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**FACTORS OF EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF TERROR PHOBIA  
AMONG SOUTHERN UKRAINE'S URBAN RESIDENTS**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the paper is to consider the main factors of the emergence and development of the fear of a terrorist attack, terror phobia, among Southern Ukraine's urban residents. The authors emphasize that terrorist attacks have a destabilizing effect on individuals and societies as a whole, because they generate a space of fear, despair, and panic. Modern terrorism is seen as a phenomenon that creates a catastrophic threat not only to universal civilizational values – freedom, democracy, and security, but also to a sustainable lifestyle in a particular locality. Terrorism has become an integral attribute of modern planetary existence, a punishment for modern humanity, a kind of tribute to the altar of the new world order, a tragic fragment of the socio-political picture of the world, in which it is increasingly difficult to see the outlines of a new order or new chaos. The city of Kherson was chosen to be the research area as it is the centre of the region that borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine. The location like that makes it topical to study the city's population's level of terror phobia, associated with the threat of being affected by a terrorist attack, perceived as a potential danger. The provisions put forward in the article are specified on the data of socio-empirical analysis of the individual components of Southern Ukraine's terror sphere under the current circumstances.

**Keywords**

Terrorist attack – Urban residents – Southern Ukraine – Terror sphere – Fear – Security



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## Introduction

Interest in terrorism under the current circumstances is caused by the fact that it is, in a broad sense, the most significant obstacle to civilizational progress, a destructive factor in understanding and conceptualizing identification intersections and alternatives of the global society and Ukraine in particular. Terrorism in modern society is an oppositional interaction of two different ways of organizing public life, two different forms of relations, formally and informally configured. In recent decades, almost all the states at the forefront of civilization development have united against an informal but well-organized community of terrorists who seek to establish their desired order through the chaos spread in the social space.

## Literature review

Modern scientists point to the topicality of the philosophical understanding of terrorism as an absolutely negative phenomenon of social life, the purpose of which is to condense the space of individual and group fear. The production of new philosophical ideas in the context of the study of terrorism is due to social and political changes in the world community, as well as the increase in geopolitical tensions with reference to the emerging risks and challenges<sup>1</sup>.

Terrorism is the main source of public fear, which has far-reaching consequences for society and the state. The fear of a terrorist attack not only changes the behaviour of citizens in their regular environment, but it also creates a real physical danger. However, trust in relationships reduces the level of fear of terrorism. There has been discovered the occurrence of a strong negative link between trust in government entities and fear of terrorism<sup>2</sup>. In many countries, citizens' awareness about the manifestations of terrorism is determined by the format of the transmitted media messages. Mass media discussions of terrorist attacks raise questions about the ways such reports create a climate of fear among residents. Getting information about terrorism from multiple sources increases the level of fear of terrorism, and it is especially true about the sources that are actively accessed<sup>3</sup>.

We note the lack of research that links the fear of a terrorist attack to the characteristics of the state, and particularly to the fact, whether the level of democracy affects the fear of terrorism. Modern scientists<sup>4</sup> argue that fear is inherent in citizens of undemocratic countries, whereas democratic governments are resistant to the fear of a possible terrorist attack. It is also argued that the most vulnerable categories of population bear a heavier burden of fear and other factors of psychological pressure associated with terrorist threats, as well as retaliatory actions on the part of the state<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> S. Kostyuchkov; E. Pronin; G. Morozova y A. Pautova, "Philosophical Concept of Terrorism at the Present Stage of World Development", *Philosophy of Science*, Vol: 5 num 2 (2018): 1374-1385.

<sup>2</sup> R. Van Der Does; J. Kantorowicz; S. Kuipers y M. Liem, "Does Terrorism Dominate Citizens' Hearts or Minds? The Relationship between Fear of Terrorism and Trust in Government", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, (2019), DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2019.1608951.

<sup>3</sup> H. Williamson; S. Fay y T. Miles-Johnson, "Fear of terrorism: media exposure and subjective fear of attack", *Global Crime*, Vol: 20 num 1 (2019): 1-25, DOI: 10.1080/17440572.2019.1569519.

<sup>4</sup> D. Christensen y J. Aars, "Does Democracy Decrease Fear of Terrorism?", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol: 31 Issue 3 (2019): 615-631, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1287700.

<sup>5</sup> D. Eisenman; D. Glik; M. Ong; Q. Zhou; Chi-H. Tseng; A. Long; J. Fielding and S. Asch, "Terrorism-Related Fear and Avoidance Behavior in a Multiethnic Urban Population", *Am J Public Health*, Vol: 99 num 1 (2009): 168-174, DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2007.124206.

The study of a person's fear of terrorism aims to examine gender differences in responses to the threat of terrorism as a certain form of violent victimization. The results of the study prove that women are more susceptible to fear and more likely to seek answers to the information related to terrorism<sup>6</sup>. Modern scientists<sup>7</sup> consider various approaches to explaining people's fear of terrorist attacks. The presented empirical analysis with the use of structural equation models proves that the fear of terrorism has no elements that connect it with the fear of violent crimes practically. For example, a negative attitude towards the Muslim world determines the fear of terrorism in the world community, partially neutralizing other fears generated in society. Muslim migrants are a priori viewed as a threat to national security in different countries of the world. Counter-terrorism measures are accompanied by preventive radicalization assessments, justifying the practice of persecuting Muslims, which contributes to the progressive development of anti-Islamic discourses<sup>8</sup>.

**Hypothesis.** The authors make an assumption that the level of terror phobia among Southern Ukraine's urban residents is quite high. This is due to the fact that the centre of the region in which the study was conducted borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine.

**Purpose.** The purpose of the study is to do research into the level of terror phobia among the urban residents of Southern Ukraine, in the city of Kherson specifically. The authors' research interest is determined by the fact that the city of Kherson is the centre of the region that borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in the east of Ukraine. The topicality of the study is significantly increased in the context of modern Ukraine's orientation to European space in view of the growing threat of terrorism in almost all parts of the world.

## Material & methods

Terrorism is based on the fear of a large number of people; the formula is very simple: there is no fear – there is no point in terrorism. Even extremely brutal violence and a criminal crime do not cause a sense of mass threat because of their everyday nature. All-encompassing global fear is becoming a symptom of a serious civilization disease. Fear is a general, trans-historical, and, moreover, eternal concept, one of the determinants of the essence and content of the processes that manifest the beginning of the twenty-first century. Being undoubtedly important in a certain period of civilization development, the problem of fear has acquired the status of a mega-problem in the era of global transformation processes of the world order. Fear activates the progressive emancipation of a person from the rational perception of the world, "suggesting" a suitable object for generating fear – all those who are not like "Me" or "Us", who came to "my familiar world" to change it for the worse.

It should be noted that terror phobia, the fear of a terrorist attack, exists inside a person in the form of a fairly wide range of nuanced shades – from anxiety to panic fear. If the source of danger is indifferent, uncertain, or unconscious, fear is recorded in the person's

<sup>6</sup> A. Nellis; "Gender Differences in Fear of Terrorism", *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, Vol: 25 num 3 (2009):322-340, DOI: 10.1177/1043986209335012.

<sup>7</sup> H. Andersen; J. Mayerl, "Attitudes towards Muslims and fear of terrorism", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol: 41 Issue 15 (2018): 2634-2655, DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2017.1413200.

<sup>8</sup> S. Sharma y J. Nijjar, "The racialized surveillant assemblage: Islam and the fear of terrorism", *Popular Communication. The International Journal of Media and Culture*, Vol:16 Issue 1 (2018): 72-85.



emotional sphere as anxiety. Functionally, fear serves as a kind of warning to the subject about probable danger, makes it possible to focus on its sources, and encourages the search for ways to distance oneself from danger. When fear takes on the power of affect, it can imperatively transmit certain behavioural stereotypes to a person and place them under the command of these stereotypes.

In the third Millennium social space, human fears are effectively manipulated to achieve the desired result; irrational fear is an effective tool for blocking the common sense and the protective mechanisms of the human psyche. When paralyzed with fear a person easily makes concessions, gives in to suggestion, and accepts any conditions, the fulfilment of which will relieve, even for a short time, their own and their loved ones' feelings of fear for life, health, and well-being. In this context, terrorism is a risk causing factor associated with new technological opportunities that produce a wide range of changes in society, and their assessment encourages large-scale sociological research<sup>9</sup>.

In the course of the study, the method of a sociological survey was used. The basis of the sociological survey was an interview, a direct socio-psychological contact between the researcher and the respondent in which responses to a system of questions based on the purpose and objectives of the study are recorded. From an empirical point of view, we used a survey conducted among a representative sample of the residents of the city of Kherson in the southern region of Ukraine. A standardized interview with a rigidly fixed questionnaire developed by the authors was applied. The subject of the study is the attitude of the residents of the city of Kherson to the threat of terrorism. The purpose of the study is to identify the specifics of social perception of the threat of terrorist attacks and to rank the factors of the emergence and development of terror phobia among the urban residents of Southern Ukraine. The volunteers from among the University students were invited as interviewers. The interview was prepared in advance and it guaranteed the respondents' confidentiality. The results of the interview were processed and analysed by the authors directly.

The research findings are based on the data of a sociological survey on the factors of emergence and development of terror phobia among the urban residents of Southern Ukraine.

### Research base

The city of Kherson, located in the South of Ukraine, was chosen as the research base. The choice is determined by the fact that Kherson is the administrative centre of the region that borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine. 120 (n=120) residents of Kherson aged from 18 to 70, representing a wide social cross-section of citizens, men and women of different professions, occupations and social statuses, took part in the sociological survey.

*Procedure.* The research results are determined by the quality of the interview preparation and the depth of its content analysis. The questionnaire used in the interview included the following questions:

- 1) Do you feel the fear of a terrorist attack in your daily life in your city?

<sup>9</sup> V. Shcheblanova, Dynamics of the risks of modern terrorism: monograph (Saratov: SSTU, 2010).  
DR. SERHII KOSTIUCHKOV / DR. EDWARD PRONIN / PH. D. (C) ELENA VOLKOVYCH / PH. D. (C) TETIANA CHERKASHYNA  
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2) In your opinion, is the risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack higher in the city as compared to the village?

3) If you feel the fear of a terrorist attack in your daily life in the city, can this be due to the fact that your city is the centre of the area that borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine?

4) In your opinion, can the fear of a terrorist attack emerge because of a large number of displaced people in your city, among whom there may be potential terrorists?

5) If you feel the fear of a terrorist attack in your daily life in the city, can this be due to the fact that mass media often report about terrorist attacks in different regions of the world?

6) In your opinion, can the fear of a terrorist attack be caused by the fear of political, economic, or social future in general?

## Results

Basing on the results of the interview, the authors compiled the responses digests, the analysis of which became the result of the study. Before the interview, the interviewers explained (with the consent of the respondents) the meaning of the operational concepts used in the interview – terror phobia, the threat of a terrorist attack, a terrorist attack, it being understood that the term "terror phobia" is used with a bigger emphasis on its socio-psychological, rather than its clinical psycho-dysfunctional content.

*Digest of responses to Question 1. Do the respondents who live in the city experience manifestations of terror phobia, the fear of a terrorist attack, in their daily life?*

Among 120 respondents, 107 (89%) are afraid of violence in general including the one which is the result of a terrorist attack. 13 respondents (11%) said that they did not feel the fear of probable actions of terrorists. No further interviews were conducted with them since the following questions are relevant only if the first question is answered positively (see Fig. 1).

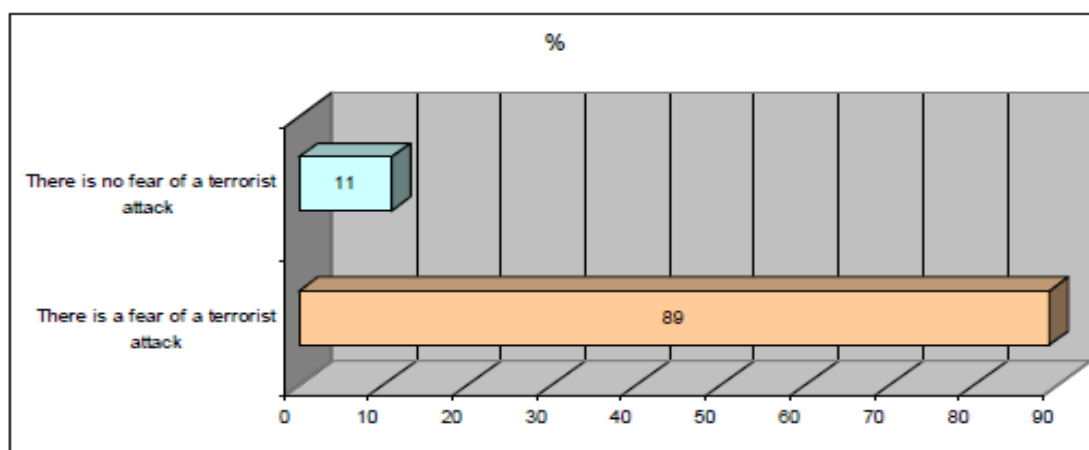


Figure 1  
Digest analysis for Question 1



*Digest of responses to Question 2. How do the respondents assess the threat of a terrorist attack in the city compared to a locality in the rural area?*

Among 107 respondents, 74 (69%) believe that the risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack in the city is much higher than in rural areas. 19 respondents (18%) found it difficult to answer this question. 14 respondents (13%) said that in the region, the risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack did not depend on the geographical location (see Fig. 2).

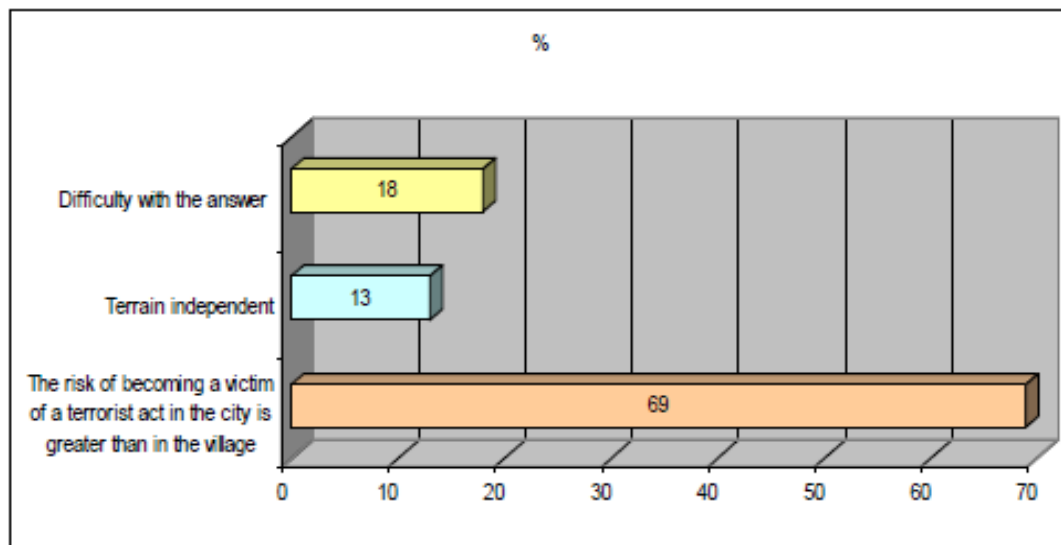


Figure 2  
Digest analysis for Question 2

*Digest of responses to Question 3. Do the residents of the city feel the fear of a terrorist attack because Kherson is the centre of the region that borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine?*

The respondents' answers were as follows: out of 107 respondents, 82 (77%) said that the city's relative proximity to the territory where the fighting was taking place certainly affected the growth of the level of terror phobia among the citizens.

The respondents explained their answers by saying that the terrorists' target might include military facilities, the armed forces' deployment, and objects of transport or energy infrastructure.

According to the respondents, probable terrorist attacks on these objects may leave victims among the civilian population. 17 interviewees (16%) found it difficult to answer this question. 8 respondents (7%) said that the proximity of the locality to the combat zone was not related to the probability of a terrorist attack and, accordingly, did not affect the growth of the terror phobia level among the citizens (see Fig. 3).

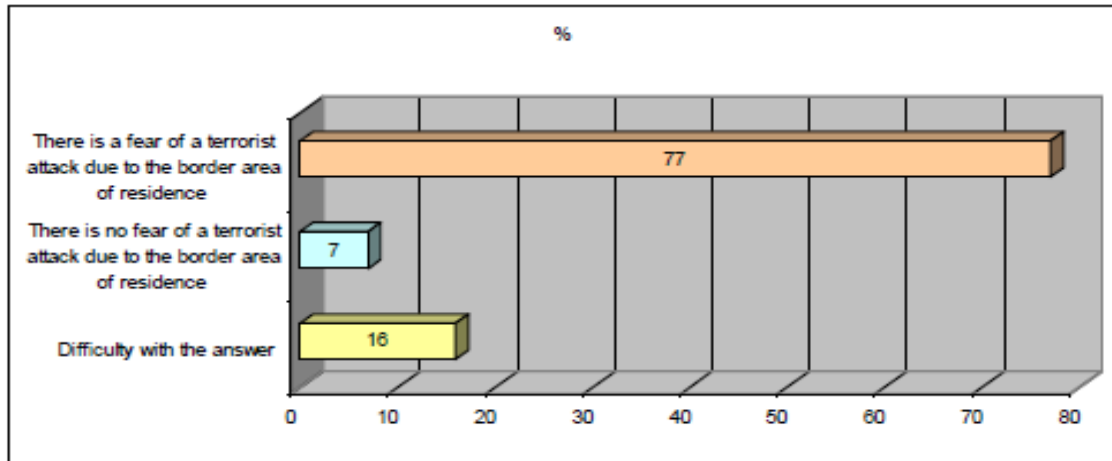


Figure 3  
Digest analysis for Question 3

*Digest of responses to Question 4. In your opinion, can the fear of a terrorist attack emerge because of a large number of displaced people in your city, among whom there may be potential terrorists?*

56 citizens out of 107 respondents (52%) said that during the period of fighting in the East of Ukraine, the number of displaced people from Donetsk and Luhansk regions had increased sharply in the city. This group of people may include potential terrorists who are focused on destabilizing the political situation in the southern region of Ukraine. This fact caused fear among 56 respondents. 14 respondents (13%) expressed their belief that there were no terrorists among the internally displaced persons, they were peaceful people who had fled the war. 37 (34%) respondents said they were not ready to give a reasonable answer to the interviewer's question (see Fig. 4).

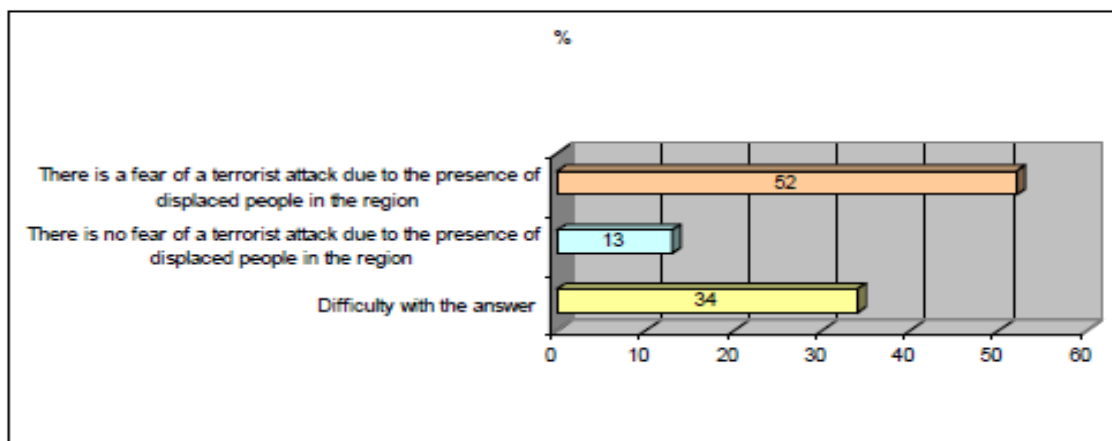


Figure 4  
Digest analysis for Question 4

*Digest of responses to Question 5. If you feel the fear of a terrorist attack in your daily life in the city, can this be due to the fact that mass media often report about terrorist attacks in different regions of the world?*

57 respondents (55%) noted that the saturation of mass media with reports about violence in general and terrorist attacks in particular actually created an atmosphere of suspicion and fear in society, even if the terrorist attack took place somewhere in Asia or Africa. The respondents also noted that Europe and Ukraine in particular attracted terrorists' attention and activity. 13 respondents (12%) stressed that mass media did not increase their personal level of terror phobia, but could (and did) influence the mass consciousness. 17 respondents (16%) said that the media served as a generator of the flow of terror phobia, but this role was not decisive. In their opinion, the fear of a terrorist attack is formed by a certain set of factors, but they find it difficult to specify these factors. 19 respondents (18%) indicated that they did not have a clear answer to this question (see Fig. 5).

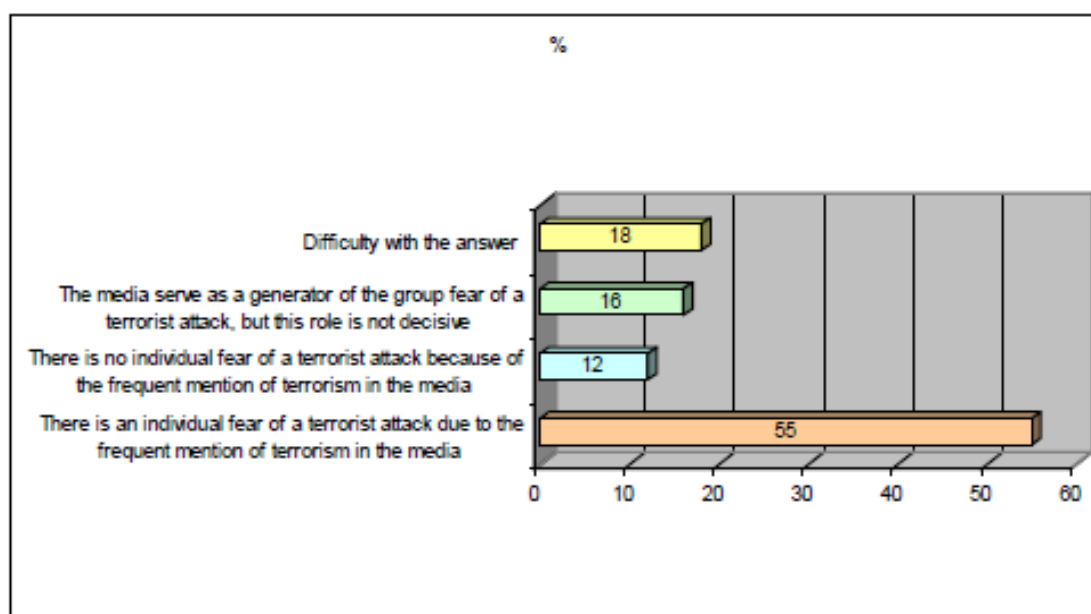


Figure 5  
Digest analysis for Question 5

*Digest of responses to Question 6. Can the citizens of Ukraine, in particular the ones of its southern region, have the fear of a terrorist attack because of the fear of the political, economic, or social future in general?*

Uncertainty about the future and distrust of the government and its policies – social, political, and economic – can cause the fear of probable negative or even tragic events: this is the opinion of 82 respondents (77%). 16 respondents (15%) stressed that they did not see a connection between uncertainty about the future, distrust of the government and its policies, and the fear of a possible terrorist attack. They also suggested the idea that the sense of security among the residents would grow if the state increased its efforts to ensure a stable and secure environment in society. 9 respondents (8%) said that they did not have a clear answer to the question (see Fig. 6).

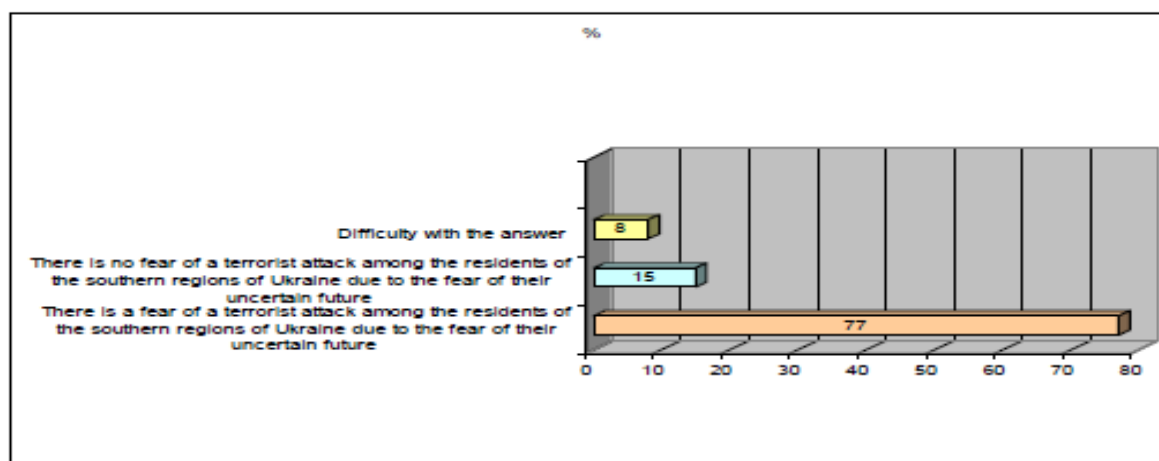


Figure 6  
Digest analysis for Question 6

## Discussion

The results of the study prove that the emergence and development of terror phobia among the urban residents of Southern Ukraine is due to the presence of a set of factors of different strength and intensity. The authors make the assumption that the level of terror phobia among Southern Ukraine's urban residents is quite high. This is due to the fact that the region in the centre of which the study was conducted is a border area with the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine. The hypothesis was confirmed, the research results proved the fact that the key factors of the fear of a terrorist attack among the residents of the city of Kherson are as follows: a) life in the urban space is considered in the light of the fact that the city itself with its infrastructure, facilities of increased danger, population density and size is a preferential target for terrorists; b) the city of Kherson is the centre of the region, which borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is located geographically close to the combat zone in the East of Ukraine; c) significantly numerous displaced persons living in the city may include potential terrorists; d) mass media frequently report about terrorist attacks in different regions of the planet and this enhances strongly-held views about the constant risk of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack regardless of the place of residence; e) the fear of a terrorist attack is caused by the total fear of the political, economic, and social future.

Cross-tabulations of answers to the questions "If you experience the fear of a terrorist attack in your daily life in the city, can this be due to the fact that your city is the centre of the area which borders the Russian-annexed Crimea and is geographically close to the combat zone in Eastern Ukraine?" and "In your opinion, can the fear of a terrorist attack emerge because of the large number of displaced persons in your city, among which there may be potential terrorists?" make it possible to state that the fear of becoming a victim of a terrorist attack in the city, the centre of the region, which is geographically close to the combat zone in the East of Ukraine, and the fear of displaced persons, among whom there may be potential terrorists, are different in content, though related phenomena. Not all the respondents who fear the territorial proximity to the combat zone are afraid of displaced persons as probable carriers of the terrorist threat and vice versa (see Fig. 7).



All the identified factors of the fear of a terrorist attack among the residents of the city of Kherson are interrelated and form a structured cluster. The figure shows a generalized picture of the inter-correlations of structural elements of the socio-political continuum and the factors of terror phobia, which are consistently related to each other. However, it should be noted that the presence of one of the fears actualizes the second one, because since the beginning of hostilities in the East of Ukraine, the number of refugees from the war-torn regions has increased sharply in the southern territories of Ukraine, in particular in Kherson region.

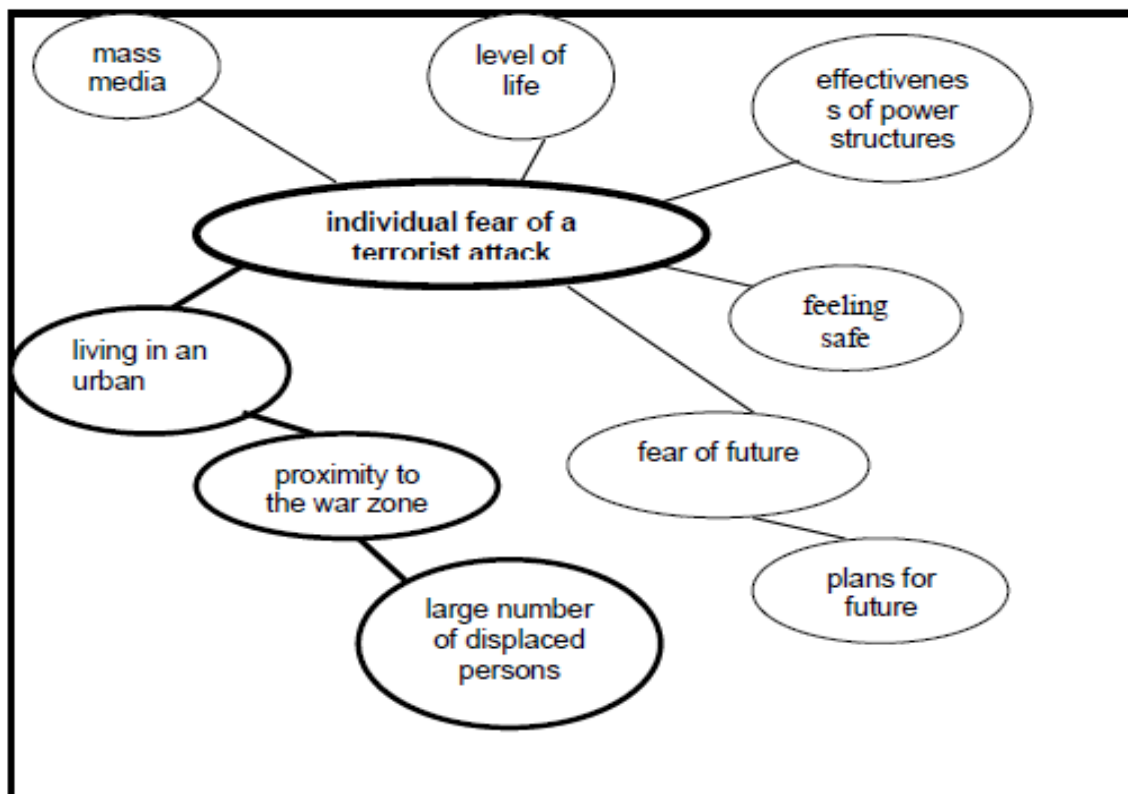


Figure 7

Scheme of inter-correlating structural elements of the socio-political continuum and the factors of terror phobia.

The analysis of the digests of the interview results showed that the most effective factors for citizens' fear of a terrorist attack were, firstly, the relative proximity of the city to the territory where the fighting is taking place, and secondly, their uncertainty about the future and distrust of the government in its social, political and economic policies. These factors turned out to be decisive and in fact terror-phobic for 77% of the residents of the city of Kherson. 52% of the respondents associate the fear of a terrorist attack with a large number of displaced people in the research area. Accordingly, this causes a sense of fear of probable terrorist attacks and affects the growth of the level of terror phobia among the residents.



It should be noted that modern scholars and practitioners tend to explain the absence of panic and fear of terrorist attacks among residents by information campaigns aimed at de-escalating these panic manifestations. The results of their research confirm the fact that citizens' trust in the government consistently reduces the fear of terrorism. At the same time their confidence in the effectiveness of state counter-terrorism policies is less important. The more citizens believe in the ability of the government to resist terrorist attacks, the more they feel that the authorities share their values and give them the opportunity not to be afraid of terrorist attacks<sup>10</sup>. We emphasize that we have not come across any studies of the key factors of the emergence and development of the fear of a terrorist attack (terror phobia) among Southern Ukraine's urban residents in the works of other scientists.

## Conclusion

A realistic approach to the process of the modern world development enables us to state that such concepts as "war", "fear", "loneliness", "poverty", "personality", "freedom", "crime", "terrorism" and others are the most commonly used and universally congenial among the concepts-symbols of our time. Modernity brings with it

"...not only new social relations and ways of life, another economics, new political conflicts and a transformed consciousness, but also improving the understanding of the status of human life. Determining the status of human life, in our opinion, is to reveal and articulate the key principles that govern society in its attitude towards the person to the extent that it realizes itself as a society of the appropriate level of development. The universal, trans-historical principle of social attitude to human life is the recognition of its unconditional value in various dimensions – religious, philosophical, and scientific ones"<sup>11</sup>

Fear belongs to the most general, trans-historical, and, without exaggeration, eternal concepts that can determine the essence and content of the processes that marked the beginning of the twenty-first century. The problem of fear, which is important in any period of the development of civilization, has acquired the status of a super-problem in the era of global transformation processes of the world order. The fear of a terrorist attack is not a fear generated by the actual impact of dangerous for a person factors: it is characterized as an emotion of anticipation, namely the one that is anticipated or predicted in the nearest or slightly distant future.

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