



The state of the world economy as a threat to Russia's security: public estimates and influencing factors

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ABSTRACT

The state of the world economy is considered as a factor influencing on the national security of Russia's population. Using methods of applied statistics and sociological approach, we have analyzed the data of international sociological survey, conducted in February-May 2017 in 38 countries. We have analyzed the reports and statistical bases of the World Economic Forum, World Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the US Central Intelligence Agency. In context of this research we demonstrated the plurality of factors determining estimates of the national security threats taking into account both personal characteristics of people and peculiarities in development of the country of their residence. The external and internal factors of threats to their country are approximately equally characterized by the residents of Russia and Israel. We have built a multiple regression equation, which allows calculating the current and prognostic assessment of the threat of state of the world economy for a country's security. The received results can be used for further studies of the security discourse and peculiarities of the threat perception. Also, knowledge of the factors determining the estimates of threats will help to select the instruments and measures, which will create objective and subjective security and perception of it.

KEYWORDS:

national security, economic security, risk, global competitiveness, export of goods and services, sociological approach, multiple regression.

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1. RELEVANCE

Security is one of the basic conditions for sustainable development of the territory (Ekologo-ekonomicheskaya bezopasnost 2011; Chernikov, Orsoeva 2008; Romashin 2008; Raudeliūnienė, Tvaronavičienė, Dzemyda 2014). Threats to national security are often considered as an element of the environment (Smirnova 2007). They emerge as a result of conflict of people's interests, which occur as well in the process of their cognitive activity (Smirnova 2007). Due to non-linearity of the processes and peculiarities of human cognitive activity (Karginova, 2017; Rosenzweig, 2007; Tversky A., Kahneman, 1974; Galton, 1869) the absolutely correct reflection on the surrounding reality is impossible (Maksimova, Goncharova, Noyanzina, 2012). There are adequate, as well as putative, artificially formed threats; their parameters are assessed as overestimated or underestimated (Mamytov 2016). For example, the country can increase its army's size aiming to ensure its security, but in other countries this fact may be considered as a threat to their own security (Smirnova 2010).

In this paper the state of the world economy is considered as a threat to national security for Russia's population and we have attempted to formalize the factors determining it. For this purpose, it was expected to define the general outline of threats for population, to compare the Russian and foreign data on their significance, to identify the key influencing factors and to build a multiple regression equation of people's estimates.

The choice of the threat, caused by the state of the world economy, appears to be particularly relevant in conditions of global regionalization (Karginova, 2018). Analysis of the public estimates of specific national security threats will allow determining to which of them the prior attention need to be paid, knowledge of the factors will give us the opportunity to form the instruments and to take measures in order to minimize the threats. Even in case of the presence of objective conditions, which ensure the economic security of the territory, there will be no development without subjective perception of it: outflows of capital, people, etc., will take place.

Besides, it is important to minimize the threat significance perception by population also in relation to the fact that nowadays people are increasingly orienting on the estimates not of experts, but of the ordinary citizens, which are practically instantly spread via reposts in social networks. An ordinary reader often does not have critical attitude to the received information, makes no distinction between the public opinion and the expert's point of view. And the spread information does not always coincide with the reality, as evidenced by the researches (Zdorov'e, 2013). Respectively, the increasing anxiety level is possible in society.

2. THEORY

Using international threats as an example we demonstrated the general mechanism for identification of threats. Threat perception is the result of comprehension of the possibility

and scale of negative consequences. In this case cognitive mechanisms are involved: social comparison, causal attribution, self-reflection and empathy. Consequently, threats may be considered as social constructors (Smirnova, 2016).

Threats to the national security are not always perceived rationally. It has been experimentally demonstrated that sensitivity to the signals of danger is increasing, if a person can avoid unpleasant consequences, and is decreasing, if such possibility is not available (Brandtstädter, Voss, Rothermund, 2004). If a person has already faced negative consequences of a risk, relevance of the threat is increasing for him (Koshiba, Ohtani, 2015).

Representatives of different categories of population participated in assessment of the security threats perception (Platonov, Prokop'eva, 2018; Problemy 2015) in some regions of Russia (Polukhina, Savenko, 2014) and European countries. Thus, sociological surveys in Europe and Russia are demonstrating the mismatch of socio-political risks estimated as dominating among the population of these territories. This is related, in particular, to different sensitivity to the significance of objects and phenomena, as well as to different level of political tolerance (Pankratov, 2014).

The study of international security shows that groups of people with similar values are less frequently recognizing each other as a source of threat, comparing to what opinion the groups with distinctive values have about each other (Garcia-Retamero, Muller, Rousseau, 2012). The peculiarities of assessing the environmental threats have been shown by the results of sociological research conducted in 25 countries. The prevalence of threats connected with the use of new technologies doesn't lead to perception of these threats as more significant. At the same time, the growing number of the introduced technologies increases the anxiety level in society. In result, the environmental threats are most seriously perceived in countries, where the level of use of new technologies is low, but rapidly increasing (Lima, Barnett, Vala, 2005).

Consequently, a threat can be both ontological and epistemological characteristic of the environment (Smirnova, 2007). Application of the sociological approach, which implies paying prior attention to society and cognitive factors, can be considered as reasonable (Smirnova, 2010). In particular, this approach has developed in literature (Buzan, Waever, Wilde, 1998; Buzan, 1983) and will be used in this research in order to supplement the objective views on security by subjective ones.

3. METHODOLOGY

The results of the Pew Research Center's international survey were used as the research material. Respondents were offered to assess, to which degree one or another threat was significant for their country (the significance of every threat was defined separately). The research was conducted in February-May 2017 in 38 countries around the world, both in developed (the USA, Great Britain and

others) and developing countries (for example, Tanzania). Over 850 people have been interviewed in each country, almost 42 thousand people in total. Indicators for the sample representativeness included gender, age, region of residence, and additionally in 36 countries – education, in number of countries – other characteristics: ethnic identity and territory of origin.

Additionally we used the reports and statistical bases of the World Economic Forum, World Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the US Central Intelligence Agency.

Literature materials have been processed using the applied statistics methods, primarily the correlation and regression analysis and building of a multiple regression equation.

4. RESULTS

Analysis of materials of the Pew Research Center’s international survey allowed us to define the proportion of respondents, who considered the threat to be significant for their country, and the existing difference in the estimates of residents of different countries. The most important threats are the Islamic group ISIL (organization is banned on the territory of Russia) and global climate change. Opinions about the risk of cyberattacks from other countries and the state of the world economy coincided, the large number of refugees revealed to be less significant. Most people (35%) are concerned about domination of the USA, fewer (31%) – of Russia and China (table 1).

The situation in Russia differs in a certain way from the situation in the world. For Russians the threat of Islamic

group ISIL is considerably prevailing over all others. The largest difference from the values in the world is observed in relation to global climate change: it is considered to be significant among 35% of Russians (2.6 percentage points or in 1,7 times lower, that in the world). Also, Russians less frequently perceive the state of the world economy as a threat to national security, than it is perceived on average in the world, however, in this case the difference is not so significant. The USA’s domination is a great concern for 37% of respondents, almost twice as much as the power and influence of China.

Comparison of threat assessment between Russia and macroregions of the world demonstrated the smallest difference with the North America (fig. 1) and Israel, in relation to the state of the world economy as a threat to national security – with Great Britain, Hungary and the USA. Significance of the US domination as a threat is perceived higher than analogous threat of China’s domination, this was observed not only in Russia, but also in the Near East and Latin America. The USA is considered as the main threat in Latin America, Near East, Africa and Canada, Russia – in Europe and the USA, and only in Pacific Rim – China.

No estimation of the ISIL threat (organization is banned in the territory of Russia) was made in Turkey, of power and influence of the USA – in the USA, of power and influence of Russia – in Russia

In the USA, Russia and most of 70% Europe countries, there is dependence between the person’s age and his estimation of ISIL (banned in the territory of Russia) as a threat to national security: representatives of older generation consider this threat as more substantial, than younger people do (table 2). In Russia the difference is the smallest – 12

Table 1
Assessment of a threat as significant for the country of person’s residence, % of interviewed respondents
(according to the data (Poushter, Manevich, 2017))

Threat	Mean value in the world	Russia	Difference, percentage point
Islamic group ISIL*	62	58	–4
Global climate change	61	35	–26
Cyberattacks from other countries	51	34	–17
State of the world economy	51	38	–13
Large number of refugees from Iraq and Syria	39	37	–2
Power and influence of the USA**	35	37	2
Power and influence of Russia***	31	–	–
Power and influence of China	31	19	–12

Hereinafter, the mean values for a group of countries were calculated by using a median.
No assessment was made: * in Turkey; ** in the USA; *** in Russia.

percentage points, in Netherlands – the largest, 32 percentage points (Poushter, Manevich, 2017).

We have monitored the dependence between the respondent's political views and his assessment of significance of national security threats (table 3): the right-wingers were more concerned by ISIL (banned in the territory of Russia) and large number of refugees, the left-wingers – by global climate change. In Europe, the threat of refugees was estimated higher by the right-wing supporters (Poushter, Manevich, 2017). In the USA, respondents were divided into the liberal (left-wingers), moderate (centrists) and conservators (right-wingers).

It may be suggested that such differences in data of Russia are difficult to monitor due to the lack of clear division of parties into right-winged and left-winged.

In view of the stated objective, the main attention is paid to the threat of state of the world economy. No dependences mentioned above were observed in relation to this threat (Poushter, Manevich, 2017). We have studied the dependency of its estimates:

- on the country's economic competitiveness (Global Competitiveness Index);
- on the value of export and import (part of exported and, respectively, imported goods and services in GDP);

- on the level of economic development (per capita GDP at purchasing power);
- on the economic growth rate (annual growth).

On the basis of the calculated Pearson Correlation Coefficient (table 4), it is shown that there is the feedback between assessment of the state of the world economy as a threat to national security and all considered indicators, primarily economic competitiveness, the second most significant indicator is the level of economic development. The export share in GDP has more substantial influence, than the export share, and economic growth rate has the smallest influence.

The next, in order to build a multiple regression equation and to exclude multicollinearity, the coefficients of linear paired correlation between the indicators in consideration were calculated. Based on the higher value of Global Competitiveness Index comparing to GDP per capita and export of goods and serviced comparing to import, as well as on their high paired correlation, GDP per capita and imports of goods and services were excluded from further analysis.

For other indicators we have built different variants of multiple regression equation and calculated the standard error for some groups of indicators (table 5). We

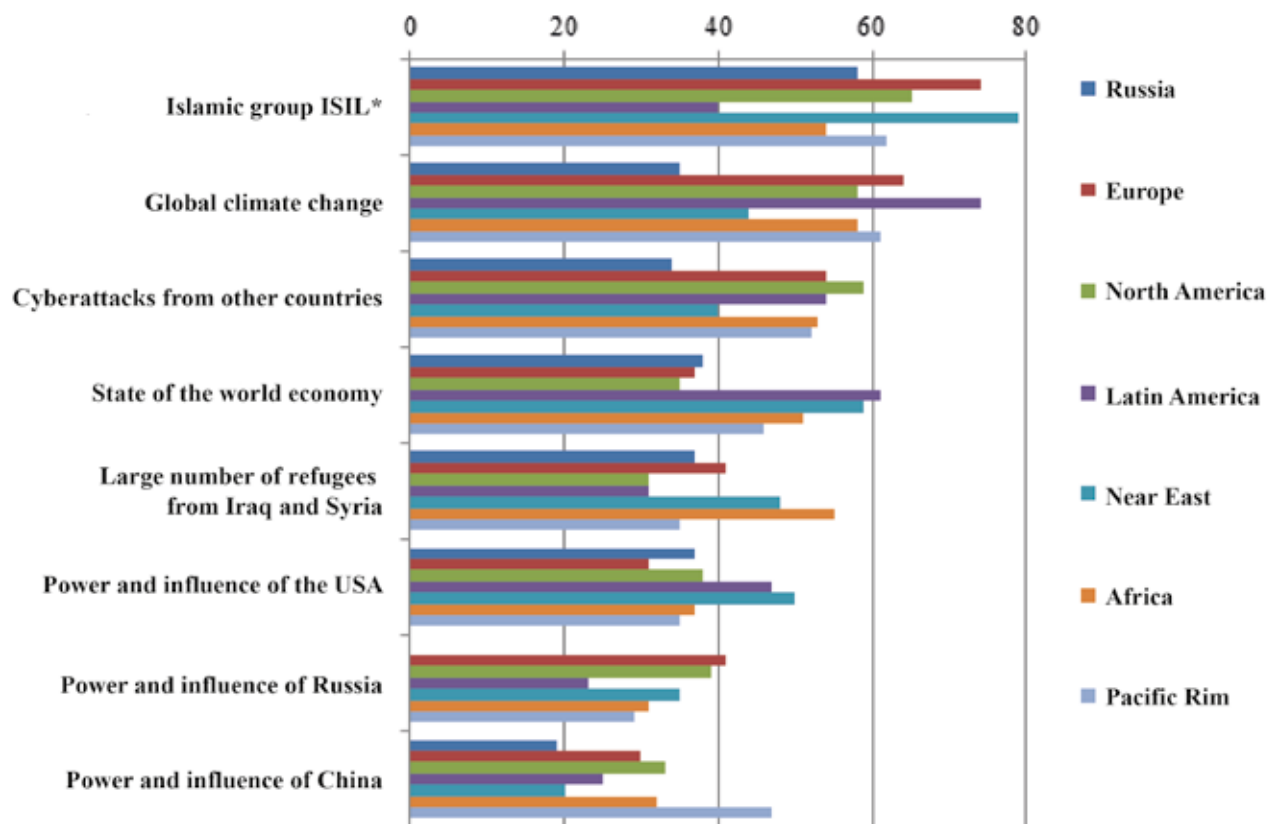


Fig. 1. Assessment of a threat as significant for the country of person's residence according to macroregions, % of interviewed respondents (according to the data (Poushter, Manevich, 2017))

Table 2
Assessment of the threat of Islamic group ISIL (banned in the territory of Russia) as significant for the country of person's residence according to macroregions, % of interviewed respondents (according to the data (Poushter, Manevich, 2017))

Territory	Age, years			Difference*, percentage points
	18–29	30–49	50+	
Mean value in the USA and Europe countries, where the difference is of statistical significance	49	67	79	30
Russia	51	55	63	12

* Between the oldest and youngest age groups.

Table 3
Assessment of a threat as significant for the country of person's residence depending on political views, % of interviewed respondents (according to the data (Poushter, Manevich, 2017))

Threat	Left-wingers	Centrists	Right-wingers	Difference, percentage points
Islamic group ISIL (banned in the territory of Russia)	63	77	79	16
Global climate change	73	66	55	-18
Large number of refugees from Iraq and Syria	20	36	52	32

have chosen the equation with Global Competitiveness Index and export of goods and services, because this variant implies the minimal standard error of the estimate (variation of the actual estimates relative to the regression line). Relevance of the relation and statistical significance of the regression equation were confirmed by the Fisher criterion, which equaled to 8,378 (critical value – 3,245).

Multiple regression equation is as the following:

$$y = 1,0934 - 0,1170x_1 - 0,0019x_2,$$

where y – assessment of the threat of state of the world economy to the country's security by population; x_1 – country's Global Competitiveness Index; x_2 – export of goods and services, % of GDP.

Prognostic assessment calculated by the equation and its comparison with actual data showed, that the indicated factors with offered significance level explain to a lesser degree the estimates in Senegal, Sweden, Poland, Germany and India (enumerated in descending order).

Table 4
Relation between the estimates of threat of the world economy state to country's security and selected in the context of the research of national indicators (according to the data (Poushter, Manevich, 2017; The Global Competitiveness, [s.a.]; The World Bank Group, [s.a.]; Statistical base, [s.a.]; The World Factbook, [s.a.]))

Indicator	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Relation
Global Competitiveness Index	-0,52	Noticeable feedback
Export of goods and services, % of GDP	-0,34	Moderate feedback
Import of goods and services, % of GDP	-0,24	Weak feedback
Per capita GDP at purchasing power, dollar.	-0,39	Moderate feedback
GDP annual growth, %	-0,14	Weak feedback

Note: the data of export and import of Japan for 2016 and of Venezuela for 2014 were used.

We have also calculated estimates of the threat of state of the world economy to the country's national security according to the data for 2007-2016 years for Russia (fig. 2). The average annual changes may be considered as insignificant – only 0,66 percentage points. This is caused by multidirectional influence of Global Competitiveness Index (+9,1%) and decrease of the export share of goods and services in GDP (-13,7%).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Assessments of threats to national security for a country of residence depend both on personal characteristics of respondents (in particular, their age and political views) and on peculiarities in the development of their country (indicators of competitiveness, export and import, etc.). There is a noticeable feedback between the state of world economy and the country's economic competitiveness and moderate feedback between the export share in GDP and

Table 5
Standard error in multiple regression equation (according to the data (Poushter, Manevich, 2017; The Global Competitiveness, [s.a.]; The World Bank Group, [s.a.]; Statistical base, [s.a.]; The World Factbook, [s.a.]))

Number of indicators	Indicator	Standard Error
3	Global Competitiveness Index; export of goods and services; GDP annual growth	0,1427
2	Global Competitiveness Index; export of goods and services	0,1410
1	Global Competitiveness Index	0,1447

Note: the data of export of Japan for 2016 and of Venezuela for 2014 were used.

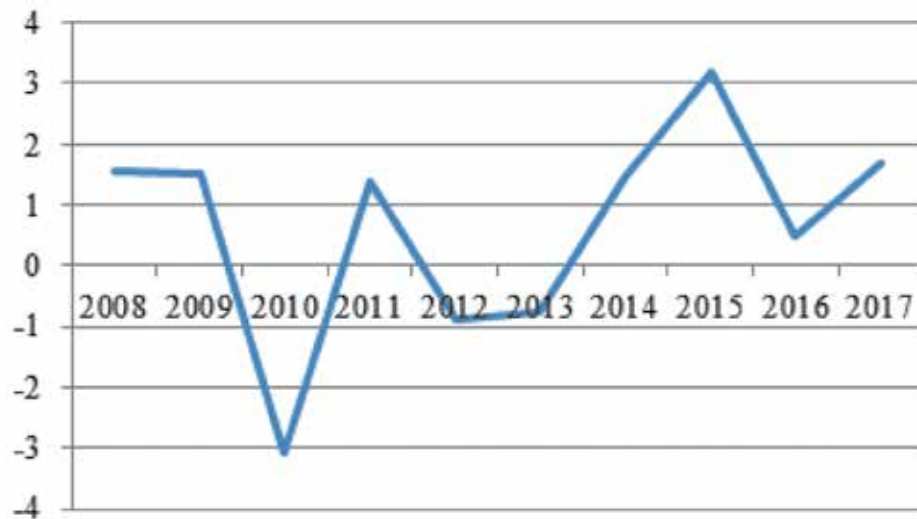


Fig.2. Change of the prognostic assessment of the threat of the world economy state to country's security by population of Russia, percentage points (Competitiveness Dataset, [s.a.]; The World Bank Group, [s.a.]))

GDP per capita. This factors influence not only on actual security, but also on perception of it. Dynamics of the indicated macroeconomical characteristics affects the very security discourse and does it both directly and indirectly, through mass media, public attitudes, etc.

Plurality of factors determining the significance degree of certain national security threats is the reason for considerable difference in estimations of population of different countries. Comparing to the mean value in the world, the threat of Islamic group ISIL (banned in Russia) is more significant in Russia (it exceeds the estimates of other threats in 2-3 times), the threat of global climate change is perceived as significant in 1,7 times less frequent here, than in the world. Assessment of the threat of state of the world economy to national security by Russians is also lower, than on average in the world.

The built multiple regression equation allows calculating the current and prognostic assessment of the threat of state of the world economy to the country's security. It has been demonstrated that insignificant fluctuations in estimates of Russia's population was observed from 2007 to 2016, which is connected with multidirectional influence of the growing national economy competitiveness and decreasing export share of goods and services in GDP.

Knowledge of the factors determining the perception of national security threats by country's population is necessary to build the appropriate politics – selection of the instruments and measures, which will create both objective and subjective security (perception of it). Appropriate politics will promote entrepreneurial activity, prevent migration, increase the birth rate, etc. Consequently, it will provide sustainable and secure development of the territory.

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