provides.”(Margaret Kerr, 1999, p.750). “The information disclosed by the child produces a certain level of parental trust, but it could also be true that trusting parents respond in such a way that children feel more free to disclose.” (M Kerr, et al. 1999, p.750). In this study they found that “The parents' past behavior probably produces in the child a sense of trust or distrust.”(p.750)

## 5. Theoretical Framework

Trust is a dynamic, complex, multi-leveled, culturally-rooted, communication-based, & multi-dimensional phenomenon. What makes this phenomenon very important is: trust is one of the most essential elements in constructing human social life. Obviously it can facilitate interpersonal communication, and on the other hand lack of trust or distrust to some extent can cause a lot of difficulties in communication.

There are different definitions for concept of trust. Each focuses on some specific aspects of this concept, for instance Bernath and Feshbach (1995, p.2) defined trust as:

“...a complex, developmental feature of personality with interactive cognitive and affective, conscious and preconscious, and rational and nonrational or prelogical facets. Trust is a basic and fundamental feature of personality, pervasive on a preconscious level in influencing perceptions of social situations involving risk.”

Harrison McKnight, Cummings, Chervany (1998) explored the same definition about trust: “is based upon the person's cognitive beliefs about the other person and the person's emotional security about those beliefs.”(p.11)

On the other hand, Harrison McKnight, Cummings, Chervany (1998) and Jøsang, Ismail Boyd (2007) they define interpersonal trust as: “One party's willingness to depend on the other party with a feeling of relative security even though negative consequences are possible”(p.9). This explanation shows ‘risk’ is an inevitable element that comes across with trust. Therefore, when someone trusts the other party it means s/he takes the risk & positively trusts the other one even though there is a possibility for negative outcomes. According to Mayer (2007): “Trust is the willingness to take risk, and the level of trust is an indication of the amount of risk that one is willing to take.”(p.346)

Interestingly, there are three common concepts that we continually see in interpersonal trust definitions. Those key words are: “belief, willingness, and vulnerability”.

In order to measure specific type of trust we have to consider the fact that: “trust levels vary according to who is participating in the relationship, and will vary according to circumstances and situations.” (Dietz et al., 2006, p.572)

In this study five types of interpersonal trust will be examined in interpersonal relationship of the people with the same gender, in order to see whether we can develop these trust categories into private settings or not. These trust types are: affective trust, cognitive trust, identification-based trust, experience-based trust, and distrust.

Interpersonal trust forms in an *interpersonal relationship* which is the interaction and communication between two or more people. The interpersonal relationships varies according to the context that it takes place and the expectations between communicators. In this paper we focus on friendship relationships.

*Interpersonal trust* is defined by Holmes and Rempel, (1989), and also by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna, (1985), as “the expectation that a partner can be relied upon to be responsive to one’s needs, both in the present and in the future.” (Jennifer Wieselquist , 2009,p.534). Some other researches such as Wieselquist et al. (1999), demonstrate that in interpersonal trust “individuals trust their partners to the degree that they perceive their partners to be accommodating in conflict situations and willing to sacrifice desired activities for the sake of the relationship.”<sup>1</sup>(p.86). Usually interpersonal trust takes place in those relationships in which the individuals are highly committed and they care about the future of their relationship.

There are different definitions for *affective trust*. Actually this level of trust is emotional (e.g., Erdem & Ozen, 2003). Johnson-George and Swap, (1982); and also Rempel et al., (1985) claimed that “Affective trust is the confidence one places in a partner on the basis of feelings generated by the level of care and concern the partner demonstrates.” The core of this type of trust is reliance on a partner based on emotions. Based on Lewis and Weigert, (1985), and McAllister (1995) this type of trust is “emotionally based and is characterized by the perceived

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.impettrelationships.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2010/11/2008-Pos-Psych-Ch.-Impett-Gordon.pdf>

strength of the relationship and the sense of security felt in the relationship”( Andrew Zur, et al 2011,p.74). Johnson and Grayson (2005) claimed that “in this type of trust partner acts with benevolence to elicit an emotional bond of trust” ( Andrew Zur, et al 2011,p.75). McAllister (1995) also argued that affective trust is grounded in reciprocated interpersonal care and concern or emotional bonds. Hansen et al (2002) claimed “This form of trust is said to be subjective in nature, as the perceived trustworthiness of one party is based on the feelings, emotions, and moods of the other.” (Andrew Zur, et al 2011, p 75).

*Cognitive trust* is a level of trust that is rational in nature (e.g., Erdem and Ozen, 2003). McAllister (1995) explored that cognitive trust is grounded in individual beliefs about peer reliability and dependability as well as competence. Cognitive trust “arises from an accumulated knowledge that allows one to make predictions, with some level of confidence, regarding the likelihood that a focal partner will live up to his/her obligations” (Johnson & Grayson, 2005, p. 501). It is what Rempel et al. (1985) call “predictability” and Johnson, George and Swap (1982) call “reliableness.” As cognitive trust is objective in nature, it is based on a rational process which determines whether the other party in the relationship can be trusted (Hansen et al., 2002).

In *identification-based trust* “relationships are more heavily grounded in intangible resources such as perceptions of mutual attraction, support and caring for each other.”( Roy J. Lewicki and Edward C. Tomlinson 2003). This type of trust forms when the parties take time to develop their common interests, values, perceptions, motives and goals (Roy J. Lewicki and Carolyn Wiethoff 2000). In this type of trust both parties have a level of understanding of each other’s desires, wants, needs and intentions. Lewicki and Bunker (1995,1996) defined IBT as “confidence based upon the understanding that full internalization of each other’s desires and intentions has been achieved, the parties understand each other, agree with what each other wants, and are prepared to support one another in pursuit of those ends.”(P.2)

*Experience-based trust* is a type of trust in that parties trust is based solely on their own experience (Nathan Griffiths, 2005). In this type of trust “Good experiences lead to an increase whereas bad experiences lead to a decrease in trust.” (Eugen Staab & Thomas Engel, 2008, p.1).

“Users interact with resources and infer trust based on their experiences and, over time, improve their trust models”( Nathan Griffiths and Kuo-Ming Chao, 2004, p.4).

*Distrust* is the last type that will be described in this part. Distrust is “confident negative expectations regarding another’s conduct” (Lewicki et al., 1998: 439). Roy J. Lewicki, Edward C. Tomlinson and Nicole Gillespie (2006) argued that “distrust reduces complexity by allowing undesirable conduct to be seen as likely (if not certain) and to be managed” they also mentioned that “distrust is a continuum that ranges from low distrust to high distrust”. Another definition by Gretchen Peterson (2005) is “Distrust involves an active cognition to distrust not simply the absence of the cognition to trust” (p.513). Lewicki and Wiethoff (2000) described that “Distrust is not merely the absence of trust, but is an active negative expectation regarding another.”<sup>2</sup>

## **6. Methodology**

### ***6.1 Participants***

This study was done at Gothenburg University. Twelve international students participated in this study; eight females and four males. Half of the female and male participants were from Sweden and the other half from Iran. All participants were between twenty and thirty years of age.

Basically in this type of qualitative studies the smallest group consists of three participants. It could be either one female and two males, or one male and two females. Therefore having a group of twelve participants including four men and eight women -which are four times more than the smallest group- is enough to observe types of trust and its development in private settings in same-sex interpersonal relationships, and to cover the aim of this study.

### ***6.2 Limitations***

This study has been carried out on both sexes with two different cultures. Trust is not bound to one particular group, race or ethnic background. Rather it is present in all interpersonal and intercultural relationships. Culture and sex are undoubtedly two important factors that can affect

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/lewtrust.htm>

trust, its formation and development in interpersonal relationships. The positive point here is that, the result of this study might work in numerous groups and larger cultural and sexual range. Due to the small number of participants in this study, we do not intend to generalize it to all sexes and cultures, nor do we offer any categorical stereotypes. Rather we only aim to observe types of trust and its development in private settings in same-sex interpersonal relationships.

At the end we will have a look at “interpersonal trust” from a different gender prospective, since we do not have the intention to separate our informants into complete different groups. Rather we will focus on both similarities and differences equally, to find out any possible tendency to the specific trust types by males and females.

The study of trust phenomenon, and its types, especially from gender point of view, in today’s societies with multicultural populations, cannot be narrowed down to a few studies. It certainly needs more dynamic studies. We hope that this research can shed light on further study of “gender trust” in the future.

### ***6.3 Research design***

One important aspect of this study is the cultural diversity of the participants; some male and female students form a Scandinavian country in Europe with an individualistic culture and some male and female students form a Middle Eastern country in Asia with a collectivistic culture. Thus this cultural diversity had to be considered. We were supposed to design a scenario in order to put our participants in a critical situation where they could trust a friend. To do this we set up different interesting scenarios that were useful, but some of these scenarios were only critical to one culture and not the other. Therefore, we chose the most versatile scenario applicable to most cultures. We tried to use a universal humanistic moral framework in our scenario to put our informants from different nationalities and cultures in a situation where they had to trust someone. This critical situation involved a big risk.

The scenario and the questionnaire were designed in a way that the informant would place himself somewhere in the categorization of types of trust after replying the questions. That is to say, we could identify the type of trust the informant applied in her/his interpersonal relationship. This would lead us to answers of our research questions.

Critical incident and the questions:

-Imagine you have cheated on your partner. But now you regret it badly. No one knows about it, not even your partner, but you need to talk to someone and share your personal story , to reduce the emotional pressure and stress, and also to get some advices. There is a huge risk, and you may lose your relationship if that person reveals your secret.

(The person you choose to trust must be one of your friends of your same gender.)

-Who would you choose? And how would you choose that person?

-What characteristics and qualities a person should have to make you trust him/her?

-Explore your reasons for not trusting other friends in this case?

-When you trust someone, which item affects your trust more than others:

a. Your previous experiences with others.

b. Your experiences with that person.

c. Your feelings towards that person.

d. Length of your friendship.

#### ***6.4 Data collection***

This part of the study was done through a set of oral interviews using an audio recorder. It was important to create such an atmosphere where the informant could trust the interviewer, something which is the focal point of this study. Thus, before anything else, we started by introducing and giving them some honest information about ourselves. Using our communication skills we tried to create a relative trust between us in order to facilitate the interview which would eventually lead us to more reliable and truthful answers. If participants did not trust the interviewer, s/he would give conservative answers to our questions and such answers would not be reliable. After some short, friendly dialogues and when we felt the time was ripe, we started recording, critical incident was explained for the informant and h/she was asked to imagine her/ himself in the situation. The questions were asked and they had enough time to reply.

In the last part of the data collection we gave our informants a questionnaire with three questions and asked them to write down their answers. The questions were:

-Three words that come to your mind about trust.

-Three reasons that make you lose your trust.

-Put these items in order of importance to trust someone.

Age/ Gender/ appearance/social status/ previous experiences/ affection/ other peoples attitude towards that person/ nationality & culture/ Length of relationship.

### ***6.5 Data analysis***

The next step was the analysis of answers to the critical incidents. All important points and key words based on the theories of this study that could indicate the type of trust were identified and analyzed. The diversity of answers and the new points indicated the complexity, broadness and the important role of trust in interpersonal relationships.

All cases were analyzed and summarized one by one. Common points, similarities and difference of cases were clarified. A table was also drawn for our informant's answers in order not to miss any words or answers, since every word can be a keyword in the study of trust types and gender trust. These tables could organize our data and depict the results in the best way. It also facilitates the readability of this paper.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in this study. Quantitative method was used for the analysis of the tables. However, using qualitative method was inevitable due to the nature of this study. For instance, in analyzing the interviews we had to consider the nuances of the word and phrases used by the participants.

### ***6.6 Data conclusion***

The final step was to classify the male and female answers separately in order to compare. In data conclusion section we come to some common points, similarities, and differences among males and females, and also we categorize the possible tendencies to different trust types. Here in this section we once again review the research questions important to this study.

### ***6.7 Validity and Reliability***

A number of strategies have been deployed in order to increase the validity of this study. First, the participants were asked to choose the place of interviews by themselves thereby enabling them to feel more relaxed and comfortable to talk about their personal experiences. Secondly, it was deemed helpful the informants be required to imagine themselves in the critical situation

with the aim of eliciting more reliable answers. Thirdly, audio recording the interviews increases the validity and reliability of this study, therefore, the oral interviews have been transcribed carefully not to miss any important point. And, finally, three tables were drawn for informants' answers to the written questionnaires not to miss any word or answer.

Interviews have been recorded, transcribed, drawn in tables, and analyzed. Needless to say, the fact that in such qualitative studies, there is always a possibility that the researcher-as a part of analytical instrument in conducting the interviews, collecting the data, and analyzing the results-could partly affect the outcomes. Due to the small number of participants we do not intend to generalize the result of this study to any gender or a specific cultural group. Rather, we hope that this kind of research can shed light on further studies of “gender trust” in the future.

## **7. Ethical considerations**

Since the nature of our critical incident was to share ones private life experiences or personal beliefs, our data was collected anonymously. This means that all recordings are copyrighted and the informant’s personal information such as names are not collected.

## **8. Results and analysis**

Three tables of information are procured in order to explore the afore mentioned questions for the present study. The first two respectively concern the responses given by the twelve individuals when asked to mention the first three words that come to their mind (Table 1) about trust as well as the three reasons for losing their trust (Table 2). These tables have been structured in two categories featuring male and female interviewees so as to serve the end of provisionally categorize their answers according to their gender. Therefore, the first two tables consist of a list of answers which are distinguished according to their gender. The third table illustrates the figures these individuals were asked to give when asked to grade items which they find important in order to trust someone. It has been designed in such a way to separate the male and female responses where the upper part represents the figures given by the males and the

lower part represents the ones given by the females. The density of the color is given in three levels with more dense colors represent more important items in discussing trust with the interviewees. This table is then followed by another smaller one stating the average taken by the male and female responses regarding each category. The closer the number is to 1 the more significant the item is for the individual concerning the issue of trust. Part of the results given in Table 3 are to be utilized when we focus on differences and similarities between the two gender groups.

In the course of our analysis, firstly, the responses given by the male interviewees will be looked at and, then, the same process will be carried out about the females. Secondly, we will concentrate on the similar responses given by both males and females to anchor a certain understanding of the similarities regarding their preoccupations when required to think about the issue of trust. Afterwards, we will explore a few unique observations made by certain individuals in the survey who demonstrated concerns which are not shared by the rest.

**Three words that comes to your mind about trust**

<b>Trust</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Male Responses</b>			
1. M1.Sw	Mutual experiences	Love	Fear
2. M2.Sw	Friendship	Know each other	Experience
3. M3.Ir	Lie	Relationship	Family
4. M4.Ir	Difficult thing	Same thinking phase	When my friend prefers his relationship with me than others.
<b>Female Responses</b>			
5. F1.Sw	Friendship	Family	Social capital
6. F2.Sw	Reliability	Truthfulness	Promises
7. F3.Sw	Friends	Family	Honesty
8. F4.Sw	Listening to me	Revealing something to me in return	Giving their opinion
9. F5.Ir	Faithful	Mutual understanding	Friendship
10. F6.Ir	Age	Experience	
11. F7.Ir	Friendship	Calm down	Relaxing
12. F8.Ir	Very valuable	Very hard to find	Rare

***“Table 1: Trust”***

**Three reasons you lose your trust:**

<b>Losing Trust</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Male Responses</b>			
1. M1.Sw	Lies	Not admitting mistakes	Talking behind your back
2. M2.Sw	Lying	Avoiding stuff	Back-stabbing
3. M3.Ir	Lie	Cheating	Religion
4. M4.Ir	Lie	Not keeping secrets	When someone is 'extreme' in all his emotions, for instance: he hates someone so much, or loves someone so much, & 'exaggerates' his idea about others positively or negatively.
<b>Female Responses</b>			
5. F1.Sw	Bad experiences	Hearing others bad experiences.	When the person doesn't pay attention.
6. F2.Sw	People doing something I explicitly ask them not to.	Lying	Not doing what they promised.
7. F3.Sw	Dishonest	Greed	Fail experience
8. F4.Sw	Gossip	Talking behind my back	
9. F5.Ir	If I saw or feel that somebody is jealous.	If I feel that a person talks about the other's secrets.	If I can't see trust in their eyes.
10. F6.Ir	Lie	Fail experience	Avoid keeping secret
11. F7.Ir	Lie	If someone say my private things to the others.	If someone act in a way that I didn't expect.
12. F8.Ir	Lies	Backbiting	When someone talks behind people easily.

***"Table 2: Losing Trust"***

Put these items in order of importance to trust someone:

Order	age	gender	education	appearance	Social state	Pervious experiences	Feelings toward that person	affection	Other peoples' attitude towards that person	Nationality & culture	Length of rlnp
<b>Male Responses</b>											
M1.Sw	7	6	11	8	10	3	1	4	5	9	2
M2.Sw	7	9	5	8	4	1	3	10	11	6	2
M3.Ir	9	10	6	4	5	1	3	11	8	7	2
M4.Ir	3	4	7	6	8	1	2	10	5	11	9
<b>Female Responses</b>											
F1.Sw	10	11	4	7	5	1	2	8	3	9	6
F2.Sw	11	10	8	7	6	5	1	3	4	9	2
F3.Sw	8	7	11	4	6	2	1	10	3	9	5
F4.Sw	8	5	7	10	9	2	1	3	6	11	4
F5.Ir	5	4	10	11	9	3	1	6	7	8	2
F6.Ir	2	3	4	11	10	1	7	8	9	5	6
F7.Ir	4	3	8	7	10	1	5	6	9	11	2
F8.Ir	1	6	8	11	9	2	3	7	4	10	5

*“Table 3: Importance order”*

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
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Average	Age	Gender	Education	Appearance	Social state	Previous Experiences	Feeling toward that person	Affection	Other people's attitude towards that person	Nationality & culture	Length of friendship
Male	6.5	7.25	7.25	6.5	6.75	1.5	2.25	8.75	7.25	8.25	3.75
Female	6.125	6.125	7.5	8.5	8	2.125	2.625	6.325	5.625	9	4

## ***8.1 Table analysis***

As it is observable from the first two tables a range of different issues were raised and commented upon by the male individuals. A number of these remarks were mostly made by the male interviewees. These include: fear, religion, extreme emotions, appearance, social status such as class, education and profession. One considers trust “a difficult thing” and another said he is only able to trust someone if he/she "shares a similar attitude" with regards to ethical values and concerns. In addition, all males mentioned “lying” at least once when asked to comment on trust. All these responses point to a shared position among the males when one discusses trust, that is, they all arguably tend to possess a standpoint concerning trust that is to be well interpreted in relation to what is called “cognitive trust” as it has been previously discussed in the theoretical section of this study.

On the other hand we see responses given by the majority of the female interviewees. These include numerous affection-related remarks. For instance, they considered trust as intuitive and thought they can trust someone merely “when [they] can see trust in their eyes.” They also related the ability to trust someone with the other person’s willingness to “listen” or “reveal something secret” to them in return of confiding something of the same nature in their trustee. Moreover, they thought of trust as “relaxing,” and found that it is more difficult to trust when the person “does not pay attention” and value "other people’s attitude towards that person". And finally, "age" was mentioned as an important factor in trust while others considered trust “very hard to find.”

There seems to be a change of attitude together with a difference in priorities when one asks females about trust. Unlike the male group, their trust seems to be more affection based. This heterogeneity between the two groups can be read in light of Sheila Simsarian Webber’s (2008: 746) –among others- distinction between “cognitive and affective trust” whereby she identifies “reliability, dependability, and competence” as the components of the cognitive type of trust. The first group (males) seems arguably to feature such characteristics. The cognitive trust is thought by Lewis and Weigert (1985), and Dunn (2000); to be based on “a certain level of knowledge

which warrants trusting that party.”(Andrew Zur, et al 2011, p.74). They seemingly tend to be based mostly on logic and rationale-at least when talked about consciously.

Contrary to this is, according to Webber, “close interpersonal relationships” which facilitate the “affective (emotional)” trust. This seems to be in keeping with what has been remarked by the second group (females) the answers of whom tend, for the most part, to be “subjective in nature” since, according to Hansen it “is based on the feelings, emotions, and moods of the other.” (Hansen et al. 2002).

One can also identify a similitude in a number of responses by the male and female individuals. For instance both male and female groups said issues such as mutual experience, friendship, family, mutual understanding, knowing each other, relationship, friendship, truthfulness, reliability, faithfulness, and honesty, are significant to establish or attract trust in other people. In addition, they both considered lying, backstabbing, dishonesty, greed, unfaithfulness/cheating, not keeping secret, unfulfillment of expectations, failed experience, and gossiping to be factors whereby they can possibly lose their trust in someone.

Interestingly, there were examples where two male interviewees gave unique comments on trust. Their responses do not seem to correspond to any form or category of trust which was mentioned in the literature on trust. For instance one, who does not consider himself religious, mentioned that, for him, fanaticism (especially religious) to be a root of high distrust in someone while for another extremist behavior is source of distrust. He was the only one who mentioned “religion” as one on the reasons why he can lose trust in a person. For him, fanaticism represents an insurmountable barrier in interpersonal relationships, a barrier which reduces intimacy and increases distrust. Having similar beliefs and attitudes, however, are the main reasons for him to trust someone.

The other one considered person’s exaggerated hatred or love toward someone as a sign to mistrust that person. Extreme behaviors as such trigger in him a strong feeling of mistrust in a person. He also used himself as an example of a person who cannot keep anyone’s secret because while talking he reveals friend’s secrets spontaneously. A similar feeling of distrust or suspicion with trust was demonstrated by this one as well. They seem to be more suspicious than the others in the group when they are willing to trust someone. In addition, they both

demonstrate a fear towards being exposed. The only factor separating them from the rest of the group while simultaneously being a point in common between them is their cultural/national background: they are both male Iranians. Attempting to interpret such attitudes towards trust can possibly be sought with regards to their shared culture and/or gender.

After looking at the contents provided in the three tables, it seems interesting to see how the information provided by the twelve individuals differs and/or relates to the five categories of trust defined in the theoretical background, namely, the affective, the cognitive, the experience-based, identification-based, and finally issues concerning distrust or the lack/loss of trust. These categories will be explored here in relation to the interviewees' private setting, that is, their personal contexts in light of what they said in detail regarding trust/distrust. A special attention will be paid to the discussion of trust in men-men as well as women-women relationships and the aim is to identify the perception of trust among same-sex relationships. We will try to offer useful categorization/ taxonomy for interpreting the similarities and differences in male and females' perception of trust. The interviewee's names have been replaced by a series of initials in order to keep the anonymity of the interviewees and to facilitate further references—all the interviews have been transcribed and collected and can be accessed at the end of the present study. The initials respectively stand for gender, country of origin, and the number (1 to 12) allocated to each interviewee.

## ***8.2 Interview analysis***

### ***8.2.1 Affective trust***

Although the table analysis showed a tendency where males seem to favor cognitive trust and females affection-based, we see a slight disparity in analysis when we look at the more detailed interviews. For instance, the case concerning Swedish Male 1 (M. Sw. 1) demonstrated a type of trust which can be categorized as highly affection-based. When faced with the question whom he might find trustworthy, he immediately mentioned his close friend:

"I'm talking even sharing this to him, and he would know the reason for doing so is just emotional pressure and all that, so he would still... I know, I think that is the main reason, that he causes it... I just know I can trust him, I don't really know why."

He was the only male who chose his "feelings toward that person" as his first choice to trust someone. He seems more intuitive regarding who to trust making him a somehow clear example of an individual favoring affection-based trust. In addition, he was the only case who mentioned "mutual understanding, love, and fear."

Among the females, F. Sw. 6 stressed that "feeling probably play a big role, because if I have good feelings with someone then I would go hang out with that one, probably spend more time leading to more trust" and F. Ir. 9 is dubious about certainty when it comes to completely trusting someone because she thinks her feelings "tell" her whether to trust someone or not. She seems quite confident and satisfied with her choices of who to trust because she mentions that she has never been mistaken about her intuition as to who is worthy of her trust. F. Ir. 11 considers "love" to be a major factor in trusting another individual rendering trust and emotion inseparable to her. She sees her sister, for instance, as trustworthy "because I really love her, and I know she loves me."

### ***8.2.2 Cognitive trust***

Similar to our categorization of the affection-based trust, the cognitive one also proved to be highly varied in the interviews. F. Ir. 9 does not view herself much of a "feeling person" in order to trust meaning that she disregards issues of affection when she thinks about trust. Instead, she sees herself a "more rational" and contests that "To like or love someone doesn't affect my trust, because I love my husband, I love my sister, I love my mother, but I cannot say many things to them." Thus rationality and practical observations with regards to the other person are what she sees as important factors in her willingness to trust. As it has been discussed previously in the literature on the cognitive trust, for her, "accumulated knowledge" as well as her ability to "predict" the other's person degree of reliability play a significant part in his/her trustworthiness. She also highlights the process of logical/reasonable thinking as a factor which "may help me"

deciding who is trustworthy and who is not. On the same token, F. Ir. 12 thinks that trust is a risky business after all and that she prefers to “go more *rationally* than emotionally to trust someone.” She disregards affection as trust establishing procedure and contends that “to *like* someone doesn’t bring that kind of trust between people.”

Among the males M.Sw. 2 also “[goes] more rationally for trusting people” and M. Ir. 3 has developed a highly cognitive approach concerning trust. He goes so far as to preferring “a consultant,” an expert, that is to say, “who thinks in more technical, rational.” He mentions or alludes to almost all of the keywords previously theorized about the cognitive mode of trust such as “reliability,” “predictability,” a sense of “obligation,” “predictions,” and “rationality.” He also stresses “accumulated knowledge” as a main means of being able to trust someone and sees the whole issue as a mechanical one when he says

"My close friend based on his knowledge about me, can understand me better than others. Because maybe you tell your secret to someone who doesn't know how you think, and doesn't know you and your thoughts, your background, and then he gives you a solution that is not useful or may make your situation worse. "

### ***8.2.3 Experience-based trust***

M. Sw. 2 emphasizes “experience” to rationality when he thinks about trust. He relates the extent of “mutual experience” to “the length of friendship” considering them to “go hand in hand.” M. Ir. 4 also sees his “experience with [his] friend in keeping my secrets is very important” in order to develop a sense of trust. He regrets lacking sufficient experience in previous situations when he trusted some people and comments bitterly on what he calls his “failed experiences” from which he can be said to have developed a high sense of suspicion to trust others.

Among the females, F. Sw. 7 thinks she can trust a person more easily the second time “because she has proved that she can be trusted, so I trust her again of course.” She also stresses the “length of our friendship and [her] experience” as equally important. F. Ir. 11, alike, said she *learned* a lot from her bad experiences:

"When I have a bad experience from someone, next time when I want to trust someone else I remember those bad experiences than I want to learn from those bad experiences and behave in another way to avoid having those bad experiences again. But if I didn't have any bad experience in trusting, then I completely trust to someone. "

She uses the Persian proverb "you never put your hand in a the same hole twice, that you've been bitten by a snake once" meaning "you never make the same mistake twice" resonating the English proverb "Fool me once, shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me."

#### ***8.2.4 Identification-based trust***

The factors and ideas we quoted and discussed from the interviews to be related to the experience-based trust, also show relevance to what is defined as the "identification-based trust" in the literature concerned with the subject. According to John Settle (1998),

The ultimate level, identification based trust, occurs when the parties come to internalize or closely identify with each other's interests. While this advanced level of trust thrives in the soil of knowledge-based trust, it is enhanced through affirming similar motives, interests, needs, and goals; displaying empathy, compatibility, and similar reactions to common situations; and sharing some situationally relevant values and principles. Lewicki/Stevenson likened this kind of trust to the harmony of musicians who create a joint product greater than the sum of the parts.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, relationships characterized by identification based trust are seen by Roy J. Lewicki and Edward C. Tomlinson (2003) to be "more heavily grounded in intangible resources such as perceptions of mutual attraction, support and caring for each other."<sup>4</sup> This is evident in

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.convenor.com/madison/trust.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/trust-building>

the case of F. Sw. 6 who believes the length of relationship/friendship to be important. She thinks if “she is friends with someone” then, she can decide better whether to trust that person or not. Also, F. Sw. 8 observes that “it takes time for you to trust people. I think I need to know them before I go talk to them” emphasizing the importance of a minimum of knowledge or familiarity regarding that person before she can decide to trust them.

Moreover, F. Ir. 12 presumes “the person I will select [to trust] is the one who wants the best for me,[that is], the person that is very kind to me and wants best things for me ... someone, [for instance], like my mother.” For her, confidence, that is to say, the ability to presume if she can see whether that person shares the same preoccupations with her, because she is important to them, plays the central role of acquiring trust. This can be related to A.P. Nauta’s (2001) observation that “Identification-based trust is grounded in empathy with the other: understanding on a personal level the other party's desires, wants and intentions.”

The male side of the interviews equally outlines this predominantly present characteristic in their conception of trust. M. Sw. 1, for instance, says he can trust one of his friends “because we have been friends for about seven or eight years and I think *we have the same moral values* in life” mirroring Daniel’s definition of the identification-based trust as to be “founded upon knowledge of shared values and commitments” (Daniel J, et al 2006, p.5). M. Ir. 3, who sees experience very important, says

"The most important thing is, I trust someone who thinks same as me, not someone who is in another boundary of thinking. Maybe I know some people for so many years but I cannot trust them because I know they do not think like me."

Analogously, M. Ir. 4 considers the previously mentioned phrase “length of friendship” not to be important whereas he sees “the quality of friendship” as “the most important thing” to be able to trust. He continues: “In order to be my friend, someone should have some specific characteristics such as: thinking like me, to like what I like, and to be in the same phase of thinking [meaning possessing a shared ethical stance towards values, for instance] and ideology.”

### 8.2.5 Distrust

In between the numerous attitudes towards trust, some showed to be on the negative side, that is to say, to be mirroring what one might call “mistrust,” “distrust,” or the “lack of trust.” Some of them seem highly related to same sex relationships such as the case with F. Ir. 12 who “cannot see anyone” between her female friends whom she can possibly trust. She believes that, even if her female friends won’t “harm” her, they will at least “take advantage” of a piece of information she had previously confided in them. Or, she fears that, they may reveal her or “judge her [the] wrong [way]” because she claims to be “sure” that if she tells her friends about a secret, “they will take advantage of that [...] because none of them are that close to [her].” F. Ir. 9 on the other hand, claims

"If I want to release such a problem I don't talk to someone, maybe I write to somebody or myself but I won't talk in some cases, but usually if it's just for releasing I prefer to write for myself, and not talking to a person."

In addition, she considers jealousy as a factor which causes distrust or losing trust. Intriguingly, one of the factors seen as mistrust/distrust provoking is also understood to be jealousy by Marianne Dainton (2009), according to whom, “[r]elational uncertainty will be positively associated with jealousy, negatively associated with maintenance, and negatively associated with trust.”(p.174). In other words, borrowing Dainton’s understanding of the relation between trust and jealousy, one can claim that there is a reverse relationship between jealousy and trust, that is to say, the more one perceives the other as jealous of oneself, the more one becomes inclined to lose trust in the other, or to lose motivation to establish it.

Interesting, again, is the case of M. Ir. 4 who views himself as an example of distrust! He usually keeps his secret to himself and he prefers not to confide any secret in anyone. He is perpetually afraid of those “who are very *talkative*” *because he sees in them the danger that they might reveal someone’s secret unintentionally while constantly talking.* He observes that “usually, I don’t talk about something that is very important for me, and I usually keep my secrets [to] myself. Some people talk very easily, they don’t mean anything but they talk about others unintentionally.”

## 9. Concluding Remarks

The five trust types (Cognitive, Affective, Experience-based, Identification-based, Distrust) which have been studied in the present study were originally conceived of in relation to such areas as organization, business, and ecommerce. The aim of the study has been to extend the application of these trust types to private settings and to explore the possibility of a similar conception of trust categorization in individuals' personal contexts. Several observations are to be distinguished with regards to the two analyses carried out above.

Firstly, there was only one case where only one form of trust was discussed. Rather every interviewee demonstrated a combination as well as an interrelation of all five trust types. Secondly, almost all showed identification-based as well as experience-based trust to be central to their conception of establishing trust: the majority of the case-individuals mentioned the phrase "growing up together" to hold an important place in their ability and willingness to trust someone, among whom, M. Sw. 2 believes "in-circle" friends are more trustworthy than others. Thirdly, no indications were given to show any exclusivity of any type to trust to a specific gender. And finally, unlike what was expected after analysis of the Tables 1 and 2, there does not seem any general inclination from one gender to a specific type of trust.

### *9.1 Interplay of categories*

Therefore it seems conceivable to think about trust in slightly different terms. That is, instead of trying to categorize individuals according to the "trust-types," one can think of trust to be more of an "interplay" of different dimensions due to its multifaceted nature when discussed in private settings. There seemed a recurring pattern in almost all of the interviewees discussions: they begin by a conservative (cognitive) stance and then experience comes into play and alters/reinforces their initial conception of trust. Afterwards trust enters the domain of identification and finally trust is successfully established. For instance, F. Sw. 6 showed affective and identification-based trusts simultaneously and M. Sw. 1 shows that his experienced based trust forms his affective trust resulting in his cognitive mode of trust to be influenced and guided by his affection. Moreover, all analyzed identification-based trusts were mostly based on

cognitive trust, meaning that there is the factor of rationality in arriving at such common points where mutual understanding and trust can develop. In addition based on our analysis in some cases we could see some sort of “overlap” between trust types, especially between identification-based trust and experience-based trust. Meaning that without relationship experiences between parties, it is impossible to identify each other’s needs and desires, because it takes time to develop each other’s values and goals.

There were indeed cases one can only categorize according to factors which are not mentioned in the literature. As it will be discussed, these are issues which can, however, be looked at them in terms of different categories such as gender and culture.

## ***9.2 Gender dimensions***

A few instances were only seen in the females. For instance, only females said they would talk to a member of the family whereas males do not mention family members as a possible trustee (F. Sw. 6, F. Sw. 8, F. Ir. 11, and F. Ir. 12). Also, four of the females—from both countries—prefer to trust a male friend rather than a female whereas this preference was not seen in the male case-individuals. Three females could not trust a friend because they are all afraid of being judged. For them, “face” plays an important role where keeping and losing it is seen related to trust.

Other interesting preoccupation solely mentioned by the females is the relationship between trust and the other’s ability of “listening.” An example is the case with F. Sw. 5 who views trust in light of the “need to talk” in order only to “release pressure.” F. Ir. 10, on the other hand, stresses that it is “important that she [her trustee] just listen to me” without judging. This is to be paralleled with Deborah Tannen’s proposition that men are confused by the various ways women use conversation to be intimate with others. One of these ways she calls “troubles talk.” She says, “[f]or women, talking about troubles is the essence of connection. I tell you my troubles, you tell me your troubles, and we’re close. Men, however, hear troubles talk as a request for advice, so they respond with a solution” (Tannen, 1990, p. 61)

### *9.3 Cultural dimensions*

Regardless of their gender four Iranians out of six discussed distrust in their interviews and seemed more dubious about trust than the Swedish case-individuals. Contrarily, the Swedish were more at ease when asked to comment on trust. Whereas the Swedes responded with phrases such as “I just know I can trust him, I don’t really know why” or “I have no problem for trusting people”, whether to trust someone, the Iranians considered trust as a “difficult thing” or “rare” and “hard to find.” Although they were not yet asked to comment on the issue of the “lack of trust” they did not hesitate to take the initiative to remark negatively about the positive concept of trust. In addition, one Iranian male and three Iranian females related trust to searching someone who can provide them with advice or solutions. They see trust to be linked with expert advice showing, perhaps, their lower willingness to take risks in comparison with their Swedish counterparts. Probably it is because of the presence of “system trust” in Sweden and the absence of such an issue in Iran. According to Luhmann (1979), “system trust builds up through continual, affirmative experiences with the system. It grows and persists precisely because it is impersonal, diffuse and rest on generalization and indifference”. (Bachmann, Reinhard et al. 2008, p.394). Some European countries have system trust in different layers of their society, for instance in their educational system, in health care system, in finance, etc. Sweden is one of those countries that has the system trust, and normally it positively affects the interpersonal trust in the society. According to Lumann (1988), “system trust rests on the actor’s assumption that everybody else trusts the system too” (Bachmann, Reinhard et al. 2008, p.394).

### *9.4 A new type of (dis)trust?*

Most interestingly with regards to the cultural observations, perhaps, a form of distrust which one might call a “fanatic-based distrust” mentioned by two Iranian males. M. 3. Ir sees religion as a valiant source of distrust and says he is not able to trust someone whom he realizes to be of a religious background. M. 4. Ir demonstrates a similar attitude towards what he calls “extreme” people in the sense that people whom he sees as expressing extreme forms of emotions and reactions to ordinary situations. Having been encountered, perhaps, with fanatic forms of religious behavior, the first shares a suspicion with the second Iranian male who sees extremism

as a drawback for trust. They both represent a form of unreasonable form of behavior which can be called fanatic. Therefore, without being too ambitious, one could claim that, in societies similar to our two male Iranian case-individuals, a certain attitude towards trust is distinguishable. It can be called fanatic, or extremist (dis)trust. Interestingly enough, we were not able to find any literature on this thus, one is tempted to entertain the possibility of a new category.

To conclude, it is discernible that the question asked in the beginning of the project cannot be pinpointed to a simple answer because both genders showed all five categories of trust. Also, table 3 and the analysis of the interviews toppled the assumption that one gender exclusively favors a certain type of trust over other types facilitating a form of prediction. Needless to say, due to the limitations of this study, it was carried out on data provided merely by twelve individuals. Although it has been worked in such a way so as to be as diversified as possible, it can in no way lead to definitive answers regarding trust in private settings. However, what can be seen as having achieved is the fact that one can see trust in this domain, equally, as well as organizational, commercial, etc. scales.

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## 11. Appendix

### 11.1 Participants and Interviews

#### 11.1.1 Males Participants

##### 1. Swedish, male, 21 years old:

Yeah, I'll choose my friend Albin, he's been a friend of mine for about, we have known each other for about seven or eight years, and I will choose him mainly because I know he is a person that I can trust, the reason for saying so, we have been through a lot together and I know he wouldn't say anything, so if my main goal was to just talk to someone, and if I don't want the story come out, I would tell him because I know he wouldn't tell anyone, because if he did he would screw up our friendship, and he wouldn't do that, so that's why I'll choose him. And about the characteristics and qualities does he have: He is a trustworthy person, he is very generous, he always listens to me when I talk to him, it's not like that you talk to wall, you can always talk, whatever it's about, it is school or a situation like this, and he is smart as well, and he would understand the risks that I'm taking even sharing this to him, and he would know the reason for doing so is just emotional pressure and all that, so he would still... I know, I think that is the main reason, that he causes it... I just know I can trust him, I don't really know why. The thing is we went to the same school on the seven, eight and ninth grade, high school as well, but we didn't know each other, we knew the other one were, but we hadn't talk, but then I moved to Oslo and we met there and we became friends very fast. Me, him and two other friends shared an apartment and we got very close since we lived in the same apartment for like I would say for a year, then when I moved to Gothenburg, he start studying same as me, so we shared with another friend as well and an apartment as well, I think we have the same moral values in life as well. I know he would say to me that I am a f\*\*\*ing idiot, excuse me for the language, but I'm an idiot if I don't tell her or anyone else but he would also say that if I feel like that is what I want to do, I think he would say that: ok I do want you to tell, but I won't do it, it's your job. But I think we would pressure me against telling the truth or something like that. And about why I don't trust other friends, I have another friend Eric. But I wouldn't tell him because he doesn't live here, that's basically the reason I couldn't talk to him just face to face in lives somewhere in a long way so that is the reason to not trusting him but I can think of other friends I wouldn't tell because there is always a risk that they... I mean in a situation like this you want to take as low risk as possible, right? You don't want the story to come out you know, if I really couldn't talk to Albin for some reasons, I would choose someone else to release the pressure that would be Eric but then I can't think of no one else because they are my closest friends and they are my closest friends for a reason, so I wouldn't choose anyone else like that because I wouldn't want to take the risk, and that they wouldn't understand me because they know me as person, so if I were do mistakes like this, they would probably understand somehow why I did it, I was just been stupid

or whatever it was, but they would try to... I think they would try to help me analyze the situation and why I did what I did. And about your last question I would say all of them actually, not the previous experience with others maybe, but I would say that my experience with that person, that's why I choose Albin because we've been through a lot together and we share the same moral values we are kind of ... we are similar to each other, I mean I know he is a good friend, even though we haven't had the same length of our real relationship or sort of friendship or whatever you call it, we've been through a lot in the latest years, this is what happens between twenty four hours per day. So if I have to choose two of this, I would say my feelings toward that person, and the length of friendship. So first I would say C: feelings towards that person, and second I would say the length of our friendship, and then third would be B: your experience with that person, and the last one would be A: experience with others.

## **2. Swedish, male, 25 years old:**

First of all I'll go to someone close to me just to talk about it and see if they understand how I see? What I've done and the mistakes, and how somebody else would look at me, before I will go to the person that I have done this to, and talk to them. So I will choose one of my nearest friends. About the quality and characteristics of the person to make me trust him its experience and how long I've known that person. That goes hand in hand for me. Yeah, long relationship friendship that we have had. I am kind of open mind person so I have no problem for trusting people, but it doesn't mean that I talk to all of my friends. First I have in-circle friends and closest friends that I'll talk to one of them, or several of them, but I do not go around and talk to the people that I know, and ask: what do you think about this? What do you think about that? What should I do? It doesn't make sense, because these persons may not know me as well as my close friends. They don't know how I think how I act, how I feel about certain stuffs, that's the reason I don't tell to the normal people and normal friends. My previous experiences of course affects my trust, because you may have had a friend that you have trusted and that trust gone because of something that you have done or something that he or she has done, talk to somebody else or told the secrets to anybody or whatever, so previous experiences are quite important to understand, but you go back to the feelings once more, because experience makes different kinds of feelings, now I prefer to think differently and to see differently about stuff, so it's quite important, or it's really important to have those previous experiences. My previous experiences are more important than my experience with that specific person. I go more rationally for trusting people. The length of friendship depends on how much experience you have had during the friendship, maybe you know someone for twenty years but don't have that much experience, so the length of friendship and experience goes hand in hand.

### **3. Iranian, male, 26 years old:**

I have some friends that we grow up together. Our thoughts are the same, whenever we had different ideas we discussed it and we had some arguments to come to the same point and now we have balanced our way of thinking. My close friend based on his knowledge about me, can understand me better than others. Because maybe you tell your secret to someone who doesn't know how you think, and doesn't know you and your thoughts, your background, and then he gives you a solution that is not useful or may make your situation worse. So I'll trust two close friends that I know them well, if I couldn't visit a consultant. I just see the experiences that I had with that specific person and I do not over generalize my previous experiences with others because each person is different. The most important thing is, I trust someone who thinks same as me, not someone who is in another boundary of thinking. Maybe I know some people for so many years but I cannot trust them because I know they do not think like me. But I would prefer a consultant, who thinks more technical, rational and beneficial about my problem, and s/he is an expert in such situations.

### **4. Iranian, male, 26 years old:**

Usually I don't talk about something that is very important for me, and I usually keep my secrets by myself. Some people talk very easily, they don't mean anything but they talk about others unintentionally. But there are some people that if you talk to them for hours and hours they never say anything about anyone and they are naturally like that. So I would prefer the second group, because sometimes you want to say something about someone, and you think about it, and you try to remember it. But sometimes you reveal something unintentionally. For example; I usually use examples while I am talking, and these examples are sometimes so clear that the listener can guess who I am talking about without mentioning his or her name. I really don't mean it, but it comes out of my mouth unintentionally and levels someone's secret spontaneously, and I don't trust such people like myself. I never something to someone and ask him not to tell anyone what I've said. I tell someone something based on my previous experiences with that person. First I'll see if he talks about other people's secrets with me. In the beginning I would say some small things to test him and to see if he talks about these things with others. Length of friendship is not important for me, the quality of friendship is the most important thing for trusting someone. In order to be my friend, someone should have some specific characteristics such as: thinking like me, to like what I like, and to be in the same phase of thinking and ideology. Then between these friends the one who doesn't talk too much , because talkative people are not reliable persons to trust to. In the middle of their speech they usually reveal something about others private life and secrets. My experience with my friend in keeping my secrets is very important item to trust him again, and I do not interfere my feelings in trusting my friends. In addition, single guys are better to trust, because I'm sure those guys who are in a relationship 100 % will share your secret with their partner as she is the closest person in their life. Some of them believe that they should tell everything to each other and there are no secrets between them, not even about friends. Based on

my general experiences I keep my secrets by myself and this is the effect of my failed experiences that I had with others.

### **11.1.2 Females Participants**

#### **5. Swedish, female, 24 years old:**

It would be a friend of mine that I've known since I was very very young, like five or six years old. She is one of my closest friends, and I guess I would choose her because I know she wouldn't tell anyone like she even if we are like a group of girls together, she and myself are like the tightest one in our group. so that why I would choose her. About her characteristics: I guess she is trustworthiness, girls are very good in talking,. I guess when we have known each other for a very long time you have a feeling like she wouldn't talk, but I know other friends would talk. I guess I think about previous experiences with others, kind of think like ok these persons I can't trust, and who will I trust, and sort of reflected in a negative way first instead of positive way. The length of friendship I don't think it's very important. But I guess I could trust one that I haven't been very close for a long time, that's what I mean. It's not about how long I have known her, it's more about what kind of friendship we have with each other. Maybe that's more about the feelings, and I mean if I had any bad experience with that person I probably wouldn't trust her. I guess we always have friends like that tells you or like you are in a situation or you find out about something and you are like, ok the other person tells you, you can't really tell anyone about this, I guess you always have one or two persons in your life that you actually can tell, maybe sometimes you just need to talk like this situation, just you like reveal the pressure that you know something that you not suppose to know, you can't tell anyone but you still need to tell someone, because you don't need the solution you just need to talk.

#### **6. Swedish, female, 22 years old:**

So I would choose my closest female friend, the one I got from the school, and I trust her a lot. Basically I've known her for a quite while, for five or seven years or something. I mean, I know I can share anything with her and she wouldn't talk to anybody else about it if I don't want to. I feel I would talk to her about it but not to the other one who says: oh, she told me not tell you but ... But I trust her, otherwise I won't tell my female friends, I would rather talk to my brother. I am very close to my brother. He is three years younger than me. Just the regular things if you tell a person, and they go around and talking about it to everybody else then you know that... I will consider that they would talk to other people about me, if I tell them something that I want them to keep it. I don't trust other friends that basically if they have done something that I don't ... in some cases... just anything that makes me not trust the person that fully with a secret like that or with some confidential thing, it could be anything, just talking to others about something that I've mentioned, or maybe just if I lend something to them and they don't give it back to me, or

you know something that causes any mistrust... probably the length of friendship is important for me, so it's not like that I trust people from the first step, so it's more like if I'm a friend with them then I feel that I can trust them or not. Feeling probably play a big role, because if I have good feelings with someone then I would go hang out with that one, probably spend more time leading to more trust. So I would consider the experience with that person and feelings with that person, and also the length of my friendship, but my experiences with others does not affect my trust. I mean if I really had extremely bad experiences with all people that I known maybe I would think twice maybe before trusting somebody very deeply but it doesn't really affect, I mean I consider everyone equally.

**7. Swedish, female, 23 years old:**

I will choose one of my best friends from long way back, we have been friend from ten years old or so. Because she has proved that she can be trusted, so I trust her again of course. Both the length of our friendship and my experience with her are important that I trust her, but mostly that she has proven before that can tell her something and she will not tell anything to the others. There are other friends that I can choose but I don't know, she is the one that I trust the most, so that's why I choose her, the other friends are... well I haven't known them for as long as... yeah, I think it's the length... we grew up together for about thirteen years or longer. I don't know... when you have a relationship you trust your relationship. I am a friend of her, we can put all the things that I need in this friendship as well. Maybe I am conservative, of course I can trust, but it depends, I know I could trust you with reports but I don't know about other situations, so it depends on the situation. We can like someone but it doesn't mean that we trust them, just like them. It can be very friendly but you don't know if you can trust them, I don't have the experience with that person.

**8. Swedish, female, 20 years old:**

I think I would actually choose my mother because I trust her very much and because I don't know... I don't feel like she would judge me, I mean she is my mother. Well, I can trust her, I know she is never going to say anything. I can talk to my mother about almost everything. But this, I would feel so bad about this, would probably reveal it to my partner later but if I would have to talk to someone about it I would talk to my mother. Well firstly I would talk to my mother, but secondly I have a best friend, but I think we have different ... she hasn't have relationship so she doesn't have that much experience about it, and we think differently what is cheating and stuff, because I kissed a guy's cheek once and I felt really really bad about it, but she said: oh, it's ok, but I felt really bad about it. So I don't think we have the same values, and I have another friend and she is really good at giving advice and I might be talking to her and I know she wouldn't say anything to anyone, but she doesn't follow her own advice in relationship and stuff . she is really good at giving advice but I'm not so sure that she is following them herself, so it's a bit complicated. Well actually I've had those friends, from a long relationship,

my best friends that I've known forever, so I wouldn't choose anyone that I've got to know here when I start studying here, I don't think I know them well enough to talk to them about that, I feel too bad, I would feel that they would judge me, maybe there is one friend that I would talk to but she was not the first one in mine, so probably length of the friendship matters. Well just spontaneously if I ... it's just been... I've been better friends with the one, the second girl that I would have chosen but first one the one who was my best friend now, it's been like... this one, she got a boyfriend and she start hang out a lot with him so we just went apart or something, a little bit, it's not like that we were not friends or anything, but it's like we stopped spending that much time together, and I started to be more friends with her, the second one, we have been friends but not like best friends. Well I talk to the people I like, I don't talk so much to her anymore just because she is more with her boyfriend now. But I just think it's naturally being better friends, but I would have consider both of them, yeah I would talk to them. In this case it's just too intimate at least about this case to talk about to new people or new friends. As I said, anyone of my new friends was not one of my first options, so it was my natural thinking. Well, probably it takes time for you to trust people. I think I need to know them before I go talk to them.

**9. Iranian, female, 29 years old:**

I usually trust my male friends, because I have most male friends that are very close to me, but in serious problems I usually trust to those who maybe they are not so close but I know them in a way that I can trust them, it doesn't mean that they are very close to me, maybe I talk about some minor problems, but in the case that I feel they can understand me, maybe it happened to them, or they talked to me before. But usually I don't have any special measure to trust people. It is just my feelings and the way I know them from their behavior. But it never happened to me to talk to a girl, I don't know why, even my sister, we are very close but I never say such a thing to my sister. But I think I have a good feeling or a good way of guessing that makes me that if I say such a thing to a friend, a girl or boy, they cannot... they don't have that much capacity, and maybe I heard them, I give them the feeling that they hate me, not because of myself but they become very doubtful about everything in their life, they think ok so nobody is trustable, and I never think that you can do such a thing. I know some people that they are strong, they can manage these things and they can separate things differently, you know and they won't be hurt, because I have very close friends that I can tell them many things, but in some cases that I feel that I will make a problem, mental problem for that person, I never say such a problem or such a thing to them. So about the characteristic of that person... Usually strong people or the people I think that they had such a problem before, and yeah, my feeling yeah... I think no one is 100 % sure , but your feeling that tells you, but not the feeling in a glance, but during our relation I felt that, and I've never made mistake in my life. I have different friends that I talk about different topics to them, and in some serious problems that I talked to them, I never regret or feel I shouldn't tell them. About not choosing other friends...it's not just trust, that those persons are not trustable, sometimes because of their characteristics, maybe I know they are maybe very

sensitive, or I feel that I might make some problems for them, maybe they become doubtful about everything. In such a case, it not so important even if they become doubtful about me if I tell them, rather the important thing for me is that maybe I will make problem for them. Because I heard some of these things before, so I think sometimes, yeah it is because they are not trustable, because I've known them, I've heard them that they talk about the other person maybe. But I think it's not a very serious reason to say because of this reason these people are trustable or not. For some topics I talk to my sister, but for many topics I don't talk even to my sister, she is very close to me, but I think I will make some problems for her, maybe some mental problems, or involve that person. But I have some friends that I know if I tell them the problems and also the important part for me is they can give me their good solutions, they are some people that they have this ability, and maybe I've seen before or I feel that they can help me. But usually they are successful people, they are people that gave me very good way of consulting in other issues maybe. If I want to release such a problem I don't talk to someone, maybe I write to somebody or myself but I won't talk in some cases, but usually if it's just for releasing I prefer to write for myself, and not talking to a person. But if I think they may help me, even very short tips, I will consult with them or talk to them. About experience with a person... I have some friends, I didn't have so much contact with them but I talk to them for a serious problem or a secret even. They were my friends but we have never had such a talking with each other about secrets or something. So my previous experiences with others is not that important for me, I never generalize, and it takes time to trust some body. The length of friendship is important but the depth of friendship is more important, maybe you are get friend with somebody in a month but the depth of your... I mean you have a very deep contact with each other, you talked a lot or communicate in a way that you have feeling that ok this person is very close to you and very trustable. To like or love someone doesn't affect my trust, because I love my husband, I love my sister, I love my mom and I trust them but I can't say many things to them.

**10. Iranian, female, 25 years old:**

I think I will choose one of my best friends here, she is close to me. Since I have many experiences with her. She was supportive to all of my problems and she didn't tell anything, and she kept all my secrets by herself, so I will choose that person and listens to all the things that tell her. Even if she couldn't help me she just listened and it helps, and it was very important for me that somebody just listens and doesn't judge me. But here it's different for me, I cannot trust all my friends, since when I told something to somebody the other day I heard my words from the other person. I don't know in here it is different, but I don't like it and because of that I don't have many close friends. But in Iran it was different. In here something bothers me, yeah, and I experienced it a lot. I don't know what's the reason, here we should be supportive to the other friends but it's not like that. I think my previous experiences affects my trust. You told me I have to choose a friend who is a girl, but I would like to say that most of my close friends are guys and I can trust guys more. Maybe because of my experience. Keeping secrets by girls depends on the situation, if they want to show themselves or maybe if they want to destroy you they reveal

your secret. I had experience of this. Here as well, one of my friends, I talked to her but the other day I heard my words from a guy, and I was like wow, asked him how do you know that? Because of that I would like to talk to a guy. And also my trust is influenced by my experience with that person. If I have fail experience with someone I will not trust like the previous time but it depends on what I am going to say and I'll be more conservative with that person. Actually I'm not that much feeling person to trust with my sense or something like that and I am more rational. The length of my friendship doesn't affect me, I have many close friends that I know for a short time.

**11. Iranian, female, 20 years old:**

First of all thanks for choosing me. I'm not going to trust my friends but if I'm under a big pressure I'm going to trust my sister, no, first of all I'm going to visit a consultant to get some lead, I mean some helpful notes to lead me, but if I really couldn't find any consultant then I'll choose my sister, maybe because I really love her, I know her for about eighteen years. I really trust her because I know that she really likes me and she really leads me in a correct way, maybe she has some mislead also but I want to trust her in comparison to my friends. Because I think she has more experience than me and I know that she really likes me and she doesn't think about the other things, she just helps me. Maybe if I'm in Iran I talk to one of my friends because I know her for nine years, because it is something very important in this case. But in most cases, first of all I trust my friends for one time and in 99 % of them I saw different thing from what I expect. When I say something to my friends privately after one week or one year maybe I hear it from other person that I don't expect it. In my sister I didn't see anything from her, every time if say some private things she always keep it in her mind and she never tell to anyone else. Because of that I'm going to trust her first of all. But in 99% of my friends in Sweden they failed, maybe because here is like a small society at university. I have a friend in Iran that just after one year I trusted her and I tell everything to her and until now everything is ok and she didn't say anything to anyone else, she does try to help me. One of the most important things in this kinds of friendships is we grew up with each other from the secondary school. I mean we have the same method of thinking. Maybe one of the most significant things is we grew up with each other, and I grew up with my sister also, so maybe having the same way of thinking and growing up together makes you trust her because I mean she is like a part of your body. But I prefer first to go to the consultant and then talk to my sister and then my friend in Iran. Most of the time I general my previous experiences, because when you have a bad experience in Iran there is an idiom that they say: When I have a bad experience from someone, next time when I want to trust someone else I remember those bad experiences than I want to learn from those bad experiences and behave in another way to avoid having those bad experiences again. But if I didn't have any bad experience in trusting, then I completely trust to someone.

**12. Iranian, female, 21 years old:**

In such a case if I really need to talk to someone, first of all I'm not going to choose anyone among my friends, because I can't see anyone there I can trust. The person I will select is the one who wants the best for me, the person that is very kind to me and wants best things for me always, someone like my mother, because she is the one who always pays attention to everything that she does for me, and if she wants to say something, if she wants to trust someone, or do something, the first thing she thinks about is me and my future. So I don't have a friend like... I don't have someone a friend with these characteristics, I always have my mother, so if I really want to talk to someone I will see if the person does something to harm me or not. Because I am sure if I tell my friends they will take advantage of that, I'm sure they will do that, and because none of them are that close to me, none of them are... I don't know, I really can't trust them. Because I know even if they don't do something to harm my relationship, or don't tell my boy friend or something, they will talk about it with everyone, I'm sure they will do that. And also I know they will think bad about me, they make some very bad conclusions about me and they will judge me wrong. The length of friendship does not affect my trust, not at all, because I had friends that we have been friends for more than ten years but after a very long time I saw that no, of course she is not the person I can trust. In such a case which is very risky I go more rational, just thinking about whether I like that person or not, I just want to release myself and of course keep my relationship, so I don't think so, I don't think I'll choose the person I like more, to trust. And 'like' doesn't bring that kind of trust between people. Mostly I generalize my experiences and they really work, most of time when I generalize my experience of the unfaithful friends, when I compare them with the new one I see that everything that went wrong with other people is the same with this one, so most of the time I consider my past experiences to someone new.