PERCEIVED THREATS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TOWARDS RUSSIANS IN UKRAINE

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In this study I wanted to check the influence of the perceived threats and military affect on the emotions that are felt by Ukrainians towards the Russians who participate in the Donbass war zone. Test was constructed using the theories that link perceived intergroup threats and emotions that they elicit. The participants from the military and general population were asked to take the test in order to investigate the attitudes towards different groups. There were three versions of the test which included demographic questions, questions about the threat-perceptions and emotions experienced towards Russians; additionally six criminal stories in order to see what types of punishments would be assigned to different ethnic groups. The last part of the test later proved to have validity problems and thus was not included into final analyses. Factor analyses on threat perceptions towards Russians revealed two different threats: individual and group threats. Significant predictors of the particular emotions in the sample were found. Individual threats and group threats significantly predicted the level of aggression; group threats significantly predicted the level of fear and envy and individual threats significantly predicted the level of disgust in the sample.

Keywords: intergroup conflict, perceived threats, group threats, individual threats, emotions.
relations are defined as any interaction between the two groups, that includes any perceptions of each other, emotions and recognitions of own in-group (Vaughan & Hogg, 2005). Additionally, self-identification and categorization processes have an impact on the behavior of the group towards the out-group. It’s definition, shared ideas (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and emotions. In the case in-group participants think about the similarities between them and the out-group, the out-group might be harmed or benefited (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 1999). If the in-group is hurt, emotions would motivate the group to protect it. Emotionally driven group-oriented actions are to reduce potential threats that may damage the development of that group (Vaughan & Hogg, 2005). The way the certain events are seen by the group affect the way they would feel about them and thus, react. It was hypothesized that the predominant threats to the group are symbolic and realistic (Integrated threat theory, Stephan & Renfro, 2002), which may have certain negative impacts on the in-group towards the out-group. The results of the study done on the negative stereotypes of the out-group (Stephan, Boniecki, Ybarra, Bettencourt, Ervin, Jackson, McNatt, & Renfro, 2002) showed that negative stereotypes were significantly predicting both realistic and symbolic threats. A distinction was also made between group threats and individual threats. Realistic group threats are listed as threats to the power of the group, it’s resources and general welfare; symbolic group threats are threats to religion, values, morality and beliefs (Stephan & Renfro, 2002). Realistic individual threats are threats towards one individual, such as physical harm, economic loss, deprivation of resources. Symbolic threats to individuals are loss of self-esteem, honor and identity (Stephan & Renfro, 2002). Situational factors such as smaller land, lack of resources and military equipment, possibility of losing close friends and family, elicits realistic individual threat.

**Threats and emotions**

There was a prediction made between the possible link of threat-perception and emotions, this hypothesis was supported by the results of the study done on the American population (Neuberg & Cottrell, 2002). Group-level resource threats (e.g. threat to safety, possessions, economy) would generally elicit anger and fear, which would activate anger/attack or escape as a response. Group-integrity threats (e.g. reciprocity relations, trust, values, morality, competence) would in most cases elicit anger with a variety of emotions, such as pity, sadness, disgust, envy; which would activate aggression, avoidance or prosocial behavior (see Neuberg & Cottrell, 2002). Sociofunctional approach implies that different threats will impact the different emotions and action tendencies (Neuberg & Cottrell, 2002). Threats to individual resources would be the most important concern, thus eliciting the strongest and extreme emotions; less extreme impact would have the group-related threats and then the threats to group integrity. Consequently, certain features of the environment (e.g. war, the amount of people/their speed from the out-group approaching), would affect the perception of the immediate threat and thus the intensity of the experienced emotion. Experienced emotions are based on the context of whether certain situation is beneficial or harmful to oneself or the in-group (Devos, Silver, Mackie, & Smith, 2002; E. R. Smith, 1993, 1999; Mackie et al., 2000). If the in-group is threatened by the out-group it plays a direct impact on the emotions that are going to appear towards the out-group. Additionally, the bonding of the in-group identification would be higher (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000). In the study, the negative reactions (and assigned punishments) to the out-group were measured in relation to the group-identification. It was found that fear and anger were mostly distinguished if talking about the intergroup context, as it was found that action tendencies were highly related to the emotions that were present towards the out-group (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000). They predicted negative actions and anger towards the out-group when reminded of the symbolic and collective resources. Additionally, active support of the action of the in-group would more likely to provoke acting on it, also for the person who sees her/himself as a part of the group, emotions that he/she would experience towards the out-group would differ in the intensity accordingly to the in-group.

**Current Study**

I want to know whether the model of intergroup threat would explain the emotions towards Russians in the Ukrainian group. I hypothesize that the perception of threat in Ukrainians would elicit emotions as predicted by the theory. I also want to study whether a threat has an impact on the emotions and actions that are going to be taking towards the out-group. One possible factor is that Ukrainians may see Russians as a threat, moreover, soldiers who have higher threat perceptions of Russians since they took part in the conflict is the way to see differences in groups of participants. In the process of conflict between the countries it is expected that general population would be feeling threatened, and the perceptions of threats in the military group would be higher.

**My hypothesis and main goal of the study**

In my study, the conflict that is happening between Ukraine and Russia would be illustrated as such: there is a political struggle, while also cultural similarities that are present between the two countries and are threatened by intrinsic culture of each country and self-identification. Loss of resources and lives of relatives would represent realistic threats. Additionally, media on both sides inflates the way the war is perceived, creating variety of additional perceived threats (e.g. loosing amounts of resources due to Russian invasion, versus actual amounts of resources). It might be mentioned that the prior history between two countries, similarities in culture may have the influence as well. Accordingly, previous research done by Zartate, Garcia, Garza, & Hitlan (2004), if participants in the study think about the similarities between them and the out-group, the out-group would be later seen as equally powerful and, hence, able to compete for their resources (Stephan & Renfro, 2002). Thus, I expect that Ukrainians would be feeling threatened.
Methods

Sample
The overall number of participants was 60, mostly males (N = 55) with the mean age of 32.5 (SDage = 9.62). 38 of the participants had finished school or had completed their BA studies, while 11 had only finished middle school, 11 had finished MA studies and 2 had had their PhD completed.

Procedure
Participants would be asked whether they would like to take a survey in order to measure the attitudes towards different groups. Sixty-three questionnaires in total were completed by the two groups of general Ukrainians and a military group. Forty-five questionnaires were given to different groups of general Ukrainians and a military group. Thirty-five questionnaires were delivered to the 73 Maritime Center of special forces (SPECNAZ) that carry out war operations behind enemy lines, from the March 2014, now in Kramatorsk base, originally from the Crimea. The military group had diverse population of young soldiers, older businessmen, lecturers and others (Mage = 30.2, SDage = 11.2). Thirty-five questionnaires were delivered to the 73 Maritime Center of special forces (SPECNAZ) that carry out war operations behind enemy lines, from the March 2014, now in Kramatorsk base, originally from the Crimea. The military group had diverse population of young soldiers, older businessmen, lecturers and others (Mage = 30.2, SDage = 11.2).

Results
First a zero-order correlations were calculated of threats and emotions (see Table 2). The results of the correlation revealed that disgust was highly correlated with Individual threats, fear was mildly correlated with Group threats and anger had shown a correlation with both factors. Additionally, the tendency for the respect was observed, suggesting that the lower the perceived group threat is, the higher the respect.

In order to test impact of threats and military service on emotions several models of multiple regression were calculated. Models for respect and pity turned out to not be significant, thus they are not reported.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Individual threats</th>
<th>Group threats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(6) Russians are a threat to my freedom</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Russians are potentially dangerous</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Russians may hurt me physically</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Russian person is more likely to attack me first</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Russians are potentially threatening to the Ukrainian resources</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Russians portray a threat to Ukrainian economy</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Russians are fighting against Ukrainians on the occupied territories</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of variance</td>
<td>44.53</td>
<td>34.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s α</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Model for anger shows that individual threats, group threats significantly predicted the level of aggression in the sample, while being in the military had no significant effect. With the proportion of explained anger variance of 37.3%.

Analyses revealed that with proportion of explained envy variance is 2.6%, group threats significantly predicted the level of envy in the sample, while (not)being in the military and individual threats did not.

The results of the multiple regression for disgust indicated that three predictors explained 27.2% of variance. Analyses revealed that individual threat significantly predicted the level of disgust in the sample, while (not)being in the military and individual threats did not.

The results of the multiple regression for fear, with proportion of explained fear variance is 13.8%, shows that group threats significantly predicted the level of fear in the sample, while (not)being in the military and individual threats did not.

**DISCUSSION**

**Findings**

The results show that certain emotions can be linked to specific threats, which is consistent with the previous research. Analysis shows that individual threats and group threats significantly predicted the level of aggression, the result that corresponds to the previous findings about the anger (Neuberg & Cottrell, 2002 predictions); individual threats significantly predicted the level of disgust in the sample. In the previous studies it was shown that disgust levels significantly correlated with physical threats, however Neuberg & Cottrell (2002), argued that threats elicit variety of emotions, which was not found in my study. It can be said, that no other study examining phenomena of perceived threats in Ukraine was done before.

Even though I hypothesized that actions that Ukrainians would take towards the Russians in the specific situations would differ substantially, it did not have any significant results and thus that part of the test had to be left out from the initial analysis.

**LIMITATIONS**

The numbers of participants, that might have been unsubstantial for such a long test (six pages to fill in), as well as the groups that were taking the test were specific, meaning the results cannot be generalized. Additionally, the groups that have participated in the study were not controlled by me and I am unable to judge where and in which conditions the tests were completed. It is important to remember, that the military group in Ukraine was a volunteering group of people, and is a special group of participants within which lies a population of itself: with a different level of IQ’s, ages and economical statuses. Such a diversity may cause too many different understanding of the questions, attitudes and emotional inside. Thus, soldiers might not have answered...
the questions in the way that was predicted (e.g., when asked if they feel afraid, they would answer that they would mark not at all), due to high feelings of patriotism, distrust into tests and others. These ideas may have had an effect on the responses, whereas some people from other regions from Ukraine could have reacted otherwise. Additionally, the majority of the respondents were males in both samples and in total only sixty questionnaires were completed fully. If the participant perceived himself as a Russian, he was excluded from the sample, since he would be a part of the out-group stereotype and his responses would be biased.

The test was fully constructed by me, thus reliability and validity were not checked prior to the testing. Thus it might have had an influence on the test itself. Also, since the face validity of the test was unknown and I did not have any influence on the way results were collected, I cannot conclude whether the participants understood the questions and answered them as intended.

Further suggestions and conclusions

My findings might give a raise to a further investigation in order to predict the future attitudes and actions towards the Russian group as well as possibility high levels of prejudice occurring as the conflict between the countries. The results did not differ for the military when compared with the general population. The effect might be due to the number of the sample, however this issue has to be explored further, since differences were expected at first. My research suggests that further testing is needed in order to have a broader understanding of the life and perception of the Russians in Ukraine. Even though some results are present, since Russians and Ukrainians had such a long history of relationships in between the two countries, the existing model of threat-perception might be modified in order to find more conclusive results on the inter-group conflicts and interaction in the war-like situation in between two culturally similar countries. Another aspect that could be studied in Ukrainian-Russian interactions is power asymmetry. I suspect, that Ukraine is a lower power-group in comparison to Russia’s amount of resources and their group size. It was shown that ethnic groups lower in power (e.g., Ukrainians in this case) perceive higher levels of threat from high power groups (e.g., Russians) then the high power groups perceive from low power groups (Corenblum & Stephan, 2001; Stephan et al., 2002). Additionally, the results provide an understanding of how the Russians are seen and using the existing models of emotions and behavioral responses (such as in Neuberg & Cottrell, 2002), the outcomes of the war and further relationships with the country might be predicted.

References:

Appendix A

Please read the following questions and respond honestly by underlining or writing the answer that suits you the most.

1) Where are you originally from?
   Ukraine — Russia — Belorussia — Georgia — Other (write) ___

2) Your sex
   Male/ Female

3) Your age

4) What is your native language
   Russian — Ukrainian — Other

5) What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
   Elementary — Middle school — High school — BA — MA — PhD

6) Are you currently
   Unemployed — student — work and study — work — do not study anything — volunteer

7) Are you currently:
   Now in service — never have been in service — no longer in service

8) Do you keep track of the changes in the war and its progression?
   Yes/No

9) Have you ever participated in the current military battle (in ATO)?
   Yes/No

10) Have you ever been close in the area (20 km from the front line) of the ATO battle
    Yes/No

11) Please underline to which world views you could relate more
    Left — Right

12) What is your religious preference
    Orthodox — Catholic — Muslim — Judaism — Atheist/ Agnostic — Other

13) How often are you involved in the religious practices?
    1 (never) — 2 (rarely) — 3 (from time to time) — 4 (every month — every week) — 5 (every day)

Next I am going to present several statements. Please, indicate to what extend you agree or disagree with them.

1) Russians display a threat to me and your my country?
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

2) Russians are fighting against Ukrainians on the occupied territories
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

3) Russians are potentially dangerous
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

4) Russians may hurt me physically
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

5) Russian person is more likely to attack me first
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

6) Russians are a threat to my freedom
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

7) Russians could limit my ability to communicate with my family
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

8) Russian influences are threatening to the development of our culture
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

9) Russian are Orthodox Church is a direct threat to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church
   1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

10) Russians are a threat to the way we live now
    1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

11) On occupied territories Russians are dictating rules that are not driven by morality
    1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

12) Russians are threatening to the Ukrainian resources
    1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

13) Russians portray a threat to Ukrainian economy
    1 (absolutely disagree) — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 (absolutely agree)

1. Please mark to What Extend do you think that Ukrainians feel next presented emotions towards Russians?
   Whether they feel definitely not/yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 (not at all)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (extremely)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatred</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jealousy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pity</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Squeamishness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admiration</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adoration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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СПРИЙНАТТЯ ЗАГРОЗ І ЇХ ВПЛИВ НА ЕМОЦІЙНІ РЕАКЦІЇ НА РОСІЯН В УКРАЇНІ

Анотація
У цьому дослідженні я хотіла перевірити вплив сприйнятих загроз та військової служби на емоції, які відчувають українці, які беруть участь у зоні Донбасу, відносно росіян. Тест був побудований з використанням теорій, що зв'язують сприйняті міжгрупові загрози та емоції, які вони викликають. Учасникам військового та загальнонародного населення було запропоновано пройти тест, щоб дослідити ставлення до різних груп. Існували три варіанти тесту, які включали демографічні питання, питання про загрозу та емоції, які відчували відносно росіян; до того ж, шість кримінальних історій, щоб побачити, які види покарань будуть призначені для різних етнічних груп. Факторний аналіз щодо сприйняття загроз відносно росіян виявив дві різні загрози: так звані індивідуальні та групові загрози. Знайдені істотні предиктори окремих емоцій в групі. Індивідуальні загрози та групові загрози значно передбачали рівень страху; групові загрози значно передбачали рівень гніву та заздрісті, а індивідуальні загрози значно передбачали рівень відрази.

Ключові слова: міжгруповий конфлікт, типи загроз, групові загрози, окремі загрози, емоції.

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ВОСПРИНИМАЕМЫЕ УГРОЗЫ И ИХ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ РЕАКЦИИ НА РОССИЯН В УКРАИНЕ

Аннотация
В этом исследовании я хотела проверить влияние воспринимаемых угроз и военной службы на эмоции, которые испытывают украинцы, участвующие в зоне Донбасса, в отношении россиян. Тест был построен с использованием теорий, связывающих восприятие межгрупповые угрозы и эмоции, которые они вызывают. Участникам военного и общенародного населения было предложено пройти тест, чтобы исследовать отношение к разным группам. Существовали три варианта теста, которые включали демографические вопросы, вопросы о угрозе и эмоциях, которые испытывали в отношении россиян; к тому же, шесть уголовных историй, чтобы увидеть, какие виды наказаний будут предназначены для различных этнических групп. Анализ по восприятию угроз в отношении россиян обнаружил две разные угрозы: так называемые индивидуальные и групповые угрозы. Найдены существенные предикторы отдельных эмоций в группе. Индивидуальные угрозы и групповые угрозы значительно предсказывали уровень гнева, групповые угрозы значительно предсказывали уровень страха и зависти, а индивидуальные угрозы значительно предусматривали уровень отторжения в выборе.

Ключевые слова: межгрупповой конфликт, типы угроз, групповые угрозы, отдельные угрозы, эмоции.