

CULTURE OF VIGILANCE AND TRUST: CROSS-CULTURAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNTERING FRAUD

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Abstract. Fraud has become one of the most widespread global threats undermining both economic security and social trust across states and institutional environments. In wartime and post-crisis societies, the risks associated with fraud escalate even more sharply, as psychological vulnerability, disruptions in governance, and weakened oversight systems create favorable conditions for manipulation and exploitation. The relevance of the problem is heightened by the simultaneous digitalization of financial transactions and everyday communication, which expands the tools available to fraudsters and complicates the detection of misconduct.

The aim of this study is to conceptualize fraud not only as a legal or financial violation but as a multidimensional and cross-cultural challenge that requires the integration of vigilance, institutional safeguards, and trust-building strategies. The object of the study is the perception, organization, and mechanisms of fraudulent practices in diverse cultural and institutional contexts. The theoretical foundation is based on security studies, economic security frameworks, cross-cultural management, and behavioral economics, which jointly explain the interaction between rational calculation and emotional susceptibility in fraud-related decisions.

The study demonstrates that fraud typically proliferates under the combined influence of three systemic factors: information asymmetry, insufficient institutional control mechanisms, and low levels of financial and digital literacy

among the population. Empirical data from the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) illustrate the magnitude of the phenomenon, with median global losses per case exceeding 1.6 million USD. The findings also show that perpetrators frequently occupy positions that presuppose trust and operational discretion, which allows them to bypass standard monitoring procedures. Behavioral indicators such as living beyond one's means, unusual secrecy in communication, or systematic avoidance of mandatory leave are identified as common warning signs.

At the same time, cultural factors influence the balance between trust and vigilance. For example, Western European settings tend to rely on institutional trust and regulatory oversight, while many Eastern societies emphasize interpersonal trust and relational ethics. Community-based solidarity, especially visible in wartime Ukraine, can be both a protective factor and a vulnerability, as it encourages mutual support but can also mask risks of internal manipulation. Understanding these cultural dynamics is essential for designing effective anti-fraud strategies that are both context-sensitive and sustainable.

The practical value of the study consists in outlining tools and mechanisms for countering fraud in both organizational and societal systems. These include comprehensive education in financial, digital, and information literacy; technical solutions such as secure payment platforms (for example, Brazil's Pix system); and organizational practices like whistleblowing channels, staff rotation in high-risk units, and routine internal audits.

Special attention is given to the formation of a security-oriented culture that promotes ethical conduct and responsible trust rather than suspicion or fear.

The key conclusion emphasizes that building a sustainable security culture requires balancing vigilance with trust. This balance strengthens not only economic

resilience but also psychological and social recovery, which are critical elements of stability in the contemporary world. Such an approach allows societies and organizations to protect themselves from fraud while preserving the social cohesion and cooperation necessary for long-term development.

Keywords: fraud prevention; economic security; security culture; cross-cultural management; financial literacy; digital literacy; information asymmetry; internal controls; whistleblowing; organizational trust; wartime resilience; social capital

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