

Fear of the dark: how terrorist events affect trust

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Abstract

In this paper we provide evidence on whether individuals differ in their level of trust depending on their exposure to exogenous terrorist attacks at different ages. In line with well-grounded psychological theories on the formation of human beliefs, attitudes and values, we find that exposure to traumatic violent events in early stages of human development, especially during adolescence and early adulthood, reduces trust. The formed values tend to be persistent over time so that exposure in subsequent stages does not exert the same effects. Results are robust to several checks.

Keywords: Trust, Terrorism, Values formation

JEL Codes: A1, Z1

1 Introduction

Nowadays many societies are experiencing an increasing lack of trust. The most recent data indicate a rapid loss of trust in all traditional institutions both at government and business level over the last twenty years ([Edelman, 2019](#)).

Trust is an essential element for all human relations and its lack undermines relationships and transactions. Economic activities strongly depend on

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the level of trust. Indeed, trust plays a central role in encouraging cooperation by reducing uncertainty and minimizing the costs of limited information. It enhances the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions: it influences positively civic participation and resilience to disasters, it decreases economic inequality and illegal activities. The cost of low trust is therefore high from both a social and economic point of view. Distrust can create a vicious cycle increasing regulation, lowering economic growth and lowering trust further, reinforcing the negative mechanism of selfish behaviours.

Differences in factors that reduce uncertainty and information restrictions and spur cooperation help answer the question of why performance is different across countries or sectors. Trust affects a variety of economic outcomes such as growth, macroeconomic stability, trade or investment. Levels of social trust predict national economic growth as powerfully as financial and physical capital, and more powerfully than skill levels that are elements carefully monitored by policy makers. Furthermore, trust is also associated with many other non-economic outcomes ranging from life satisfaction to suicide incidence. Trust is one of the collective values and inclinations characterizing social networks through its social capital ([Putnam, 2000](#)). In a broad sense, trust can be considered as the level of confidence that people have in others that they will act as it might be expected. Since trust represents in a synthetic way a large number of beliefs and values that favor inter-personal cooperation within the society, it may favor economic performance. Thus, from a policy perspective, the lack or the decrease in trust should be monitored carefully.

Explanations for the decline in trust in institutions include on the one hand social or political factors (poor institutional performance, large scale global shock ranging from globalization to migration, and growing political polarization) and on the other hand economic factors (increasing economic inequality and low intergenerational mobility). The reasons underlying the decline in generalized trust are somehow less clear and straightforward.

In recent years, terrorism has become a more commonplace phenomenon. Its effect on trust may be ambiguous. Terror attacks trigger anxiety in people and increase the fear that terrorism may occur again. Fear can make us less trusting of each other and anxiety can make us more guarded when we meet other people. But we also see that terrorism brings people together to express their grief, compassion and solidarity.

The paper contributes to two main related strands of the literature: the one on the determinants of trust and the one on the effect of terrorism on socio economic outcomes. The first field is well developed and consolidated, both from a theoretical and an empirical point of view. Quite surprisingly, given the huge interest in trust in social sciences, while cross-countries comparisons

on the determinants of trust at the macro level are widely available (see, for instance, [Porta et al., 1997](#); [Zak and Knack, 2001](#); [Bjørnskov, 2007](#)), less is known about the individual characteristics of those who trust the others. Trust depends both on aggregate attributes and attitudes related to history, culture, institutions or geography and on individual factors related to education and wealth, religious beliefs, family background and specific life experiences. In particular, available studies show that pro-social preferences and trust are higher among women, religious people, ethnically homogeneous groups and psychologically or physiologically cohesive groups. The second field is quite new but it is growing rapidly. The majority of available studies focuses on conflicts or war. The literature examining the effect of conflict on trust and trustworthiness has reached contradictory conclusions. On the one hand, having experienced wars or other conflicts generates distrust and other anti-social behavior in the society ([Fehr, 2009](#); [Nunn and Wantchekon, 2011](#)). On the other hand, war exposure or violent experience can foster pro-social behaviour (see [Bauer et al., 2016](#), for a detailed review). Results depend on whether the violence has intra - group or inter - group origin.

Conflicts and terrorism share some features, but they also differentiate in many aspects. Both involve acts of extreme violence, both are motivated by political, ideological or strategic ends, and both are inflicted by one group of individuals against another. The consequences of each for the population are negative. War tends to be more widespread and the destruction is likely to be more devastating because a war is often waged by states with armies and huge arsenals of weapons at their disposal. Terrorist groups rarely have the professional or financial resources possessed by states. Apart from the methods used and the extent of the violence, however, war and terrorism are also seen differently by international law. Although there is no full consensus, an act of terrorism is politically inspired, involves violence or the threat of violence, is designed to have a strong psychological impact (targets tend to be selected carefully to provoke the desired reaction) and involves deliberately targeting civilians.

In this paper we provide evidence on whether individuals differ in their values depending on their exposure to exogenous terrorist attacks at different ages. Namely, we base our analysis on well-grounded psychological theories on the formation of human beliefs, attitudes and values. On the one hand, there is consensus among psychologists that individuals values are formed in early stages of their development especially during early adulthood and they are very persistent over time. Core values depend on the historical environment of reference and hence individuals within a specific generation tend to share values and attitudes different from those of individuals within other generations. The strongest effect is found between 18 and 25 years of

age (Krosnick and Alwin, 1989). However, on the other hand, very recent traumatic events have a short term effect on individual beliefs.

The rest of the paper is organized as follow: Section 2 briefly reviews the psychological literature on values formation, Section 3 describes the data while Section 4 presents the empirical strategy. The main results are discussed in Section 5 and a set of robustness checks are performed in Section 6. Finally, Section 7 concludes.

2 Values and trust formation

Traits and values are important psychological characteristics defining personality. Traits are aspects of personality that differ across individuals, are fairly consistent over situations and influence behaviour. Traits tend to be stable over time and they differ from states, which are more transitory dispositions. Values instead can be defined as the set of features that are valued by an individual, such as honesty, friendship. Personal values, together with links and understandings in society, form a society social capital that enables individuals and groups to interact. Traits and values characterize individual personality as a result of the influence and interaction of nature (biology and genetics) and nurture (environment and upbringing).

From a psychological point of view some phases in life have a particular importance in the development of cultural orientations and values. Two alternative psychological theories explain individual values formation. According to the ‘impressionable years model’ or the ‘formative phase model’ the development of cultural values depends on experiences in a particular period of life where susceptibility to change and development is higher. Recent studies identifies the critical formative phase with adolescence and early adulthood instead of early childhood as previous studies do. Generations are constituted by people sharing in this period the historical environment which has an important socializing influence. People belonging to the same generation tend to share values and attitudes compared to individuals within other generations.

Instead, based on the ‘lifelong openness models’ development occurs lifelong and people are equally open to changes in orientation in every moment as a results of specific experiences. According to this view attitudes and values are susceptible to variation throughout the entire lifespan. Social learning theory demonstrates that individuals form their attitudes and behaviours under the influence of people nearby and the environment (Bondura, 1977). The level of trust seems to depend on the frequency of social interactions: individual engaged more often with others are those better endowed. Limi-

tations in connections reduce trust and trustworthiness.

3 Data

To identify the effect of terrorism on trust we use two main sources of data: global survey data containing information for trust and value of the general population together with geopolitics data on terrorist attacks over the last 50 years.

Measures of trust are recovered from all the available waves of the World Values Survey (WVS) (Inglehart et al., 2014). The WVS is a nationally representative survey conducted in almost 100 countries that account for almost 90 percent of the world’s population. It investigates human beliefs, values, motivations and norms. The questionnaires, common across countries, collect information on different types of attitudes, preferences and behaviours as well as information on standard observable socio - demographic characteristics. From 1981 to 2014 six waves have been carried: namely in the period 1981–1984, 1990–1993, 1995–1998, 1999–2004, 2005–2009 and 2010–2014. Geographical coverage varies depending on the wave, ranging from 22 countries in the first round, to about 100 countries in the last round.

Among the available questions we focus on the one measuring generalized trust by asking people: ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?’.

Due to some inconsistency between age and year of birth, we dropped all individuals with more than 5 years of difference.

Information on terrorist attacks are taken from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (START, 2018) covering all the world countries for the period 1970–2015. The project is managed by the GTD team at University of Maryland using alternative sources of information, such as media articles, electronic news archives, existing datasets, books, journals or legal documents. Actions are classified as terrorism when characterized by ‘the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation’. An incident is included in the database when three conditions are jointly satisfied: i) the incident is intentional, ii) it entails some level of violence or immediate threat of violence and iii) it is perpetrated by sub-national actors. In addition, two of the three following criteria must be present: i) the act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal,¹ ii) there must be evidence of an intention to co-

¹According to this definition, the exclusive pursuit of profit is not enough to identify an action as terrorist.

erce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience than the immediate victims, iii) the action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities. The GTD does not include plots or conspiracies that are not enacted, or at least attempted. However, unsuccessful attempts are recorded. Incidents occurring in both the same geographic and temporal point will be regarded as a single incident, but if either the time of occurrence of incidents or their locations are discontinuous, the events will be regarded as separate incidents. Together with the exact localization of the event, information about the type of attack, the weapon, the target, the number of victims, the consequences, and the perpetrator is available, even if a clear-cut classification is often difficult.

For each country-year we construct alternative measures of terrorism incidence. The simplest one is an absolute indicator for the total number of events. The second one accounts for the intensity of the event. In particular, we construct an index as the sum of the number of terrorist incidents and terrorism victims (the number of individuals killed or wounded in terrorist attacks) per year over the size of the population (Meierrieks and Gries, 2013). Finally, the last is an indicator for the nature of the attack based on the perpetrator and the aim. The constructed measures refer to different time spans according to the age of people in the WVS. Our final sample consists of 109 countries with a broad variety of income levels, religions and geography. The complete list of countries used for the analysis is presented in Table 1.

4 Identification strategy

The aim of the empirical strategy is to identify whether and to which extent the exposure, at different ages, to terrorist attacks modifies individual trust in other people or institutions. The repeated cross-sectional structure of the WVS allows exploiting both cross-sectional and temporal variations arising from the individual country and year of birth. In particular, we match the country-year indices for terrorism discussed in the previous section to individuals according to their country and cohort of birth. Hence, the identification of the effects of terrorism on values comes from the fact that different countries experienced different terrorist events over the years. All specifications include controls for individual age, year of birth and time fixed effects to control for age and cohort specific trends in beliefs as well as for common national history.

All regressions are estimated using OLS for ease of interpretation, but similar results are obtained with ordered logit or probit. Standard errors are clustered at the country level. Because of the small number of clus-

ters, we also correct the standard errors using the ‘wild bootstrap’ procedure suggested by [Cameron et al. \(2008\)](#) and we clustered at both country and wave/year level ([Cameron and Miller, 2015](#)).

The empirical analysis proceeded in subsequent steps. Namely, we estimate the following equation:

$$T_{icty} = \alpha + X'_{icty}\boldsymbol{\beta} + W'_{icty}\boldsymbol{\gamma} + Z'_{cy}\boldsymbol{\delta} + \eta_c + \theta_y + \varepsilon_{icty} \quad (1)$$

where T is a measure of trust of individual i , living in country/region c , born at time t and surveyed in year y , while X includes the terrorist events which individual i has been exposed to in different phases of life, namely childhood (from 0 to 15), adolescence and youth (from 15 to 25), adolescence and adulthood (more than 15) or in all the life up to date of the survey (all). Terrorist events refer to those occurred in the region (if available) or country of residence of individuals when surveyed. Since not all the waves of the WVS collect retrospective information on individual history of international migration experiences we restrict the sample to individuals born in the country where surveyed and who never moved.

We include among control variables usual socio-demographic characteristics, such as age (linear and squared), gender, education, employment status. Country and year fixed effects are added in order to control for all those features constant over time within countries or across countries in a given year that may affect trust in people.

Moreover, we also plan to include among the sets of controls more socio-demographic characteristics and individual beliefs and values (matrix W) as well as national time-varying characteristics, such as GDP and inequality level (matrix Z).

5 Results and comments

In this section, we discuss the results of the estimation of our model.

In [Table 2](#) we report results for our baseline model, estimated with OLS, in which terrorist events are measured by the total number of terrorist incidents occurring in the country of residence from 1970 to the date of the survey. In [column \(1\)](#) we observe a negative and significant effect of terrorism on trust. A variation of one standard deviation in the total terrorist events experienced over life has an impact of -0.023 on trust. This effect is robust, in terms of significance and magnitude, to the inclusion of individual controls that may impact the level of trust ([Column \(2\)](#)). In particular, in line with the existing literature on the determinants of trust, women on average declare a lower level of trust. Moreover, the trust tends to decline with age and the

effect is non impact. As expected, employed and more educated individuals tend to be characterized by a higher level of trust in other people. Including, in specifications (3) and (4), country and wave fixed effects to control for time-invariant characteristics specific to the country of residence and the the wave of the survey, the estimated impact remains significant and negative, with a slight reduction in the magnitude.

Although we prefer the OLS method of estimation for enhancing results' interpretation, we obtain very similar estimates, both in terms of significance and notably magnitude, when applying a probit (Table 3).

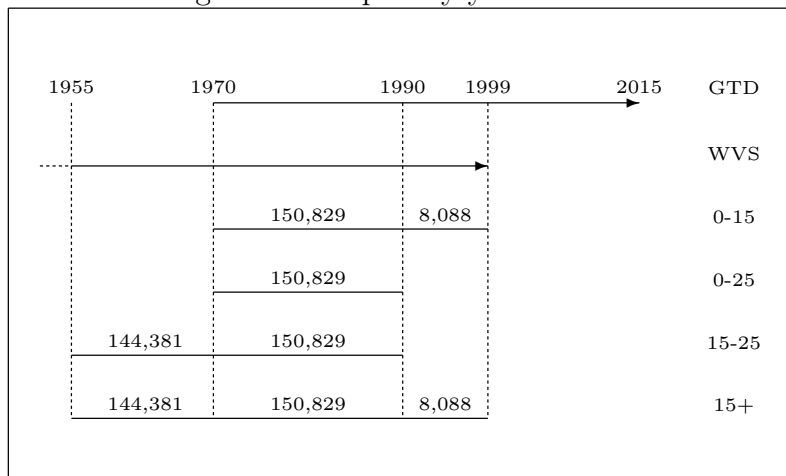
As discussed in previous sections, according to the psychology literature, individuals' values are formed in early stages of their development especially during adolescence and early adulthood and they are very persistent over time. For this reason, we measure the exposition to terrorist events during different phases of life, namely we consider the events experienced by individuals up to the age of 15 or 25, those experienced during adolescence and early adulthood from 15 to 25 and finally events observed from the age of 15 on. Results of this disaggregation by individuals' life period of exposition to terror are reported in Table 4, where column (1) repeat the baseline specification when considering all the events during individuals' life. All the specifications reported include country and wave fixed effects. According to the estimation results, both terrorist events experienced in the period 0 - 25 years and those from the age of 15 onward have a negative and significant impact on trust; however, the number of violent events observed between the age of 15 and the age of 25 seems not to have an impact. Again, results are absolutely comparable when applying a probit estimation.

While this may suggest that there is no specific age that determines the impact of terrorism on trust, these results may alternatively be driven by the fact that, by considering different variations of the terrorism measure, our sample is different in each specification and thus not directly comparable.

Indeed, Figure 1 shows the different dates of birth for the four measures we employ in the paper. The top line shows the availability of GTD data, while the second the birth years of individuals surveyed in WVS (older than 16, so that they cannot be born after 1999). The following lines illustrate the year of birth of individuals by indicator. When considering all events in the lifetime (All), the sample includes all individuals born since GTD data are available, while we can extend the sample by 15 years, including those born after 1955, when we count the number of events after the age of 15 (15-25 and 15+). Consistently, if we limit the analysis to events experienced before the age of 25, we must include in the sample only individuals born until 1990.

To obtain comparable estimates across different specifications using the alternative measures for terrorism, we re-estimate the model on a consistent

Figure 1: Samples by year of birth



sample, i.e. the same sample of individuals born between 1970 and 1990 for all the specifications (Table 5). When introducing alternative measure of terrorism using the same sample, results show a negative and significant impact on trust of all our measures. In terms of magnitude, the impact of terrorism measured at different age periods of the individuals is comparable, even if slightly higher in the case of total events experienced in life.

6 Robustness checks

To check robustness and validate our results, in this section we report results of different robustness checks.

In Table 7, we estimate the baseline model with alternative measures of terrorism, but clustering errors at the country level. Results are fully confirmed, with a significant impact only of terrorist events in the age 0-25, with an impact of -0.006 when considering one standard deviation of the variable of interest.

Results are even more convincing when considering a sample consistent across specifications, as in Table 8. Here, we observe that, clustering errors at the country level, we obtain a negative and significant impact of terrorist events experienced during early adulthood and youth. Experiencing events of terrorism in the age bracket 0-25 or during early adulthood, between 15 and 25 years, has a negative persistent impact on trust over time.

7 Conclusions

This paper provides new evidence on the effect of terrorism in shaping individual attitudes especially in terms of trust in other people. Results confirm the psychology literature according to which individuals' values are formed in early stages of development especially during early adulthood and they tend to be very persistent over time. The conducted analysis shows that having being exposed to terrorism during the critical years of adolescence and early adulthood shape the level of trust. Individuals who grew up during a more turbulent historical period are less trustful. Instead, formed values tend to be persistent over time so that exposure to terrorism in subsequent stages does not exert the same effect.

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A Descriptive statistics

Table 1: List of countries by dataset

	Country	Code	Area	ESS	WVS	GTD	RAND
1	Afghanistan	4	Middle East	.	.	9690	2025
2	Albania	8	Europe	.	3533	77	54
3	Algeria	12	Middle East	.	2482	2720	319
4	Andorra	20	Europe	.	1003	1	.
5	Angola	24	Africa	.	.	491	73
6	Antigua and Barbuda	28	Americas	.	.	1	.
7	Azerbaijan	31	Asia	.	3004	69	9
8	Argentina	32	Americas	.	6398	804	267
9	Australia	36	Oceania	.	6174	88	33
10	Austria	40	Europe	8713	4492	106	62
11	Bahamas	44	Americas	.	.	5	2
12	Bahrain	48	Middle East	.	1200	182	18
13	Bangladesh	50	Asia	.	3025	1513	155
14	Armenia	51	Asia	.	4600	32	8
15	Barbados	52	Americas	.	.	3	2
16	Belgium	56	Europe	12577	7358	142	117
17	Bhutan	64	Asia	.	.	6	12
18	Bolivia	68	Americas	.	.	314	79
19	Bosnia and Herzegovina	70	Europe	.	3512	169	114
20	Botswana	72	Africa	.	.	10	3
21	Brazil	76	Americas	.	4768	267	53
22	Belize	84	Americas	.	.	8	1
23	Solomon Islands	90	Oceania	.	.	4	.
24	Brunei	96	Asia	.	.	1	.
25	Bulgaria	100	Europe	8324	5607	51	12
26	Myanmar	104	Asia	.	.	347	50
27	Burundi	108	Africa	.	.	504	14
28	Belarus	112	Europe	.	7142	13	2
29	Cambodia	116	Asia	.	.	258	60
30	Cameroon	120	Africa	.	.	180	.
31	Canada	124	Americas	.	7079	76	34
32	Central African Republic	140	Africa	.	.	202	1
33	Sri Lanka	144	Asia	.	.	2982	350
34	Chad	148	Africa	.	.	80	12
35	Chile	152	Americas	.	5700	2334	253
36	China	156	Asia	.	7791	242	28
37	158	158	.	.	3245	47	4
38	Colombia	170	Americas	.	10562	8077	1913
39	Comoros	174	Africa	.	.	5	.
40	Congo	178	Africa	.	.	.	2
41	Democratic Republic of Congo	180	Africa	.	.	.	10
42	Costa Rica	188	Americas	.	.	67	40
43	Croatia	191	Europe	3133	3724	71	23
44	Cuba	192	Americas	.	.	30	19
45	Cyprus	196	Asia	4409	3550	130	72
46	Czechoslovakia	200	Europe	.	.	54	2
47	Czech Republic	203	Europe	12947	7909	35	5
48	Benin	204	Africa	.	.	8	1
49	Denmark	208	Europe	10836	4742	40	29
50	Dominica	212	Americas	.	.	3	.
51	Dominican Republic	214	Americas	.	417	89	27
52	Ecuador	218	Americas	.	1202	215	77

Continued on next page

Table 1 – continued from previous page

	Country	Code	Area	ESS	WVS	GTD	RAND
53	El Salvador	222	Americas	.	1254	5320	118
54	Equatorial Guinea	226	Africa	.	.	2	.
55	Ethiopia	231	Africa	.	1500	150	85
56	Eritrea	232	Africa	.	.	10	5
57	Estonia	233	Europe	11391	6085	20	7
58	Falkland Islands	238	Americas	.	.	1	1
59	Fiji	242	Oceania	.	.	17	2
60	Finland	246	Europe	14275	5764	15	1
61	France	250	Europe	12981	6319	2617	1223
62	French Guiana	254	Americas	.	.	7	.
63	French Polynesia	258	Oceania	.	.	3	2
64	Djibouti	262	Middle East	.	.	21	4
65	Gabon	266	Africa	.	.	4	1
66	Georgia	268	Asia	.	6210	215	99
67	Gambia	270	Africa	.	.	3	.
68	West Bank and Gaza Strip	274	Middle East	.	.	.	2038
69	Palestine	275	Middle East	.	1000	1990	.
70	Germany	276	Europe	20490	.	1228	487
71	German Democratic Republic	278	Europe	.	6436	1228	6
72	German Federal Republic	280	Europe	.	8553	1228	.
73	Ghana	288	Africa	.	3086	18	1
74	Gibraltar	292	Europe	.	.	1	2
75	Greece	300	Europe	9759	2642	1200	730
76	Grenada	308	Americas	.	.	5	1
77	Guadeloupe	312	Americas	.	.	56	2
78	Guatemala	320	Americas	.	1000	2050	110
79	Guinea	324	Africa	.	.	24	1
80	Guyana	328	Americas	.	.	25	5
81	Haiti	332	Americas	.	.	212	23
82	Vatican	336	Europe	.	.	1	.
83	Honduras	340	Americas	.	.	321	73
84	Hong Kong	344	Asia	.	2252	26	1
85	Hungary	348	Europe	11518	6633	45	12
86	Iceland	352	Europe	1331	3405	4	1
87	India	356	Asia	.	10124	9940	1048
88	Indonesia	360	Asia	.	3015	714	243
89	Iran	364	Middle East	.	5199	667	148
90	Iraq	368	Middle East	.	6226	18770	10763
91	Ireland	372	Europe	15490	4242	274	26
92	Israel	376	Middle East	12353	1199	2085	1687
93	Italy	380	Europe	3696	7897	1545	434
94	Cote d'Ivoire	384	Africa	.	.	60	3
95	Jamaica	388	Americas	.	.	34	8
96	Japan	392	Asia	.	8170	400	85
97	Kazakhstan	398	Asia	.	1500	24	7
98	Jordan	400	Middle East	.	3623	92	87
99	Kenya	404	Africa	.	.	517	12
100	North Korea	408	Asia	.	.	1	.
101	South Korea	410	Asia	.	7070	37	38
102	Kuwait	414	Middle East	.	1303	74	45
103	Kyrgyz Republic	417	Asia	.	2543	30	15
104	Laos	418	Asia	.	.	22	14
105	Lebanon	422	Middle East	.	1200	2413	676
106	Lesotho	426	Africa	.	.	29	2
107	Latvia	428	Europe	.	4622	23	9
108	Liberia	430	Africa	.	.	33	8
109	Libya	434	Middle East	.	2131	1643	16

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Table 1 – continued from previous page

	Country	Code	Area	ESS	WVS	GTD	RAND
110	Lithuania	440	Europe	6036	4527	14	6
111	Luxembourg	442	Europe	3187	2821	16	5
112	Macao	446	Asia	.	.	33	2
113	Madagascar	450	Africa	.	.	26	7
114	Malawi	454	Africa	.	.	4	.
115	Malaysia	458	Asia	.	2501	76	14
116	Maldives	462	Asia	.	.	17	1
117	Mali	466	Africa	.	1534	319	2
118	Malta	470	Europe	.	3362	20	12
119	Martinique	474	Americas	.	.	12	1
120	Mauritania	478	Middle East	.	.	18	9
121	Mauritius	480	Africa	.	.	2	.
122	Mexico	484	Americas	.	10827	499	81
123	Mongolia	496	Asia	.	.	.	1
124	Moldova	498	Europe	.	4589	20	6
125	Montenegro	499	.	.	2816	10	13
126	Morocco	504	Middle East	.	3651	36	28
127	Mozambique	508	Africa	.	.	272	36
128	Namibia	516	Africa	.	.	151	3
129	Nepal	524	Asia	.	.	923	493
130	Netherlands	528	Europe	13505	7747	121	76
131	New Caledonia	540	Oceania	.	.	31	.
132	New Zealand	554	Oceania	.	2996	18	5
133	Nicaragua	558	Americas	.	.	1970	46
134	Niger	562	Africa	.	.	116	1
135	Nigeria	566	Africa	.	6778	2888	74
136	Norway	578	Europe	11703	5532	18	11
137	Pakistan	586	Middle East	.	3933	12768	1277
138	Panama	591	Americas	.	.	126	23
139	Papua New Guinea	598	Oceania	.	.	81	5
140	Paraguay	600	Americas	.	.	89	11
141	Peru	604	Americas	.	5422	6085	371
142	Philippines	608	Asia	.	3600	5576	593
143	Poland	616	Europe	12430	7644	34	14
144	Portugal	620	Europe	13718	3738	139	51
145	Guinea-Bissau	624	Africa	.	.	9	.
146	Timor	626	Asia	.	.	10	10
147	Puerto Rico	630	Americas	.	1884	0	21
148	Qatar	634	Middle East	.	1060	7	2
149	Romania	642	Europe	.	8256	6	5
150	Russia	643	Europe	.	.	.	281
151	Rwanda	646	Africa	.	3034	156	5
152	Saint Kitts and Nevis	659	Americas	.	.	2	.
153	Saint Lucia	662	Americas	.	.	1	.
154	San Marino	674	Europe	.	.	27	.
155	Saudi Arabia	682	Middle East	.	1502	193	66
156	Senegal	686	Africa	.	.	118	1
157	Serbia	688	Europe	.	.	.	24
158	Seychelles	690	Africa	.	.	2	.
159	Sierra Leone	694	Africa	.	.	97	20
160	Singapore	702	Asia	.	3484	7	5
161	Slovak Republic	703	Europe	8791	5537	18	8
162	Vietnam	704	Asia	.	2495	11	2
163	Slovenia	705	Europe	9607	6520	7	1
164	Somalia	706	Middle East	.	.	2890	371
165	South Africa	710	Africa	.	16786	1957	58
166	Zimbabwe	716	Africa	.	2502	181	28

Continued on next page

Table 1 – continued from previous page

	Country	Code	Area	ESS	WVS	GTD	RAND
167	Spain	724	Europe	13543	13959	3239	1428
168	Western Sahara	732	Middle East	.	.	5	3
169	Sudan	736	Middle East	.	.	.	44
170	Suriname	740	Americas	.	.	66	6
171	Swaziland	748	Africa	.	.	16	4
172	Sweden	752	Europe	12839	7421	102	45
173	Switzerland	756	Europe	12335	5125	107	84
174	Syria	760	Middle East	.	.	1468	23
175	Tajikistan	762	Asia	.	.	184	59
176	Thailand	764	Asia	.	2734	3338	2009
177	Togo	768	Africa	.	.	48	3
178	Trinidad and Tobago	780	Americas	.	2001	22	2
179	United Arab Emirates	784	Middle East	.	.	22	10
180	Tunisia	788	Middle East	.	1205	92	16
181	Turkey	792	Middle East	4272	12879	3557	1279
182	Turkmenistan	795	Asia	.	.	2	1
183	Uganda	800	Africa	.	1002	366	63
184	Ukraine	804	Europe	9987	8013	1584	26
185	Macedonia	807	Europe	.	3550	118	65
186	Russia	810	Europe	10028	12538	6497	640
187	Egypt	818	Middle East	.	7574	1799	133
188	United Kingdom	826	Europe	15667	9462	4992	909
189	Tanzania	834	Africa	.	1171	50	9
190	United States	840	Americas	.	10387	2693	567
191	Burkina Faso	854	Africa	.	1534	9	.
192	Uruguay	858	Americas	.	3000	75	26
193	Uzbekistan	860	Asia	.	1500	21	16
194	Venezuela	862	Americas	.	2400	269	162
195	Republic of Vietnam	868	Asia	.	.	.	1
196	Wallis and Futuna	876	Oceania	.	.	1	.
197	Yemen	887	Middle East	.	1000	2606	136
198	Yugoslavia	890	Europe	.	3992	942	66
199	Serbia and Montenegro	891	Europe	.	1220	.	3
200	Zambia	894	Africa	.	1500	60	9
201	Kosovo	999	Europe	.	1601	180	132

Numbers indicate the number of observations for ESS and EVS-WVS and the number of terrorist events registered by GTD and RAND.

B Regression tables

Table 2: Baseline model. OLS coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Female	.	-0.011*** (0.002)	.	-0.015*** (0.002)
Age	.	-0.010*** (0.002)	.	-0.007*** (0.002)
Age squared	.	0.000*** (0.000)	.	0.000*** (0.000)
Currently employed	.	0.031*** (0.002)	.	0.002 (0.002)
Secondary educ.	.	0.022*** (0.003)	.	0.014*** (0.003)
Tertiary educ. or more	.	0.093*** (0.003)	.	0.069*** (0.003)
Constant	0.255*** (0.001)	0.337*** (0.021)	0.172*** (0.014)	0.223*** (0.024)
Wave FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Country FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.023	-0.023	-0.012	-0.010
Obs.	156181	146228	156181	146228

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3: Baseline model. Probit coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Most people can be trusted				
Terrorist events	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Female	.	-0.037*** (0.007)	.	-0.057*** (0.008)
Age	.	-0.033*** (0.005)	.	-0.025*** (0.005)
Age squared	.	0.001*** (0.000)	.	0.000*** (0.000)
Currently employed	.	0.100*** (0.008)	.	0.010 (0.009)
Secondary educ.	.	0.076*** (0.010)	.	0.055*** (0.010)
Tertiary educ. or more	.	0.292*** (0.011)	.	0.235*** (0.012)
Constant	-0.659*** (0.004)	-0.386*** (0.067)	-0.938*** (0.049)	-0.747*** (0.085)
Wave FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
Country FE	No	No	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.024	-0.025	-0.010	-0.007
Obs.	156181	146228	156181	146228

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Exposition at different ages. OLS coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000*** (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000** (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)
Female	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.008*** (0.002)
Age	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Currently employed	0.002 (0.002)	0.003 (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)	0.013*** (0.002)	0.011*** (0.002)
Secondary educ.	0.014*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)	0.020*** (0.002)	0.019*** (0.002)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.069*** (0.003)	0.069*** (0.003)	0.070*** (0.003)	0.086*** (0.002)	0.085*** (0.002)
Constant	0.223*** (0.024)	0.225*** (0.024)	0.224*** (0.025)	0.127*** (0.014)	0.132*** (0.013)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.010	-0.000	-0.006	-0.000	-0.004
Obs.	146228	146043	138470	266380	274754

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 5: Exposition at different ages. OLS coefficients. Consistent sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000*** (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000** (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)
Female	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)	-0.015*** (0.002)
Age	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Currently employed	0.004 (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)	0.004 (0.002)
Secondary educ.	0.015*** (0.003)	0.016*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)	0.015*** (0.003)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.070*** (0.003)	0.070*** (0.003)	0.070*** (0.003)	0.070*** (0.003)	0.069*** (0.003)
Constant	0.222*** (0.025)	0.223*** (0.025)	0.224*** (0.025)	0.225*** (0.025)	0.222*** (0.025)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.009	0.002	-0.006	-0.004	-0.007
Obs.	138470	138285	138470	138392	138364

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Sample of people born between 1970 and 1990.

Table 6: Exposition at different ages. Probit coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Most people can be trusted					
Terrorist events	-0.000*** (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000** (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	0.000 (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000** (0.000)
Female	-0.057*** (0.008)	-0.057*** (0.008)	-0.055*** (0.008)	-0.027*** (0.006)	-0.030*** (0.006)
Age	-0.025*** (0.005)	-0.025*** (0.005)	-0.025*** (0.006)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.004* (0.002)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)
Currently employed	0.010 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)	0.015* (0.009)	0.044*** (0.007)	0.040*** (0.006)
Secondary educ.	0.055*** (0.010)	0.057*** (0.010)	0.057*** (0.011)	0.073*** (0.008)	0.070*** (0.007)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.235*** (0.012)	0.238*** (0.012)	0.239*** (0.012)	0.283*** (0.008)	0.279*** (0.008)
Constant	-0.747*** (0.085)	-0.743*** (0.085)	-0.745*** (0.087)	-1.089*** (0.047)	-1.067*** (0.047)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.007	0.000	-0.005	0.000	-0.003
Obs.	146228	146043	138470	266380	274754

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7: Exposition at different ages. OLS coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.007*** (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)
Age	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Currently employed	0.002 (0.004)	0.003 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.013*** (0.003)	0.011*** (0.003)
Secondary educ.	0.014* (0.008)	0.015** (0.007)	0.015** (0.007)	0.020*** (0.007)	0.019** (0.007)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.069*** (0.013)	0.069*** (0.013)	0.070*** (0.013)	0.086*** (0.013)	0.085*** (0.013)
Constant	0.223*** (0.033)	0.225*** (0.033)	0.224*** (0.034)	0.127*** (0.024)	0.132*** (0.024)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.010	-0.000	-0.006	-0.000	-0.004
Obs.	146228	146043	138470	266380	274754

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Errors clustered at country level.

Table 8: Exposition at different ages. OLS coefficients. Consistent sample.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)
Age	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Currently employed	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.004)
Secondary educ.	0.015* (0.008)	0.016** (0.007)	0.015** (0.007)	0.015** (0.007)	0.015* (0.008)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.070*** (0.013)	0.070*** (0.013)	0.070*** (0.013)	0.070*** (0.013)	0.069*** (0.013)
Constant	0.222*** (0.034)	0.223*** (0.034)	0.224*** (0.034)	0.225*** (0.034)	0.222*** (0.034)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.009	0.002	-0.006	-0.004	-0.007
Obs.	138470	138285	138470	138392	138364

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Errors clustered at country level. Sample of people born between 1970 and 1990.

Table 9: Exposition at different ages. Probit coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Most people can be trusted					
Terrorist events	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000*** (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	0.000 (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.057*** (0.009)	-0.057*** (0.009)	-0.055*** (0.010)	-0.027*** (0.009)	-0.030*** (0.009)
Age	-0.025*** (0.008)	-0.025*** (0.008)	-0.025*** (0.008)	-0.003 (0.003)	-0.004 (0.003)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Currently employed	0.010 (0.013)	0.010 (0.013)	0.015 (0.014)	0.044*** (0.012)	0.040*** (0.012)
Secondary educ.	0.055* (0.028)	0.057** (0.028)	0.057** (0.028)	0.073*** (0.026)	0.070*** (0.026)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.235*** (0.044)	0.238*** (0.043)	0.239*** (0.043)	0.283*** (0.041)	0.279*** (0.042)
Constant	-0.747*** (0.117)	-0.743*** (0.118)	-0.745*** (0.119)	-1.089*** (0.077)	-1.067*** (0.074)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.007	0.000	-0.005	0.000	-0.003
Obs.	146228	146043	138470	266380	274754

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Errors clustered at country level.

Table 10: Exposition at different ages. OLS coefficients

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000* (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.008*** (0.003)
Age	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Currently employed	0.002 (0.003)	0.003 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.013*** (0.004)	0.011*** (0.004)
Secondary educ.	0.014* (0.008)	0.015* (0.008)	0.015* (0.008)	0.020** (0.008)	0.019** (0.009)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.069*** (0.013)	0.069*** (0.013)	0.070*** (0.012)	0.086*** (0.013)	0.085*** (0.014)
Constant	0.223*** (0.020)	0.225*** (0.020)	0.224*** (0.026)	0.127*** (0.020)	0.132*** (0.018)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.010	-0.000	-0.006	-0.000	-0.004
Obs.	146228	146043	138470	266380	274754

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Errors clustered at country and wave level.

Table 11: Exposition at different ages. OLS coefficients. Consistent sample

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Terrorist events	-0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-15)	.	0.000 (0.000)	.	.	.
Terrorist events (0-25)	.	.	-0.000* (0.000)	.	.
Terrorist events (15-25)	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)	.
Terrorist events (15+)	.	.	.	.	-0.000 (0.000)
Female	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.004)	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.004)
Age	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.007*** (0.003)
Age squared	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000*** (0.000)
Currently employed	0.004 (0.004)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.003)	0.004 (0.004)
Secondary educ.	0.015* (0.008)	0.016* (0.008)	0.015* (0.008)	0.015* (0.008)	0.015* (0.008)
Tertiary educ. or more	0.070*** (0.012)	0.070*** (0.012)	0.070*** (0.012)	0.070*** (0.012)	0.069*** (0.012)
Constant	0.222*** (0.026)	0.223*** (0.027)	0.224*** (0.026)	0.225*** (0.027)	0.222*** (0.026)
Wave FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
One st.dev. effect	-0.009	0.002	-0.006	-0.004	-0.007
Obs.	138470	138285	138470	138392	138364

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Errors clustered at country and wave level. Sample of people born between 1970 and 1990.