

Perceived Threat from Minorities Decreases with Increased Societal Threat: Evidence from the 2021 Military Coup in Myanmar

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Abstract

Societies are often comprised of majority group members who feel threatened by minorities which, in return, are denied equal rights. How do perceived societal threats, that impact both majorities and minorities, influence perceived minority threat and the support for their rights? We utilized the February 2021 Myanmar coup – which has been perceived as threatening by most majority and minority citizens – to examine this question in a three-wave cross-sectional survey. One wave was conducted before the coup. The second (immediately after) and third (one year after) were aimed to understand short and long-term changes in perceived minority threat following the coup. Perceived minority threat decreased after the coup with increased perceived societal threat (wave 2) and increased back again when perceived societal threat diminished (wave 3). Perceived minority threat was also associated with higher support for minority rights. Our results reveal the dynamic nature of group-relevant threats using a unique non-WEIRD sample.

Introduction

On February 1st, 2021, a military coup occurred in Myanmar. Myanmar's military, known as the Tatmadaw, seized control of the country and detained several top political leaders. The coup marked a major setback for Myanmar's fragile transition to democracy, which had begun in 2011 after decades of military rule¹. The military's actions were met with widespread condemnation and protests erupted across Myanmar, with citizens demanding the release of detained leaders, the restoration of civilian rule, and a return to democratic governance. The military junta responded with a crackdown on dissent, deploying security forces and imposing internet restrictions¹.

In parallel, Myanmar houses multiple religious and ethnic groups in delicate balance, with Buddhists (i.e., the majority) perceiving ethnic and religious minorities, and especially Muslims, as threats to the identity of Myanmar^{2,3}. However, the onset of the coup bore far-reaching implications for the freedoms of the whole population, irrespective of ethnicity or religion as mass population displacement and extreme violence unfolded. Therefore, most Burmese citizens, except for those directly affiliated to the military, have seen the coup as a threat to the entire society (Thawngmung & Noah, 2021). This led majority and minority groups in Myanmar to align for a common cause, sparking interethnic protests for the first time since Myanmar's independence⁴.

Given the tense relationship between the Buddhist majority and the minorities in Myanmar, the coup presents a unique opportunity to examine a long-standing question: what is the relationship between perceived threats to the entire society (e.g., a coup) and perceived threat from minorities experienced by the majority group? The literature suggests two competing hypotheses. The first hypothesis argues that perceived societal threat is associated with increased perceived minority threat and decreased support for minority rights. The second hypothesis argues that a shared perceived societal threat may be associated with lower perceived minority threat and higher support for minority rights. Our study aimed to examine

these two competing hypotheses using a large-scale 3 time-point cross-sectional design in a real-world context.

Perceived Societal Threat Positively Associated with Perceived Minority Threat

Numerous historical threatening events involved minorities being scapegoated, i.e., being wrongfully, or disproportionately assigned blame for the events⁵. For example, during the middle-ages, conspiracy theories considered Jews responsible for the spread of the black plague in Europe⁶. More recently, minority groups were blamed and discriminated against during the 2008 economic crisis⁷⁻⁹ and the COVID19 pandemic¹⁰⁻¹².

Conditions of threat (e.g., during societal threats) may increase the salience of ingroup identities in an attempt to regain control over one's situation and avoid exposure to additional risks¹³⁻¹⁵. More particularly, societal threats may shake up the social ranking of societies, threatening the status of advantaged members and making minority members of lower status more threatening¹⁶. In response, individuals may use scapegoating (i.e., assigning blame to minorities for the societal threat) to further enhance one's control in the face of uncertainty and assuage a sense of individual responsibility⁵. Therefore, minorities- even when they are unrelated to the societal threat- may be seen as more threatening when societal threats arise¹⁷⁻¹⁹, further leading to disregard of their civil rights^{13,15,20}. Based on these findings, one potential hypothesis is that perceived societal threat would be positively associated with perceived minority threat, further relating to lower support for minority rights.

In contrast to the previously reviewed findings, alternative historical and empirical evidence suggests that threatening situations increase affiliation²¹, implying a potential negative relationship between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat. Research analyzing past disasters and mass-emergencies have shown that those events often create shared goals²², therefore being associated with social cohesion, cooperation and prosocial orientation across groups in society²³⁻²⁵. Furthermore, international threat from China and Russia towards the U.S. has been associated with lowered animosity between American Democrats and Republicans²⁶. One common limitation in these studies, however, is that they assessed the outcomes in the presence of an actual threat (i.e., not necessarily perceived). Therefore, it is impossible to conclude whether perceived threat or another element associated with this threat (e.g., higher contact due to cooperation) underlies the effect on intergroup animosity. In addition, these studies did not focus on perceived threat from minorities.

The common ingroup identity model²⁷ can underpin the social psychology behind the positive effects of perceived societal threat on the relationship between majority and minority groups. The theory posits that people's identification with various groups (e.g., their homogenous ingroup vs. the broader ingroup including minorities) shifts fluidly depending on whether the context makes salient individual versus collective goals²⁸. According to the model, perceived shared threats make the broader ingroup identity more salient, increasing shared identification with and decreasing threat from individuals who share a

superordinate identity²⁹⁻³¹. As a result, the second potential hypothesis suggests that as perceived societal threat increases, perceived minority threat decreases, ultimately relating to higher support for minority rights.

The Present study

Utilizing the occurrence of the military coup, we designed a three-wave cross-sectional survey in Myanmar to test whether perceived societal threat is positively or negatively associated with perceived minority threat. The first wave was conducted before the onset of the coup, while the second and third wave were conducted one month and one year respectively after the coup. We examined perceived threat from minorities at each wave and measured perceived societal threat and support for minority rights at wave 2 and 3. While wave 1 and wave 2 provided us pre- and post-coup evidence on perceived minority threat, wave 3 allowed us to examine how perceived minority threat evolves when the immediate perceived threat from the coup wanes.

The coup followed an election that took place after wave 1 (November 8th, 2020), catching citizens by surprise³². Therefore, we assumed that perceived societal threat would be higher after the coup (wave 2 and wave 3) than before the coup (wave 1). Ever since the coup occurred, nationwide long-lasting violent conflict has continued to cause deaths and people to flee their homes³³. However, while the number of violent police interventions increased between wave 2 and wave 3³⁴(see Fig. 1, panel a), it was paired with a decreasing- not increasing- public interest as measured by web searches (34) (see Fig. 1 below, panel b). In a similar vein, research shows that individuals who live in societies immersed in a chronic state of threat go through routinization, yielding a sense of normalcy in the presence of hardships, risks and other negative consequences³⁵. Given that most of Burma's history is characterized by military rule¹we reasoned that in the year after the coup, citizens would habituate to the coup, implying lower perceived societal threat at wave 3 versus wave 2.

The structure of our data allowed us to compare the two competing hypotheses mentioned above. While along with the military coup, a range of psychological variables may alter perceived minority threat, we focus on the perceived societal threat the coup may cause. According to the first hypothesis, perceived minority threat should be higher at wave 2 (post-coup, when perceived societal threat is high) relative to wave 1 (pre-coup, when perceived societal threat is low) and lower in wave 3 (after habituation) relative to wave 2 (H1a). According to the second hypothesis, perceived minority threat should be lower at wave 2 relative to wave 1 and higher at wave 3 relative to wave 2 (H2a). Furthermore, the latter two waves allowed to test the effects of reported perceived threat on support for minority rights. As a result, the first hypothesis argues that the negative relationship between reported perceived societal threat and support for minority rights will be mediated by higher perceived threat from minorities (H2a), while the second hypothesis suggests that the positive relationship between reported perceived societal threat and support for minority rights will be mediated by lower perceived threat from minorities (H2b).

Results

We first tested H1a and H2a, to examine whether perceived minority threat would be lower or higher directly after the coup versus before the coup, as well as whether perceived threat would change a year after the coup relative to right after the coup. We statistically compared perceived ethnic minority threat and perceived Muslim threat before (when the threat of coup was low), right after the coup (when the threat of coup was high) and a year after the coup (when we assumed citizens would habituate) in two separate models. Each model consisted of an ANCOVA in which perceived minority threat was predicted by wave and the demographic variables. Gender (0 = “man”, 1 = “woman”), city-resident (0 = “Living in a town or a village”, 1 = “living in a city”) and religion (0 = non-Buddhist, 1 = Buddhist) were dummy-coded before being entered to the regression. The assumptions of the models reported in this study were assessed and deemed satisfied after visual inspection of the assumption plots.

In the first model, perceived ethnic minority threat differed significantly between time points ($F(2, 5045) = 87.28, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .03$). Tukey contrasts showed that both in wave 2 ($w2-w1 = -.72, p < .001$) and wave 3 ($w3-w1 = -.44, p < .001$) perceived minority threat (i.e., after the coup) was lower than in wave 1 (i.e., before the coup). Due to lack of measures of perceived societal threat in wave 1, we cannot test differences between wave 1 and the other waves in perceived societal threat. However, we did find statistical support that perceived societal threat decreased from wave 2 to wave 3 ($w3-w2 = -.36, F(1, 4065) = 59.76, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .01$), which coincided with an increase in perceived minority threat from wave 2 to wave 3 ($w3-w2 = .28, p < .001$). The model yielded support for H1b, that the onset of the military coup (being associated with perceived threat) coincided with lower perceived minority threat and that a decrease in perceived threat in the aftermath of the coup coincided with an increase in perceived minority threat (see Fig. 2).

In the second model, perceived Muslim threat differed significantly between time points ($F(2, 4892) = 25.51, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .01$). Tukey contrasts showed that in wave 2 ($w2-w1 = -.35, p < .001$), but not in wave 3 ($w3-w1 = -.06, p = .49$) perceived Muslim threat (i.e., after the coup) was lower than in wave 1 (i.e., before the coup). Indeed, the decreased reported perceived societal threat from wave 2 towards wave 3 ($w3-w2 = -.36, F(1, 4066) = 59.77, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .01$) coincided with an increase in perceived Muslim threat from wave 2 to wave 3 ($w3-w2 = .30, p < .001$), explaining the lack of significant difference between wave 1 and wave 2 on perceived Muslim threat. The model yielded support for H1b, that the onset of the military coup (being associated with perceived societal threat) coincided with lower perceived Muslim threat and that a decrease in perceived threat in the aftermath of the coup coincided with an increase in perceived Muslim threat (see Fig. 3).

After investigating the temporal relationships between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat, regression and structural equation models examined hypotheses H2a/ H2b, i.e., whether perceived threat from minorities would mediate the positive/ negative relationship between perceived societal threat and support for minority rights. While we did have measures of perceived ethnic minority threat and perceived Muslim threat in wave 1, we did not possess measures of perceived societal threat or support

for minority rights at that time. Therefore, the regression analyses examined H2a/b on data from only wave 2 and wave 3. Measurement of perceived ethnic minority threat and Muslim were randomized between participants, due to survey length constrains. Therefore, two models were constructed, one per mediator.

Multiple linear regression models first tested the paths of the mediation separately, i.e., whether reported perceived societal threat relates to higher vs. lower perceived ethnic minority and Muslim threat and whether perceived ethnic minority and Muslim threat related to higher vs. lower support for minority rights. The analysis showed that those who perceived more societal threat, perceived lower threat from ethnic minorities ($b = -.17$, $SE = .02$, $CI[-.21, -.13]$, $t = -8.18$, $p < .001$) and Muslims ($b = -.16$, $SE = .02$, $CI[-.21, -.12]$, $t = -7.90$, $p < .001$) and that those higher on perceived ethnic minority threat ($b = -.16$, $SE = .02$, $CI[-.20, -.13]$, $t = -8.30$, $p < .001$) and perceived Muslim threat ($b = -.13$, $SE = .02$, $CI[-.17, -.08]$, $t = -5.77$, $p < .001$) were less likely to support minority rights (see Table 1 and Table 1 in supplementary materials p.1).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for the Variables and Changes Across Time x

Wave	Percent women	Mean age	Standard deviation age	Percent Buddhists	Mean education	Standard deviation age	Percent city Dwellers
wave1	0.24	30.38	16.93	0.73	3.50	0.95	0.45
wave2	0.24	28.17	14.71	0.74	4.19	1.21	0.43
wave3	0.28	30.64	18.02	0.78	4.02	1.20	0.40

Two mediation models tested perceived ethnic minority threat and perceived Muslim threat as 2 separate mediators of the relationship between perceived societal threat and support for minority rights (see supplementary materials p.2). In the first model, besides including perceived societal threat as the independent variable, perceived support for minority rights was taken up as the dependent variable and perceived ethnic minority threat (i.e., the mediator) and the control variables were introduced. In the model, the total effect of perceived societal threat on support for minority rights ($b = .17$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 8.44$, $p < .001$) was partially mediated by perceived minority threat as both the direct ($b = .15$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 7.29$, $p < .001$) as well as the indirect ($b = .03$, $SE = 0.005$, $t = 4.83 = p < .001$) effect of perceived societal threat on support for minority rights. As a result, this analysis provided support for H2b, that lower perceived minority threat will mediate the positive relationship between perceived societal threat and support for minority rights.

The second mediation model was identical to the first model (see above), yet now with perceived Muslim threat as the mediator instead of perceived ethnic minority threat. In this model, the total effect of perceived societal threat on support for minority rights ($b = .15$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 6.97$, $p < .001$) was partially mediated by perceived Muslim threat as both the direct ($b = .14$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 6.19$, $p < .001$) as well as the indirect ($b = .02$, $SE = 0.004$, $t = 3.55$, $p < .001$) effect of perceived societal threat on support for minority

rights were significant. As a result, this analysis provided additional support for H2b, that lower perceived realistic Muslim threat will mediate the positive relationship between perceived societal threat and support for minority rights.

Finally, since the list of threats we took up in the survey is arbitrary (i.e., we could have added a series of other threats or left out some of those we have right now), we reanalyzed the data, focusing on the most central item of perceived societal threat. The variable was now conceptualized as whether participants agreed (1 = agree, 0 = not agree) that “the rights and freedoms of the entire population” were threatened by the military coup. The results followed the same pattern as the main analyses (indirect effect perceived ethnic minority threat: $b = .09$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 4.07$, $p < .001$, indirect effect perceived Muslim threat: $b = .06$, $SE = 0.02$, $t = 3.35$, $p = .001$).

Discussion

This research investigated the effect of perceived societal threat on perceived threat from minorities. Using data from a three-wave cross-sectional study with a non-WEIRD Burmese sample, we tested the effect of the February 2021 military coup and its aftermath on perceived minority threat and support for minority rights. Perceived threat from minorities decreased directly after the military coup (difference between wave 1 and 2). Wave 2 and wave 3 offered us a unique opportunity to measure the relationship between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat. Decreases in perceived societal threat from wave 2 towards wave 3 coincided with higher perceived threat from minorities. Furthermore, survey responses of perceived societal threat were negatively associated with perceived threat from minorities in wave 2 and wave 3. Finally, the positive relationship between societal threat and support for minority rights was mediated by lower perceived minority rights. Combined, our results provide support for a negative and not a positive relationship between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat.

This research adds an important piece of the puzzle to the debate about the relationship between societal threats and threats perceived from minorities. It provides support to the idea that groups are dynamic entities whose focus adapts in response to environmental challenges. Events entirely unrelated to minority groups may shift away majority members' attention from minority groups, therefore altering the attitudes and behaviours towards minority members. Conversely, our study shows that reductions of perceived threat, in turn, relates to increased minority threat. These findings aim to inspire a more comprehensive model of perceived minority threat that includes contextual factors. Moreover, and more importantly, it aims to inspire research that finds pathways how to assuage perceived minority threat when no external threat is present. Perhaps, creating common goals across minority-majority boundaries may engage the same processes to lessen threat perceptions³⁶.

While our results provide support for a negative relationship between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat, one question is whether there are moderating variables that predict whether societal threat would lead to a reduction or increase in minority threat. Some literature suggests that the extent to which a perceived threat is shared may determine the nature of the relationship between

perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat. Societal threats may be divisive when the minorities are seen as less affected by the threat or the cause of the threat¹⁰. Conversely, research has shown that perceived threat shared amongst group members can strengthen within-group ties³⁷ and create shared goals to combat the consequences of this threat³⁶. Reports on the Myanmar coup have shown that citizens perceived the coup as threatening for the country in its entirety³². In the common ingroup identity model, this “sharedness” is exactly what drives common ingroup identification²⁷ and can thus explain the negative relationship we found in our study. In sum, this research hopes to inspire future studies that will compare the contexts that afford a positive versus negative relationship between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although our research provided evidence for a positive relationship between perceived societal threat and perceived minority threat in a unique context, some characteristics may hamper its generalizability. Our research compared between time points, before, right after and a year after the coup, with between-time comparisons serving as indicators for perceived societal threat. Although we controlled for several demographic variables, our research remains cross-sectional³⁸, thwarting causality claims. Longitudinal assessment of the effects of perceived societal threat on perceived threat from minorities could fortify the claims we made in this article.

Another limitation of our findings is the study sample. Using random domain intercept sampling, we were able to offer our surveys to a wide range of internet users in Burma. However, due to the non-incentivized nature of the study, a large drop-out was detected. Given that the drop-out is random, multiple imputation would be able to correct for potential biases induced due to the missingness of the data³⁹. While multiple imputation yields the same results (see supplementary materials), it is hard to verify whether a systematic source of missingness could be identified in the data. Follow-up research with alternative sampling strategy might clarify this.

This research demonstrated the interconnectedness of perceived threats from different targets. Perceived threat originating from a certain source may inform threats from a range of other sources. Therefore, our research advocates for a more integrated view on the origins of, the dynamics between and the consequences of perceived threats from different sources to improve more favorable intergroup relations.

Materials and Methods

Participants and procedure

This study receive IRB approval from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the study was performed in accordance with all relevant guidelines and regulations. We used RIWI (Real-time Interactive World-wide Intelligence; <https://riwi.com/>), an organization specialized in sampling hard-to-reach populations, to run the studies. Because reaching participants in Burma is extremely challenging, our recruitment was based

on a novel method. When individuals in Burma typed in a website that does not exist, instead of yielding an error (i.e., “this page does not exist”), they were informed about the sampling procedure and invited to a non-incentivized survey⁴⁰. Only Burmese participants who indicated to be 18 years or older could participate in our study. Informed consent was obtained from all subjects in the study and/or their legal guardian(s), which complied with all regulations imposed by the IRB of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. As internet penetration still only hovers around 35% in Burma⁴¹, highly educated males were overrepresented in the survey (see supplementary materials)¹. However, due to the sampling method, we were able to randomly offer the survey to the entire population of adult internet users in the country. Its non-incentivized nature, this allowed us to reach more intrinsically motivated participants, while also resulting in more missing data points.

Three online cross-sectional surveys were carried out. All surveys were translated by local partners of the NGO Digital Public Square that we worked with and were conducted in Burmese. Certain items were translated bidirectionally to optimally capture their meaning. The first wave was held in March 2020, a year before the military coup occurred. It served as a pre-coup estimate of perceived threat from minorities. The second wave was held in March 2021, one month after the coup occurred and provided us with post-estimates of perceived threat from minorities and measures of perceived societal threat and support for minority rights. The third wave was held in January 2022, 11 months after the coup, allowing us to test the long-term effects of the coup and providing measures of perceived societal threat, perceived minority threat (i.e., threat from ethnic minorities and Muslims as the most stigmatized religious minority⁴²) and support for minority rights.

Length limitations to the survey in wave 1 and wave 2 had some implications for the measurement of the main variables of our study. As indicators of perceived minority threat, in wave 1 and wave 2, participants were either asked about perceived threat from ethnic minorities *or* Muslims. In Wave 3, both were assessed together. In addition, in both wave 1 and wave 2, we were only able to measure perceived ethnic minority threat and perceived Muslim threat with one item for each target group. This item uniquely reflects perceived symbolic threat and not realistic threat. To overcome this limitation, we added extra items in wave 3 referring to perceived realistic ethnic minority and Muslim threat. See supplementary materials for analyses using perceived realistic threat instead of perceived symbolic threat in wave 3.

We tested the required sample size using the `mc_power_med` app in R Shiny generic power analysis⁴³. This analysis showed that, in order to detect a mediation effect with 1 mediator and small correlation effects between all variables (i.e., the main analyses with $r = .10$), we needed sample of 1512, while ensuring a 95% power at the $p = .05$ level. Our collaborators of DPS, maintain a standard goal sample of 2000 full responses per wave for their surveys. Therefore, we sampled responses until reaching this cut-off. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the waves, comparing between waves is troublesome as sample characteristics may differ. To account for these sample differences, we controlled for participants' demographics in all our analyses (i.e., gender, age, religion, type of residential community and educational level).

In total, 2085, 2075, and 2081 participants finished the survey in wave 1 wave 2 and wave 3 respectively. To manage missing responses in the data, we applied pairwise deletion, considering only those individuals who had responses for all the variables of interest. Given the large number of missing datapoints, pairwise deletion (i.e., using all observations for which the variables of interest were measured) may be problematic as it can compromise power and cause biased estimates of the statistical effects³⁹. While we used pairwise deletion in the main analyses, we performed robustness analyses using multiple imputed data (see supplementary materials). Multiple imputation involves generating multiple plausible imputed datasets considering the distribution of the observed data. By performing the analysis on each imputed dataset and integrating and reporting the findings based on these datasets, it yields more unbiased estimates of effects in cases of large amounts of missingness, enhancing statistical precision³⁹.

Measures

Perceived societal threat. Perceived societal threat as a result from the coup was assessed solely in the second and third wave by asking participants whether they perceived each of the listed threats related to the military coup. Therefore, while we consider an increase in perceived societal threat from wave 1 to wave 2 as very plausible, we cannot test this formally. The measures were inspired by literature on symbolic and realistic threats⁴⁴ and the same items were used in wave 2 and wave 3. We asked, “which of the below domains do you feel are threatened by the military takeover?”. Response options were “the rights and freedoms of the entire population”, “the rights and freedoms of minorities”, “Your personal security and safety”, “The security and safety of your community” and “your personal financial safety”. The individual perceived societal threat scores were a sum score of the number of items the participant agreed with. A confirmatory factor analysis suggested a one factor model encompassing the perceived societal threat as plausible in both wave 2 ($CFI = .98$, $RMSEA = .05$, $SRMR = .02$) and wave 3 ($CFI = .99$, $RMSEA = .01$, $SRMR = .01$).

Perceived ethnic minority threat. Perceived ethnic minority threat was assessed in all 3 waves with one item, again inspired by literature on symbolic and realistic threat⁴⁴. We asked “Do you agree or disagree? Ethnic minorities are a threat to Myanmar culture and traditions”. Participants then responded using a 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree Likert scale.²

Perceived Muslim threat. Perceived Muslim threat was assessed in all 3 waves with one item, again inspired by literature on symbolic and realistic threat⁴⁴. We asked “Do you agree or disagree? Muslims are a threat to Myanmar culture and traditions”. Participants then responded using a 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree Likert scale.

Support for minority rights. Support for minority rights was only assessed in the second and third wave with 1 item. Participants answered “To what degree do you value the below? The right to protection for all minorities.” on a 1 = not at all to 5 = to a very large extent Likert scale.

Demographics. In all waves, participants answered a brief demographic questionnaire in which their gender, age, education, religion, and type of community of residence (village, city or town) were assessed. We controlled for all demographic variables in all our analyses (see Table 1).

Declarations

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Contributions

Daan Vandermeulen is the main author of the paper, being responsible for formulating the idea of the study, reviewing literature, collecting data, analyzing data and writing up the manuscript. Kinneret Endevelt was responsible for reanalyzing the data and formulating feedback on the whole manuscript. Amit Goldenberg and Eran Halperin contributed by streamlining the idea for the project, giving feedback on data collection, data analysis and co-writing the manuscript.

Additional information

The authors declare no competing interests.

Data availability

The code and data used for the analyses reported in the main manuscript and the supplementary materials are available at: https://osf.io/93x82/?view_only=73b16bd0e5634733879e35821fccdf4.

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Footnotes

1. Due to the instable political situation, obtaining reliable census data is challenging in Burma. Therefore, no weighting was performed on the survey data. Supplementary analyses were performed on data weighted for the demographic variables of the study.
2. Due to the limited survey length in wave 1 and wave 2, we were only able to measure perceived ethnic minority threat and perceived Muslim threat with one item. This item uniquely reflects perceived symbolic threat and not realistic threat. To overcome this limitation, we added extra items in wave 3 referring to perceived realistic ethnic minority and Muslim threat. See supplementary materials for analyses using perceived realistic threat instead of perceived symbolic threat in wave 3.

Figures

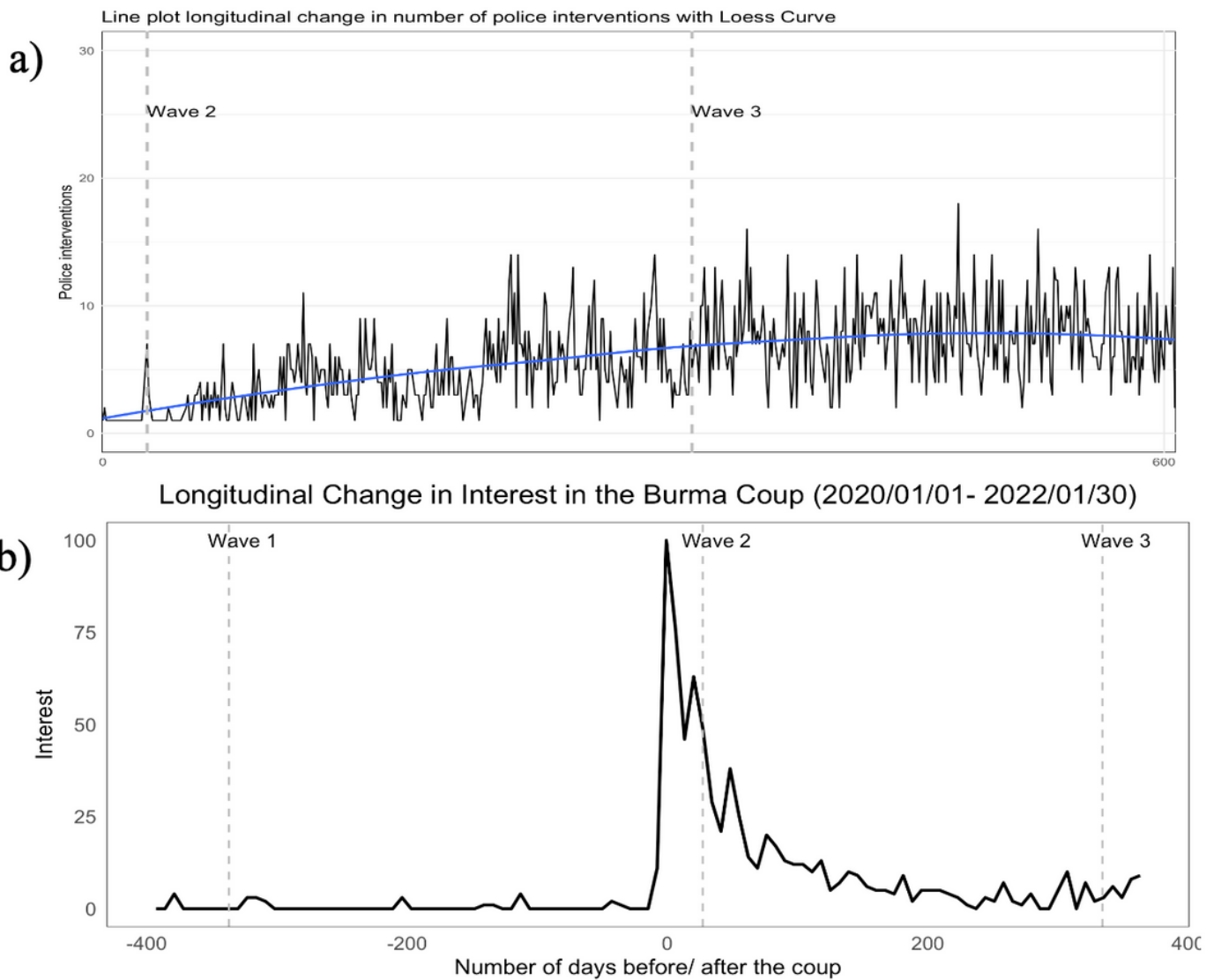


Figure 1

Panel a: Line plot with Loess curve of the number of police interventions in protests that are related to the coup throughout wave 2 and wave 3 (data retrieved from: <https://github.com/minzawoo88/Civilian-Casualties-in-Myanmar/tree/main/Public%20Release%20Datasets>). Panel b: Line plot showing the interest on Burmese Google surfers from wave 2 to wave 3 expressed by the proportion of google searchers that day relative to the maximum daily searches. The maximum lies on the day following the coup (data retrieved from: <https://trends.google.com/trends/>).

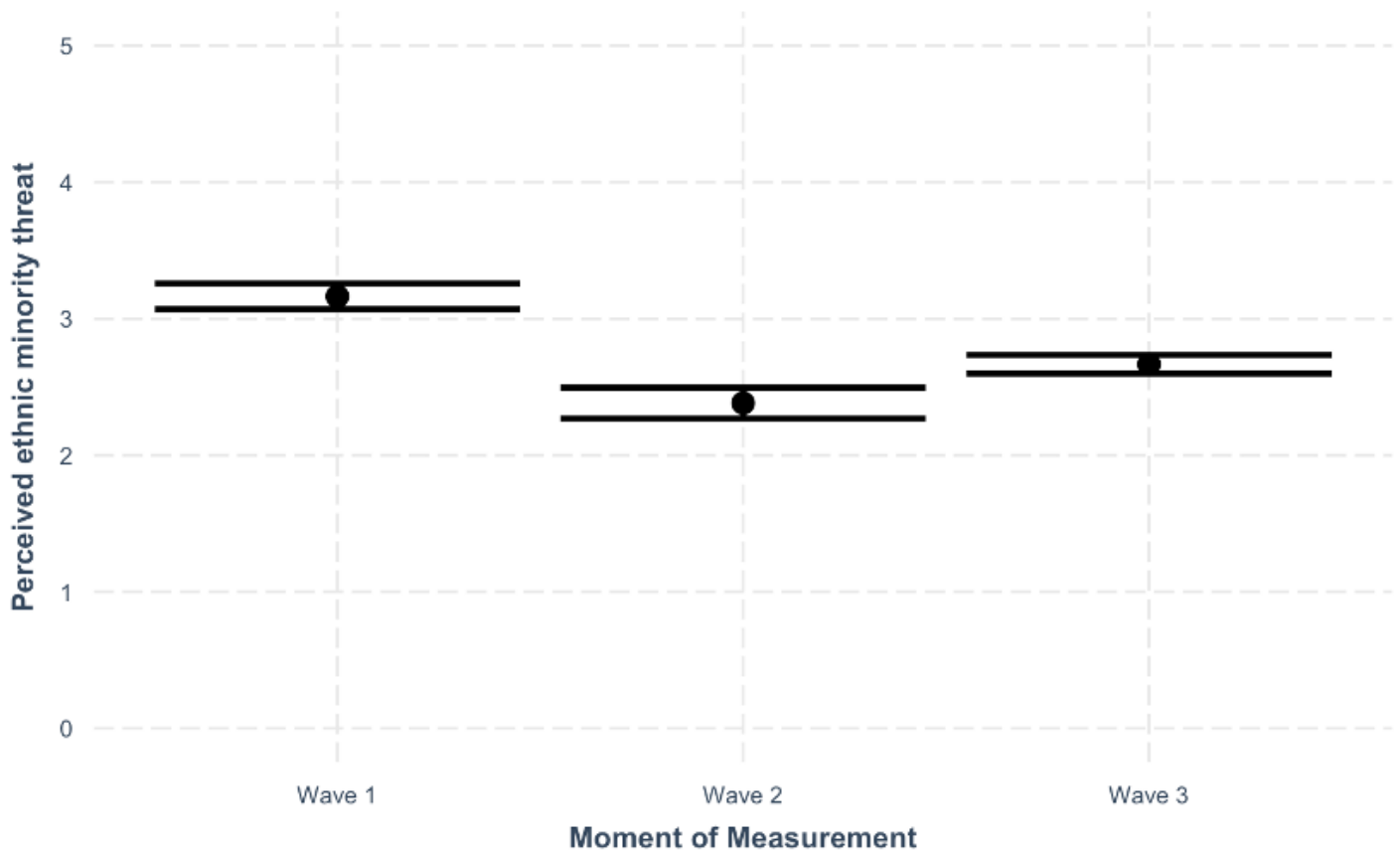


Figure 2

Interval plot showing the confidence intervals of perceived ethnic minority threat per wave (wave 1 = one year before the coup, wave 2 = one month after the coup and wave 3 = one year after the coup). The dots indicate the average perceived ethnic minority threat per wave.

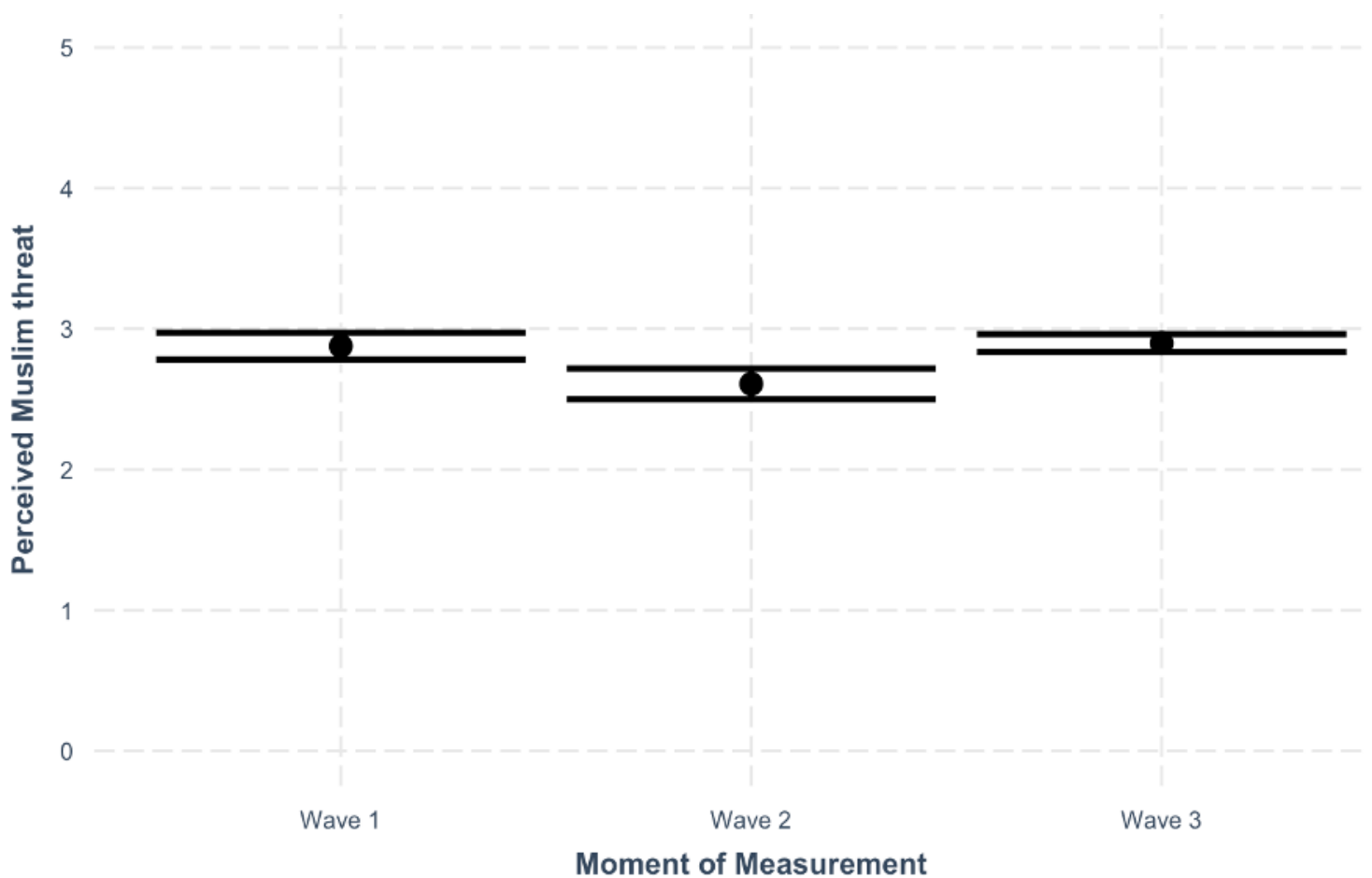


Figure 3

Interval plot showing the confidence intervals of perceived Muslim threat per wave (wave 1 = one year before the coup, wave 2 = one month after the coup and wave 3 = one year after the coup). The dots indicate the average perceived ethnic minority threat per wave.

Supplementary Files

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