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When Data Do Not Matter: Exploring Public Perceptions of Terrorism

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ABSTRACT

Public perceptions of terrorism are out of line with reality. How can perceptions be changed? Using a 4 × 2 experimental design with a national sample of U.S. adults, we examine how source of information and details provided impact views of terrorism. Sources, details, and individual-level factors—Islamophobia, trust in media, and trust in science—impact perceived accuracy of terrorism data. Many people updated their views on terrorism after reading factual information, yet only trust in science was related with this change. In short, people can be persuaded by factual information on terrorism, but it is less clear why they change beliefs.

"*If you truly value science and the scientific method please double check your bias… it's unprofessional and unscientific*." —participant feedback after reading factual information about terrorism in the United States

Public perceptions of terrorism are out of line with reality. Nearly half of Americans believe that they or a family member are likely to be the victim of a terrorist attack. For many, fear of terrorism impacts daily life.[1] Despite widespread fear of terrorism, the actual risks are dramatically lower. Between 2006 and 2015, there were 136 terrorist attacks in the United States that resulted in ninety-nine fatalities.[2] In short, the actual threat of terrorism is simply insufficient to justify the fear it generates.[3] Yet, the public receives conflicting information about terrorism from politicians, media, and researchers. One narrative suggests that terrorism is an ever-present threat,[4] particularly from Muslims[5] and foreigners.[6] The contrasting narrative shows that terrorism in the United States is rare[7] and—when it does occur—the perpetrator is most likely to be a White man.[8] Despite these competing narratives, many believe the most salacious and stereotype-consistent version of terrorism threats while discounting actual data that could minimize fears. When presented with factual information about terrorism, why are some people inclined to believe it while others are not?

Drawing from multidisciplinary literatures, we know that information processing and opinion forming are dynamic. Zaller argues that political preferences follow a "receive-

accept-sample" model.[9] From this model, a person's opinion on terrorism at any given time reflects the information that they have received about the topic, their acceptance of that information, and then a sample from accepted information for whatever is most salient. Elite discourse frames the information that people *receive* on terrorism, among other issues.[10] People are more likely to *accept* information that confirms their preconceived views of the world.[11] When asked for their opinion, people then *sample* from the information that they have accepted on the issue. Yet, in an era of both increased political polarization[12] and so-called fake news,[13] information is met with increasing skepticism.[14] As such, it is unclear how people process and decide whether or not to believe factual information about terrorism—a topical, fear-inducing, and polarizing issue.[15]

Data on terrorism can minimize fear, but only if people are willing to believe the evidence and change their attitudes accordingly. To understand why some people believe factual information about terrorism while others do not, we use a survey-embedded experiment. The present study addresses two gaps in the literature: (1) we examine how source and nature of information impact perceptions of terrorism, and (2) we examine how individual-level factors—Islamophobia, trust in media, and trust in science—impact opinions about and willingness to change attitudes on terrorism in the United States.

We organize the article as follows: First, we engage with the literature on how people evaluate information generally and on terrorism specifically. Next, we outline our methodological approach to studying how framing impacts perceptions of factual information about terrorism. We conclude with the study's results, implications for public perception and policy, and directions for future research.

Cognitive mechanisms and belief persistence

Personal motivations influence how we interpret and respond to information.[16] When processing information, several cognitive mechanisms—such as heuristics and confirmation bias—are used to make decisions and help preserve our worldview. People often rely on heuristics—simple rules or cognitive shortcuts—to make judgments about the world around us.[17] Heuristics can be benign and save cognitive energy. Reliance on certain heuristics, however, may result in judgments that are inaccurate and harmful—such as racial profiling. Relatedly, confirmation bias is the tendency to seek out—and be less critical of—information that supports preexisting beliefs while avoiding contradictory information.[18] People also engage in disconfirmation bias whereby they are more critical of information that contradicts preconceived views.[19] This belief persistence involves a person: (1) assessing the most likely scenario (availability heuristic); (2) seeing more confirming cases and fewer disconfirming cases (illusory

correlation); and (3) remembering confirming cases while ignoring disconfirming cases (data distortions).[20] In short, people often make judgments in simplified, and often inaccurate, ways.

When asked to assess information, people use different reasoning strategies depending on whether their goal is to make an accurate judgment or to arrive at a specific conclusion.[21] When people are motivated to make accurate judgments, they rely less on stereotyped information and rely more on reasoning strategies that they consider best for discerning the truth.[22] However, when a person is motivated to reach a specific conclusion, they will tend to depend on memories and biases to justify their position.[23] Underlying fears, ideologies, and worldviews bolster belief in these conclusions.[24] If a person is motivated to reach a specific conclusion, but lacks memories, rules, or heuristics that can support it, they may synthesize unrelated information to make new rules to fit their desired conclusion.[25]

Attempts to correct misinformation may be ineffective in changing beliefs.[26] Rather, when faced with contradictory evidence, people may engage in "motivated reasoning"—a process of seeking information to reduce cognitive dissonance and reaffirm prior views.[27] Further, some people not only reject the new, factual information, but they also cling to their old, incorrect beliefs more strongly—a "backfire effect."[28] People who are misinformed about a topic often think that they actually understand it well, and thus are *more* resistant to information that contradicts their views.[29] Further, people who reach incorrect conclusions are especially resistant to changing their views if they reached their initial conclusion by deliberately considering additional evidence rather than simply going with their gut.[30] This may be because considering additional evidence provides more opportunities for a person to construct false analogies and find illusory correlations.[31]

Source credibility and information acceptance

Information on political issues often come from elites—disseminated via media narratives—where source credibility is vital to information processing. When someone is motivated to have a thorough understanding of an argument, they will consider the complexities of the information presented and engage in a deeper, central level of processing. If a person is either unmotivated or unable to process the substance of an argument, they will rely more on peripheral cues—like the source and their associations with that source—to make judgments.[32] When information activates partisan identities, people are motivated to process and understand information in ways that reinforce these identities.[33] Among partisans, sources aligned with the opposing political identity are seen as less credible and those aligned with the identity of the partisan are more

credible.[34] Further, as views become more strongly associated with partisan identities, motivated reasoning and the "backfire effect" become more likely.[35]

Issues discussed by media and politicians often contain some element of a threat. Some issues are unframed threats, meaning it is a widely agreed-on harm such as a pandemic. Other issues are framed threats—where the root of harm is debated, often on partisan lines—such as climate change or gun control.[36] As Albertson and Gadarian note, a terrorist attack is an unframed threat while the "War on Terror" is a framed one.[37] General information on terrorism, however, may sit in a gray area between unframed and framed threats. Definitional issues with terrorism may also add to the contradictions in how terrorism is framed[38] when sources can cherry-pick definitions and data that support their preexisting narrative. Insofar as terrorism can be a framed threat, information may be politicized to the point that an individual's accepted narrative on terrorism is dependent on their political ideology.[39] From this, we expect that:
Hypothesis 1: When information is provided by an elite from a person's partisan in-group,

a. the information will be viewed as more accurate
b. the person will be more likely to update their views on terrorism
c. the person's updated views on the issue will be more accurate

Academic researchers are another group of elites who publicly discuss terrorism and thus may influence mass opinion on the subject. We expect that academic experts will have the following impact on information processing:
Hypothesis 2: When information is provided by an academic expert,

a. the information will be viewed as more accurate
b. the person will be more likely to update their views on terrorism
c. the person's updated views on the issue will be more accurate

Information presentation

Cognitive-experiential self-theory suggests that people process information through two independent routes: a preconscious experiential route and a conscious rational route.[40] The intuitional-experiential route relies on heuristics whereas the rational route relies on logical processing.[41] Information presentation can impact the processing route used. Equivalent ways of framing numerical information have disparate impacts on public perception of that information regardless of political ideology.[42] For example, people generally view base-rate statistical information as uninformative. When they have additional contextual information, however, people view this as informative.[43] People are more susceptible to cognitive errors when processing numbers versus words. Yet, when presented with extra details that fill gaps left in the

narrative, people rely less on misperceptions.[44] From this, we expect that people will prefer a complete narrative to one that is incomplete.[45] Specifically, we expect that:
Hypothesis 3: When information is provided in more detail,

a. the information will be viewed as more accurate
b. the person will be more likely to update their views on terrorism
c. the person's updated views on the issue will be more accurate

Individual differences in perceptions of terrorism

Islamophobia

Most Americans do not have direct, personal experience with terrorism. When people lack exposure to something, their main source of information is media.[46] As such, perceptions of terrorism are largely derived from media coverage of this violence. Entertainment media disproportionately portray Arab-Americans and Muslims in the role of terrorist.[47] Similarly, terrorist attacks perpetrated by Muslims receive more news media coverage[48] and that coverage is likely to use the word "terrorism."[49] While it is unclear exactly how media coverage impacts people, we see similar biases among the public. Recent research shows that people are more likely to describe an attack as terrorism when the perpetrator was Muslim.[50]

Research on belief persistence has largely focused on social theories, which include social interactions and stereotyping.[51] Media portrayals of terrorism as a Muslim problem activates identity cues among some people.[52] Contrary to media representations, data show that non-Muslims have perpetrated most terrorist attacks in the United States.[53] Yet, whether conscious or not, it is clear that some people have anti-Muslim biases, particularly as it relates to terrorism. Given the emotional reaction that terrorism evokes, disconfirmation bias should be particularly strong on this topic.[54] As such, people who are more Islamophobic should be less likely to believe factual information about terrorism, which conflicts with their views. From this, we derive the following hypotheses:
Hypothesis 4: People who are more Islamophobic will

a. view the information as less accurate
b. be less likely to update their views on terrorism
c. have less accurate updated views on terrorism

Trust in science

Nichols's central thesis in *Death of Expertise* is that many Americans are not only ignorant on various topics, but openly embrace this ignorance and discount or disregard experts.[55] It is reasonable to expect that people who trust science more will question expertise less. Trust in science plays a role in how people process information and

assess sources.[56] The motivated rejection of science is driven by a shallow level of analysis of critical information, in a manner that prioritizes expediency and the confirmation of preexisting beliefs. In contrast, people are less likely to reject scientific findings if they understand or trust the mechanisms behind the result.[57] For example, climate change and the efficacy of vaccines are both widely supported by empirical evidence, but are not well understood by many people and are still fiercely debated among some laypersons.[58] In short, mistrust in science has made legitimate scientific evidence and debate less credible, and increased skepticism over matters that the scientific community has settled.[59] From this discussion, we expect that:
Hypothesis 5: People who are have more trust in science will

a. view the information as more accurate
b. be more likely to update their views on terrorism
c. have more accurate updated views on terrorism

Trust in media

Public trust in media has been dramatically declining since the 1970s.[60] Currently, most Americans have little confidence in news media.[61] Decreased media trust leads people to discount information portrayed in the news.[62] Concurrently, anyone with access to the Internet can share, create, and search for information. And, perhaps more importantly, the ability to select a narrow range of sources based on whether they comport with one's ideological orientation can hinder any exposure to alternate viewpoints or additional information on a given topic. Further, our social circles provide information—and interpretations of that information—about the world around us.[63] Sharing interpretations of information with others can increase feelings of trust between people.[64] Yet when media and members of our social circles have differing interpretations of information, people may conclude that media are untrustworthy. Further, if media messaging does not reflect a viewer's environment then that message is less likely to be trusted or accepted.[65]

While people across the political spectrum rate mainstream media as more trustworthy than both hyper-partisan and fake news sources,[66] this may not translate into acceptance of information within those mainstream sources, especially for people who are more distrustful of media. Factual information is only impactful when people believe it. Additionally, when people make judgments, they rely on whatever information about the topic is most salient rather than their entire store of knowledge on the topic.[67] People who have more trust in the mainstream media should be less influenced by conspiracy theories. From this, we expect that:
Hypothesis 6: People who have more trust in the media will

a. view the information as more accurate

b. be more likely to update their views on terrorism
c. have more accurate updated views on terrorism

Methodology

Sample

The present study was administered by Survey Sampling International, which provided an online sample of U.S. adults. Overall, 1,082 U.S. adults completed the study from 23–25 October 2017. Table 1 shows a survey of participant demographics and descriptive statistics for key variables.[68]

Design

We use a survey-embedded experimental design to examine how framing impacts willingness to believe factual information about terrorism. Terrorism data were taken from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).[69] For all participants, we provided information on the number of terrorist attacks in the United States between 2006 and 2015 and the number of people killed in these attacks. We also broke down attacks by ideologies—Islamists, far-right, far-left, other, and unknown. The GTD does not code this information, so two of the authors separately coded ideology for each attack, then compared coding and conducted additional research until we agreed on a clear, documented ideology behind each attack. When we could not find clear information to make a determination, the ideology was coded as unknown.

For the experimental component, we manipulated two factors in a press release about terrorism: the source of the information and the level of detail provided. There were four possible sources: (1) a Republican member of the House Intelligence Committee; (2) a Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee to prime on partisanship; (3) a team of university terrorism researchers to prime on subject area expertise; or (4) no source to serve as a control. The amount of detail provided was either: (1) just the numbers or (2) the numbers with examples from the real-world. Thus, we have a 4 × 2 between-subjects experimental design where each participant was randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. To obscure the true issue of interest in our study, each participant also read additional press releases on two other topics—carrying guns on college campuses and the seasonal flu.[70] For each issue, participants answered questions about the topic before and after reading the press release. Press releases were presented in a randomized order.

The press releases were situated within a broader survey on current event issues. All participants first answered basic demographic questions. In addition to the press releases described above, participants also answered blocks of questions to measure:

Islamophobia, trust in media, and trust in science.[71] Finally, participants answered additional background questions.

Table 1. Demographics and descriptive variables. (Table view)

Demographics	Frequency (Percent)	Mean	*SD*	Median	Range
Politics: Liberal	30.5	—	—	—	—
Politics: Moderate	44.3	—	—	—	—
Politics: Conservative	25.1	—	—	—	—
Partisanship: Democrat	39.1	—	—	—	—
Partisanship: Republican	24.2	—	—	—	—
Male	34.1	—	—	—	—
Age	—	41.33	13.48	40	18-65
Race: White	65.8	—	—	—	—
Race: Black	13.8	—	—	—	—
Race: Hispanic	13.2	—	—	—	—
Race: Asian	4.7	—	—	—	—
Race: Other	2.5	—	—	—	—
Dependent variables	Frequency (Percent)	Mean	*SD*	Median	Range
1: Information is accurate		3.03	0.74	—	1-4
2: Update terrorism frequency	68.1	—	—	—	—
3: Update terrorism lethality	63.6	—	—	—	—
4: Update attack accuracy: Correct	36.1	—	—	—	—
Low	24.3	—	—	—	—
High	7.5	—	—	—	—
No update	32.1	—	—	—	—
5. Update fatality accuracy: Correct	43.2	—	—	—	—
Low	6.9	—	—	—	—
High	13.3	—	—	—	—
No update	36.7	—	—	—	—
Measured independent variables	Frequency (Percent)	Mean	*SD*	Variance	α
Islamophobia	—	2.98	0.81	0.65	0.87
Trust in media	—	2.97	0.97	0.95	0.93
Trust in science	—	3.81	0.83	0.68	0.86

Variables

Dependent variables

We are interested in both attitudes toward factual information about terrorism and change in one's assessments of terrorism threats. People commonly say one thing yet do another.[72] To address this, researchers have added a behavioral component to attitudinal measures.[73] While we cannot measure behaviors here, we do measure change in assessments of terrorism threats from pretest to posttest.

Our main outcomes are: perceived accuracy of factual information about terrorism and whether or not people update their beliefs about terrorism—both frequency and lethality—after being presented with factual information about the subject. Participants assessed the information's *perceived accuracy*—our first dependent variable—using a 4-point scale where higher scores indicate greater accuracy (N = 1,082; M = 3.03; SD = 0.74). Here, the majority of participants (82.3 percent) indicated that the material was either somewhat or very accurate while the other 17.7 percent indicated that the material was inaccurate.

To assess whether or not people updated their beliefs about terrorism, we compare pretest and posttest measures. Before reading a press release on terrorism, participants responded to two open-ended questions about the frequency and lethality of terrorism in the United States over the ten-year period from 2006 to 2015.[74] After reading the press release—which contained the actual number of attacks and fatalities—participants were given the option to update either or both of their pretest assessments.[75] Our next two dependent variables are binary measures of whether or not the participant decided to update their assessment of terrorism's frequency (*update terrorism frequency*: 0 = no, 1 = yes) or lethality (*update terrorism lethality*: 0 = no, 1 = yes). The majority of participants updated their assessment of both the number of terror attacks (68.1 percent) and the number of terrorism fatalities (63.6 percent).

Participants who decided to update their assessment(s) then did so via another open-ended question. Some participants updated their posttest estimate to be in line with the factual evidence presented,[76] while others provided a posttest estimate that was either lower or higher than the actual number. The remaining participants did not elect to update their estimate(s) after reading the press release. From this, we create our last two dependent variables: *Updated attack accuracy* and *Updated fatality accuracy.* Each variable takes one of four mutually exclusive categories: 0 = did not update; 1 = correct update; 2 = incorrect update, lower; and, 3 = incorrect update, higher.

Independent variables

The predictors in this study are our two manipulated variables—*source* and *detail*—and three measured variables—*Islamophobia, trust in media*, and *trust in science*. We manipulated the information source in the terrorism press release. Participants were

randomly assigned to read a press release from: A Republican member of the House Intelligence Committee, a Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee, a team of university terrorism researchers, or no source listed (control). We created dummy variables for the each of the three treatment sources.

Two of the four possible sources are partisan. We expect that people will be more positively influenced by a source who shares their views and may discount information provided by a source with opposing views. Shared views are conceptualized in two ways: shared party and shared ideology. We created dummy variables for when the participant and the source share party ID (both Democrats or both Republicans) and when the participant and the source have the opposite party ID (participant is a Democrat and source is Republic or vice versa). We also created dummy variables for shared ideology (participant is liberal and source is a Democrat or participant is conservative and source is a Republican) and when the participant and the source have opposite ideologies (participant is liberal and the source is Republican or vice versa).

In sum, we operationalize source in three ways. First, we created dummies for random assignment to the press release from: *a Republican Congressman*, *a Democratic Congressman*, and *an academic researcher*. Next, we created dummies for *co-partisan* (16.8 percent) and *opposite-partisan* (14.8 percent). Finally, we created dummies for *shared ideology* (14.7 percent) and *opposite ideology* (13.4 percent). We estimate models with each set of dummies.[77]

We also manipulated the amount of detail that a participant saw about the factual terrorism information provided. Half of the participants read a press release that provided just the statistics about terrorist attacks in the United States between 2006 and 2015 while the other half were also provided with additional details and examples of attacks and perpetrators.

We also include three measured variables using validated scales for Islamophobia, trust in science, and trust in media. Islamophobia was measured using twelve items.[78] Each item was measured on a 6-point scale where higher scores indicate more Islamophobia. Scores on these twelve items were averaged to create a total score for *Islamophobia*. Observed scored ranged from 1 to 5.83 ($N = 1{,}063$; $M = 2.98$; $SD = 0.81$, $\alpha = 0.87$). Trust in science was measured with four items.[79] Each item was measured on a 5-point scale where higher scores indicate more trust in science. Scores on these four items were averaged to create a total score for *trust in science*. Observed scores ranged from 1 to 5 ($N = 1{,}082$; $M = 3.81$; $SD = 0.83$, $\alpha = 0.86$).[80] Trust in media is measured with ten items.[81] Items were measured on a 5-point scale where higher scores indicate more trust in the mainstream media. Scores on these ten items were averaged to create a total score for *trust in media*. Observed scores ranged from 1 to 5 ($N = 1{,}082$; $M = 2.97$; $SD = 0.97$, $\alpha = 0.93$).

Results

Can factual information change minds?

We are interested in both the participants' attitudes toward factual information about terrorism and their willingness to update assessments of terrorism frequency and lethality after reading factual information. In the pretest, only one participant (0.1 percent) correctly guessed that there were 136 terrorist attacks in the United States from 2006 to 2015, while 1.4 percent guessed in the range of 120–152. Similarly, only one participant (0.1 percent) correctly guessed that nintety-nine people were killed in those attacks, while 9.1 percent guessed in a range of eighty-nine to 109. After reading the press releases, a far greater number of people correctly identified the number of terrorist attacks and fatalities. Of those who updated their views on attack frequency ($N = 736$), 35.6 percent correctly named the number of attacks posttest; this accounts for 24.2 percent of the entire sample including those who did not update their views posttest. When expanded out to a range, 52.7 percent of those who updated their views (35.9 percent of the whole sample) stated that there were somewhere between 120–152 attacks in the United States during this ten-year period. Over half (51.2 percent) of those who updated their views on attack lethality ($N = 686$) correctly named the number of fatalities from these attacks posttest; this is 32.4 percent of the whole sample. When expanded out to a range, 67.9 percent of those who updated their views (43.1 percent of the whole sample) stated that somewhere between eighty-nine and 109 people were killed in these attacks. In short, some people were persuaded to update their estimates about terrorism after reading factual information on the topic.

How does factual information change minds?

To examine factors that explain why some people update their beliefs when presented with factual information while others do not, we turn to our analyses.[82] In Table 2, we analyze factors that impact the perceived accuracy of the information provided about terrorism in the press release. The dependent variable is measured on a 7-point scale. We estimated models with both ordered logistic regression and ordinary least squares (OLS). Since the results are the same, we report the OLS models that allow for easier substantive interpretation.[83]

We operationalize source in three ways: the source's party identification alone (Model 1), whether the source and the participant have shared party identification (Model 2), and whether the source and the party have shared ideology (Model 3). In line with H1a, shared party identification significantly increased perceptions of the information's accuracy. Yet, neither of the other operationalization of partisan sources nor opposite party identification impacted perceived accuracy of the information. Supporting H2a, when the source was a team of academic terrorism researchers, participants were significantly more likely to think the information was accurate across

all models. Supporting H3b, participants who read a press release with both statistics and examples were significantly more likely to think the information was accurate than those who were only provided with the numbers. Contrary to H4a, Islamophobia has a positive impact on perceived accuracy of the information, but only in Model 2.[84] Islamophobia did not impact perceptions of the information's accuracy in the other models. As expected in H5a, participants with more trust in science rated the press release as significantly more accurate. Similarly, in support of H6a, people with more trust in the mainstream media were also more likely to think factual information about terrorism was accurate. In sum, the amount of detail provided, trust in science, and trust in media consistently impact people's attitudes about terrorism.

Table 2. Perceived accuracy of factual information about terrorism. (Table view)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Source: Dem	0.005 (0.06)		
Source: Rep	−0.02 (0.06)		
Source: Academic	**0.13* (0.06)**	**0.22*** (0.05)**	**0.14** (0.04)**
Source: Shared party		**0.16* (0.06)**	
Source: Opposite party		0.02 (0.07)	
Source: Shared ideology			0.11‡ (0.06)
Source: Opposite ideology			−0.08 (0.06)
Stats and details	**0.14** (0.04)**	**0.23*** (0.05)**	**0.14** (0.04)**
Islamophobia	−0.05‡ (0.03)	**0.15*** (0.03)**	−0.05‡ (0.03)
Trust in media	**0.12*** (0.03)**	**0.13*** (0.03)**	**0.12*** (0.03)**
Trust in science	**0.24*** (0.03)**	**0.51*** (0.03)**	**0.24*** (0.03)**
Observations	1,063	1,063	1,063

Note. Dependent variable question: "Thinking about what you just read, how *accurate* do you think the information is?"
Responses: range from 1 (not accurate at all) to 4 (very accurate).
Ordinary least squares regression models. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
Constants not reported.
† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

We next examine whether or not people update their views about both terrorism's frequency in the United States and the fatalities that result from it. We first focus on the number of terrorist attacks in the United States during the ten-year period of 2006 to 2015. Table 3 presents results of logistic regression models for whether or not people decide to update their assessment of the number of terrorist attacks in the United States after reading the press release. Table 4 presents the results for whether or not people update their guess on terrorism lethality in the United States posttest. Across models, only H5b is supported. People who have greater trust in science are more willing to

update their beliefs about terrorism frequency and lethality after reading factual information. Neither the source, the amount of detail, the level of Islamophobia, nor trust in media impacts whether or not people were willing to update their views about terrorism after reading factual information about it.

Table 3. Update number of terrorist attacks (yes, no). (Table view)

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Source: Dem	1.26 (0.24)		
Source: Rep	1.36 (0.26)		
Source: Academic	1.37† (0.26)	1.22 (0.21)	1.13 (0.19)
Source: Shared party		1.11 (0.22)	
Source: Opposite party		1.20 (0.24)	
Source: Shared ideology			0.84 (0.17)
Source: Opposite ideology			1.11 (0.23)
Stats and details	1.05 (0.14)	1.04 (0.14)	1.04 (0.14)
Islamophobia	0.98 (0.09)	0.99 (0.09)	0.99 (0.09)
Trust in media	0.95 (0.08)	0.95 (0.08)	0.95 (0.08)
Trust in science	**1.91*** (0.18)**	**1.90*** (0.18)**	**1.91*** (0.18)**
Observations	1,063	1,063	1,063

Dependent variable question: "Earlier you said you thought that {*piped text response from pre-test*} terrorist attacks occurred in the US in between 2006 and 2015. Given what you have read, would you like to revise your estimate?"
Responses: 0 = no, 1 = yes.
Logistic regression models. Odds ratios presented. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
Constants not reported.
† $p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$;$^{**}p < .01$;$^{***}p < .001$.

Finally, we examine factors that impact whether a person updated their views of terrorism correctly, updated but underestimated frequency, updated but overestimated frequency, or did not update at all. Since the outcomes each take one of four mutually exclusive categories, we estimated multinomial logistic regression models. Table 5 presents results for updating behavior about terrorism frequency and Table 6 reports on terrorism lethality. Again, across all models, only H5c is supported. As Table 5 shows, people who have more trust in science were more likely to correctly update their posttest views on terrorism frequency, but they were also more likely to guess too low and too high. Thus, they recognized the need to adjust their estimates, but did not always do so correctly. None of the other factors impact how people update their views on terrorism frequency. Table 6 shows that people who are more trusting in science are also more likely to correctly update their posttest guess on terrorism lethality, but they were also more likely to guess too high. As Model 23 shows, participants with shared

partisan identity to the source were more likely to guess too low on terrorism lethality, which is in partial support of H1c. In Model 24, greater trust in media is related to making a low posttest guess about terrorism lethality. This partially supports H5c. None of the other variables impacted whether or how people update their views about terrorism lethality in response to factual information.

Table 4. Update number of terrorism fatalities (yes, no). (Table view)

	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Source: Dem	1.07 (0.20)		
Source: Rep	0.94 (0.17)		
Source: Academic	1.08 (0.20)	1.15 (1.19)	1.04 (0.17)
Source: Shared party		1.16 (0.22)	
Source: Opposite party		1.18 (0.23)	
Source: Shared ideology			0.85 (0.16)
Source: Opposite ideology			0.99 (0.20)
Stats and details	1.10 (0.14)	1.09 (0.14)	1.10 (0.14)
Islamophobia	0.95 (0.08)	0.95 (0.08)	0.95 (0.08)
Trust in media	0.97 (0.08)	0.96 (0.08)	0.96 (0.08)
Trust in science	**1.71*** (0.16)**	**1.71*** (0.16)**	**1.71*** (0.16)**
Observations	1,063	1,063	1,063

Dependent variable question: "Earlier you said you thought that {*piped text response from pre-test*} people were killed in terrorist attacks in the US between 2006 and 2015. Given what you have read, would you like to revise your estimate?"
Responses: 0 = no, 1 = yes.
Logistic regression models. Odds ratios presented. Robust standard errors in parentheses.
Constants not reported.
† $p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$;$^{**}p < .01$;$^{***}p < .001$.

Discussion

This project was motivated by the puzzle of why some people are inclined to believe factual information about terrorism while others are not. Our results show that sources, framing, and individual characteristics—Islamophobia, trust in media, and trust in science—explain the extent to which someone views factual information about terrorism as accurate. While many people did change their perception of terrorism frequency and lethality in response to factual information, our results are less clear on why or when this will be the case. In short, results suggest that both contextual factors and personal views impact whether or not someone will believe information presented to them, but only those who are more trustful of science are willing to actually change their views.

Table 5. Update number of terrorist attacks (correct, low, high). (Table view)

	Correct			Low			High		
	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18
Source: Dem	1.25 (0.27)			1.08 (0.26)			**2.19* (0.81)**		
Source: Rep	1.33 (0.29)			1.34 (0.31)			1.58 (0.62)		
Source: Academic	1.40 (0.30)	1.26 (0.24)	1.15 (0.22)	1.32 (0.32)	1.24 (0.27)	1.16 (0.25)	1.56 (0.62)	1.05 (0.34)	1.00 (0.32)
Source: Shared Party		1.11 (0.25)			1.06 (0.26)			1.23 (0.43)	
Source: Opposite party		1.23 (0.28)			1.26 (0.31)			0.97 (0.38)	
Source: Shared ideology			0.83 (0.19)			0.80 (0.20)			0.90 (0.34)
Source: Opposite ideology			1.04 (0.88)			1.21 (0.31)			1.11 (0.43)
Stats and details	1.09 (0.17)	1.08 (0.17)	1.08 (0.17)	0.99 (0.17)	0.99 (0.17)	0.99 (0.17)	1.12 (0.29)	1.09 (0.28)	1.10 (0.28)
Islamophobia	0.91 (0.09)	0.92 (0.09)	0.92 (0.09)	1.11 (0.12)	1.12 (0.12)	1.12 (0.12)	0.94 (0.14)	0.95 (0.14)	0.95 (0.14)
Trust in media	0.95 (0.09)	0.94 (0.09)	0.94 (0.09)	0.91 (0.09)	0.90 (0.09)	0.90 (0.09)	1.18 (0.20)	1.19 (0.20)	1.19 (0.20)
Trust in	**2.00*** (0.22)**	**2.00*** (0.22)**	**2.01*** (0.22)**	**1.89*** (0.23)**	**1.89*** (0.23)**	**1.89*** (0.23)**	**1.51* (0.30)**	**1.49* (0.30)**	**1.50* (0.30)**

	Correct			Low			High		
	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12	Model 13	Model 14	Model 15	Model 16	Model 17	Model 18
science									
Observations	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056
AIC	2645.74	2651.04	2650.82	2645.74	2651.04	2650.82	2645.74	2651.04	2650.82
BIC	2764.81	2770.13	2769.91	2764.81	2770.13	2769.91	2764.81	2770.13	2769.91

Dependent variable question: "Please enter your new estimate for the number of people killed in terrorist attacks in the US between 2006 and 2015 here."
Recoded Responses: 0 = No Update; 1 = Correct; 2 = Under-estimate (Low); 3 = Over-estimate (High).
Multinomial regression models. Constants not reported.
Relative risk ratios are presented with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
† $p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$.

Source credibility, conceptualized as shared party identification, increased perceived accuracy of information. Yet, contrary to expectation, it did not impact whether or not people changed their views or how accurate posttest views were for those who did update. To our surprise, opposite party identification did not impact any of the outcomes. The significant impact of shared party identification on information accuracy suggests that terrorism data in general are a framed threat, whereas the insignificant impact of opposite party identification suggests this is an unframed threat.[85] Perhaps terrorism data may sit somewhere between framed and unframed threats, which could explain the mixed impact of partisan sources on perceived accuracy of the information. Further, source credibility by way of academic expertise did increase perceived accuracy of the information provided on terrorism, but did not impact whether or not someone changed their views.

The prevalence of null results causes us to consider additional factors that may be at play. Knowledge of, and attitudes about, terrorism are likely developed over time. In some cases, a simple correction of misinformation or clarification of a misperception may be able to be accomplished in a single exposure. Yet our results suggest a need to better understand the thresholds at which new (and accurate) information starts to "sink in" and have a demonstrable impact on people's perceptions of vulnerability and estimates of a phenomenon as emotionally charged and potentially threatening as terrorism. One promising finding is that, despite rhetoric to the contrary,[86] participants in this study viewed academic researchers as credible sources for accurate, factual information that is data-driven.

Table 6. Update number of terrorism fatalities (correct, low, high). (Table view)

	Correct			Low			High		
	Model 19	Model 20	Model 21	Model 22	Model 23	Model 24	Model 25	Model 26	Model 27
Source: Dem	0.99 (0.20)			1.63 (0.56)			1.13 (0.32)		
Source: Rep	0.97 (0.19)			1.08 (0.39)			0.83 (0.24)		
Source: Academic	1.11 (0.22)	1.20 (0.21)	1.11 (0.19)	0.77 (0.31)	0.76 (0.28)	0.68 (0.25)	1.11 (0.31)	1.14 (0.28)	0.99 (0.24)
Source: Shared party		1.08 (0.22)			**1.96* (0.63)**			0.99 (0.29)	
Source: Opposite party		1.26 (0.27)			1.02 (0.40)			1.07 (0.33)	
Source: Shared ideology			0.88 (0.18)			1.39 (0.47)			0.54‡ (0.18)
Source: Opposite ideology			1.05 (0.23)			1.03 (0.39)			0.86 (0.27)
Stats and details	1.09 (0.15)	1.09 (0.15)	1.09 (0.15)	1.46 (0.38)	1.40 (0.37)	1.43 (0.37)	0.99 (0.20)	0.99 (0.20)	0.99 (0.20)
Islamophobia	0.97 (0.09)	0.97 (0.09)	0.97 (0.09)	0.99 (0.18)	0.99 (0.18)	0.99 (0.18)	0.82‡ (0.10)	0.82‡ (0.09)	0.82‡ (0.09)
Trust in media	0.90 (0.08)	0.89 (0.08)	0.89 (0.08)	1.36‡ (0.21)	1.34‡ (0.21)	**1.38* (0.21)**	1.07 (0.13)	1.07 (0.13)	1.06 (0.13)
Trust in science	**1.85*** (0.18)**	**1.85*** (0.18)**	**1.86*** (0.18)**	1.32 (0.24)	1.32 (0.24)	1.30 (0.23)	**1.48* (0.23)**	**1.48* (0.23)**	**1.50** (0.23)**
Observations	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056

	Correct			Low			High		
	Model 19	Model 20	Model 21	Model 22	Model 23	Model 24	Model 25	Model 26	Model 27
AIC	2479.87	2477.10	2477.67	2479.87	2477.10	2477.67	2479.87	2477.10	2477.67
BIC	2598.96	2596.20	2598.76	2598.96	2596.20	2598.76	2598.96	2596.20	2598.76

Dependent variable question: "Please enter your new estimate for the number of attack in the US between 2006 and 2015 here."
Recoded Responses: 0 = No Update; 1 = Correct; 2 = Under-estimate (Low); 3 = Over-estimate (High).
Multinomial regression models. Constants not reported.
Relative risk ratios are presented with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
†
$p < .10$; $^{*}p < .05$;$^{**}p < .01$;$^{***}p < .001$.

Participants who read both the statistics and were provided with examples viewed the information as more accurate. By providing more details, or a complete narrative, people were more accepting of factual information about terrorism. Our results here are in line with previous findings that people view statistical information alone as uninformative[87] and that people are more persuaded by a complete narrative.[88] However, providing more details did not lead to a change in views, which contrasts prior findings that complete narratives reduce reliance on misperceptions.[89] Yet, in the context of voter choice, corrective information may impact attitudes but not behaviors, which is in line with our results here.[90]

Turning to individual-level factors, only trust in science had a consistent impact across outcomes. Across all models, people who were more trusting in science indicated that factual information about terrorism was more accurate and were more likely to change their views about terrorism. These results are certainly not a refutation of the literature that suggests people are generally less trusting in expertise[91] and that this mistrust carries over into issues that are largely settled scientifically.[92] Rather, this suggests that greater trust in science is linked to more acceptance of data and vice versa. Our results raise the question of how to increase trust in science, which is a concept that requires more theorizing and research. Additionally, trust in media positively predicted perceived accuracy of terrorism data, which supports prior research though this did not carry over into changing views on terrorism.[93]

In sum, presenting laypeople with factual information about terrorism can lead to updated views on both the frequency and lethality of terrorism in the United States. Yet—apart from level of trust in science—our manipulated variables, measured variables, and demographic variables do not clearly explain why some people change their views on terrorism while others do not when presented with factual information on the subject.

Conclusion

Results from this study show that changing minds about terrorism is possible, but does not paint a clear picture of when or how that occurs. While some attention has been paid to possible ways to intervene in cases of motivated rejections of science,[94] our ability to specifically address the inaccuracies related to terrorism continues to be ripe with possibility. Thus, future research should further try to unpack this black box of persuasion as it relates to terrorism, which ventures outside of the so-called hard sciences related to biomedical phenomena (i.e., vaccines), or climate change in which geoscientific data may appear to be more fundamentally "objective" in the first place. For phenomena in the realm of the behavioral and social sciences, we posit that an already difficult challenge may be made that much more difficult.

We have suggested some cognitive mechanisms or routes of persuasion that people may use to process information about terrorism, but this has great potential for a deeper level of understanding and analysis. Specifically, how can source, framing, and other factors impact whether or not a person not only views information to be accurate but also is willing to change their views on the issue? In the case of terrorism, peoples' willingness to update beliefs may be further influenced through intergroup stereotypes about *who* is a terrorist, and the heightened negative intergroup emotions that could plausibly make updating beliefs quite unlikely. Further, people who perceive terrorism to be more prevalent and more deadly may respond to corrective information differently than those who view terrorism as less threatening. By unpacking the role of perceived vulnerability—and the complications that a heightened sense of perceived vulnerability may introduce—we might see that some people are significantly or uniquely resistant to "right-sizing" their estimates of terrorism.

One limitation of our research is that it presents information in a short press release and immediately asks for assessments on the data's accuracy and perceptions of it. Future research should examine the persistence of these views over longer periods of time. The frequency, duration, and intensity of exposure will likely prove to be important factors in understanding how and when beliefs will be updated. Additional research on identifying the root causes of anti-science beliefs and the sources of incorrect scientific information could also be fruitful in this area. For example, would participants still view factual information on terrorism to be accurate after a week, after a month, longer? And, do these participants recall the actual frequency and lethality of terrorism in the United States, or does this information fall out of one's memory as conflicting narratives are regularly presented by media and politicians? What we can say with some degree of certainty is that perceptions of terrorism, however incomplete or inaccurate, have been used to establish and gain public support for a wide range of policies ranging from who is allowed to travel to the United States, to who is subjected to closer levels of surveillance, and beyond. Thus, it behooves the future research community to bring

data to bear to ensure valid, reliable, and accurate assessments of not only the actual risks that terrorism presents, but also a more accurate picture of who bears responsibility for terrorist attacks and what those attacks indeed look like. The present research clearly illustrates that a one-shot approach to correcting this problem is insufficient. Rather, a more coordinated and sustained effort to present corrective and factual information will be required. Our findings strongly suggest that it will be important for academic researchers—informed by data—to play a key role in increasing the accuracy and extent of public knowledge on terrorism.

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ID (F(6, 1075) = 0.79, p = .58). Similarly, we see no differences in the measured variables across treatment conditions: Islamophobia (F(6, 1056) = 0.55, p = .77); trust in media (F(6, 1075) = 0.55, p = .77); and, trust in science (F(6, 1075) = .15, p = .99).
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GTD, 2017.
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75.
Posttreatment, participants were presented with the option to update their assessment(s) of the number of attacks and/or the number of fatalities. First, "Earlier you said you thought that {*their pre-response*} terrorist attacks occurred in the US in between 2006 and 2015. Given what you have read, would you like to revise your estimate?" Second, "Earlier you said you thought that {*their pre-test response*} people were killed in terrorist attacks in the US between 2006 and 2015. Given what you have read, would you like to revise your estimate?"
76.
The actual number of terrorist attacks in the United States between 2006 and 2015 is 136. We code Updated Terror Attack as correct if the participant's posttest guess was

between 120 and 152. The actual number of fatalities from terrorism in the United States between 2006 and 2015 is 99. We code Updated Terror Fatality as correct if the participant's posttest guess was between 89 and 109. We also estimated models where the posttest guess was only coded as correct if it was the exact number. The results are substantively unchanged.
77.
We also estimate models with dummies for: (1) Source Democrat & Participant Democrat; (2) Source Democrat & Participant Republican; (3) Source Republican & Participant Democrat; and, (4) Source Republican & Participant Republican. We estimate all models reported in text with this fourth operationalization of source and report results in Appendix Tables A2 and A3. The results are fundamentally the same across models. Here with one difference: Republican participants in the Republican source condition rated the information as more accurate and were more likely to give a low estimate for the number of fatalities from terrorism posttreatment.
78.
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80.
Our three measured variables were not balanced between Democrats and Republicans. Compared to Republicans, Democrats indicated: significantly greater *trust in science*, $t(685) = 7.30$, $p < .001$; significantly greater *trust in media*, $t(685) = 12.66$, $p < .001$; and significantly higher perceived *Islamophobia*, $t(669) = 3.48$, $p < .001$. As such, it is possible that these measured variables are proxies for *party ID*. To examine this, we replicated the models in Tables 5 and 6 and included dummy variables for Democrat and Republican. These models are reported in Appendix Tables A4 and A5. The results are fundamentally unchanged and neither of the party ID variables has a significant impact on any of the outcomes.
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As robustness checks, all models reported in text were also estimated: (a) with only dummies for the experimental conditions and (b) with experimental dummies, measured variables, and participant demographics. Across the modeling decisions, results are fundamentally the same. Models reported in text include the experimental treatment dummies and measured variables.
83.

The correlation among the independent variables ranges from 0.11 to 0.50.
84.
While this finding is surprising, the *Islamophobia* construct is more a measure of the extent to which a person views Islamophobia's presence in society as opposed to their own Islamophobic views. Perhaps people who are more likely to acknowledge that Islamophobia exists in society are also more open to narratives that counter Islamophobic sentiment.
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Appendix: Terrorism press releases

Experimental press releases varied on two factors: *source* and *level of detail.* Participants in the no detail conditions did not see the underlined portions. Each participant was randomly assigned to read one press release on terrorism. See Appendix for full text of experimental press releases. The appendix tables are referenced in the Endnotes already.

PRESS RELEASE

{(1) Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee on Terrorism Data; (2) Republican member of the House Intelligence Committee on Terrorism Data; (3) University researchers on Terrorism Data; (4) Terrorism Data.}

September 1, 2017. Terrorism is often in the news, but to truly understand how common or uncommon terrorism actually is, {(*1) A Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee cited; (2) a Republican member of the House Intelligence Committee cited; (3) a team of university terrorism researchers cited; (4) [D]*}data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), which is funded by the Department of Homeland Security.

According to GTD data, there were 136 terrorist attacks in the United States between 2006 and 2015; in total, 99 people were killed. The odds of being killed in a terrorist attack are extremely low, especially compared to the odds of being killed by a car accident, by gun violence, or from medical complications.

Between 2006 and 2015, far-right extremists like white supremacists, anti-abortion activists, and anti-government militias were responsible for roughly 50% of all terrorist attacks in the U.S. Examples you may be familiar with include the Charleston Church Massacre and The Oak Creek Sikh temple shooting.

Another 16.5% of attacks were driven by various other ideologies, such as nonpartizan grievances with the IRS or conspiracy theories.

Nearly 14.5% of terrorist attacks were committed by far-left wing extremists such as animal rights and environmental groups, who typically attack animal testing labs, people who work in these labs, and housing developments that damage the environment. Most of these attacks do not result in fatalities, but do cause economic harm and property damage.

Islamist extremists only committed about 12.5% of terrorist attacks in the United States over the last decade. Despite this low prevalence rate, compared to other violent acts carried out in the U.S. by groups with varying ideologies, terrorism coverage by U.S. media is often associated with “Islamic terror attacks” like the Boston Marathon Bombing or the Fort Hood Shooting.

Lastly, the perpetrator and ideological motivation were unknown in about 6.5% of attacks.

Research {by the *(1) Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee cited; (2) Republican member of the House Intelligence Committee cited; (3) team of university terrorism researchers cited; (4)*} is ongoing.

Table A1. Demographics and descriptive variables by condition. (Table view)

Source details	Dem. stats	Dem. stats +	Rep. stats	Rep. stats +	Academ. stats	Acaedm. stats +	None stats	None stats +
Pretest measures								
# of attacks (median)	12.5	15	15	10	12	11	15	10
# of fatalities (median)	400	510	400	300	300	350	500	250
Demographics								
Liberal	27.5%	35.4%	31.5%	30.1%	30.5%	30.6%	28.1%	30.3%
Moderate	51.5%	40.8%	39.2%	45.1%	45.0%	47.0%	40.6%	45.5%
Conservative	21.0%	23.9%	29.4%	24.8%	24.4%	22.4%	31.3%	24.1%
Democrat	37.0%	46.2%	38.5%	36.1%	37.4%	37.3%	44.5%	36.6%
Republican	20.3%	22.3%	21.0%	30.8%	24.4%	20.9%	27.3%	26.9%
Male	38.4%	28.5%	30.1%	36.8%	33.6%	33.6%	35.2%	36.6%
Age (mean, *SD*)	41.3 (13.5)	41.6 (13.5)	41.2 (13.9)	40.6 (12.7)	40.6 (13.9)	40.3 (12.9)	42.4 (14.0)	42.6 (13.6)
Race: White	65.2%	63.9%	67.8%	66.2%	67.9%	66.4%	64.8%	64.1%
Race: Black	14.5%	17.7%	14.7%	12.8%	12.2%	15.7%	7.8%	14.5%
Race: Hispanic	16.7%	13.1%	11.2%	12.0%	12.2%	12.7%	19.5%	9.0%
Race: Asian	1.5%	3.1%	5.6%	6.0%	5.3%	3.7%	5.5%	6.9%
Race: Other	2.2%	2.3%	0.7%	3.0%	2.3%	1.5%	2.3%	5.5%
Measured independent variables								
Islamophobia (mean, *SD*)	3.0 (0.8)	3.0 (0.8)	3.0 (0.8)	3.0 (0.8)	3.0 (0.8)	3.1 (0.8)	2.9 (0.8)	3.0 (0.9)
Trust in media (mean, *SD*)	3.0 (0.9)	3.1 (0.9)	2.9 (1.0)	3.0 (1.0)	3.0 (0.9)	3.0 (1.0)	2.8 (1.1)	3.0 (1.0)
Trust in science (mean, *SD*)	3.9 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.9)	3.8 (0.8)	3.8 (0.9)

Table A2. Replicating Tables 2–4 matching source and participant party ID. (Table view)

	Perceived accuracy of information	Update # of terrorist attacks (yes, no)	Update # of terrorism fatalities (yes, no)
Source: Academic	**0.14** ** **(0.05)**	0.20 (0.17)	0.14 (0.16)
Source: Dem and democrat participant	0.04 (0.07)	0.05 (0.24)	0.09 (0.23)
Source: Dem and republican participant	−0.08 (0.09)	−0.03 (0.28)	0.15 (0.29)
Source: Rep and democrat participant	−0.04 (0.08)	0.31 (0.26)	0.17 (0.24)
Source: Rep and republican participant	**0.17** * **(0.08)**	0.19 (0.28)	0.24 (0.27)
Stats and details	**0.13** ** **(0.04)**	0.04 (0.14)	0.09 (0.13)
Islamophobia	−0.05‡ (0.03)	−0.01 (0.09)	−0.05 (0.08)
Trust in media	**0.13** *** **(0.03)**	−0.05 (0.08)	−0.04 (0.08)
Trust in science	**0.24** *** **(0.03)**	**0.64** *** **(0.10)**	**0.54** *** **(0.09)**
Observations	1,063	1,063	1,063

Note. First model estimated with OLS. Second and third models estimated with logistic regression where odds ratios presented. Constants not reported. Clustered standard errors in parentheses.

†

$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table A3. Replicating Tables 5 and 6 matching source and participant party ID. (Table view)

	Correct		Low		High	
	# attacks	# fatalities	# attacks	# fatalities	# attacks	# fatalities
Source: Academic	0.23 (0.19)	0.18 (0.18)	0.21 (0.21)	−0.27 (0.37)	0.05 (0.33)	0.13 (0.25)
Source: Dem and democrat participant	0.04 (0.28)	0.05 (0.26)	−0.15 (0.30)	0.42 (0.39)	0.48 (0.39)	−0.05 (0.36)
Source: Dem and republican participant	0.13 (0.31)	0.22 (0.31)	−0.27 (0.39)	−0.04 (0.65)	−0.003 (0.58)	0.04 (0.47)
Source: Rep and	0.26 (0.30)	0.24 (0.26)	0.48 (0.30)	0.04 (0.46)	−0.01 (0.49)	0.08 (0.37)

	Correct		Low		High	
	# attacks	# fatalities	# attacks	# fatalities	# attacks	# fatalities
democrat participant						
Source: Rep and republican participant	0.20 (0.32)	0.10 (0.31)	0.34 (0.34)	**1.04* (0.44)**	−0.73 (0.77)	0.05 (0.43)
Stats and details	0.08 (0.15)	0.08 (0.14)	−0.01 (0.17)	0.32 (0.26)	0.10 (0.26)	−0.01 (0.20)
Islamophobia	−0.08 (0.10)	−0.04 (0.09)	0.12 (0.11)	0.01 (0.18)	−0.08 (0.15)	−0.20‡ (0.12)
Trust in media	−0.06 (0.10)	−0.12 (0.09)	−0.10 (0.10)	**0.32* (0.16)**	0.14 (0.18)	0.07 (0.12)
Trust in science	**0.70*** (0.11)**	**0.62*** (0.10)**	**0.64*** (0.12)**	0.29 (0.19)	**0.40* (0.20)**	**0.39* (0.15)**
Observations	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056

Note. Multinomial regression models. Constants not reported.
Relative risk ratios are presented with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
†
$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table A4. Update number of terrorist attacks (correct, low, high)—Control for party ID. (Table view)

	Correct			Low			High		
Source: Dem	0.23 (0.22)			0.08 (0.24)			0.78* (0.37)		
Source: Rep	0.29 (0.22)			0.29 (0.23)			0.46 (0.39)		
Source: Academic	0.35 (0.21)	0.21 (0.20)	0.14 (0.19)	0.29 (0.24)	0.20 (0.22)	0.15 (0.21)	0.44 (0.40)	0.10 (0.33)	0.003 (0.32)
Source: Shared party		0.06 (0.25)			0.02 (0.28)			0.36 (0.40)	
Source: Opposi		0.15 (0.26)			0.19 (0.28)			0.12 (0.44)	

	Correct			Low			High		
te party									
Source: Shared Ideology			−0.21 (0.23)			−0.23 (0.25)			−0.08 (0.38)
Source: Opposite ideology			0.01 (0.24)			0.18 (0.26)			0.13 (0.39)
Stats and details	0.09 (0.15)	0.08 (0.15)	0.08 (0.15)	−0.01 (0.17)	−0.01 (0.17)	−0.01 (0.17)	0.12 (0.26)	0.09 (0.26)	0.10 (0.26)
Participant democrat	0.11 (0.19)	0.05 (0.21)	0.11 (0.19)	0.15 (0.20)	0.10 (0.24)	0.14 (0.20)	−0.03 (0.30)	−0.17 (0.35)	−0.05 (0.30)
Participant republican	0.18 (0.20)	0.12 (0.22)	0.18 (0.20)	0.07 (0.22)	0.01 (0.25)	0.06 (0.22)	−0.22 (0.36)	−0.37 (0.41)	−0.24 (0.36)
Islamophobia	−0.09 (0.10)	−0.08 (0.10)	−0.08 (0.10)	0.11 (0.11)	0.11 (0.11)	0.12 (0.10)	−0.07 (0.15)	−0.06 (0.15)	−0.06 (0.15)
Trust in media	−0.06 (0.10)	−0.06 (0.10)	−0.06 (0.10)	−0.11 (0.10)	−0.12 (0.10)	−0.12 (0.10)	0.16 (0.18)	0.16 (0.18)	0.16 (0.18)
Trust in science	**0.70***** **(0.11)**	**0.70***** **(0.11)**	**0.70***** **(0.11)**	**0.63***** **(0.12)**	**0.63***** **(0.12)**	**0.64***** **(0.12)**	**0.41*** **(0.20)**	**0.40*** **(0.20)**	**0.40*** **(0.20)**
Observations	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056

Note. Dependent variable question: “Please enter your new estimate for the number of people killed in terrorist attacks in the US between 2006 and 2015 here.”
Recoded Responses: 0 = No Update; 1 = Correct; 2 = Under-estimate (Low); 3 = Over-estimate (High).
Multinomial regression models. Constants not reported.
Relative risk ratios are presented with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
†

$p < .10$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Table A5. Update number of terrorism fatalities (correct, low, high)—Control for party ID. (Table view)

	Correct			Low			High		
Source: Dem	−0.004 (0.20)			0.51 (0.35)			0.13 (0.28)		
Source: Rep	−0.03 (0.20)			0.08 (0.36)			−0.19 (0.29)		
Source: Academic	0.12 (0.20)	0.15 (0.18)	0.10 (0.18)	−0.23 (0.41)	−0.33 (0.37)	−0.39 (0.36)	0.11 (0.28)	0.11 (0.26)	−0.009 (0.24)
Source: Shared party		−0.02 (0.23)			0.51 (0.37)			−0.08 (0.34)	
Source: Opposite party		0.14 (0.24)			−0.13 (0.43)			0.0008 (0.35)	
Source: Shared ideology			−0.16 (0.21)			0.27 (0.34)			−0.64‡ (0.34)
Source: Opposite ideology			0.01 (0.22)			−0.04 (0.39)			−0.17 (0.31)
Stats and details	0.08 (0.14)	0.08 (0.14)	0.08 (0.14)	0.36 (0.26)	0.32 (0.26)	0.34 (0.26)	−0.02 (0.20)	−0.04 (0.20)	−0.02 (0.20)
Participant democrat	0.13 (0.17)	0.11 (0.19)	0.14 (0.17)	0.28 (0.32)	0.15 (0.37)	0.27 (0.32)	0.05 (0.24)	0.07 (0.28)	0.07 (0.24)
Participant republican	0.24 (0.18)	0.22 (0.21)	0.25 (0.18)	0.60‡ (0.35)	0.44 (0.38)	0.57 (0.25)	0.15 (0.26)	0.16 (0.30)	0.19 (0.27)

	Correct			Low			High		
Islamophobia	−0.03 (0.09)	−0.03 (0.09)	−0.03 (0.09)	0.002 (0.18)	0.001 (0.18)	0.0002 (0.19)	−0.20† (0.12)	−0.20† (0.12)	−0.20† (0.12)
Trust in media	−0.11 (0.09)	−0.11 (0.09)	−0.11 (0.09)	0.32† (0.17)	0.32† (0.16)	**0.33* (0.16)**	0.07 (0.13)	0.08 (0.13)	0.07 (0.13)
Trust in science	**0.62*** (0.10)**	**0.62*** (0.10)**	**0.62*** (0.10)**	0.29 (0.18)	0.28 (0.19)	0.27 (0.18)	**0.39* (0.15)**	**0.39* (0.15)**	**0.41** (0.15)**
Observations	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056	1,056

Note. Dependent variable question: "Please enter your new estimate for the number of attack in the US between 2006 and 2015 here."
Recoded Responses: 0 = No Update; 1 = Correct; 2 = Under-estimate (Low); 3 = Over-estimate (High).
Multinomial regression models. Constants not reported.
Relative risk ratios are presented with clustered standard errors in parentheses.
† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.