

## Representations of Trust to Public Service in Russian Newspapers during Election Time: Corpus-based Content Analysis in Public Administration Sociology

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### Abstract

*This article presents a study of the trust as social and public administration categories from the sociological and corpus-based perspective. To study the trust as the social category was elected a newspaper corpus (corpus of contemporary media). The corpus includes the texts of the seven media: printed Newspapers ("Novosty", "Sovetsky sport", "Trud", "Komsomolskaya Pravda"), and electronic agencies (RIA Novosti, RBC, "New region") in approximately equal volume. The study has revealed that the category 'trust' in the Russian newspapers is used in the context of political institutions. The political context means that the text describes the relationship of the actors of public administration, who, in Russia, often are the staff of public service. We believe that this fact highlights the loyalty of people to the authorities. It is indirectly confirmed by the data of positive mentions of trust in the context of 'respect' and 'authority'. In 2011, State Duma elections took place, with the number of mention of trust in political institutional context decreasing more than twice. Thus, in the pre-election period, the significance of the problem of recognition and respect for the subjects of political institutions in the media decreases, but increases the importance of social harmony.*

**Keywords:** conceptualisation, corpus-based content analysis, public administration sociology, public service, trust

### 1. Introduction

This article presents a study of the trust as social and public administration categories from the sociological and corpus-based perspective, and includes a small-scale study that analyses the way in which this concept is used in Russian. The trust has been a subject of scientific interest for more than half of century. A sociological approach to the study of trust is multifaceted. In a classic sociological work (Durkheim,1960; Weber,1997; Parsons, 1978 & Sztompka, 1999), trust is defined as a phenomenon providing social consensus and order, and the unity of society in the face of external risks. Garfinkel (1963) considers trust a necessary background condition of any mutually intelligible interaction, and states that trust requires the mutual approval of the norms and rules regularising public life (Watson, 2009). In this vein, Luhmann (1979) distinguishes this concept as a relation of dependence, which could lead to risk, social activity and the situation of choice. Comparably, economists emphasise that trust is a prerequisite for the activity in the risk situation, describing it as 'a mechanism that can reduce uncertainty in contexts of interaction and facilitate the functioning of organizational systems' (Malsch & Gendron, 2009). As Watson (2009) established, in modern social research, there are two main technologies of the operationalisation of trust, namely as terms of something else (choice, risk, game etc.) or as habitus (function).

Leith (2013) identifies three theoretical approaches to trust: an expectation, which the individual assimilates in childhood and uses to deal with the situation of uncertainty and risk; a community's capacity to take collective action in order to resolve common social issues or problems; and the mark of truth-telling, where trust is the foundation of

relationships. Importantly, Fuglsang (2015) describes the institutional-based approach to trust (Fuglsang & Jagd, 2015) in terms of relations between organisations and individuals. He stresses that the trust is based on sense-making of institutional elements by actors, and in the terms of changing environmental conditions, the actors have to consider the meanings accepted in new society. Thus, the sociological definition of trust is based on its role in society as the foundation of social cohesion and harmony: if actors have the same notions, they cling together in terms of risk and choice. Seligman (2000), in 'The problem of Trust', treats trust as a social resource renewable.

Public service is one of the main institutions of ensuring civil concord in society. In the Russian tradition, this relates to the staff of executive authorities (Atamanchuk, 2008; Obolonsky, 2011; Barabashev & Straussman, 2007), who are required to execute the function of state, including defence, policing and law-making. The same definition is typical for China: the civil service is the actor of governance (Chan & Suizhou, 2007; Wu, 2014). In the liberal tradition, public service has no political function. In the frames of New Public Management (NPM), this institution deals with only the system of public goods delivery. The main portion of researchers is focused on the results of administrative reforms in different countries and in different terms, who analyse the problems pertaining to the efficiency of the system of public goods (Banerjee & Hankla, 2014; Kumar, 2014; Puron-Cid, 2014; Knox, 2008; Héritier, 2001) in regard to the concept of 'good government' or 'performance management' as the next range of reform (West & Blackman, 2015; Amirullah, 2014) or of the professionalising of civil service during the reform (Gellén, 2013; O'Flynn, Vardon, Yeatman & Carson, 2011). In this discourses, it was established that public service requires further transparency and strengthening cooperation with civil society. In 2013, McCourt clearly showed that there is no universal form of administrative reforms, which are successful in any country (McCourt, 2013).

Considerable attention also has been directed to the study of trust in the political system—especially in extremal situations, such as in terrorist attacks (Gross, Brewer & Aday, 2009) or revolutions (Carlin, 2011) or in the virtual environment (Zornoza, Orengo & Peñarroja, 2009); trust has been identified as the important phenomenon, forming the relations between state and civil society. If political institutions, such as parties and government, inspire confidence, the negative impact of social tension and economic crises could be mitigated. However, if the political system was to be distrusted, there then would be a rise in the threat of totalitarianism or a big social shock. Importantly, generalised trust is one of the components of social capital (Kääriäinen & Sirén, 2011), and is known to promote to the social cohesion and activates the potential of civil society. The influence of newspapers and other mass-media is the subject of much empirical research, including content analysis and panel studies (Avery, 2009; Kleinnijenhuis, van Hoof & Oegema, 2006; Ceron & Memoli, 2015). It has been recognised that the influence of mass media in and across the political system depends on conditions of society. There are no relations between the forms of mass media and their influence; this only depends on the attitude of the population to the media: for example, if people trust newspapers or internet sites, the information is considered significant. The media acts as 'echo-chambers': they do not form the negative/positive relationships to the government, but rather fix and retransmit it to their audience.

Public Opinion Research Centres accumulate a wealth of empirical data on trust in public administration; however, modern methods of analysis do not allow the influence of public trust to the efficiency of governance to be assessed. The methods of sociolinguistic could combine qualitative and quantitative methodology. The School of Linguistic Pragmatics has a significant progress in this sphere (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; McCabe, O'Donnell & Whittaker, 2007; Romero-Trillo, 2011; Romero-Trillo & Cheshire, 2014; Gladkova & Romero-Trillo, 2014), and has created a special software (Corpus Tool). The authors seek to account for the nuances of verbal and journalistic speech, including irony and hidden meanings. Caldas-Coulthard and Moon are stated that 'corpus studies can help to deconstruct hidden meanings and the asymmetrical ways people are represented in the press' (Caldas-Coulthard & Moon, 2010: 99).

However, linguistic science pays little attention to the social context from a sociological point of view, reducing it to the context of the speech act 'here and now'. This requires adjustments to the linguistic techniques for the purposes of sociological and sociolinguistic research. The use of sociolinguistic methods in assessing the level of trust in media will help eliminate the subjectivity of the classical sociological methods of measuring the level of confidence in the activities of public authorities, and will also enhance the prospects of the use of methods of linguistic pragmatics.

This methodology, which will be used to analyse social concepts, has been submitted in previous papers, and is recognised as a common methodology in works such as those by Pavenkov & Rubtcova (2015) and Vasilieva (2011), Rubtcova (2015), with application in Rubtcova, Pavenkov, Pavenkov & Vasilieva (2015). We believe that corpus linguistics has the capacity to provide management sociology with a necessary analytical tool, allowing us to identify potential problems in the use and interpretation of key research concepts. The study of the concept should include the study of synonyms when considering the wide-ranging implementation of such by sociologists and respondents.

Using our approach, based on the Russian National Corpus (2015), we can establish similarities and differences in the use of the word «trust» and accordingly seek to find answers to our research questions:

What is the distribution of mention of the category 'trust' in institutional and lexical contexts?  
How is trust to public service represented in Russian newspapers?  
Has this representation changed in the period of election?  
To this aim, the following hypotheses can be devised and verified:  
Hypothesis 1: The use of word «trust» in institutional and lexical contexts has statistically significant differences.  
Hypothesis 2: The trust to public service is represented in Russian newspapers as mostly positive.  
Hypothesis 3: During the election period, the mention of 'trust' in the political institutional context has changed.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Design

The proposed research methodology adopts a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the coded array of National corpus of the Russian language, developed by specialists in corpus linguistics and representing modern Russian language in all its diversity. This includes texts of different types, in accordance with their shares during the specified period, providing representativeness. Quantifying the frequencies of word used was based on experts' context encoding, performed by three independent experts, who represented the St. Petersburg state University, North-Eastern Federal University, named after M. Ammosov, and the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

The coding was carried out across two stages: in the first stage, the theme of the whole text was defined in the institutional context; in the second stage, the lexical context was analysed, allowing a specific value of the category to be defined in an institutional context and estimates context, allowing the emotional background of the used categories to be taken into account.

### 2.2 Sampling Procedures

Studying trust as a social category, a newspaper corpus (corpus of contemporary media) was selected as it most adequately reflects the trends of the modern Russian language. The corpus includes the texts of the seven media: printed Newspapers ('Novosty', 'Sovetsky Sport', 'Trud', 'Komsomolskaya Pravda'), and electronic agencies (RIA Novosti, RBC, 'New Region') in approximately equal volume. It contains 181,175 texts, which allows 8,553,495 sentences to be analysed (see Table 1). The analysis was carried out for the period spanning May 2010–May 2011. During this period, the category of 'trust' in the media was used 1,261 times, including 835 times in 2010 and 426 times in 2011. Corpus Tool 3.1.14 processed the data in an effort to identify a structure of the analysis of this social category. The established structure has allowed the processing of data in SPSS to be implemented.

**Table 1.** The distribution of the concepts 'trust' in the Russian National Corpus

	Corpus		
	Main	Newspaper	Spoken
Total documents, sentences and words in Corpus	85 996 documents, 19 362 746 sentences, 229 968 798 words	332 720 documents, 12 920 590 sentences, 173 518 798 words	3525 documents, 1 623 625 sentences, 10 754 403 words
Word 'trust' in the Corpus, including wordforms	3 843 documents, 9 191 words	7 730 documents, 9 900 words	200 documents, 394 words
Including the distribution for years:			
2011	36	473	-
2010	83	1253	-

## 3. Results

Experts offered the tree of contexts, submitted in Appendix 1. The category 'trust' is mentioned in the following institutional contexts:

Economic Institutions: The texts describing the relationship of actors in production, distribution, exchange and the consumption of material goods;

Political Institutions: The texts describing the relationship of the actors of public administration, including civil society institutions within the state and on the international (global) level.

Social Network: The texts describing interpersonal relationships, and the interaction of various social groups.

Legal Institutions: The texts describing the interaction in the framework of law and internal security, including messages describing the crime.

Organisation: The texts describing the activities of companies and institutions, including legitimised public associations.

In the lexical context, the following values of the use categories of trust were highlighted:

Psychological Support: Organisation, which can provide psychological support on the condition of anonymity. Stable expression describes the value as: 'helpline', 'trust service'.

Message: A process of filing a complaint or reporting violations, which allows proposals to be submitted for improvement of the performance of officials on the condition of anonymity. Stable expression: 'You can make a complaint by telephone of trust'.

Approval: The acceptance of solutions previously adopted by the actor without change, and permission to continue activities. The expression 'received a credit of trust', 'vote of confidence'.

Acceptance: The adoption of the subject as a full-fledged participant in the interaction. Expressions include 'credibility', 'trust mark', 'to win the trust', 'demonstrates the trust of others' and 'unworthy of trust'.

Interaction: The willingness of the subjects of relationships to take into account mutual interests. Expressions include 'confidence building measure', 'communication builds trust' and 'mutual trust'.

Expectations: Willingness to accept the affirmation as true. The expression 'to win the trust of customers', 'trust index' and 'consumer trust'.

Respect: The informal high assessment of personal qualities or activities of the person, independent of his official status. The expression 'degree of confidence in the parents', 'everything must build on trust and loyalty' and 'I feel the trust and support'.

Authority: The ability of the person to make a power impact, based on his outstanding personal qualities and social status. Expressions include 'trust in government', 'the credibility of the President' and 'trust rating of the party'.

Deception: An unfounded belief of the owner of the property in the good faith intentions of the person. Expressions include 'the damage by deception or abuse of trust', 'easily come in the trust' and 'to elbow into confidence'.

In the framework of the current study, the estimates context was represented through two dimensions, namely positive and negative, where trust is an extra emotionally social category, which does not imply neutral evaluations.

The studying of the word 'trust', according to this context tree, led to the results discussed below.

Most of the mentions of categories in which 'trust' occurs are seen in the context of political institutions (451 mentions, equating to 35.8%) and social network (404 mentions, equating to 32%). In the lexical context, most often, trust is mentioned in the context of acceptance (432 mentions, equating to 34.3%) and authority (247 mentions, equating to 19.6%) (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** The distribution of mention of the category "trust" on institutional and lexical contexts

	Organization		Political institution		Economical institution		Social network		Legal institution		Total	
	Кол	%	Кол	%	Кол	%	Кол	%	Кол	%	Кол	%
Psychological support	50	60,2	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	50	4,0
Message	21	25,3	0	-	0	-	0	-	48	44,9	69	5,5
Approval	1	1,2	97	21,5	10	4,6	68	16,8	0	-	176	14,0
Acceptance	10	12,0	127	28,2	147	68,1	142	35,1	6	5,6	432	34,3
Interaction	0	-	74	16,4	0	-	3	0,7	0	-	77	6,1
Expectation	0	-	0	-	44	20,4	0	-	0	-	44	3,5
Respect	1	1,2	19	4,2	10	4,6	88	21,8	0	-	118	9,4
Authority	0	-	134	29,7	5	2,3	103	25,5	5	4,7	247	19,6
Deception	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	48	44,9	48	3,8
Total	83	100	451	100	216	100	404	100	107	100	1261	100

In the estimates context, the category 'trust' has been positively mentioned more frequently, although the differences between positive and negative mentions are insignificant (see Table 3). The predominance of negative statements is

identified only in the context of a legal institution, which is associated with the definition of trust as an indication of manipulative influence. In the lexical context, the negative connotations are more often associated with the definition of trust as deception, expectations and authority (see Table 4).

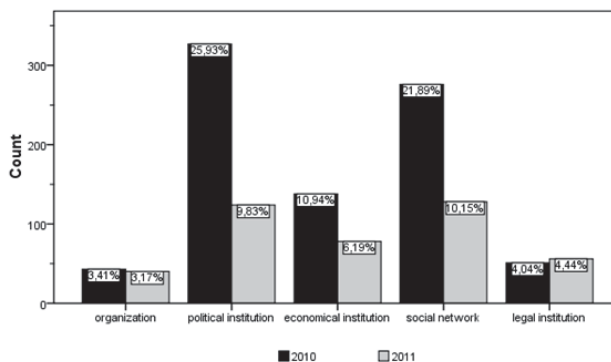
**Table 3.** The distribution of mention of the category "trust" on institutional and evaluation contexts

	Organization	Political institution	Economical institution	Social network	Legal institution	Total
Positive	54	249	125	233	34	695
%	65,1	55,2	57,9	57,7	31,8	55,1
Negative	29	202	91	171	73	566
%	34,9	44,8	42,1	42,3	68,2	44,9
Total	83	451	216	404	107	1261
%	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

**Table 4.** The distribution of mention of the category "trust" on lexical and evaluation contexts

	Positive		Negative		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Psychological support	33	66,0	17	34,0	50	100
Message	44	63,8	25	36,2	69	100
Approval	122	69,3	54	30,7	176	100
Acceptance	218	50,5	214	49,5	432	100
Interaction	64	83,1	13	16,9	77	100
Expectation	16	36,4	28	63,6	44	100
Respect	85	72,0	33	28,0	118	100
Authority	112	45,3	135	54,7	247	100
Deception	1	2,1	47	97,9	48	100
Total	695	55,1	566	44,9	1261	100

In 2010, trust was mentioned 835 times, whilst in 2011 was mentioned 426 times, with the most significant decrease noted in the context of political institutions and social network (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** The distribution of mention of the category "trust" on institutional contexts

Given that, in 2011, the elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation of the sixth convocation were held, we can assume that this change can be associated with the election campaign. In the lexical context of the decline in the values of the approval, acceptance, interaction, respect and authority, i.e. belonging to the

political institution (see Figure 5), the earlier-devised hypothesis can be confirmed.

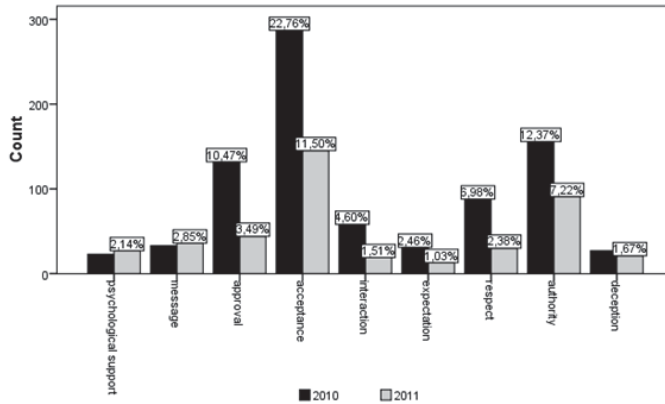


Figure 5. The distribution of mention of the category "trust" on Lexical contexts

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

An accounting of the time frames allows the identification of the change of frequency and the semantic load of the application categories, which may indicate a change of the relevance of the study of social problems. Therefore, the study has revealed that the category 'trust' in the Russian newspapers is used in the context of political institutions. In the pre-election period, the significance of the problem of recognition and respect for the subjects of political institutions in the media decreases, but increases the importance of social harmony. Thus, we can conclude that the personal qualities of political actors should be less significant in Russian society than the formal status and the willingness to make arrangements.

Hypothesis 1 is confirmed. The statistical analysis program SPSS 17.0 shows that the differences have statistical significance. The result of the procedure T-test reveal that the use of the category of 'trust' in institutional, lexical and evaluation context differs significantly ( $p < 0,000$ ). Pearson Chi-Square confirmed the results.

Moreover, Hypothesis 2 has also been confirmed. The positive mention of trust in a political context (55.2%) is more than negative (44.8%). The political context means that the text describes the relationship of the actors of public administration, who, in Russia, often are the staff of public service. We believe that this fact highlights the loyalty of people to the authorities. It is indirectly confirmed by the data of positive mentions of trust in the context of 'respect' and 'authority': 72% and 45.3%, respectively.

Hypothesis 3 has been confirmed. In 2011, State Duma elections took place, with the number of mention of trust in political institutional context decreasing more than twice. An earlier research (Vasilieva, 2015) shows that, in newspapers of Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), one of the subjects of Russian Federation—the number of mentions of public service—decreased in September 2013 during the II Tumen (Yakutian State Assembly) elections. The Yacutian newspapers define public service as the administrator of socio-economic development, and are convinced that the efficiency of this institution influences the quality of life in the republic. The respondents avoid positive or negative marks, and instead prefer neutral statements. This could evidence that, in society, there is no clear view concerning the role and contribution of public service in the results of socio-economic development. We could also assume that media refrain from publishing in order to avoid violations of the law and suspicion of the use of administrative resources.

Therefore, the proposed method of Corpus linguistics helps us to identify the meanings of social categories and trends in its use in the media. A study of the institutional and lexical context allows us to define the distribution of certain values in a variety of themes, which allows us to formalise the process of social concepts' operationalisation.

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## Appendix 1

### The distribution of mention of the category "trust" on institutional and lexical contexts (the full scheme)

