

Faculti Summary

<https://staging.faculti.net/public-sentiment-in-times-of-terror/>

This video discusses a study on public sentiment towards governments following terrorist attacks, focusing on how citizens react differently based on the context of the event. It contrasts the strong support for the U.S. government after the 9/11 attacks with the backlash against the Spanish government after the 2004 Madrid train bombings.

The researcher examines a global sample of 135 countries from 2002 to 2020, emphasizing short-term public sentiment fluctuations rather than long-term voting data. This video approach allows for a more immediate understanding of how citizens hold their governments accountable post-attack.

Using a unique dataset called the GAL dataset, which compiles real-time news articles, the researcher quantifies public discontent towards governments by analyzing negative sentiment in events targeting government actions. The study finds that following a terror attack, public discontent tends to rise significantly, with an effect lasting up to five months.

The research also investigates various mechanisms that might drive these sentiments, concluding that the backlash is specifically aimed at government accountability rather than general discontent related to other factors. Ultimately, the findings demonstrate a consistent system of checks and balances where citizens monitor and hold their governments accountable, reflecting significant implications for the citizen-state relationship.

Future research plans include examining public sentiment in other contexts, such as climate change, to further explore how public opinions and government responses interact over time.