特集論文

Under the Veil of Silence: Group-Based Emotions Experienced by Russian Immigrants in Japan who Disapprove of the Invasion of Ukraine

Varvara MUKHINA*

Abstract

Colonization, mass killings, and the military actions of one country against another can leave deep scars on their mutual relations, and these effects may last for centuries. Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine has triggered complicated emotions for many Russians who disapprove of the act. However, Russian legislation prohibits the public expression of this position. Therefore, people must confront their emotions on their own as they are deprived of the opportunity to speak out publicly. In this study, seven Russian female immigrants in Japan were interviewed. The interviews lasted 94 minutes on average and addressed the emotional issues that the respondents experienced in the early days after the invasion. The interviewees reported feeling group-based shame, guilt, fear, and ingroup-directed anger and contempt. Although all the respondents had been living outside Russia for more than a decade, they still felt embarrassed. This study shows the importance of an individual's perceived membership in an imagined community, especially at critical historical junctures.

Keywords: group-based emotions, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russian immigrants in Japan

Introduction

Traumatic events such as colonization, occupation, military invasion, and mass killings have a tremendous distressing impact on the lives of the victim groups[1)] while also influencing the members of the perpetrator group, which committed the acts of

* 上智大学外国語学部；Faculty of Foreign Studies, Sophia University, mukhina.varvara@sophia.ac.jp

aggression. For example, a literature review on group-based guilt and shame revealed such emotional experiences of White Australians concerning Indigenous Australians (Pederson et al. 2004), young Germans concerning Holocaust victims, and British students concerning the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Zimmermann et al. 2011). Studies have shown that people experience such unbearable emotions even decades or centuries after the events occurred. They feel responsible for the harm their ingroup did to the victims even when neither they nor their relatives participated in the acts. However, emotions such as guilt, shame, and ingroup-directed anger among the perpetrators make way for a reconciliatory and peacebuilding process (Iyer et al. 2007; Čehajić-Clancy 2015). Unfortunately, in Russia, there is no deep-rooted tradition of perpetrators expressing regret toward their victims (e.g., the famine of the 1920s, Gulag camp, and World War II; Etkind 2013). In the context of group-based emotions, an empirical study of group-based guilt and shame by Grigoryan and Yefremova in 2017 was the first to question the attitudes of ethnic Russians (*russkie*) regarding the deportation of Chechen and Ingush populations of the Northern Caucasus during World War II.

Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine will also leave deep scars on Russian-Ukrainian relations and require a long process of reconciliation. However, public opinion surveys have shown that most Russians support this "special operation" in Ukraine. For example, according to Levada-Center's opinion survey in March 2022, 52% of respondents "definitely supported" the move, while 28% "rather supported" it. Thus, there appears to be little room for a critical understanding of the current situation. However, these survey statistics must be considered with criticism after the amendments to the Russian Criminal Code were approved on March 4 (Article 207.3[2], Article 280.3[3], Article 284.2[4]).

1) I use the term "group" instead of, for example, "nationals" to place Russia's invasion of Ukraine in a broader context of colonial, ethnic, religious, and cultural conflicts, wherein the perpetrators and victims may be nationals of the same or different states. Following the tradition of psychological research, I use the term "ingroup" for the group that an individual associates with and "outgroup" for any group external from the "ingroup."

2) Article 207.3 "Public Dissemination of Deliberately False Information about the Use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation or the Exercise of their Powers by Government Bodies of the Russian Federation." The maximum penalty is 10 to 15 years in prison (for those actions that had severe consequences). Courts may also impose fines of up to 1.5 million rubles or order up to one year of community service or up to three years of correctional labor (Criminal Code of Russian Federation 03.04.2022, cited in Interfax 2022).

3) Article 280.3 "Public actions aimed at discrediting operations of the Russian Armed Forces aimed to protect the interests of Russia and its citizens and to ensure world peace and security." Penalties can range from a fine (100,000 to 300,000 rubles) to five years of imprisonment (Criminal

The legislative amendments restrict those who wish to speak out about their anti-war opinions. For example, a municipal deputy of the Krasnoselskii District of Moscow, Alexei Gorinov, was sentenced to seven years in a penal colony after he spoke against the organization of entertainment events in the district "because of the war." Administrative fines were imposed on those who had the inscription "No to war" on the rear window of a car; who owned a poster inscribed with the characters "*** *****," which stands for "No to war" in Russian (*Нет войне*); and who posted anti-war messages on social networking services (SNSs), which included reposting, "liking," or using a sad emoji (Lenta.ru, July 25, 2022) when referring to information inconsistent with the Russian government's official statement. Between March and August 2022, 85 criminal cases and more than 3,000 decisions imposing fines were issued, with an average fine of 34,000 rubles. Considering that the average monthly salary in Russia is 62,000 rubles, this fine is substantial. In addition, a second violation of the law allows the application of the Criminal Code.

Therefore, in the public opinion surveys, many were afraid to express their positions honestly. The current Russian legislation does not allow the estimation of the actual number of Russians against the invasion. However, the opinion surveys showed that at least 8-10% "rather did not support" and 6-8% "definitely did not support" the invasion in March 2022. These numbers increased to 11% and 10%, respectively, in September 2022.

Moreover, according to the TASS Russian News Agency, in the first nine months of 2022, Russians bought 8.4 million packs of antidepressants, 48% more than in the same period in 2021 (TASS, October 28, 2022). This implies that the invasion has influenced the emotional state of many Russian nationals, and the actual number of Russians who disapprove of the invasion is higher than what has been found.

Consequently, the aim of this study is threefold: 1) to give voice to the unheard Russian nationals, 2) to determine the kind of emotions that people who disapprove of the Russian

Code of Russian Federation 03.04.2022, cited in Interfax 2022).

4) Article 284.2 "Calls for restrictive measures against Russia, Russian citizens or Russian legal entities." Calls on foreign states or international organizations for imposing sanctions on Russian citizens will be penalized by a fine of up to 500,000 rubles, up to three years of forced labor, up to six months of arrest, or up to three years of imprisonment and a fine of up to 200,000 rubles. This is applicable after a person is held administratively liable on the same counts (Criminal Code of Russian Federation 14.07.2022, cited in Interfax 2022).

invasion have experienced under the given circumstances, and 3) borrowing from the functional theory of emotions (Fischer and Manstead 2016) to show what functions these emotions serve and to which actions they lead. Through this study, I intend to provide insights into the mental state of the common people whose country is involved in warfare as the aggressor while shedding light on the potential paths for future healing and reconciliation among the people. The participants of this study are Russian nationals living in Japan as immigrants.

Emotions: Theoretical Background

According to social identity theory, the status and achievements of the group that people identify with influence their self-esteem (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 10). Thus, the behavior of members of a group and the group's image are critical for them. The actions of some members of the same group may evoke positive or negative emotions among others. Therefore, it is useful to distinguish between *collective* and *group-based* emotions.

Collective emotions are those shared by all group members. For example, football fans may experience collective joy when their team wins. In contrast, *group-based emotions* are based on an individual's social identity and perception of belonging. They are experienced as a reaction to events or actions that the individual did not participate in directly. Additionally, they are not necessarily shared by all members of the group (Yefremova and Grigoryan 2014: 72). Understanding that such emotions are not shared by all group members increases the intensity of these emotions. This phenomenon is called the "emotional burden," wherein the individual feels a moral obligation to bear the burden on behalf of the whole group (Goldenberg et al. 2014).

This study follows a functional approach where all emotions increase the probability of an individual's survival or success (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 2). Emotions help an individual 1) form and maintain positive social relationships; 2) establish or maintain a social position relative to others; and 3) preserve their self-esteem, identity, or power, sometimes at the expense of others (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 2).

Research Method and Sample Characteristics

Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the emotions experienced by Russian nationals who disapprove of the invasion of Ukraine. Since the

interview participants live abroad, they could speak more openly about their experiences without fear of administrative and criminal punishment. However, they did not feel completely safe. For example, all the participants avoided traveling to Russia this year (2022), despite not seeing their families for at least two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to them, their anti-war position could lead to problems when crossing the border. One participant said that she was sure that her anti-war statements on SNSs were monitored and reported to the Russian authorities. Another participant saw threats on SNSs against those attending an anti-war demonstration in a Japanese city. Some people also threatened that a screenshot of the television report covering the demonstration would be posted on an SNS community and the participants' identifying information would be reported to the Russian authorities.

This study used a snowball method. I approached acquaintances who hinted at their anti-war position and asked them to recommend other respondents for the study. The motivations for participating in the study, as reported by the participants, were as follows: 1) They trusted the researcher or the acquaintance who asked them to participate (three people). 2) They found it important to express that not all Russians support the government's actions and thus wanted their voices heard (three people). 3) They were interested in the study's results and wanted to understand what was happening to other Russians at the time (three people). 4) Finally, they were grateful for the opportunity to speak out, as they found it unbearable to keep their emotions hidden (one person).

Due to the circumstances at the time of the study, the author prioritized the respondents' safety. The study participants could choose between two types of the informed consents where the study's title was or was not clearly stated. All the interviews were recorded; the recordings disposed of immediately after transcription. In addition, the demographic details were not specified for every participant. In general, the respondents were seven female Russian nationals, aged 36–49 years (average age 39.7 years), engaged in science, education, caregiving, advertising, and IT. The respondents' residential status included permanent resident, spouse of a Japanese national, and an engineer/specialist in the humanities/international services. All the participants moved to Japan between 2005 and 2013 and had been living in Japan for 9–17 years (average 14.4 years) at the time of the study. All of them were highly educated, with a master's degree or PhD in the humanities or science. Their education level, experience in international communication in the academic sphere, and primary and secondary education during

Mikhail Gorbachev's "perestoika" and Boris Yeltsin's post-Soviet period, that is, the most liberal years of recent Russian history, could have influenced their attitudes toward the invasion of Ukraine.

According to the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, in December 2021, a total of 9,118 people from Russia lived in Japan. Among them, 66% were women and 42% of them were aged 31–50 years. Most Russians either had a permanent resident status (46.87%), were spouses of Japanese nationals (11.03%), or were engineers/specialists in humanities/international services (13.6%). Thus, the study participants reflected the main characteristics of Russians in Japan. Notably, although all the respondents condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, their sentiments cannot be extended to all Russians in Japan.

This study was conducted in June–August 2022 (three to six months after the invasion began). The larger the gap between the beginning of the invasion and the interview, the greater was the effort required by the participants to remember their emotions from the early days and months. The interview duration ranged from 59 to 219 minutes (an average of 94 minutes). The interviewees were asked open-ended questions about their experiences and feelings in the early days after the invasion. If their response was not satisfactorily comprehensive, they were asked a follow-up question. Data collection and analysis were conducted sequentially based on the grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Although the specific circumstances of the study (respondents' security, time limits, and absence of assistants) imposed restrictions on the quantity of the data, the in-depth approach to the topic helped me understand the respondents' emotional states in the said period. The method's originality also concerned the interviews being conducted precisely during the conflict, so the respondents shared their raw emotions as they occurred.

Data Analysis

The respondents' states during the early days after Russia invaded Ukraine were as follows. All seven interviewees did not expect the invasion and were shocked, regardless of their level of awareness of and immersion in the geopolitical agenda. Four respondents reported a state of helplessness and powerlessness in the emerging situation (Cases 2, 3, 4, and 7). Four respondents had sleep-related problems. For instance, some experienced drowsiness and did not feel like waking up and facing the reality (Cases 1, 3, and 4) and

one participant mentioned insomnia and panic attacks (Case 7).

In addition, all the interviewees incessantly followed the news (Cases 1–7), which can be described as "doomscrolling[5]." Two respondents experienced depression (Cases 2 and 4). One of them had been in the process of managing depression before the invasion began, which caused it to worsen. The other had suffered from depression three years ago, but it was related to her physical health; the invasion was the first time the depression was related to external circumstances. All the respondents reported suffering self-imposed prohibition to experience joy. For example, they could not enjoy their favorite ballet (Case 1), classical music (Case 1), or rock music (Case 2). Some canceled all children's activities and travel (Cases 3 and 7) and were unable to consume any entertainment content and instead focused on news and analytical programs related to the situation (Cases 4, 5, and 6). For example, one respondent interviewed six months after the invasion began described her condition (Case 6 Quote 1=C6Q1, author's emphasis in bold) as follows:

> **I didn't want to allow myself joy until this horror was over.** [...] I also experience this state now. It intensifies when a particularly [bad] event occurs. I can't allow myself to return to this [ordinary life] **because [other] Russian citizens [*rossiyane*] have chosen to live like this**. My responsibility is not to be the same. We have made this mistake so many times: there was Chechnya, [the annexation of Crimea] in 2014, [inaudible]. [...] This is a big mistake. **I feel like the only thing I can do is psychologically restrain myself in this situation of not returning to life before the war**.

This interview excerpt demonstrates how this respondent suffered self-imposed prohibition to experience joy with the statement, "I didn't want to allow myself joy until this horror was over." She also experienced what can be defined as an "emotional burden," that is, she felt a moral obligation to bear the burden of the negative emotions in the name of the whole group: "I can't allow myself to return to this [ordinary life] because [other] Russian citizens [*rossiyane*] have chosen to live like this." For all the participants, this condition lasted for one to six months. The following section closely examines how the study participants described their emotions during the initial months

5) Doomscrolling means spending a significant amount of time looking at the phone or computer and reading bad or negative news stories (Cambridge Dictionary).

after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Group-based Guilt

Shame and guilt are concepts closely related to moral values. Some studies have used the terms interchangeably, whereas others have distinguished between them. According to the latter studies, guilt is related to the consequences of a person's wrongdoings targeting others (Čehajić-Clancy 2015: 106). In the context of group-based emotions, this emotion can be expressed as, "I feel guilty because my ingroup did something wrong; the outgroup is suffering." Concerning outcomes for others, guilt leads to an eagerness to compensate for the negative consequences faced by the outgroup (Yefremova and Grigoryan 2014: 77), for example, by making reparations. Many studies have stressed the role of group-based guilt in the process of reconciliation (McGarty et al. 2005; Zimmerman et al. 2011). In this context, the following narrative shows how guilt was experienced by one of the respondents (C4Q1 and 2):

> The catastrophe is that **so many people have died and are dying. Some have lost their homes and been forced to flee to Europe**. It's impossible to wrap the human brain around those numbers - 7 million refugees[6] - it's immense. [...] Yes, I feel like **my country triggered the end of the world for this country, provoked a catastrophe for it, causing such severe pain and great grief.**

> I've had this desire for a long time [...] when I'm half asleep, to go to the Ukrainian embassy and **just be on my knees as long as I can**. [...] It seems to me that if I meet a Ukrainian woman directly like this, face to face, **the only thing I can do is just fall to my knees in front of them**. I don't even know what could be said. "**Forgive us, Ukraine**." It sounds kind of pretentious. But even without words, with saying nothing, this is the only way I can express my feelings in front of the Ukrainians.

Thus, the respondent was aware of the damage caused by her ingroup: "The catastrophe is that so many people have died and are dying. Some have lost their

6) According to UNHCR, by January 2023, there were 7,915,287 refugees from Ukraine across Europe; 2,870,182 of them were registered in Belarus and Russian Federation (UNHCR, January 3, 2023).

homes and been forced to flee to Europe." The events were so unbearable that she even experienced it eschatologically as a "catastrophe," "the end of the world." Being aware of the damage caused to Ukraine, she wanted to express her group-based guilt with "forgive us, Ukraine" and the idiom "to fall to my knees," meaning "to beg, to grovel" in Russian. In general, this excerpt may be considered as expressing her desire to beg for forgiveness. Thus, guilt arose in the face of the Ukrainians, whether real or perceived, and resulted in the thought of paying moral compensation for the wrongdoings of the ingroup by apologizing and attempting to restore relationships.

Another respondent who experienced group-based guilt also mentioned the harm caused by the perceived ingroup and the idea of desired forgiveness (C6Q2):

> It's probably very **hard to understand how many children have died or been mutilated**. To realize this, you need to intentionally show yourself every day these pictures. If you don't see them, you will forget quickly. I don't know. It's impossible to keep it in your head, in your psyche. It's about children, and that's probably the worst part. I try to remember the photos **of destroyed cities: Mariupol. Kharkov. Destroyed**. If you look from above, from the drone shots, it's **just scorched earth. Everything is black. Houses are destroyed**. To realize that **people in such huge numbers have left the country** and cannot return. Those are vast numbers.

Following this, the respondent compared the situation with Rwanda, posing this question: "The Ukrainians will not be able to forgive us, so how do we forgive ourselves?" Overall, in the narrative, the interviewee listed the consequences of the invasion. Furthermore, the final negative rhetorical question expresses a hope for forgiveness while being aware that it is highly unlikely. Thus, the respondent clearly expresses guilt regarding the Ukrainians.

One more respondent (Case 1) expressed very parallel emotions towards the family of her daughter's Ukrainian friend with words as **"**her dad is at war right now!", "He is now fighting with arms in his hands!", and "Why do they have to go through all this? It's hell!" These words also appear eschatological, and it is clear that the respondent is aware of the harm caused to this Ukrainian family by the respondent's ingroup.

Group-based Shame

In contrast to group-based guilt, shame is focused on the consequences of wrongdoings for the self or self-image (Čehajić-Clancy 2015: 106). Under group-based emotions, it can be expressed as, "I feel ashamed and am a bad person as a member of the group that did something wrong." Unlike other emotions, shame affects the self in its entirety (Teroni and Deonna 2008: 1) and has a comparatively stronger negative impact on the individual's social identity. In terms of outcomes, the orientation of shame toward the self results in the intention to restore the positive ingroup image and is more likely to cause an avoidance of contact with the victim outgroup (Čehajić-Clancy 2015: 107). However, in their study of British and American attitudes toward the invasion of Iraq, Iyer et al. (2007) showed that shame might also contribute to a peacemaking process.

Iyer et al. (2007) conducted two studies. In the first study, they surveyed 194 American undergraduates during the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2006. The participants were given a fictional news article describing a post-war situation in Iraq and the attitudes of the Iraqi people toward the occupation. They were then asked to determine their emotions and willingness to participate in political action. In the second study, the researchers surveyed 185 undergraduates from British universities in 2004 using content similar to that used in the first study, which was reworded to fit the British context.

Both studies focused on the emotions of guilt, shame, and anger and showed that shame predicted the eagerness to claim the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and that previous research had underestimated the role of shame in the reconciliation process. Similarly, Giner-Sorolla et al. (2008) found that the expression of shame increased the acceptance of reparation. As an expression of self-abasement, shame equalizes the status of the perpetrator and the victim. Thus, expressing group-based shame is crucial for the reconciliation process.

The following three narratives show how the interviewees described their group-based shame. The narratives are long, but they are preserved in their original forms, as they are important to understand the respondents' emotions. Indeed, reductions would make it challenging to understand the context and essence of the narratives (C6Q3 and 4):

> [Interviewer: Do you remember going outside for the first time? And this **encounter with people outside of your family**?] Yes, I even have a story related to this. [... My daughter and I] walked around the city [omitted for safety reasons]. We were on the

train back to our home, and I was reading a book to her in Russian. An old lady stood next to us. She listened, listened, and then we got out together at our station. Once she got out, she said, "Is this English?" I said, "No, it's Russian." And at this point, **I kind of choked**. And she was like, "Oh, now *Roshia-wa taihen desu ne*."[7] And then I was right [...] I mean, **I had a lump in my throat and just burst into tears**.

The incident was so stupid because the doors [of the train] had not yet closed, and we were standing right in front of the doors. There were young people, a couple, sitting there and looking at us. And I was standing. **I had physically lowered my head and couldn't lift it, my head**. That was the feeling [crying]. [...] **The first days, it was difficult to live with this**. We're used to it now. But those days, it was difficult to lift my head [crying]. [...] As if from that moment, when the war began, **to be a Russian was to be an aggressor**. **And it's not just a sense of shame. It's a sense of identity breakdown.** [...] Everything that was dear to you, all this culture, it did not save you from these horrors. It didn't work.

In the first narrative above, the respondent described how shame manifested physically: "I kind of choked," "I had such a lump in my throat that I just burst into tears," "I had physically lowered my head and couldn't lift it, my head," and "It was difficult to lift my head." In addition, she described how the first few days of the invasion were unbearable. Notably, even six months later, when the interview was conducted, recalling the emotions made her cry. She also explained how this emotion affected her identity and self-image. Before the invasion of Ukraine, Russia was mainly associated with classical Russian ballet and 19th century literature in Japan, particularly with Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy, who profoundly describe the theme of human morality. However, the invasion has overshadowed that image of Russia in Japan. From the above narrative, it can also be concluded that the idea of Russia as the custodian of morality was internalized by the respondent as the core of her identity. Russia becoming "the aggressor" and its classical culture failing to serve as a guarantor of morality became the reason for the breaking down of her identity.

The excerpt clearly shows that shame was associated with others' perception of oneself

7) "*Russia is in a bad situation*." (Japanese)

and reputational loss. The emotion manifested at the first encounter with Japanese society. Thus, when facing an outgroup member, individuals precisely experience their ingroup membership. In this context, parallel themes can be seen in the following excerpt (C1Q2-Q3):

> [Interviewer: What were your first thoughts and feelings?] Just a bunch of thoughts: **How is it all going to be? How is this going to affect my life, my family's life? Yeah, my entire identity** – that I'm walking down the street and can proudly say that I'm from Russia. And **I just shrunk inside. My shoulders clenched; my head went down**. I remember that in **the first days when I** was walking down the street, I **couldn't even lift my head**. **I was ashamed to look at any person**. [...] **Breaking down of identity – it's the breaking down of my identity**. The regime that now exists in Russia is based on lies, crime, and covering up illegal actions. [...] **And my identity as a Russian [*russkaya*], as a Russian national [*rossiyanka*], was broken down by the fact that this regime rules in Russia and is taking such actions**.

Here, the interviewee describes how shame physically manifested itself: "I just **shrunk** inside. My shoulders clenched; my head went down," and "I couldn't even lift my head. I was ashamed to look at any person." It is also clear that this emotion emerged in encounters with Japanese society, and manifested itself particularly strongly during the first days of the invasion. It further affected the respondent's identity and self-image: "Breaking down of identity – it's the breaking down of my identity," and "And my identity, as a Russian [*russkaya*], as a Russian national [*rossiyanka*], it was destroyed by the fact that now this regime rules in Russia and is taking such actions."

In the following excerpt, the interviewee did not explain how she felt physically, but it shows how shame was related to reputational loss and was felt at an encounter (or imagined encounter) with the outgroup (C2Q1-2):

> I did all these things [cultural events] to show the good side of our country. [...] With this paradigm shift, it turns out that **I promoted a country that was preparing explosives in the cellar at that moment**. And **a lot of people know me, and I'm ashamed now.** Yes, I am somehow **ashamed** that I promoted a country that actually had a bomb in its pocket. [...] **Shock. Shame.** I don't know what to do. Do I need to

> do anything at all? And what? I **feel lost**. [...] It's kind of scary that you live abroad. Maybe you don't follow the politics. Then, **one morning you wake up and you find yourself to be some kind of bastard**. [...] And **you automatically become a bastard** in exile [when living abroad] **for people** [the Japanese] because your government has screwed up in your country. And **you don't know how to live with it**. That's probably it. A kind of **feeling lost and hopeless.**

The interviewee expressed the themes of self-image and reputation: "a lot of people know me, and I'm ashamed now," and "you find yourself to be some kind of bastard." The identity crisis was difficult to experience: "I feel lost," "And you don't know how to live with it," and "A kind of feeling lost, hopeless." Again, it is evident that this emotion appeared during encounters with the host society: "in exile [when living abroad] for people [the Japanese]." In this context, those who have more frequent contact with the outgroup may experience shame more frequently than those who mostly interact within their ingroup. Therefore, Russian migrants may experience shame more often than those living in Russia.

Group-based Fear

Fear is an emotion that predicts social survival, as the individual who experiences fear is more likely to be vigilant and avoidant, thereby escaping the threat (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 2). Fear can be described as the intention to flee from someone (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 3). However, its potential in the reconciliation process is unclear. Therefore, it is important to determine whether fear makes a person avoid action. The following narrative demonstrates how a respondent experienced fear (C6Q5):

> [Interviewer: What emotion do you experience in front of Ukrainians, the citizens of Ukraine?] **I'm afraid**. For example, when I go somewhere, **if I see someone who looks like a person from Eastern Europe**, **my gut tightens up**. Because you can't say everything you think about the situation with the first contact. And it turns out that the fact that you are a Russian automatically throws you into the lair of the beast. **Fear.** [...] Because [...] **when someone tells me that they are better than me, it is difficult for me to confront it** [...] Therefore, now, let's say, **as a Russian, I automatically become an aggressor,** as if I am on the side of the aggressor for any

> Ukrainian. T**he situation** itself is very **destructive for me psychologically.**

Here, it is clear that the respondent experienced fear in front of all Eastern Europeans, a broader category than Ukrainians[8]. Furthermore, fear was experienced physically, "My gut tightens up," with a strong psychological effect, "The situation itself is very destructive for me psychologically." The excerpt showed that this fear was a group-based emotion stemming from being considered as an aggressor due to belonging to a particular group: "as a Russian." Fear protected the individual from potential emotionally aggressive acts: "...someone tells me that they are better than me..."

In this context, the following two narratives describe the fear experienced as an immigrant in front of the host (Japanese) society (C4Q3):

> And there was **fear**. There was a fear that increased due to the **knowledge of the situations** that occurred to the representatives of a particular nation in a similar situation. For example, during the Second World War, the Japanese, ordinary civilians, in America **were sent to camps in large numbers**. [...] What if our **visas are revoked**?

Another participant (C2Q3) addressed the parallel themes as follows: "I say to my (Japanese) husband, do you understand that if there will be a serious conflict between Russia and Japan, **I can be deported**? Or **they will send us to some reservation**. We will be kept there."

Thus, the respondents were aware of the historical precedents in similar conflicts when the nationals of a country that initiated a war were deported or sent to reservations and concentration camps. Such precedents also held true for many Germans who lived in other European countries during the Second World War. This knowledge made the respondents feel vulnerable and fearful.

Ingroup-directed Anger

Anger serves the function of regaining or maintaining power or status. This emotion

8) The term "Eastern Europeans" also includes Russians. However, the excerpt, overall, shows that the respondent opposes "Eastern Europeans" and "Russians." Thus, in this case, "Eastern Europeans" are perceived as an outgroup to "Russians."

is attributed to people in power, and those who express anger might even be regarded as having a high status (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 9). In this sense, the expression of anger may enhance the self-evaluation of the individual. Unlike fear, anger is characterized by a high level of arousal (Iyer et al. 2007: 574) and is usually associated with an intention to take action and challenge the perceived injustice. Thus, anger also has great potential for the reconciliation of relationships with the victim outgroup.

For example, through their studies, Iyer et al. (2007) showed that ingroup-directed anger was the strongest predictor of political action, e.g., the intention to confront national representatives for their role in the transgression, to advocate the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, and to insist on compensation for the Iraqi people (Iyer et al. 2007: 584).

The following narrative shows how anger may be productive in challenging a perceived injustice (C5Q1-2):

> [Interviewer: **How did you live in the first days and weeks, has anything changed at the event level?**] Yes, [...] the first two weeks [...] were **very eventful** because I couldn't [focus on] work. I could think about nothing else except this war. I was **constantly watching, going through the news feed**, about what is happening there. I wanted to urgently do something. [...] And so, for the first few days**, I tried to somehow organize myself and others**. I **asked who could go to which protest**. [...] **And then I went to a solo picket at** [omitted for safety reasons].
>
> [Interviewer: Was it not scary to go to the picket, for yourself, for your security, freedom?] No. **When I went there, no, it wasn't scary** because I felt like **everything was already so bad that hiding somewhere in a safe place probably didn't make much sense** – because **all these safe places of ours will be demolished in the near future**. So, at that moment, **there was no fear**. [...] **Because this anger accumulates inside**. And I had to somehow **express it, to bring it out and calm down**. Because just to sit and be silent – well, it seemed to me that I would then, perhaps, spend my whole life regretting. [...] And I did everything I could, and **it made me feel a lot better** when **I went to this picket**.

The interviewee also described another kind of activity (omitted for safety reasons) when she publicly expressed her antigovernment position. However, the above excerpt

alone shows that the respondent not only publicly expressed her position but also chose risky forms of protest: "I tried to somehow organize myself and others. I asked who could go to which protest," "I went to a solo picket." Finally, the excerpt shows that the primary fuel of her actions was her anger at the Russian government "Because this anger accumulates inside. And I had to somehow express it, to bring it out and calm down." In this context, the following narrative of another respondent shows how her anger coexisted with resentment (C3Q1-2):[9)]

> Well, of course, **anger and resentment about the fact that you were [deceived]**, that you still hoped for something else, [...] and **anger is pettier**. Well, that **your plans were ruined**. [...] When you start thinking about all these **political moments, there is anger, grief, and even childish resentment**, when you think about **your personal plans**.

Here, the respondent evaluated anger (with resentment) as "petty" and "childish" emotions because she felt angry when she thought the war affected her life: "your plans were ruined." Her losses were incomparable with the grief of the Ukrainians, so her anger became "petty."

Nevertheless, knowing the effective actions that anger can lead to (Iyer et al. 2007: 584), it is important to not underestimate this emotion, including the damage that the people who involuntarily find themselves on the "perpetrator" side also face. This is important for a comprehensive understanding of the overall effect of this invasion.

Ingroup-directed Contempt

Expressions of contempt, such as derogation and rejection, result in the social exclusion of the object of the emotion. Like anger, contempt may boost the status of an individual by considering the object of this emotion as inferior or worthless. Expressed toward the perpetrator group, who failed to comply with moral norms, contempt serves the function of protecting these norms and values (Fischer and Manstead 2016: 10). This is a mechanism of protecting the moral norms of the ingroup when the perpetrator belongs to an outgroup. However, what happens when the individual associates oneself with a

9) Unfortunately, due to a lack of space, the emotions have not been detailed, and resentment can be studied in future research.

perpetrator group, that is, the perpetrator is part of the ingroup? The following narrative demonstrates how the respondent localized the perpetrator in the Russia's government, not the whole ingroup, and expressed contempt toward the government's actions and those responsible for the government's decisions. Distinguishing the government from the ordinary people and expressing contempt toward its actions helped the respondent protect the moral image of ordinary Russians and her own moral values (C3Q3):

> [Interviewer: If you can, metaphorically describe what did you feel toward the government, toward the state.] Well, I treat it as **a criminal**, [...] that it has no right, that it is **committing a crime**. It committed many different crimes, but **now it is committing the biggest crime on behalf of all** [...] That is, you were not asked, but **on your behalf,** they do such terrible things. What do I have to do with it? On the one hand, I feel **contempt,** of course. Because there is such **a low level of education – they have completely different values**, the people of the 70s and 80s of the KGB[10]. Well, it does not apply to me or my social circle, this kind of **imperialist ambitions**.

Here, the respondent treated the war as a crime and the Russian government as the criminal. The respondent's contempt was toward "a low level of education" and the "imperialist ambitions" of Russian officials. This ingroup-directed contempt served the function of distancing herself from the government's actions and protecting her values, which are "completely different" from that of the government.

Conscious Distancing

Another participant expressed a similar idea. However, she did not define an emotion, such as anger, fear, or contempt, but spoke of a conscious desire to distance herself from the government's actions (C7Q1):

> [Interviewer: What was the reaction, and what did you feel or think?] Well, some kind of **rejection**. Well, I really, really didn't want to believe that my country was doing this – and I strongly wanted to distance myself from it immediately. I have

10) *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*: The Committee for State Security that was the main security agency for the Soviet Union from March 13, 1954, until December 3, 1991. Vladimir Putin is known to have begun his career in the KGB and worked there from 1975 to 1991.

> never distanced myself from the government, but at that moment, I felt **the desire to do so**. That is, my country is my country. **The government is the government**. And this distancing meant that no, **I have nothing to do** with this**, with this group of people** who do it. I guess that's the feeling. It was the strongest at that moment.

In her interview, this participant twice noted that she considered Russian nationals to be victims of the regime and placed the full responsibility of the invasion on the state. Moreover, the above excerpt shows that the respondent distanced herself from the government's actions: "I strongly wanted to distance myself from it immediately," "the government is the government," "I have nothing to do with this," and "with this group of people." She might have done so to preserve her identity as a Russian and her moral values.

Respondents' Actions

This section summarizes the actions the respondents undertook in the given circumstances and how they related to their emotions. As Table 1 shows, there were three types of actions: 1) confronting Russia's officials, 2) demanding for the end of warfare, and 3) providing help for the Ukrainians in Ukraine or Ukrainian refugees in Europe and Russia. Three respondents (Cases 1, 3, and 5) donated to an opposition politician or an organization such as *Apologiya protesta* and *OVD-Info*, non-profit human rights organizations that support those arrested during the street protests in Russia. Two respondents (Cases 5 and 6) participated in a picket and anti-war demonstration in Japan, demanding the end of warfare. These actions could be categorized under what Iyer et al. (2007) called advocacy for withdrawing troops. However, they are much riskier in the context of present-day Russia.

Six respondents (Cases 1, 3–7) donated to help Ukrainian refugees, and most made their donations personally for or through acquaintances. One respondent (Case 6) was involved in volunteering that required much time and effort. Simultaneously, some people were willing to volunteer but could not due to exclusion because of their Russian nationality. For example, Case 4 registered her name as a volunteer Russian-to-Japanese interpreter, but she was never contacted. She knew that other volunteers of Japanese nationality were approached. This made her think that her nationality was the reason for being turned down. If this was the case, the organizers may have tried to minimize the

negative effect of being in contact with Russian nationals for Ukrainians. Nevertheless, some Russians who were willing to help were deprived of the chance to do so.

Table 1. Respondents' Actions

	Confronting Russia's officials	Demands for the end of warfare	Help for Ukrainians
Case 1	Donated to Russian NGO's Apologiya Protesta, OVD-info		Transferred money to the Ukrainian family in Germany, transferred money to help Ukrainian refugees to leave Russia
Case 2	-	-	-
Case 3	Donated to Russian NGO OVD-info		Transferred money to acquaintances in Ukraine
Case 4			Transferred money to Ukrainian acquaintances, spread information, ready to volunteer (but no chance)
Case 5	Donated to an opposition politician	Participated in a picket in Japan	Donated for Ukrainians through the company
Case 6		Participated in an anti-war demonstration in Japan	Volunteered for Ukrainians in Ukraine (online), spread information, volunteered for Ukrainian refugees (online), transferred money to acquaintances in Ukraine.
Case 7			Humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees in Europe, donations

As Table 2 shows, the respondents experienced different emotions simultaneously in most instances. Thus, the respondents' actions (not hypothetical ones as Iyer et al. (2007) described in their speculative experiment) may have been motivated by a combination of different emotions. The only respondent who did not take any action was the one who experienced shame and fear (Case 2), a result consistent with the literature review findings that these feelings lead to avoidance of contact with the outgroup. However, the same emotions, in combination with guilt (Case 1, 4, 6), led to action. Moreover, fear and contempt did not result in avoiding action. Therefore, the role of different combinations of emotions in taking action must be researched further in future studies.

Notably, almost all the respondents took action to help the Ukrainians, so real

Table 2. Emotions experienced by the respondents and the real actions undertaken by them

	Guilt	Shame	Fear	Anger	Contempt	Distancing	Confront R. authorities	Withdrawal of troops	Help for Ukrainians
Case 1	+	+					+		+
Case 2		+	+						
Case 3				+	+		+		+
Case 4	+		+						+
Case 5				+			+	+	+
Case 6	+	+	+					+	+
Case 7						+			+

situations might have evoked more empathy than speculative experiments. Finally, it should be noted that the actions depended on external factors, such as the associated risks and genuine opportunities to help.

Conclusion

Concurring with the literature review findings, this study showed that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had a significant negative effect on those who associated with the perpetrator group but did not support its actions. Although it is unclear how many Russians disapprove of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the number is likely higher than that reported in the official opinion polls. Indeed, the laws adopted immediately after the invasion make it impossible for the public to openly express any position that goes against the state.

However, a study showed that behind the "veil of silence" imposed by the Russian legislation, people experience strong emotions. This study's respondents mentioned shock, sleep problems, self-imposed prohibition to experience joy, and, for some, depression. They also experienced shame that broke down their core identity, along with guilt for the actions that the ingroup committed. To ensure reconciliation, these emotions

must be conveyed to the Ukrainians in the future. However, this process is bound to take significant time, if at all possible.

Some respondents felt anger and contempt for their government, or tried to distance from the government's actions to preserve their moral values. Others experienced fear and powerlessness. Overall, I hope that all the emotions that Russians have experienced but cannot express will reach those to whom they are addressed.

Moreover, not only emotions but also actions were hidden under the veil of silence. The study participants took action to confront the Russian authorities and support political opposition. Some respondents participated in anti-war demonstrations and picketing, highly risky actions under the present legislation. And almost all of them helped the Ukrainian refugees in some way.

Previous research provided useful evidence on how important emotions such as guilt, shame, and ingroup-directed anger are for political action, leading to reconciliation. However, this study showed that the emotions experienced under these circumstances were more varied and included fear and ingroup-directed contempt. This study also showed that some actions might be motivated by a combination of several emotions, for example, guilt and fear. In addition, the actions may have been constrained by external limitation factors (e.g., legislation constraints and opportunities to take action). Thus, these findings provide a new perspective and shed light on new research directions for group-based emotions.

Finally, this study risks causing discontent among those who support the Russian government and among those who sympathize with Ukraine and to whom all Russians, regardless of their attitudes toward the invasion, may be associated with the aggressors. Indeed, the damage done to the Ukrainians is incomparable to what the Russians are experiencing. Nonetheless, I believe the voices of Russians who disapprove of the invasion should be heard, and I am grateful to the respondents for their courage in sharing their experiences and showing vulnerability, despite the fear and risks to their safety and well-being.

Acknowledgements and ethical statement

I sincerely thank the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments, which helped improve the manuscript. I am also very grateful to this study's respondents who shared their opinions despite the risky circumstances. The participants were informed

of the aim of the interviews and that all the information will be used only for research purposes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The recordings were disposed of immediately after it. For safety reasons, all the narratives in this study have been presented anonymously. The demographics were not specified for every participant, but were presented as general information concerning the sample. All identifiable information, such as toponyms and participants' activities, have been omitted. This research received no funding from any funding agency in any sector.

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