

National Responses to September 11 Over Time: Changes in Emotions, Beliefs, and Behaviors

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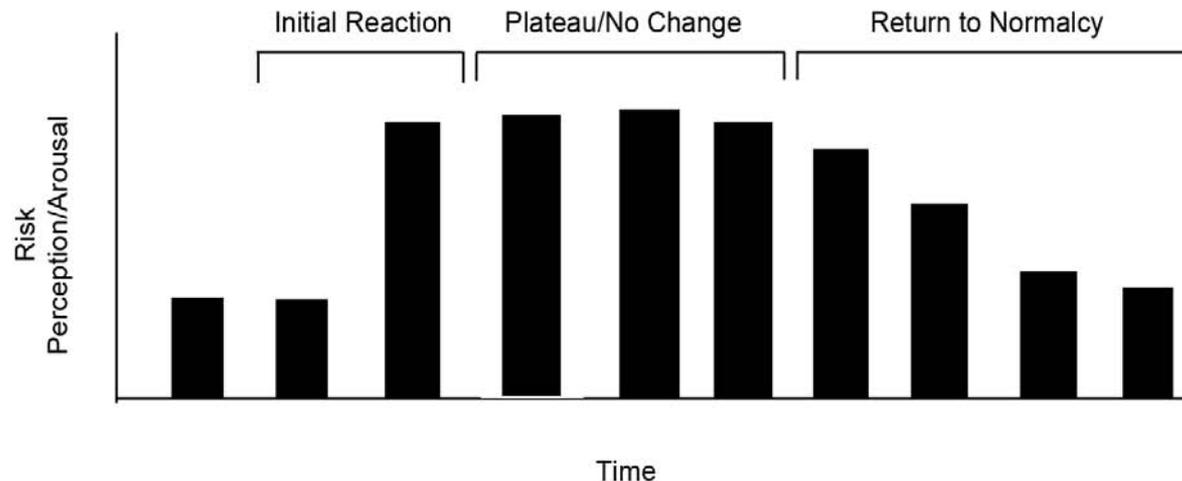


Introduction

- There were only five well-known terrorist attacks on U.S. soil and 18 attacks against Americans internationally before 9/11
- 9/11 provided us with a natural experiment – so much data, but nobody has ever done this long of a longitudinal study
- We get to see changes in emotions, beliefs, and behaviors over years
- The public's reactions to this terrorist event depended on a multitude of factors including individual risk assessment, travel preferences and behaviors, the media, governmental policy and reaction, and specific occurrences unique to the September 11 events.

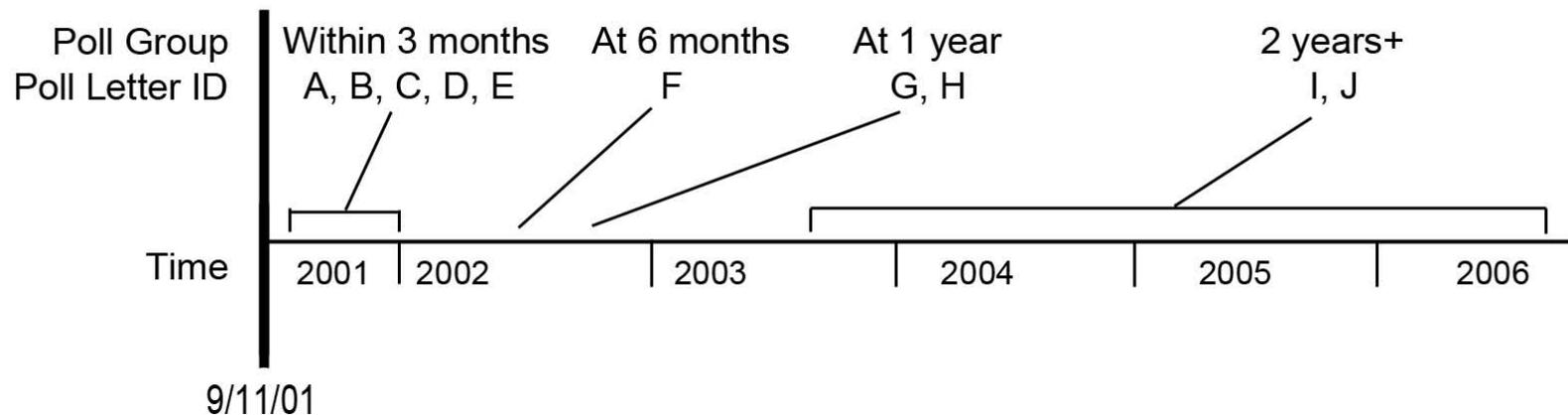
Hypotheses

- Main effect for Time:
 - Heightened responses in reaction to September 11 will dissipate and even out over time.
- Main effect for Moderating Variables:
 - Age (The elderly will be the most reactive), Sex (Females will be the most reactive), Party (Republicans will be the most reactive), and Region (The Northeast will be the most reactive).
- Interaction effects with Time and Moderating Variables
 - time trajectory for returning to normal will be different for different groups



Method

- 9433 total participants
- ABC and CBS News Polls
 - Representative sample by sex, age, party, race, region
 - No participant answered more than one poll
- 10 polls across time
 - From day of to 5 years after



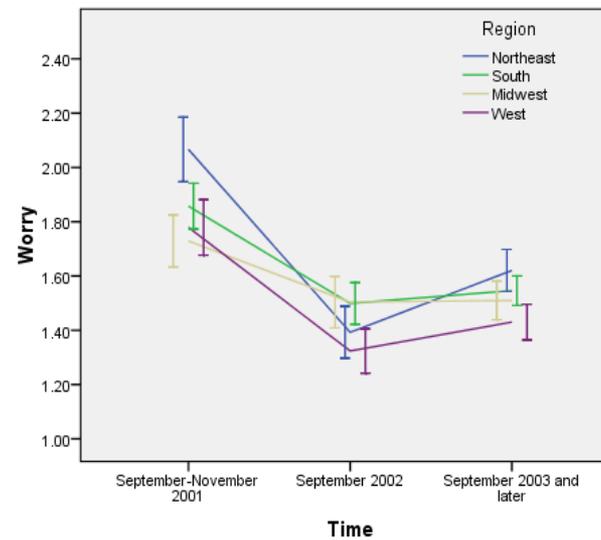
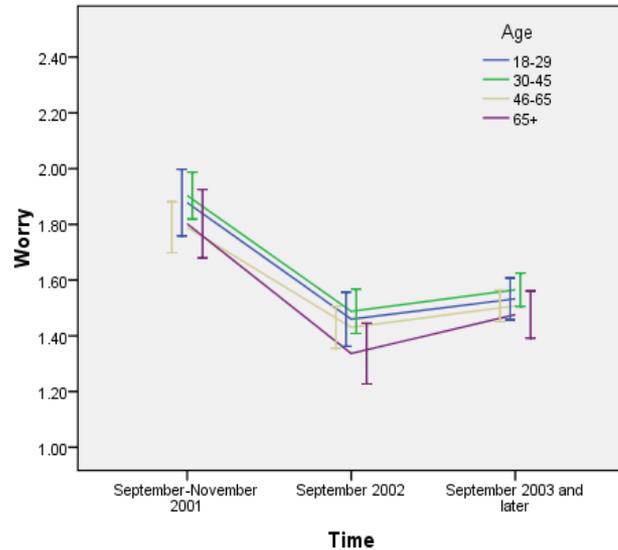
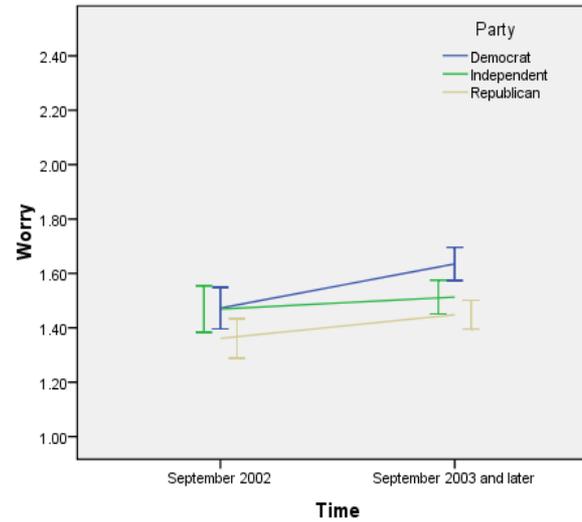
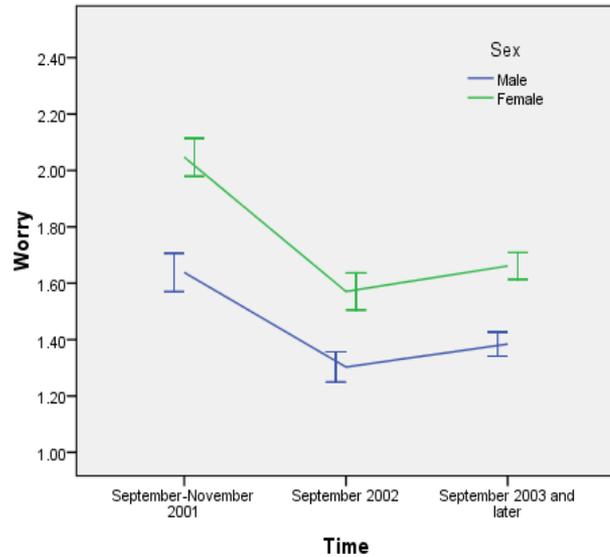
Method

- Moderating Variables
 - Sex: Male, Female
 - Age: 18-29, 30-45, 46-65, 65+
 - Party: Republicans, Independents, Democrats
 - Region: Northeast, South, Midwest, West
- ANOVA
 - Between subjects
 - 2-way ANOVAs: Time x Each of the Moderating Variables

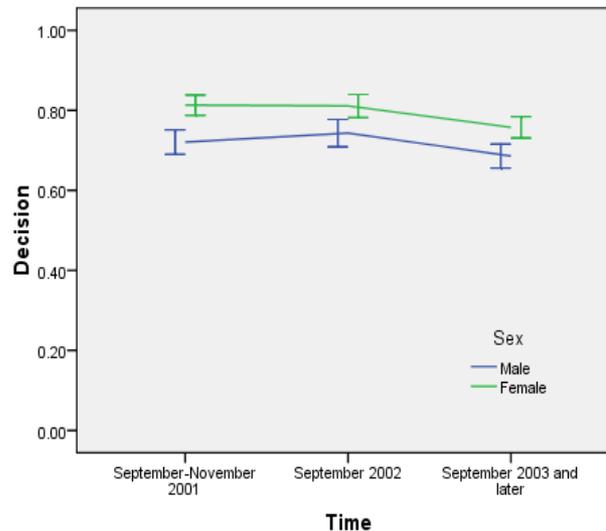
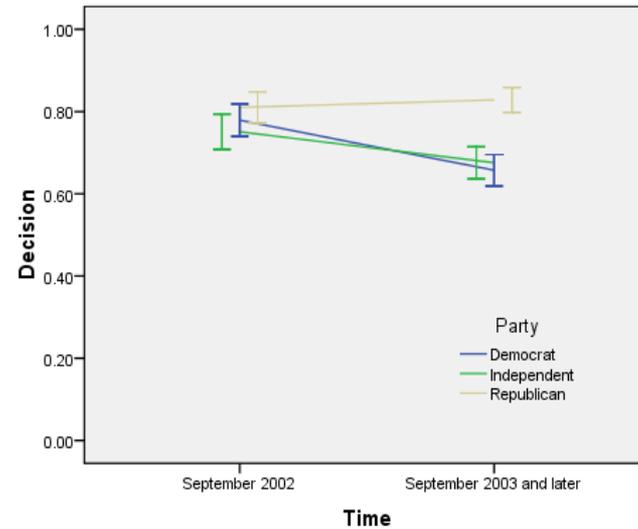
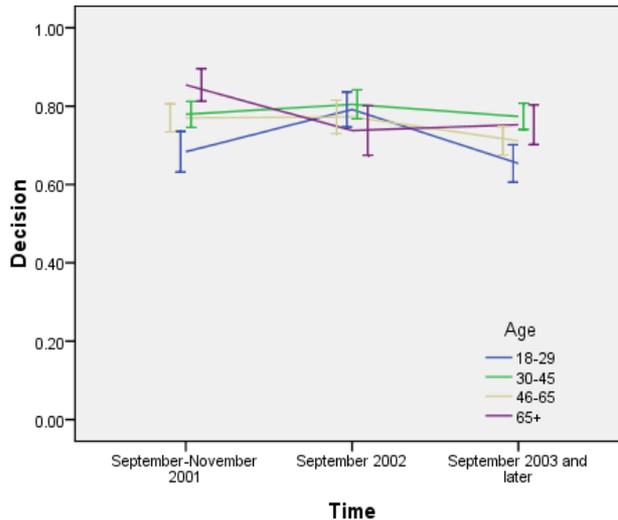
Dependent Variables

- Emotions
 - Concern about being a personal victim of a terrorist attack
 - Concern that there might be another terrorist attack on the U.S.
 - Worry about flying because of terrorism
- Beliefs
 - Confidence in the U.S. government to prevent further terrorist attacks in this country
 - What do you think is more important right now - for the FBI to: 0: Not intrude on privacy regardless of threats; 1: Investigate threats regardless of privacy
- Behaviors
 - Has September 11 changed the way you live your day-to-day life?
 - Have you flown since September 11, 2001?

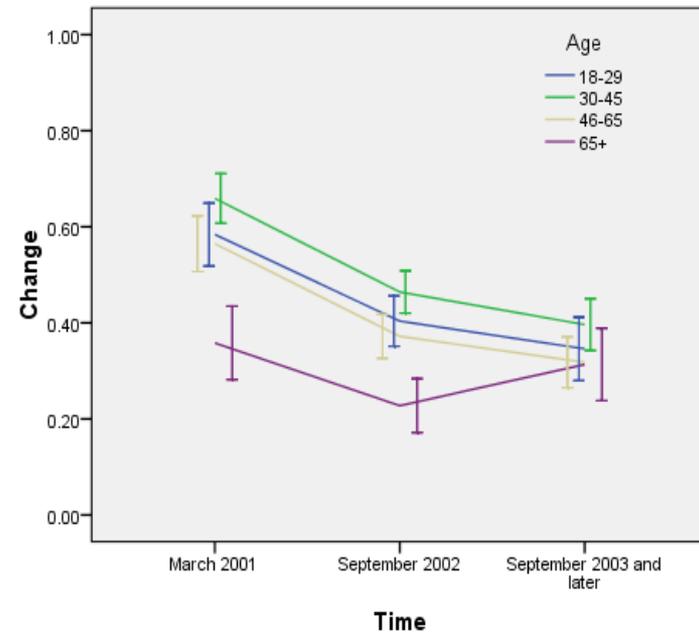
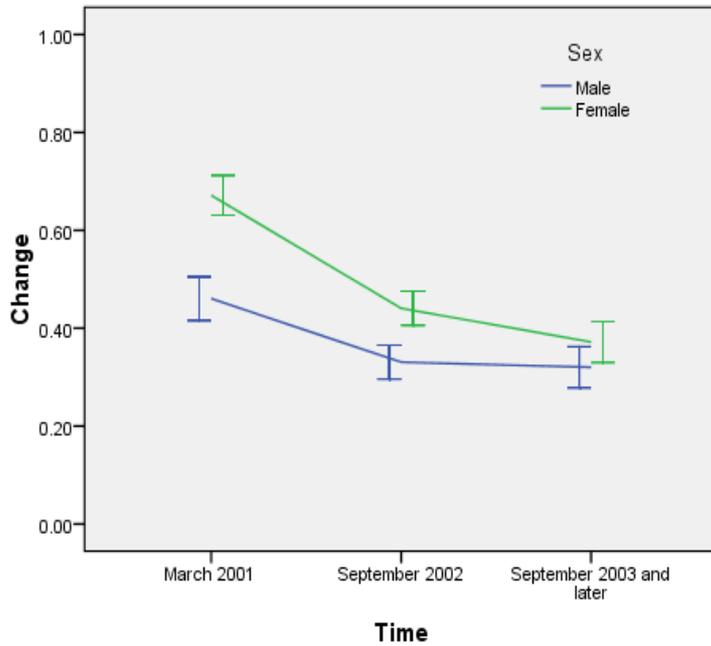
Worry about flying because of terrorism. 1=Not worried; 2=Somewhat worried; 3=Very worried



What do you think is more important right now – for the FBI to 0: Not intrude on privacy regardless of threats; 1: Investigate threats regardless of privacy.

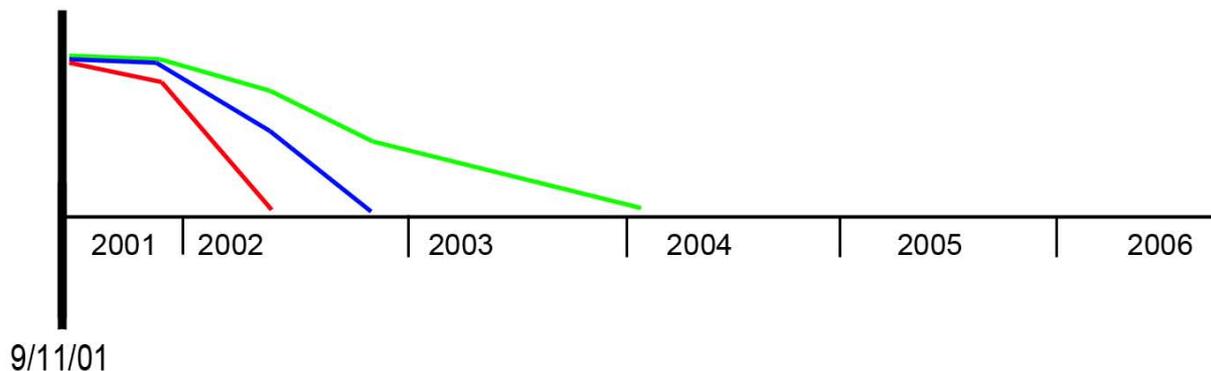


Has your day-to-day life changed as a result of 9/11? 0: No, 1: Yes



Summary of Findings: Time Main Effect

- Concern about a major attack on the US decreased to normal by six months
- Concern about being a personal victim of attack, Confidence in the U.S. Government, daily actions, and return to flying returned to normal by one year
- Worry about flying and people's preference for privacy as opposed to investigation did not decrease to normal until 2 years after



Summary of Findings: Moderating Variables Main Effect

- Sex
 - Females more concerned, more worried, changed more actions, and preferred investigation over privacy more than males
- Age
 - Elderly were least reactive
 - 30-45 year olds changed their actions the most
 - 18-29 year olds preferred privacy over investigation more than other ages
- Region
 - Northeast was the most concerned over all
 - West was the least affected
- Party
 - Democrats most concerned and most worried about flying
 - Republicans had the most confidence in the government and preferred the FBI to investigate threats regardless of privacy more than the other parties

Summary of Findings: Interaction Effects

- Time x Sex
 - Females had steeper slope for changed actions
- Time x Age
 - Elderly typically unaffected while other ages showed decreasing risk perception
 - Elderly had early confidence in the government, but declined the most
- Time x Region
 - The West had the most dramatic decrease in government confidence
 - The West and Northeast flew more over time after 9/11 but the South and Midwest stayed the same
- Time x Party
 - Republicans leaned towards investigating threats regardless of privacy, while Democrats and Independents decreased favor of investigating threats
 - Democrats and Independents consistently felt less confidence in the government over time, but Republicans had an increase in government confidence after 2002

Significance and Further Research

- Heightened emotions after a terrorist attack affect risk perceptions and behaviors
- Knowing worry still remains for at least two years provides a guideline for how the government should direct it's post-disaster reactions and policy implications.
- It is important to provide knowledge to the public to distill worries – while many people quit flying because they were worried about terrorist attacks, many more people drove which is actually more fatal than flying
- Counter-terrorism efforts in the future may not only focus on preventing terrorist acts; they may also seek to limit the advantages that terrorist acts are designed to achieve.
- Knowing that reactions to an event such as 9/11 will return to normal by about one year provides knowledge in the face of recessions or government hardships and thus the agencies can plan around this.
- Further research may include running more analyses on the intricate data; investigating different questions over time; running mock scenarios to see public's reaction; see Anthrax & MANPADs paper



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