

Self-betrayal: public opinion studying

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Abstract— The article presents the results of a study made in October 2018, which considers public opinion regarding the phenomenon of “self-betrayal”. The study was conducted to identify the relevance of the attention to this phenomenon, the frequency of its occurrence, public opinion regarding its nature and personality traits of a person, predisposed to "self-betrayal". The numerical and percentage results of the respondents' characteristics of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” are described, the distribution of this phenomenon by spheres of life, and the top ten personality traits that contribute to the emergence of “self-betrayal” which collected the maximum number of voices according to respondents.

Keywords— *self-betrayal, intrapersonal conflict, value conflict, psychological state, forcedness, mature age*

I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of "self-betrayal" is currently almost not studied. Nevertheless, various approaches in psychology and philosophy have already been considered, allowing to determine the main characteristics of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” as well as give its preliminary definition. To analyze the frequency of occurrence of this phenomenon, a pilot study was made: a survey was conducted over a period of month using a specially designed questionnaire.

The survey involved 212 respondents aged 18 to 64 years. According to the results of the study, it was revealed that 70% of respondents at least once in their lives experienced a state of "self-betrayal". Such a high figure, along with a absence of this phenomenon studies confirms the relevance of its research.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

The main objectives of the pilot study were:

- 1) Establishing the relevance of the study of the phenomenon of "self-betrayal"
- 2) Establishing the frequency of occurrence of this phenomenon among respondents
- 3) Identification by respondents of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” and their opinions regarding its nature
- 4) Determination of the influence of the psychological traits of a person for the possibility of having “self-betrayal” phenomenon

The following hypotheses were put forward:

- a significant number of respondents experienced “self-betrayal” at least once in their lives, so this is a pressing issue for many at the present time;
- the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” may relate to various spheres of life, such as professional, personal relationships, interactions with other people in current life tasks;
- the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” can occur both in crisis life situations and in everyday life;
- the majority of respondents assess "self-betrayal" as a negative psychological state accompanied by an intrapersonal conflict.

As the main research tool, a specially designed questionnaire was used, including 10 closed and open questions. The questions of the questionnaire were intended to reveal the following information:

- the frequency of occurrence of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” (question 5);
- the interpretation of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” (questions 4,5);
- the characteristics of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” (question 4, 6-10);
- the spheres of life of the respondents, where this phenomenon is manifested (questions 4-5);
- the characteristic traits of a person experiencing "self-betrayal" (questions 6-10);
- about the sex, age and education of the respondents (questions 1-3).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As respondents, 212 people aged from 18 to 64 years old participated in the study, 81% of which are women and 19% are men. 10% of the respondents are under the age of 30 years, 88.5% between the ages of 30 to 60 years; 1.5% - at the age of 60 years and above. By education, respondents were distributed as follows (Table I).

TABLE I. RESPONDENTS' EDUCATION

Education	Percentage
Secondary education	5%
Secondary special education	3%
Higher incomplete education	3%
Higher education	67%
Degree	7%
Several higher educations	16%

A. Public definition of "self-betrayal" phenomenon

First we found the share of those who were able to determine the phenomenon of "self-betrayal" among all respondents and the dependence of understanding this phenomenon on age. The respondents had to indicate words, phrases which came to their heads when describing the phenomenon of "self-betrayal", as well as recall and describe the situation when they betrayed themselves, if such event had happened in their lives.

According to the results of the study, it was established that 81% of the respondents were able to characterize the phenomenon of "self-betrayal" and 19% found it difficult to do. At the age of 30 and less - 18% of respondents found it difficult to answer, and at the age of 30 and up - 19% of respondents. This allows us to note that the understanding of this phenomenon and the readiness to define it does not depend on the maturity of the age of the respondents. As for the answers of the participants, distributed by education, there is a certain difference. Of the participants with secondary education, only 50% were able to answer the question of what they mean by the phenomenon of "self-betrayal", the second half found it difficult to do. Among participants with higher education (including several higher ones), only 15-16% found it difficult to do so. This allows us to conclude that this phenomenon is more understandable for people with higher education, having a more complex personality structure [1].

B. "Self-betrayal" experience

According to the results of the survey, it turned out that of those who answered the question of "self-betrayal" experience in their lives, 83% experienced it at least once in their life (74% among men, 84% among women). It is interesting that almost half of the respondents (46%) indicated that they had experienced "self-betrayal" more than once in their lives. It is curious that among men there are 21%, and among women 50%. It is possible that the wording of the question "indicate the case from your life" made the men to strictly follow the instructions and describe only one case. 16% of men and 9% of women answered that they had never betrayed themselves in their lives, which in general made up 10% of the respondents to this question. 7% of the respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

If we consider age divisions, then among young people under 30 years of age, 76% of respondents experienced "self-betrayal" at least once in their lives, and among mature people 30 years and older - 85%, so there is no significant difference. Thus, the hypothesis about the significant experience of the majority of respondents in experiencing the phenomenon of "self-betrayal" was confirmed (about 83%

have such experience and led to specific situations, only 10% of the subjects answered that they did not experience such an experience in their lives). This confirms the relevance of the issue of "self-betrayal" and the need for its further research.

C. Characteristics of "self-betrayal" phenomenon

Each respondent had the right to give several answers to the open question of the question "Self-betrayal - is ...", so the sum for all answers exceeds 100%. There no common response was received, a synthesis of similar responses were made. It was found that the most frequent answer (21%) was a "violation of one's own principles" - committing actions contrary to the values and beliefs of the person (respondents under 30 years old 26% chose this answer, and 20% those 30 or more years old). An additional 5% of responses were received for a softer version of "ignoring principles or ideals," which in fact complements the first answer with a lesser degree of categorization.

The next most popular answer was about performing any actions that are not pleasant or interesting for a person - 21% of such answers. The third most popular response was a compelled action - "self-betrayal" for every fifth respondent means "actions, the necessity of which is caused by his internal rejection and resistance" [2] - 20% of such answers. If we take into account that the previous answer about unpleasant actions characterizes the same compelled action only to a lesser degree (that is, a person makes actions despite the fact is that they are unpleasant or not enjoyable), namely, there is some need to perform them, then the percentage of those who associate "self-betrayal" with a state of compelled action growth up to 41% (and will take the first place in popularity).

12% of respondents believe that the state of "self-betrayal" is inherent in sacrifice, they answer: "put other people's interests above one's own" or "need to endure", or "step on the throat of one's own song" (Russian idiom), etc. Remarkably, that 21% of the respondents under 30 years of age think so, and after 30 years only 11%.

A significant part of the participants (10%) in response to the question about "self-betrayal" note that this means the choice of an "alien life way" for them. It is also interesting to note the difference in the estimates of young (up to 30) and mature (30 and older) respondents. For the first, only 5% of such answers, the second ones choose this answer more than 2 times more often - 11% of them associate "choosing alien way", "betraying a dream" with "self-betrayal". It can be assumed that the following factors influenced this:

1) assessment of the choice of the profession occurs more often in adulthood, when a person evaluates this way as "own" or "alien"; it is at this age that a person realizes the importance of choosing his own life way - that which will bring daily joy and happiness in life [3];

2) the issues of the importance of self-realization about 20 years ago in Russia did not stand so wide and open, as now, the choice of profession was carried out on the basis of other criteria.

The next most popular characterizing the state of "self-betrayal" was the answer about not accepting or losing oneself i.e. self-unacceptance - 9% of answers. Among the answers

were such words as “not accepting myself,” “not loving myself,” “losing myself,” “not believing in myself,” etc [4].

8% of respondents received answers about “betrayal” and “conformism” in each case in assessing the state of “self-betrayal”. “Betrayal” concerned himself, his principles, beliefs, ideals, norms and values. If we consider betrayal as a higher degree of violation of the principles, then these 8% of responses can be attributed to the first most popular answer.

Next 8% of the respondents noted that the state of “self-betrayal” is associated with the suppression or non-expression of feelings, which is also compelled, with the presence of some external or internal need to do so. 7% believe that the state of “self-betrayal” is accompanied by “internal struggle”, namely, such options as “struggle with myself”, “violation of inner harmony”, “loss of integrity” were noted. 5% note that when “self-betraying” a person acts “against conscience” [5].

TABLE II. PUBLIC CHARACTERISTICS OF "SELF-BETRAYAL"

#	Characteristics			
	Respondents' characteristics	%	Synthesized concept	%
A.	Unpleasant actions	21%	Compelled actions	49%
B.	Necessary actions	20%		
C.	Conformism	8%		
D.	Principles' violation	21%	Principles' violation	34%
E.	Principles' betrayal	8%		
F.	Ignoring principles	5%		
G.	Alien way	10%	Self-unacceptance	21%
H.	Self-unacceptance	9%		
I.	Self-deception	2%		
J.	Actions to the detriment of themselves	12%	Sacrifice	13%
K.	Self-harming	1%		
L.	Internal struggle	7%	Intrapersonal conflict	12%
M.	Actions against conscience	5%		

We have summarized these characteristics of "self-betrayal" according to similar concepts in Table II.

Thus, almost half of the respondents (49%) agree that the state of “self-betrayal” occurs in the conditions of compelled actions, 34% believe that it arises as a result of violation of one’s own principles or beliefs, 21% indicate that at the same time self-unacceptance appears, 13% believe that “self-betrayal” is accompanied by self-sacrifice, and 12% confirm that an intrapersonal conflict occurs in a state of “self-betrayal”.

D. Distribution of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” to spheres of life

It was found that among those respondents who described cases of “self-betrayal” - 81% clearly attributed it to one or another area of life, and 19% expressed themselves in general without specifying a specific sphere of life. Among those who indicated a sphere of life, 35% indicated “self-betrayal” in the professional sphere, and every three out of four (77%)

indicated that they had betrayed themselves when choosing a profession, occupation or place of work. 23% described situations at work in which they had to betray themselves.

30% of respondents betrayed themselves in their personal life in a relationship with the opposite sex. It is interesting that the distribution of these spheres of life (professional and personal life) has different proportions for men and women. Men have 3 times more “self-betrayal” at work than in personal relationships, namely, 55% at work against 18% in a personal life. And women have these spheres of life almost equal in terms of "self-betrayal" - 33% at work versus 31% in personal life. This can be explained by the greater importance of professional life for men in general [7].

28% of respondents noted “self-betrayal” phenomenon in relationships with others, i.e. not in a professional sphere and not in a personal life. And 7% - betrayed themselves in studies and 57% of them are younger than 30 years. One can relate studies to the professional sphere, since it is its first stage to some extent.

TABLE III. DISTRIBUTION OF THE PHENOMENON OF “SELF-BETRAYAL” TO SPHERES OF LIFE

Sphere of life	Total, %	Men, %	Women, %
Professional (studies)	42% (7%)	64% (9%)	40% (7%)
Personal life	30%	18%	31%
Interaction with others	28%	9%	28%

Summary information on the distribution of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal” to spheres of life is reflected in Table III.

Thus, we see that the “self-betrayal” phenomenon is most common for the professional sphere and is mainly related to the choice of profession or favorite work. As the main reason for choosing an “unloved” business, respondents noted some need that compelled them to make such choice. However, the sphere of personal relationships and interaction with significant others are also significant [8].

E. The traits of a “self-betraying” person

Respondents were asked to specify 5 traits, which, in their opinion, a betraying to himself person could have. 72% of all the respondents who gave answers regarding “self-betrayal” suggested traits that, in their opinion, a person possesses who can experience “self-betrayal”. A total of 135 different personality traits were indicated.

The main personality trait, which was indicated by 20% of participants, was “diffidence” or “self-doubt”. According to respondents it is the main quality that influences the possibility of "self-betrayal" experience. In public opinion, it is much easier betray to himself for a person who is unsure of himself and whose principles are into question under the influence of society or their own contradictory motives. It is for the person who has not yet figured out his values and prioritized them the most difficult thing to do is make a choice in a complex life situation. Certainly, he can make such a choice which can negatively assessed by him in the future, considering such an act as “self-betrayal”.

The second most popular trait in the opinion of respondents was “reflexivity”, gaining 15% of the votes. This is confirmed by the researchers of intrapersonal conflicts: it is precisely the organized and developed cognitive structure, the ability of the individual to analyze and self-reflection are the personal conditions for the emergence of intrapersonal conflicts in general and “self-betrayal” in particular.

The third in the number of votes given by respondents was “weakness”, gaining 13% of the votes. According to public opinion, it is difficult for a weak person to remain faithful to himself, experiencing the pressure of socium or internal tendencies, and he could commit an act that later would be evaluated by him as “self-betrayal” [9].

Among all the 135 traits were chosen ten, which collected the maximum number of votes and put in Table IV. When analyzing all of these traits, a very interesting thing came to light: for many qualities, their antipode appeared in the list. For example, despite the fact that the trait of self-doubt was cited as the main one, a significant part of the respondents believed that for “self-betrayal” it is necessary to be self-confident. For each of the trait listed in Table IV, the respondents indicated the opposite trait, which may be inherent in a person who is inclined to betray to himself.

TABLE IV. THE MOST POPULAR TRAITS FOR “SELF-BETRAYING” PERSON

Trait	Percentage
Diffidence	20%
Reflexivity	15%
Weakness	13%
Responsibility	12%
Analytical mind	11%
Lack of principles	10%
Presence of principles	10%
Honesty	10%
Ability to empathize	9%
Sacrifice	9%

More detailed analysis of the situations described by the respondents shows us that it is possible to establish that when “self-betrayal” is experiencing an intrapersonal conflict arises - a contradiction between at least two fragments of the personality: there are situations when that part of the personality that follows the principles “wins” and other situations on the contrary - the principles are violated [10]. In both situations: when violating the principles or following them (for example, to the detriment of oneself, as he believes), person considers such an act as “self-betrayal”. So, this survey allowed us to establish some duality of the phenomenon of “self-betrayal”.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of the survey shown that 70% of respondents at least once in their lives experienced a state of "self-betrayal", so this is a pressing issue for many at the present time and it confirms the relevance of this phenomenon study.

The hypothese that “self-betrayal” phenomenon relates to various spheres of life is confirmed: it relates to professional sphere (42%), personal relationships (30%) and interactions with other people (28%). And this distribution is proportional to the attention paid by the persons to each of indicated spheres of life.

Describing the phenomenon of "self-betrayal" 42% of the respondents noted that it is based on compelled actions, 34% told about principles' violation and 21% admit that it causes self-unacceptance.

Public opinion reflects some sacrifice which is inherent to “self-betrayal” phenomenon, meaning that betraying to himself person put his interests lower that others' ones, even damaging to himself in different life situations.

The majority of respondents assess "self-betrayal" as a negative psychological state, noting it like “self-harming”, with “internal struggle” and making “unpleasant actions”, “compelled actions”, or “actions against conscience”. So, “self-betrayal” experience is accompanied by an intrapersonal conflict, making the person take decisions in the situation of choice.

The public opinion about the traits of a "self-betraying" personality is ambiguous: depending on the situation of life, opposing traits may contribute to this. However, most respondents agreed that the basic traits of a person who is able to experience “self-betrayal” can be called “self-doubt,” “reflexivity” and “weakness”.

The modern world often gives to individuals conflicting and sometimes mutually exclusive requirements. “The main factor determining the success of the life of any of us is the knowledge of both our own psyche and those around us, the ability to control and influence them.” [11]. In a situation of a growing flow of incoming information, changing rules and guidelines, a person increasingly finds himself in a situation of uncertainty - a situation with several possible solutions and numerous possible consequences of these decisions.

Sometimes, as a result of the choice made, a person comes to understand that he did not act as he should [12]. In this regard, he has an internal conflict, psychological discomfort, he is experiencing a "self-betrayal" he turns to a psychologist for advice.

Thus, the experience of “self-betrayal”, being an urgent problem for many people, requires fundamental theoretical and empirical research.

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