

An Empirical Assessment of the Effect of War Exposure on the Attitudes towards Violence

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Abstract : Ukraine has recently experienced one of the bloodiest conflicts taking place on the European continent. Many active duty personnel and civilians have died, and millions of people have been displaced. This situation can lead to disorder in the country characterized by acceptance of violence and crime. There is a gap in the literature addressing the issues related to attitudes towards violence resulting from war, as well as focusing on the world's more vulnerable civilian populations - those that live in lower and middle-income countries, such as Ukraine. Using a random sample of 1200 adults from two major Ukrainian cities, this study explores the relationship between different types of war exposure (direct and vicarious) and attitudes to violence. Multivariate models reveal that multiple types of war exposure (e.g., being injured, being a witness of death, watching war events on TV) are significantly associated with the attitudes to political and interpersonal violence. In addition, the KHB decomposition procedure showed that experiencing certain mental illnesses serve as important mediating mechanisms between war exposure and attitudes towards violence. Finally, in order to prevent society from disorder and high levels of violence, future studies need to pay more attention to exploring how vital and traumatic life events can lead a population to find violent acts acceptable.

Keywords : attitudes, Ukraine, violence, war

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