Can we rely on trust in science to beat the COVID-19 pandemic?

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Abstract

In order to provide time critical information on the social determinants of health during the COVID-19 pandemic, we relate levels of trust in science with government responses to the pandemic and the extent to which populations reduced mobility, a measure identified by epidemiologists as critical to halt the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. We used data from the 2018 Wellcome Global Monitor to develop a comparable index of trust in science across 144 countries using confirmatory analysis models for categorical data (often referred as Item Response Models) with alignment optimization. We use this index to provide evidence on the association between trust in science, country level mobility changes following the COVID-19 pandemic and the stringency of regulations to halt COVID-19 spread. We find that trust in science was highest in Nordic European countries, among individuals with high educational attainment and income. Differences by religiosity, gender and residency were less pronounced. Countries where individuals trust science the most enacted less stringent regulations in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic than countries where individuals trust

science the least. Irrespective of country-specific trust in science, behaviors such as mobility reductions changed the most in countries with more stringent regulations. Stringent regulations were associated with large reductions in mobility irrespective of levels of trust in science. By contrast, where regulations were less stringent, mobility decreased more in countries with lower levels of trust in science. Many governments are considering relaxing regulations that were put in place following the rapid surge of cases and deaths and the risk that health care systems would be overwhelmed. At the country level, higher levels of trust in science appear to be associated with less voluntary adoption of behaviors that could reduce transmission, such as mobility reductions.

Introduction

On 31st December 2019 China alerted the World Health Organisation (WHO) of several cases of pneumonia induced by an unknown virus in the city of Wuhan. On March 11 2020 covid-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation ¹. Following the rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, a range of measures were announced and implemented by governments worldwide to address the public health, social and economic challenges caused by the pandemic ².

Scientific understanding of the virus and how it spreads has evolved rapidly between January and April 2020 and a lot of ground has already been covered considering how novel the COVID-19 pandemic is. The rapid accumulation of scientific evidence has been made possible by major changes in the information landscape as well as the interest of the research community and the general public in a novel virus with potential major consequences for public health. Online platforms are being used by scientists around the world to share data, conduct collaborative research and publish findings. Work is underway not only on

identifying an effective pharmacological cure for those who fall ill, on the development of a vaccine but also on how best to halt the spread of the infection until pharmaceutical treatments and a vaccine become available ³.

In particular, epidemiological models on the likely evolution of the disease and on the strain of health care system under different scenarios have been used by governments worldwide to inform policy making ⁴. Such models have been shared with the general public either as a way to justify the implementation of major restrictions to freedom of movement and freedom of association, to promote compliance with such restrictions or to promote the adoption of voluntary behavioral changes as a precondition for resisting the implementation of such restrictions. Questions have and are being raised both in scientific outlets and popular media about the assumptions underlying such models, as well as the margin of error they contain ⁴. For example, an initial decision in the United Kingdom of not enforcing strict social distancing regulations based on epidemiological models was quickly reconsidered as alternative models predicted worse outcomes under a no lockdown scenario and the number of cases and deaths started to rise. In Sweden, the government did not implement stringent restrictions, a decision that has been heavily criticized by many prominent scientists in Sweden, especially in light of the higher severity of the COVID-19 pandemic in Sweden compared to other Scandinavian countries.

When communities around the world are being asked to make profound personal and economic sacrifices in the name of scientific advice, whether directly or filtered through government regulations, there is an implicit recognition that they trust science, as imperfect and ever changing as science can be. Another implicit assumption is that trust in science is sufficient to make people change their behavior rapidly and in a sustained way in order to protect themselves and, in particular, the most vulnerable community members. Scientific

evidence in fact suggests that the vast majority of those with COVID-19 develop only mild symptoms.

In the absence of vaccines or pharmacological protocols to treat COVID-19, public health measures are being directed at preventing SARS-CoV-2 contagion through behavioral changes involving the reduction of interpersonal physical contact and the use of protective measures in situations when such contact occurs (such as washing hands, keeping distance and wearing a face mask). Many worry that these measures may not be widely followed because of lack of information, lack of ability or willingness to dramatically change behaviors in a rapid and sustained way.

The present study

We present a new worldwide indicator of trust in science as well as evidence on the extent to which a greater trust in science or government regulations were associated with behavioral changes that might contribute to halting the spread of COVID-19: reducing mobility. Our study is based on data from the 2018 Gallup implemented Wellcome Global Monitor ⁵, data on the timing and strictness of government regulations developed by the Coronavirus Government Response Tracker initiative ¹ and Google's Mobility Index.

The Wellcome Global Monitor was administered in 144 countries/economies and is the largest study to date designed to map attitudes towards science. Participants were asked to report using a 4-point Likert scale with categories: 'a lot', 'some', 'not much', and 'not at all'; 'how much do you trust scientists in this country'; 'on general, would you say that you trust science'; 'in general, how much do you trust scientists to find accurate information about the world'; 'scientists work with the intention of benefiting the public'; 'scientists are open and honest about who is paying for their work'. We use multi-group alignment optimization for categorical data ⁶ to construct the trust in science index. This iterative

algorithm produces an index that maximizes comparability across all participating countries while correcting for country specific differences in item translations and cultural differences across countries in the interpretation of the trust in science construct. We then relate country level trust in science with government regulations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and population level reductions in mobility to present time critical evidence on the social determinants of health.

Method

Data

Gallup implemented Wellcome Global Monitor

In 2018 the Wellcome Global Monitor was administered in 144 countries/economies was designed to map attitudes towards science. Five items that describe different ways in which people can express if and to what extent they trust science were included.

Participants were asked to report using a 4-point Likert scale with categories: ‘a lot’, ‘some’, ‘not much’, and ‘not at all’; ‘how much do you trust scientists in this country’; ‘on general, would you say that you trust science’; ‘in general, how much do you trust scientists to find accurate information about the world’; ‘scientists work with the intention of benefiting the public’; scientists are open and honest about who is paying for their work’.

TABLE 1

The Wellcome Global Monitor was included as a module within the Gallup World Poll. Since 2005, the Gallup World Poll has regularly surveyed people in over 160 countries, representing more than 99% of the world’s population aged 15+, using randomly selected, nationally representative samples. A comprehensive description of the Wellcome Global

Monitor can be found at <https://wellcome.ac.uk/reports/wellcome-global-monitor/2018> (accessed on 1 May 2020). Additional information on the Wellcome Global Monitor technical standards and procedures is available in the Supplementary Annex.

Google's Mobility Index

Data on mobility come from the Community Mobility Reports developed by Google and covers the period 15 February 2020 to 11 April 2020. Google data indicate the percent change in visits to a large list of activities compared to the baseline period. The baseline for the calculation of the change in visits is the median value, for the corresponding day of the week, during the 5-week period Jan 3–Feb 6, 2020. Data are based on information from users who have opted-in to Location History for their Google Account, so the data represents a sample of Google map users. Data were accessed on April 28th. As with all samples, this may or may not represent the exact behaviour of the overall population. A detailed description of the data and description is available from:

<https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/>

Stringency Index

The Stringency Index ² was used to map government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the Coronavirus Government Response Tracker initiative

<https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/coronavirus-government-response-tracker>. The index was constructed using nine indicators mapping country specific and date specific enforcement of regulations limiting physical contacts The Stringency Index ranges between 0 and 100 with 100 representing the highest stringency and 0 the lowest.

A detailed description of the index calculation is available at:

<https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Calculation%20and%20presentation%20of%20the%20Stringency%20Index.pdf>

We downloaded the Stringency Indicator on 28th of April 2020 covering the period 1st of January 2020 to 28th of April 2020.

Number of COVID-19 cases

Data on the reported number of COVID-19 cases come from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Data refer to the period 31st of December 2019 to 20th of April 2020 from:

<https://qap.ecdc.europa.eu/public/extensions/COVID-19/COVID-19.html>

Methods used to compute a cross-country comparable Trust in Science Index

To construct a valid and reliable trust in science index given potential problems of cross-country comparability we employ Confirmatory Analysis Models for categorical data (often referred as Item Response Models) with alignment optimization ^{6,7}. This approach allows to respect the categorical nature of responses while correcting for comparability issues. The procedure aligns item parameters from group-specific models into a ‘most optimal invariance pattern’ that allows to estimate group-specific factor means and variances without requiring exact measurement invariance.

In the analysis the categories “not much” and “not at all” of the items reported in Table 1 were considered be the same and assigned a code 0 because they had very low frequencies of responses in some countries.

The procedure we employed is based on CFA multiple group model. The CFA latent response variable formulation is described by equations (a) and (b).

$$y_{ipg}^* = \nu_{ig} + \lambda_{ig}\eta_{pg} + \epsilon_{ipg} \quad , \quad \eta_{pg} \sim N(\alpha_g, \psi_g^2) \quad (a)$$

Where $i = 1, \dots, I$ denotes the item (in our case it varies from 1 to 5), p denotes the respondent, and $g = 1, \dots, G$ the group (country). y_{ipg}^* is a continuous latent response variable

underlying the observed categorical variable y_{ipg} . τ_{1pg} and τ_{2pg} represent threshold parameters:

$$y_{ipg} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } y_{ipg}^* \leq \tau_{1pg} \\ 1 & \text{if } y_{ipg}^* > \tau_{1pg} \\ 2 & \text{if } y_{ipg}^* > \tau_{2pg} \end{cases} \quad (b)$$

ν_{ig} and λ_{ig} are the item parameters: factor intercept and factor loading. For the categorical variable case the variance of the residual ϵ_{ipg} is standardized as $\pi^2/3$ in line with the logistic model and ν_{ig} is standardized to take a value of zero. This multiple group CFA model is not identified because not all item loadings and item thresholds can be simultaneously estimated along with group means $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_G)$ and standard deviations $\psi = (\psi_1, \dots, \psi_G)$. One common solution to this problem is to fix all item parameters to be the same across all groups. The model where all item parameters are constrained to take the same value across all groups is referred to as the CFA scalar model. The CFA scalar model allows analysts to estimate means and standard deviations for groups (setting one group as reference category for all others). However, the identification of the CFA scalar model requires very strong assumptions about measurement invariance (comparability) that are not realistic^{8,9,10} and that may lead to serious bias if measurement invariance does not hold¹¹.

In order to solve the identification problem without relying on strong measurement invariance assumptions, the alignment optimization approach requires two steps. In the first step, all group means are fixed to zero and all variances are fixed to one and all item parameters (slopes and thresholds) are estimated freely (i.e. they are allowed to vary across groups). The proper identification of means and variances is done in second step of the alignment procedure where α and ψ are determinate in such a way that the amount of measurement non-invariance is minimized. This is achieved by utilizing an appropriate

alignment function, which optimally aligns group-specific item parameters. This can be done because the estimated item parameters are a function of the group-specific parameters, group means and standard deviations ⁷. The alignment algorithm determines aligned means α and standard deviations ψ by minimizing an alignment optimization function F . Following Muthén and Asparouhov ⁶ we used the same loss function for slopes and thresholds:

$$f(x) = \sqrt{|x|} = |x|^{1/2} \quad (c)$$

The loss function represented by equation (c) is minimized at a solution where there are a few large non-invariant measurement parameters and many approximately invariant measurement parameters.

Following Muthén and Asparouhov ⁶ we estimate two models for the trust in science scale. First, we estimated a so called free-alignment model where all means α and standard deviations ψ for all items and all groups were freely estimated. We identified the country with the mean closest to zero (Cameroon) according to the free-alignment model. Second, we estimated a fixed-alignment model to gain stability of estimates. More concretely, we fixed the trust in science index mean for Cameroon (the country with the index mean closest to zero) and its standard deviation to 1 and once again run the alignment optimization for the final estimates using the fixed-alignment model.

The Alignment method is carried out using maximum likelihood estimation and we estimated it using the computer software Mplus version 8 ¹². Simulation studies indicate that the alignment procedure is much more effective in recovering reliable mean estimates in cross-cultural settings than scalar models that ignore problems of comparability ^{11, 13}.

Alignment optimization provides item parameters and aligned means and variances for the groups. To estimate individual indicators used in individual level analysis we estimate factor scores using CFA multigroup model with parameters fixed to those obtained in

alignment optimization. Maximum likelihood of factor scores estimates allow us to use all observed data and estimate the trust in science index (under missing at random assumption) for all respondents who responded at least one out of five questions and therefore have non missing values for at least one of the five indicators). Therefore, despite the large number of "Don't know/ refused" responses we were able to estimate a trust in science index for more than 97% of respondents.

As a robustness check in Table S2 we report correlations between results obtained using alignment optimization and results obtained while employing a scalar model, a model consisting of a simple index based on the sum of item codes for all 5 items and a selection of country level characteristics obtained from other sources. Table S1 presents results of the alignment scaling and provide detailed results for each country. The results show that external validity for alignment-based indicators are higher than for other methods of estimation. Together with theoretical appropriates and simulated based evidence we conclude alignment optimizing approach as most suitable method for investigated indicators.

While in the original scale obtained through alignment optimization the mean is fixed to zero and the variance to 1 in Cameroon (the country with the mean closest to zero in the free-alignment estimation) in all graphs we present results on a standardized scale that was transformed to have a mean of 0 and variance of 1 among all equally weighted 144 countries present in the Wellcome Global Monitor.

Results

Figure 1 illustrates between country differences in levels of trust in science in 144 countries worldwide. Differences across key population groups (age, gender, educational attainment, household income, residence place, and religiosity) are available in the Supplementary Online Annex Tables S3, S4, S5). Examining disparities and potential polarization of trust in

science is important in order to tackle potential information and persuasion campaigns effectively, but also because the transmissibility of the disease means that unless virtually all members of a community behave in ways that reduce disease spread, infections will not stop. Among the countries represented in the Wellcome Global Monitor, trust in science was highest in Finland, Uzbekistan and Australia and lowest in Burundi, Mauritania and Togo. Trust in science was especially high in Nordic European countries (Country specific mean index values and rankings are available in Supplementary Online Annex Table S1).

Differences by background characteristics are largest with respect to education and income levels. Differences in trust by educational attainment were identified in 110 countries and in 95 of these individuals with higher educational attainment expressed higher levels of trust ($p \leq 0.05$) (Table S4). Differences by income level could be observed in 65 countries (in 57 trust was higher among the top income quintile than among the bottom income quintile and in 8 the reverse was true, $p \leq 0.05$) (Table S5). Gender differences could be observed in 48 out of the 144 countries ($p \leq 0.05$) (in 40 of these men expressed higher trust) (Table S3). Trust in science differed according to whether the respondent reported being religious in 37 out of the 96 countries with available data (in 26 countries trust was lower among religious individuals, $p \leq 0.05$) (Table S4). Trust in science differed across urban and rural areas in 59 countries (in 34 of these it was higher in urban areas, $p \leq 0.05$) (Table S5).

FIGURE 1

At the global level, countries where individuals trust science the most appear to have enacted, on average, less stringent government regulations than countries where individuals trust science the least (Figure 2). But are levels of trust in science observed in the Wellcome Global Monitor associated with changes in people's behaviors in response to the COVID-19

pandemic? Although people can adopt a range of protective behaviors in response to the pandemic, the only indicator that is yet available internationally on behavioral responses is mobility reductions. Google released data on country specific changes in mobility between the baseline period (January 3 and February 6 2020) and each day up to April 30 2020. April 30 2020 is the latest date with available data at the time of writing. Data are being updated on a rolling basis. We identify country specific mobility reductions at critical time points of the evolution of the pandemic (both nationally and globally) and estimate the association between levels of trust and mobility reductions and between government regulations and mobility reductions. Figure 2 presents results obtained considering mobility reductions on the day when a country observed 100 COVID-19 cases (results for other critical thresholds are available in Supplementary Online Annex Tables S6 and S7 and are in line with those presented). The number of COVID-19 cases may not reflect the true extent of the infection due to differences in testing and reporting standards, but it is possibly more relevant than true infections in shaping behavior because it is the number that is generally discussed in the mainstream media and by the public.

FIGURE 2

When examining changes in behavior that is indicative of how much people shelter-in-place and limit movement to essential activities, results suggest that, irrespective of how much local populations trusted science, behaviors changed the most in countries with more stringent regulations (Panel B of Figure 2). Furthermore, while in the presence of stringent regulations the change in mobility was profound and relatively uniform, in countries with medium and high levels of trust and where regulations were less stringent, mobility was reduced more in those countries where levels of trust in science were lowest. Results are robust to the inclusion of controls such as the Human Development Index (HDI), Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) in Purchasing Power Parity and level of urbanization (see Supplementary Online Annex Table S7).

Discussion and Implications

As many governments are considering relaxing the regulations that were put in place following the rapid surge of cases and deaths and the risk that health care systems would be overwhelmed, these results offer some sobering reflections. At the country level, higher levels of trust in science appear to be associated with less mobility reductions. Among some, trust in science may induce a sort of optimistic impotence: when people trust science, they may slow to enact profound and difficult behavioral changes because they believe scientific advances will provide effective solutions. Others may estimate their personal risk of dying to be low (in fact lower than the actual risk they face)^{14, 15}, may not consider the threat they pose to others, or may be unable to follow scientific advice even if they trust such advice, because of psychological or economic reason. Finally, for many, trusting science may mean that they trust that medical doctors will be able to treat them effectively even if a pharmacological treatment is currently not available, and therefore may have fewer incentives to change their behavior. The greatest successes of sciences, that is immunization programs have enabled humans to dramatically reduce the death and suffering that accompany viral infections, from polio to measles, from smallpox to diphtheria no doubt increased trust in science. Paradoxically, they can be a significant obstacle to fight pandemic. While important, trust in science is not sufficient to galvanize communities to take profound behavioral changes. Government regulations and guidelines are.

Scientists around the world are working not just to develop vaccines for COVID-19 that are effective and safe but also on how their production and distribution can be organized in record time to halt the spread of SARS-CoV-2 virus and reduce its human toll. When

vaccines will become available, trust in science and scientists will be crucial to ensure widespread immunization, given that information on its safety will most likely be limited, especially with respect to its long-term consequences. Until then, like in all chemical reactions, trust in science will play only a part in a complex balancing act in which governments, communities, medical personnel and scientists will have to find the right mix, including the right catalysators and proper inhibitors to protect the health and well-being of communities.

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Annex

The Wellcome Global Monitor

The Wellcome Global Monitor was included as a module within the Gallup World Poll. Since 2005, the Gallup World Poll has regularly surveyed people in over 160 countries, representing more than 99% of the world's population aged 15+, using randomly selected, nationally representative samples. A comprehensive description of the Wellcome Global Monitor can be found at <https://wellcome.ac.uk/reports/wellcome-global-monitor/2018> (accessed on 1 May 2020). Additional information on the Wellcome Global Monitor technical standards and procedures is available in the Supplementary Annex.

Questions were designed to be easily understood in the local languages, avoiding expressions difficult to translate in different languages. Where possible, response options were kept to a simple binary format such as 'yes/no' to lighten the cognitive burden on respondents and limit cultural influences on response styles that are associated with longer scales. Questionnaires were translated into the major conversational languages of each country. First, Gallup created master language questionnaires in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Arabic. Then, local language translations were performed from the master language version. All samples were probability-based and nationally representative of the resident adult population. The coverage area was the entire country, including rural areas, and the sampling frame represents the entire civilian, non-institutionalized, aged 15 and older population. Gallup used telephone surveys in countries where telephone coverage represented at least 80% of the population or is the customary survey methodology. In countries where face-to-face surveys were conducted, sampling units were stratified by population size and/or geography, and clustering was achieved through one or more stages of sampling. In countries where interviews were conducted by telephone, a dual sampling frame was used (landline and mobile telephone), except for Finland and Libya, which were mobile telephone only.

Sample size was 1,000 in the majority of countries. In China, India and Russia the sample sizes were 2,000 or greater. In rare instances, the sample size was between 500 and 1,000 people. See table S1 for details.

Table S1. *Trust in science index computed using alignment optimization (countries in decreasing order of the index)*

Country	Sample size	Means		Variances		Standardized means	Rank
		estimate	se	estimate	se		
Finland	1,000	1.89	0.23	2.32	0.46	2.70	1
Uzbekistan	1,000	1.65	0.17	0.95	0.19	2.25	2
Australia	1,003	1.62	0.24	2.07	0.55	2.19	3
Norway	1,000	1.59	0.18	1.31	0.27	2.13	4
Spain	1,000	1.41	0.15	1.06	0.22	1.81	5
Belgium	1,004	1.40	0.15	1.11	0.23	1.79	6
Canada	1,012	1.36	0.15	1.55	0.33	1.71	7
Turkmenistan	1,000	1.36	0.21	2.49	0.47	1.70	8
Latvia	1,021	1.32	0.19	1.79	0.46	1.64	9
France	1,000	1.30	0.18	1.17	0.27	1.61	10
New Zealand	1,002	1.30	0.16	1.03	0.23	1.59	11
Myanmar	1,000	1.25	0.16	1.12	0.21	1.51	12
Ireland	1,000	1.24	0.12	0.73	0.14	1.50	13
Estonia	1,000	1.20	0.15	1.14	0.28	1.41	14
Denmark	1,000	1.19	0.13	0.90	0.17	1.40	15
United States	1,006	1.18	0.15	2.01	0.41	1.37	16
Sweden	1,000	1.16	0.14	1.06	0.22	1.34	17
Czech Republic	1,000	1.15	0.19	4.64	0.80	1.31	18
United Kingdom	1,000	1.11	0.12	0.95	0.19	1.24	19
Tajikistan	1,000	1.09	0.12	1.45	0.28	1.22	20
Lithuania	1,000	1.06	0.17	2.36	0.49	1.15	21
Japan	1,004	1.04	0.18	1.35	0.29	1.12	22
Iceland	500	1.04	0.12	0.60	0.14	1.11	23
Germany	1,000	1.03	0.13	0.72	0.15	1.09	24
Portugal	1,001	1.01	0.11	1.16	0.23	1.06	25
China	3,649	1.00	0.10	1.59	0.24	1.04	26
Tanzania	1,000	0.96	0.11	1.08	0.20	0.97	27
Netherlands	1,001	0.95	0.11	1.83	0.36	0.94	28
Poland	1,000	0.92	0.16	2.00	0.35	0.90	29
Egypt	1,000	0.92	0.13	2.11	0.40	0.90	30
Azerbaijan	1,000	0.91	0.13	1.37	0.26	0.88	31
Bangladesh	1,000	0.90	0.13	1.32	0.27	0.85	32
Austria	1,000	0.89	0.09	0.48	0.09	0.84	33
Niger	1,000	0.88	0.10	1.45	0.28	0.83	34
Italy	1,000	0.86	0.11	0.80	0.17	0.79	35
Nepal	1,000	0.83	0.10	0.86	0.17	0.74	36
Switzerland	1,000	0.80	0.09	0.63	0.12	0.68	37
Israel	1,010	0.79	0.10	1.47	0.29	0.65	38
Kazakhstan	1,000	0.78	0.11	1.68	0.30	0.63	39
Thailand	1,000	0.77	0.20	0.90	0.28	0.61	40
Luxembourg	1,000	0.72	0.08	0.41	0.09	0.52	41
Iran	1,005	0.71	0.13	0.57	0.17	0.51	42
India	3,000	0.70	0.08	1.66	0.26	0.48	43
United Arab Emirates	1,005	0.68	0.10	0.84	0.22	0.45	44
Singapore	1,000	0.66	0.11	2.07	0.42	0.42	45
Hungary	1,000	0.64	0.17	1.32	0.24	0.38	46
Sri Lanka	1,109	0.63	0.09	0.86	0.18	0.36	47
Saudi Arabia	1,016	0.63	0.10	0.51	0.10	0.35	48
Malta	1,007	0.62	0.11	0.52	0.12	0.35	49
Philippines	1,000	0.60	0.08	1.05	0.21	0.31	50

Morocco	1,001	0.60	0.10	0.72	0.13	0.30	51
Argentina	1,000	0.58	0.08	0.97	0.18	0.28	52
Slovenia	1,000	0.58	0.08	1.00	0.18	0.27	53
Romania	1,002	0.58	0.09	1.73	0.34	0.27	54
Ethiopia	1,000	0.57	0.10	1.14	0.24	0.26	55
Rwanda	1,000	0.56	0.09	1.18	0.22	0.24	56
Uruguay	1,000	0.56	0.08	1.13	0.22	0.22	57
Lebanon	1,000	0.54	0.09	1.67	0.30	0.20	58
Russia	2,000	0.53	0.08	1.03	0.18	0.18	59
The Gambia	1,000	0.52	0.09	0.43	0.11	0.17	60
Belarus	1,061	0.52	0.12	1.03	0.20	0.16	61
Kuwait	1,001	0.52	0.11	0.68	0.23	0.16	62
Ghana	1,000	0.51	0.08	1.27	0.22	0.15	63
Cyprus	1,011	0.51	0.08	0.49	0.10	0.15	64
Cambodia	1,000	0.50	0.08	0.43	0.10	0.12	65
Turkey	1,000	0.45	0.13	1.24	0.24	0.04	66
Costa Rica	1,000	0.45	0.07	0.90	0.17	0.03	67
Guinea	1,000	0.45	0.08	1.27	0.23	0.02	68
Slovakia	1,000	0.43	0.11	1.63	0.28	-0.01	69
Libya	1,003	0.41	0.10	0.37	0.14	-0.05	70
Chile	1,000	0.40	0.08	1.48	0.28	-0.07	71
Croatia	1,000	0.40	0.10	1.98	0.40	-0.07	72
Kyrgyzstan	1,000	0.39	0.13	0.74	0.23	-0.09	73
Iraq	1,000	0.37	0.09	1.44	0.40	-0.12	74
Tunisia	1,001	0.37	0.07	0.88	0.15	-0.12	75
Nigeria	1,000	0.37	0.08	1.09	0.23	-0.13	76
Laos	1,001	0.36	0.08	0.74	0.16	-0.13	77
Liberia	1,000	0.36	0.06	0.56	0.13	-0.13	78
Mongolia	1,000	0.34	0.07	0.54	0.10	-0.17	79
Jordan	1,002	0.31	0.07	0.76	0.19	-0.23	80
Palestinian Territories	1,000	0.30	0.08	0.47	0.15	-0.24	81
Dominican Republic	1,000	0.30	0.06	0.68	0.12	-0.25	82
Malaysia	1,000	0.30	0.09	1.46	0.32	-0.25	83
Uganda	1,000	0.26	0.06	0.71	0.13	-0.32	84
Mozambique	1,000	0.25	0.07	0.94	0.18	-0.34	85
Mexico	1,034	0.22	0.06	0.91	0.17	-0.40	86
Kosovo	1,000	0.21	0.06	0.38	0.07	-0.41	87
Serbia	1,000	0.21	0.08	1.44	0.28	-0.42	88
Mali	1,000	0.19	0.07	0.95	0.20	-0.46	89
Bulgaria	1,001	0.18	0.09	1.52	0.27	-0.47	90
Eswatini	1,000	0.17	0.05	0.54	0.12	-0.48	91
South Korea	1,014	0.17	0.13	1.68	0.49	-0.49	92
Yemen	1,000	0.16	0.07	1.19	0.33	-0.50	93
Afghanistan	1,000	0.16	0.18	2.05	0.38	-0.51	94
Malawi	1,000	0.16	0.06	1.14	0.22	-0.52	95
Ukraine	1,000	0.16	0.11	1.40	0.29	-0.52	96
Haiti	500	0.15	0.08	0.38	0.12	-0.53	97
Senegal	1,000	0.12	0.07	1.12	0.20	-0.58	98
Georgia	1,000	0.12	0.07	0.81	0.14	-0.58	99
Armenia	1,000	0.11	0.07	0.67	0.17	-0.59	100
Venezuela	1,000	0.11	0.06	1.07	0.20	-0.60	101
Pakistan	1,000	0.11	0.07	1.16	0.20	-0.60	102
Indonesia	1,000	0.11	0.07	0.88	0.16	-0.61	103
Kenya	1,000	0.10	0.06	0.82	0.16	-0.63	104
Zimbabwe	1,000	0.09	0.06	0.81	0.15	-0.64	105
Mauritius	1,000	0.09	0.07	0.83	0.19	-0.64	106

Taiwan	1,000	0.06	0.13	1.33	0.35	-0.70	107
Honduras	1,000	0.05	0.05	0.65	0.11	-0.71	108
Colombia	1,000	0.03	0.06	0.87	0.16	-0.75	109
Burkina Faso	1,000	0.03	0.07	1.14	0.21	-0.76	110
Northern Cyprus	1,000	0.02	0.04	0.42	0.13	-0.76	111
Greece	1,000	0.02	0.11	2.29	0.47	-0.76	112
Brazil	1,000	0.01	0.07	1.23	0.21	-0.79	113
Cameroon*	1,000	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	-0.80	114
Comoros	1,000	-0.03	0.04	0.35	0.08	-0.85	115
El Salvador	1,000	-0.03	0.07	0.78	0.15	-0.87	116
Botswana	1,002	-0.04	0.07	0.75	0.15	-0.87	117
Albania	1,000	-0.06	0.06	0.67	0.16	-0.92	118
South Africa	1,000	-0.07	0.07	0.87	0.17	-0.93	119
Sierra Leone	1,000	-0.07	0.07	1.08	0.25	-0.93	120
Zambia	1,000	-0.09	0.07	1.18	0.23	-0.97	121
Paraguay	1,000	-0.10	0.06	0.87	0.15	-0.99	122
Ecuador	1,000	-0.12	0.06	0.95	0.17	-1.03	123
Algeria	1,000	-0.14	0.07	0.80	0.17	-1.06	124
Nicaragua	1,000	-0.15	0.06	0.75	0.17	-1.08	125
Bolivia	1,000	-0.17	0.06	0.77	0.14	-1.12	126
Panama	1,000	-0.18	0.06	0.94	0.17	-1.14	127
Madagascar	1,000	-0.21	0.07	1.17	0.22	-1.19	128
Guatemala	1,000	-0.21	0.06	0.96	0.16	-1.19	129
Peru	1,000	-0.21	0.08	1.00	0.19	-1.20	130
Vietnam	1,012	-0.24	0.17	1.91	0.41	-1.24	131
Chad	1,000	-0.25	0.07	1.06	0.20	-1.27	132
Republic of Congo	1,000	-0.26	0.08	0.75	0.16	-1.29	133
Namibia	1,005	-0.29	0.06	0.70	0.13	-1.35	134
Macedonia	1,008	-0.33	0.09	1.37	0.26	-1.41	135
Bosnia and	1,000	-0.37	0.09	1.24	0.24	-1.49	136
Ivory Coast	1,000	-0.38	0.07	0.74	0.14	-1.51	137
Gabon	1,000	-0.38	0.07	0.87	0.16	-1.51	138
Moldova	1,000	-0.40	0.09	1.34	0.24	-1.54	139
Benin	1,000	-0.42	0.08	1.98	0.37	-1.58	140
Montenegro	1,000	-0.43	0.08	0.99	0.19	-1.59	141
Burundi	1,000	-0.57	0.09	1.38	0.26	-1.86	142
Mauritania	1,000	-0.78	0.11	1.31	0.26	-2.25	143
Togo	1,000	-0.90	0.11	0.86	0.18	-2.46	144

Source: Wellcome Global Monitor 2018; note: * country mean fixed to 0 and variance to 1 in alignment optimization.

Table S2. *Correlation between different scaling methods of Trust in Science, GDP per capita and HDI.*

Country level indicator	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(1) Trust in science (alignment)	1.0000				
(2) Trust in science (scalar model)	0.9230	1.0000			
(3) Trust in science sum score	0.9188	0.9821	1.0000		
(4) GDP per capita 2018	0.5416	0.5097	0.4841	1.0000	
(5) HDI 2018	0.5346	0.4563	0.3972	0.8051	1.0000

Source: Wellcome Global Monitor 2018. GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$) (GDP) come from the World Bank National Accounts database <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> accessed on 15 April 2020. Human development index 2018 (HDI) come from the United Nation's Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi> accessed on 15 April 2020.

Table S3. *Differences in trust in science by age and gender, by country*

	Correlation between age and trust in science		Mean levels of trust in science, by gender		
	estimate	p-value	male	female	p-value
Afghanistan	-0.160	0.000	0.267	0.039	0.031
Albania	-0.012	0.765	-0.021	-0.103	0.137
Algeria	-0.056	0.177	-0.131	-0.149	0.782
Argentina	0.047	0.205	0.661	0.515	0.032
Armenia	0.063	0.117	0.083	0.138	0.348
Australia	-0.064	0.150	1.523	1.690	0.140
Austria	-0.128	0.001	0.946	0.833	0.007
Azerbaijan	-0.082	0.028	0.845	0.980	0.072
Bangladesh	-0.080	0.038	0.880	0.910	0.691
Belarus	0.059	0.108	0.453	0.582	0.042
Belgium	0.031	0.430	1.400	1.406	0.930
Benin	0.018	0.687	-0.292	-0.557	0.013
Bolivia	-0.158	0.000	-0.059	-0.281	0.000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-0.073	0.047	-0.328	-0.407	0.276
Botswana	0.023	0.586	-0.002	-0.068	0.276
Brazil	-0.146	0.000	0.075	-0.059	0.065
Bulgaria	-0.002	0.965	0.032	0.317	0.001
Burkina Faso	0.135	0.003	0.047	-0.000	0.568
Burundi	0.015	0.700	-0.619	-0.521	0.181
Cambodia	0.109	0.018	0.541	0.464	0.053
Cameroon	0.089	0.055	0.166	-0.171	0.000
Canada	-0.233	0.000	1.438	1.277	0.060
Chad	0.064	0.137	-0.228	-0.283	0.478
Chile	-0.122	0.001	0.552	0.254	0.000
China	0.185	0.000	1.074	0.920	0.000
Colombia	-0.110	0.010	0.119	-0.057	0.004
Comoros	-0.038	0.377	0.014	-0.065	0.051

Costa Rica	0.003	0.941	0.521	0.387	0.038
Croatia	-0.264	0.000	0.338	0.448	0.277
Cyprus	0.139	0.000	0.511	0.514	0.952
Czech Republic	0.021	0.588	1.153	1.017	0.334
Denmark	-0.221	0.000	1.237	1.149	0.127
Dominican Republic	-0.034	0.346	0.387	0.214	0.001
Ecuador	-0.131	0.000	0.082	-0.315	0.000
Egypt	0.035	0.382	0.883	0.953	0.501
El Salvador	-0.057	0.120	0.071	-0.116	0.003
Estonia	0.022	0.535	1.207	1.189	0.793
Eswatini	-0.052	0.150	0.267	0.096	0.000
Ethiopia	-0.199	0.000	0.599	0.546	0.485
Finland	-0.265	0.000	1.886	1.892	0.953
France	-0.102	0.010	1.365	1.249	0.113
Gabon	-0.032	0.440	-0.221	-0.538	0.000
Georgia	-0.038	0.310	0.134	0.106	0.637
Germany	-0.010	0.805	1.091	0.962	0.013
Ghana	-0.108	0.015	0.556	0.471	0.302
Greece	-0.072	0.067	-0.014	0.058	0.494
Guatemala	-0.002	0.954	-0.173	-0.243	0.259
Guinea	0.113	0.008	0.331	0.568	0.003
Haiti	0.042	0.450	0.161	0.130	0.614
Honduras	-0.078	0.029	0.081	0.027	0.285
Hungary	-0.055	0.142	0.612	0.661	0.527
Iceland	-0.075	0.166	1.017	1.057	0.549
India	-0.182	0.000	0.807	0.570	0.000
Indonesia	-0.112	0.004	0.148	0.067	0.198
Iran	0.147	0.000	0.760	0.663	0.032
Iraq	-0.072	0.072	0.295	0.449	0.041
Ireland	-0.037	0.372	1.266	1.221	0.395
Israel	0.101	0.008	0.779	0.794	0.847

Italy	-0.163	0.000	0.937	0.792	0.019
Ivory Coast	-0.046	0.310	-0.385	-0.373	0.850
Japan	-0.115	0.007	1.093	0.993	0.199
Jordan	-0.042	0.245	0.264	0.367	0.050
Kazakhstan	0.048	0.276	0.686	0.854	0.067
Kenya	-0.055	0.262	0.089	0.100	0.877
Kosovo	-0.018	0.629	0.238	0.190	0.183
Kuwait	0.050	0.191	0.553	0.463	0.110
Kyrgyzstan	-0.089	0.007	0.393	0.379	0.808
Laos	0.093	0.021	0.429	0.298	0.016
Latvia	-0.032	0.395	1.395	1.258	0.119
Lebanon	-0.070	0.047	0.540	0.544	0.969
Liberia	0.038	0.301	0.424	0.300	0.011
Libya	0.098	0.032	0.434	0.372	0.120
Lithuania	-0.004	0.926	0.978	1.119	0.193
Luxembourg	-0.086	0.048	0.735	0.696	0.342
Macedonia	-0.010	0.794	-0.270	-0.382	0.177
Madagascar	-0.012	0.781	-0.196	-0.216	0.800
Malawi	-0.004	0.912	0.140	0.170	0.671
Malaysia	-0.128	0.001	0.261	0.339	0.367
Mali	-0.028	0.558	0.218	0.155	0.385
Malta	0.037	0.326	0.656	0.593	0.195
Mauritania	0.079	0.089	-0.786	-0.771	0.862
Mauritius	0.237	0.000	0.152	0.028	0.064
Mexico	-0.079	0.026	0.257	0.187	0.245
Moldova	-0.069	0.049	-0.258	-0.527	0.000
Mongolia	0.007	0.828	0.383	0.301	0.048
Montenegro	-0.079	0.057	-0.403	-0.449	0.502
Morocco	0.056	0.185	0.586	0.610	0.653
Mozambique	0.153	0.000	0.327	0.180	0.026
Myanmar	0.153	0.000	1.246	1.252	0.934

Namibia	-0.007	0.892	-0.280	-0.305	0.676
Nepal	-0.128	0.005	0.936	0.737	0.001
Netherlands	-0.179	0.000	1.060	0.829	0.012
New Zealand	-0.056	0.179	1.308	1.285	0.755
Nicaragua	-0.021	0.571	-0.061	-0.234	0.001
Niger	0.102	0.006	0.846	0.913	0.430
Nigeria	-0.084	0.103	0.499	0.214	0.000
Northern Cyprus	0.010	0.839	0.048	-0.004	0.263
Norway	-0.240	0.000	1.663	1.507	0.049
Pakistan	-0.104	0.011	0.041	0.186	0.051
Palestinian Territories	-0.036	0.344	0.253	0.350	0.032
Panama	-0.010	0.760	-0.128	-0.232	0.104
Paraguay	-0.091	0.007	-0.086	-0.117	0.603
Peru	-0.142	0.000	-0.084	-0.338	0.000
Philippines	-0.104	0.007	0.577	0.629	0.437
Poland	-0.085	0.023	0.901	0.946	0.634
Portugal	-0.043	0.377	1.121	0.903	0.007
Republic of Congo	0.108	0.014	-0.203	-0.330	0.036
Romania	0.024	0.515	0.681	0.485	0.028
Russia	-0.000	0.989	0.542	0.518	0.618
Rwanda	0.069	0.101	0.564	0.559	0.952
Saudi Arabia	0.080	0.055	0.654	0.583	0.129
Senegal	-0.054	0.123	0.162	0.086	0.263
Serbia	0.026	0.545	0.204	0.209	0.952
Sierra Leone	-0.070	0.063	-0.021	-0.118	0.186
Singapore	-0.130	0.001	0.743	0.568	0.078
Slovakia	-0.100	0.005	0.447	0.416	0.722
Slovenia	-0.028	0.504	0.616	0.549	0.333
South Africa	-0.025	0.554	0.016	-0.147	0.007
South Korea	0.041	0.248	0.263	0.069	0.015
Spain	-0.003	0.948	1.359	1.465	0.130

Sri Lanka	-0.091	0.013	0.705	0.560	0.013
Sweden	-0.327	0.000	1.294	1.020	0.000
Switzerland	-0.058	0.168	0.846	0.763	0.115
Taiwan	-0.063	0.100	0.135	-0.012	0.055
Tajikistan	0.002	0.949	1.109	1.076	0.682
Tanzania	0.091	0.028	0.969	0.948	0.782
Thailand	-0.183	0.000	0.811	0.726	0.169
The Gambia	0.040	0.274	0.554	0.496	0.154
Togo	-0.080	0.053	-0.869	-0.925	0.369
Tunisia	-0.047	0.209	0.305	0.436	0.027
Turkey	-0.155	0.000	0.358	0.553	0.010
Turkmenistan	0.043	0.277	1.424	1.275	0.157
Uganda	-0.021	0.548	0.322	0.198	0.023
Ukraine	-0.051	0.202	0.069	0.224	0.058
United Arab Emirates	0.061	0.034	0.703	0.615	0.132
United Kingdom	-0.121	0.002	1.156	1.057	0.125
United States	-0.170	0.000	1.182	1.164	0.865
Uruguay	0.078	0.032	0.617	0.499	0.087
Uzbekistan	-0.040	0.284	1.633	1.664	0.626
Venezuela	0.099	0.006	0.184	0.037	0.029
Vietnam	0.116	0.008	-0.286	-0.176	0.225
Yemen	-0.001	0.987	0.360	-0.001	0.000
Zambia	-0.018	0.681	-0.047	-0.131	0.274
Zimbabwe	-0.074	0.050	0.084	0.096	0.840

Source: Global Monitor 2018. Age and gender were reported by the respondent.

Table S4. *Differences in trust in science by educational attainment and religiosity, by country.*

	Mean levels of trust in science by educational attainment				Mean levels of trust in science by religiosity		
	elementary	secondary	university	p-value	religiosity	secular	p-value
Afghanistan	-0.079	0.724	1.335	0.000	0.156	.	.
Albania	-0.149	0.022	0.110	0.000	-0.064	0.006	0.437
Algeria	-0.294	0.021	0.134	0.000	-0.140	.	.
Argentina	0.365	0.672	1.124	0.000	0.564	0.891	0.002
Armenia	0.143	0.037	0.309	0.000	0.111	-0.058	0.580
Australia	0.916	1.483	2.014	0.000	1.402	1.904	0.000
Austria	0.726	0.879	1.037	0.000	0.899	0.816	0.102
Azerbaijan	0.944	0.876	1.190	0.017	0.914	-0.087	0.002
Bangladesh	0.711	1.023	0.937	0.000	0.895	.	.
Belarus	0.562	0.481	0.628	0.047	0.557	0.046	0.000
Belgium	0.777	1.322	1.635	0.000	1.367	1.469	0.130
Benin	-0.321	-0.574	-0.398	0.028	-0.408	-1.583	0.000
Bolivia	-0.442	-0.068	0.083	0.000	-0.193	0.184	0.003
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-0.432	-0.379	-0.092	0.005	-0.374	-0.097	0.461
Botswana	0.013	-0.048	-0.205	0.038	-0.020	-0.299	0.136
Brazil	-0.188	0.143	0.292	0.000	-0.016	0.249	0.088
Bulgaria	0.147	0.003	0.586	0.000	0.192	-0.708	0.005
Burkina Faso	0.072	-0.134	0.072	0.008	0.021	.	.
Burundi	-0.522	-0.796	-0.888	0.001	-0.567	-1.801	.
Cambodia	0.511	0.435	0.343	0.128	0.503	.	.
Cameroon	0.123	-0.175	-0.257	0.000	0.024	-0.722	0.001
Canada	0.672	1.220	1.758	0.000	1.197	1.674	0.000
Chad	-0.248	-0.274	-0.178	0.749	-0.249	-0.486	0.414
Chile	-0.068	0.395	1.070	0.000	0.342	0.920	0.002
China	1.085	0.887	0.725	0.000	.	.	.
Colombia	-0.164	0.110	0.471	0.000	0.017	0.141	0.648

Comoros	-0.035	-0.023	0.020	0.538	-0.028	.	.
Costa Rica	0.282	0.476	0.850	0.000	0.426	0.702	0.176
Croatia	0.125	0.281	1.189	0.000	0.381	0.674	0.145
Cyprus	0.555	0.468	0.556	0.092	0.507	0.706	0.012
Czech Republic	0.339	1.075	2.139	0.000	0.595	0.972	0.015
Denmark	0.775	1.151	1.564	0.000	1.157	1.304	0.024
Dominican Republic	0.324	0.250	0.376	0.235	0.283	0.342	0.577
Ecuador	-0.368	-0.087	0.281	0.000	-0.123	-0.065	.
Egypt	0.647	0.908	1.512	0.000	0.917	.	.
El Salvador	-0.057	-0.035	0.157	0.071	-0.026	-0.117	0.438
Estonia	1.024	1.165	1.331	0.006	1.163	1.238	0.289
Eswatini	0.126	0.211	0.395	0.015	0.173	.	.
Ethiopia	0.534	0.695	0.687	0.074	0.573	.	.
Finland	1.199	2.018	2.721	0.000	1.816	2.168	0.007
France	0.951	1.218	1.785	0.000	1.246	1.445	0.011
Gabon	-0.412	-0.364	-0.148	0.034	-0.382	-0.516	0.294
Georgia	-0.068	0.078	0.273	0.000	0.118	0.650	0.018
Germany	0.393	0.976	1.254	0.000	1.014	1.041	0.627
Ghana	0.364	0.616	0.730	0.009	0.514	0.338	0.806
Greece	-0.320	-0.004	0.567	0.000	0.018	0.403	0.360
Guatemala	-0.268	-0.137	-0.124	0.093	-0.224	-0.257	0.827
Guinea	0.582	0.203	-0.020	0.000	0.448	-0.504	0.008
Haiti	0.194	0.089	0.232	0.125	0.152	0.174	0.842
Honduras	0.030	0.041	0.314	0.019	0.078	-0.012	0.348
Hungary	0.389	0.678	0.893	0.000	0.645	0.617	0.736
Iceland	0.985	0.920	1.306	0.000	0.982	1.223	0.002
India	0.492	0.865	1.416	0.000	0.694	.	.
Indonesia	0.015	0.157	0.486	0.000	0.110	.	.
Iran	0.745	0.688	0.718	0.572	0.712	.	.
Iraq	0.278	0.509	0.491	0.006	0.371	.	.

Ireland	0.984	1.226	1.350	0.026	1.245	1.214	0.680
Israel	0.781	0.619	1.124	0.000	0.788	0.855	0.597
Italy	0.693	0.985	1.002	0.000	0.849	0.931	0.332
Ivory Coast	-0.445	-0.250	-0.271	0.003	-0.373	-0.286	0.588
Japan	0.879	0.995	1.298	0.001	1.061	1.036	0.764
Jordan	0.395	0.297	0.248	0.179	0.312	.	.
Kazakhstan	1.139	0.680	0.769	0.023	0.778	0.986	0.435
Kenya	0.152	0.045	0.083	0.323	0.099	-1.430	.
Kosovo	0.203	0.211	0.303	0.150	0.213	.	.
Kuwait	0.677	0.519	0.491	0.169	0.578	.	.
Kyrgyzstan	0.545	0.353	0.323	0.025	0.386	0.676	.
Laos	0.372	0.278	0.584	0.001	0.363	.	.
Latvia	1.299	1.272	1.447	0.177	1.308	1.330	0.819
Lebanon	0.206	0.628	0.964	0.000	0.542	0.734	0.569
Liberia	0.333	0.407	0.528	0.147	0.366	.	.
Libya	0.486	0.382	0.399	0.312	0.405	.	.
Lithuania	1.294	0.968	1.278	0.016	1.066	0.742	0.087
Luxembourg	0.267	0.656	0.968	0.000	0.697	0.767	0.112
Macedonia	-0.625	-0.287	0.236	0.000	-0.328	0.247	0.263
Madagascar	-0.234	-0.144	-0.069	0.361	-0.217	-0.094	0.471
Malawi	0.225	-0.039	0.148	0.001	0.146	1.162	0.000
Malaysia	-0.150	0.238	0.806	0.000	0.299	.	.
Mali	0.215	0.105	0.089	0.220	0.173	1.474	0.000
Malta	0.518	0.605	0.756	0.003	0.620	0.670	0.606
Mauritania	-0.906	-0.569	-0.388	0.000	-0.778	.	.
Mauritius	0.245	0.004	-0.075	0.002	0.090	0.425	0.107
Mexico	-0.039	0.228	0.620	0.000	0.220	0.207	0.925
Moldova	-0.603	-0.429	-0.043	0.000	-0.403	0.261	0.251
Mongolia	0.318	0.326	0.391	0.349	0.344	0.334	0.821
Montenegro	-0.461	-0.503	-0.055	0.000	-0.434	-0.221	0.442
Morocco	0.585	0.619	0.609	0.816	0.597	.	.

Mozambique	0.270	0.258	.	0.839	0.293	-0.345	0.000
Myanmar	1.352	1.092	0.834	0.000	1.249	.	.
Namibia	-0.393	-0.272	0.028	0.000	-0.288	.	.
Nepal	0.769	1.006	1.017	0.000	0.831	.	.
Netherlands	0.501	0.724	1.479	0.000	0.703	1.243	0.000
New Zealand	0.843	1.247	1.635	0.000	1.176	1.447	0.000
Nicaragua	-0.328	-0.067	0.033	0.000	-0.159	0.040	0.094
Niger	0.893	0.509	.	0.001	0.896	.	.
Nigeria	0.439	0.328	0.205	0.329	0.367	.	.
Northern Cyprus	-0.124	0.030	0.176	0.000	0.037	0.201	0.166
Norway	1.224	1.491	1.918	0.000	1.510	1.819	0.001
Pakistan	-0.110	0.573	0.786	0.000	0.107	.	.
Palestinian Territories	0.221	0.320	0.344	0.184	0.302	.	.
Panama	-0.357	-0.167	0.154	0.000	-0.131	-0.721	0.000
Paraguay	-0.241	-0.062	0.115	0.000	-0.099	-0.191	0.647
Peru	-0.609	-0.127	0.234	0.000	-0.215	-0.107	0.626
Philippines	0.495	0.568	0.943	0.000	0.603	0.917	.
Poland	0.270	0.924	1.569	0.000	0.925	2.153	0.000
Portugal	0.753	1.093	1.292	0.000	0.992	1.070	0.502
Republic of Congo	-0.331	-0.229	0.213	0.001	-0.253	-0.082	0.520
Romania	0.272	0.593	1.082	0.000	0.577	2.511	.
Russia	0.594	0.504	0.546	0.469	0.517	0.776	0.012
Rwanda	0.573	0.501	0.902	.	0.556	0.865	0.718
Saudi Arabia	0.704	0.589	0.670	0.162	0.648	.	.
Senegal	0.081	0.193	0.633	0.003	0.124	.	.
Serbia	0.069	0.194	0.476	0.001	0.200	0.566	0.013
Sierra Leone	-0.154	0.162	0.171	0.000	-0.073	.	.
Singapore	0.668	0.506	0.986	0.000	0.620	1.168	0.001
Slovakia	0.109	0.409	0.869	0.000	0.434	0.499	0.684
Slovenia	0.448	0.581	1.115	0.000	0.473	0.894	0.000

South Africa	-0.081	-0.071	0.193	0.048	-0.062	0.941	0.000
South Korea	0.261	0.225	0.093	0.213	0.280	0.055	0.005
Spain	1.227	1.437	1.860	0.000	1.460	1.258	0.015
Sri Lanka	0.583	0.679	0.895	0.047	0.629	.	.
Sweden	1.019	1.094	1.405	0.000	1.090	1.245	0.027
Switzerland	0.550	0.827	0.983	0.000	0.782	0.871	0.224
Taiwan	-0.060	-0.033	0.233	0.001	0.075	0.020	0.493
Tajikistan	0.945	1.096	1.335	0.001	1.095	0.140	0.209
Tanzania	0.982	0.871	0.795	0.148	0.957	1.187	0.274
Thailand	0.686	0.918	0.953	0.001	0.766	.	.
The Gambia	0.570	0.437	0.287	0.001	0.524	.	.
Togo	-0.948	-0.868	-0.622	0.006	-0.893	-1.131	0.067
Tunisia	0.204	0.474	0.691	0.000	0.370	.	.
Turkey	0.149	0.568	0.683	0.000	0.466	0.678	0.215
Turkmenistan	0.919	1.423	0.937	0.001	1.350	.	.
Uganda	0.238	0.294	0.219	0.563	0.258	.	.
Ukraine	0.201	0.086	0.321	0.009	0.149	0.326	0.419
United Arab Emirates	0.952	0.722	0.642	0.071	0.859	.	.
United Kingdom	0.905	1.080	1.266	0.000	1.077	1.198	0.072
United States	-0.049	0.981	1.629	0.000	1.032	1.801	0.000
Uruguay	0.307	0.581	1.048	0.000	0.522	0.629	0.194
Uzbekistan	1.755	1.642	1.373	0.011	1.654	2.655	.
Venezuela	-0.077	0.134	0.348	0.000	0.154	-0.404	0.000
Vietnam	-0.202	-0.246	-0.273	0.841	-0.215	-0.282	0.475
Yemen	0.041	0.335	0.660	0.000	0.163	.	.
Zambia	-0.052	-0.111	-0.089	0.781	-0.089	0.126	0.126
Zimbabwe	0.022	0.116	0.345	0.039	0.081	0.691	0.013

Source: Wellcome Global Monitor, 2018. Educational attainment was reported by the respondent answering the question 'What at is your highest completed level of education?'. Religiosity was reported by the respondent answering the yes or no question 'Is religion an important part of your daily life?'. A dot implies lack of data (no responses for the relevant category).

Table S5. *Differences in trust in science by area type and household income, by country*

	Area Type			Household income (per capita)					
	rural area	city	p-value	Poorest 20%	Second 20%	Middle 20%	Fourth 20%	Top 20%	p-value
Afghanistan	0.154	0.169	0.919	-0.060	-0.219	0.255	0.266	0.266	0.000
Albania	-0.079	-0.037	0.455	-0.113	-0.150	-0.134	-0.003	-0.003	0.006
Algeria	-0.182	-0.132	0.589	-0.167	-0.179	-0.143	-0.113	-0.113	0.918
Argentina	0.488	0.621	0.067	0.402	0.535	0.424	0.653	0.653	0.000
Armenia	0.079	0.160	0.170	0.048	0.100	0.090	0.182	0.182	0.654
Australia	1.336	1.710	0.005	1.294	1.582	1.573	1.768	1.768	0.020
Austria	0.861	0.943	0.062	0.893	0.841	0.883	0.874	0.874	0.506
Azerbaijan	0.938	0.866	0.340	0.641	0.949	1.049	0.976	0.976	0.031
Bangladesh	0.884	0.987	0.328	0.859	0.917	0.739	0.829	0.829	0.008
Belarus	0.610	0.450	0.017	0.358	0.562	0.482	0.613	0.613	0.053
Belgium	1.434	1.353	0.230	1.126	1.379	1.438	1.517	1.517	0.001
Benin	-0.277	-0.788	0.000	-0.310	-0.398	-0.404	-0.467	-0.467	0.815
Bolivia	-0.253	-0.130	0.046	-0.326	-0.262	-0.181	-0.055	-0.055	0.005
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-0.310	-0.520	0.009	-0.514	-0.247	-0.428	-0.359	-0.359	0.187
Botswana	-0.021	-0.078	0.360	-0.062	0.048	0.019	-0.073	-0.073	0.367
Brazil	-0.091	0.094	0.010	-0.104	-0.038	0.065	0.061	0.061	0.398
Bulgaria	0.289	0.057	0.007	-0.030	0.317	0.163	0.112	0.112	0.066
Burkina Faso	0.066	-0.183	0.005	0.030	0.185	0.088	0.102	0.102	0.000
Burundi	-0.533	-0.931	0.000	-0.552	-0.549	-0.450	-0.681	-0.681	0.334
Cambodia	0.518	0.387	0.031	0.537	0.532	0.577	0.441	0.441	0.073
Cameroon	0.132	-0.269	0.000	0.085	0.024	0.167	-0.169	-0.169	0.018
Canada	1.167	1.458	0.001	1.150	1.232	1.267	1.481	1.481	0.001
Chad	-0.232	-0.363	0.118	-0.334	-0.119	-0.179	-0.410	-0.410	0.078
Chile	0.164	0.493	0.000	0.035	0.360	0.213	0.547	0.547	0.000
China	1.059	0.870	0.000	1.289	0.957	0.984	0.924	0.924	0.000
Colombia	-0.047	0.096	0.019	-0.143	-0.055	0.075	0.144	0.144	0.004
Comoros	-0.007	-0.057	0.220	-0.183	-0.003	0.070	-0.021	-0.021	0.003
Costa Rica	0.453	0.442	0.877	0.277	0.371	0.463	0.505	0.505	0.006
Croatia	0.321	0.622	0.013	0.178	0.184	0.279	0.458	0.458	0.000
Cyprus	0.456	0.570	0.008	0.411	0.439	0.551	0.555	0.555	0.013
Czech Republic	1.170	0.932	0.099	0.729	0.811	0.918	1.192	1.192	0.000
Denmark	1.121	1.274	0.008	1.068	1.163	1.234	1.252	1.252	0.183
Dominican Republic	0.378	0.246	0.013	0.230	0.294	0.343	0.302	0.302	0.687
Ecuador	-0.147	-0.068	0.250	-0.328	-0.152	-0.115	-0.106	-0.106	0.001
Egypt	0.964	0.861	0.317	0.629	0.837	0.834	0.751	0.751	0.000
El Salvador	-0.031	-0.037	0.916	-0.052	0.022	-0.048	-0.007	-0.007	0.832
Estonia	1.114	1.280	0.013	1.056	1.095	1.108	1.324	1.324	0.001
Eswatini	0.189	0.059	0.057	0.150	0.139	0.180	0.163	0.163	0.572
Ethiopia	0.574	0.565	0.921	0.470	0.569	0.724	0.609	0.609	0.207
Finland	1.699	2.144	0.000	1.690	1.703	1.883	1.918	1.918	0.003
France	1.279	1.335	0.442	1.089	1.219	1.349	1.343	1.343	0.006
Gabon	-0.352	-0.399	0.473	-0.469	-0.317	-0.337	-0.459	-0.459	0.368
Georgia	0.097	0.152	0.333	-0.074	0.060	0.014	0.235	0.235	0.000
Germany	0.996	1.051	0.288	0.941	0.982	1.040	1.081	1.081	0.415
Ghana	0.414	0.576	0.047	0.414	0.401	0.575	0.600	0.600	0.400
Greece	-0.047	0.066	0.281	-0.330	-0.022	-0.053	0.221	0.221	0.001
Guatemala	-0.239	-0.174	0.291	-0.377	-0.320	-0.139	-0.177	-0.177	0.000
Guinea	0.492	0.317	0.043	0.635	0.539	0.357	0.383	0.383	0.047
Haiti	0.159	0.123	0.545	0.105	0.297	0.082	0.151	0.151	0.171
Honduras	0.072	0.016	0.300	0.057	0.096	0.001	0.046	0.046	0.834
Hungary	0.666	0.603	0.407	0.253	0.650	0.714	0.839	0.839	0.000

Iceland	1.010	1.064	0.428	0.918	1.005	1.023	1.068	1.068	0.188
India	0.686	0.752	0.394	0.656	0.555	0.713	0.764	0.764	0.027
Indonesia	0.122	0.083	0.537	0.102	0.138	0.057	0.177	0.177	0.669
Iran	0.718	0.698	0.679	0.684	0.696	0.734	0.696	0.696	0.839
Iraq	0.450	0.333	0.155	0.342	0.283	0.410	0.400	0.400	0.700
Ireland	1.171	1.347	0.001	1.152	1.192	1.232	1.284	1.284	0.113
Israel	0.904	0.715	0.021	0.311	0.860	0.782	0.965	0.965	0.000
Italy	0.895	0.802	0.148	0.671	0.935	0.842	0.825	0.825	0.003
Ivory Coast	-0.382	-0.377	0.942	-0.358	-0.395	-0.373	-0.404	-0.404	0.991
Japan	0.942	1.181	0.003	0.934	0.981	0.911	1.173	1.173	0.033
Jordan	0.141	0.378	0.000	0.354	0.313	0.300	0.288	0.288	0.962
Kazakhstan	0.770	0.786	0.859	0.839	0.624	0.794	0.809	0.809	0.589
Kenya	0.086	0.126	0.615	0.323	0.103	0.080	0.005	0.005	0.013
Kosovo	0.241	0.167	0.043	0.201	0.135	0.231	0.210	0.210	0.066
Kuwait	0.413	0.536	0.126	0.537	0.604	0.495	0.558	0.558	0.165
Kyrgyzstan	0.413	0.304	0.114	0.329	0.462	0.338	0.397	0.397	0.549
Laos	0.359	0.377	0.758	0.524	0.361	0.369	0.252	0.252	0.058
Latvia	1.350	1.289	0.475	1.054	1.237	1.368	1.431	1.431	0.017
Lebanon	0.729	0.332	0.000	0.133	0.422	0.536	0.774	0.774	0.000
Liberia	0.402	0.299	0.033	0.281	0.377	0.401	0.337	0.337	0.544
Libya	0.403	0.421	0.659	0.400	0.413	0.418	0.417	0.417	0.949
Lithuania	1.144	0.960	0.085	0.815	0.934	1.308	1.080	1.080	0.054
Luxembourg	0.722	0.704	0.672	0.700	0.730	0.730	0.761	0.761	0.589
Macedonia	-0.399	-0.230	0.038	-0.401	-0.392	-0.360	-0.446	-0.446	0.003
Madagascar	-0.211	-0.190	0.816	-0.260	-0.258	-0.280	-0.164	-0.164	0.366
Malawi	0.173	0.081	0.356	0.145	0.261	0.240	0.126	0.126	0.095
Malaysia	0.283	0.310	0.765	0.105	0.165	0.399	0.418	0.418	0.078
Mali	0.151	0.285	0.089	0.317	0.157	0.176	0.221	0.221	0.224
Malta	0.598	0.675	0.120	0.486	0.641	0.646	0.640	0.640	0.091
Mauritania	-0.801	-0.728	0.459	.	.	.	.	.	.
Mauritius	0.138	0.021	0.088	0.135	0.046	0.054	0.147	0.147	0.770
Mexico	0.224	0.215	0.879	0.080	0.227	0.197	0.225	0.225	0.041
Moldova	-0.433	-0.273	0.035	-0.607	-0.612	-0.415	-0.242	-0.242	0.000
Mongolia	0.369	0.316	0.204	0.265	0.330	0.345	0.369	0.369	0.316
Montenegro	-0.516	-0.337	0.008	-0.553	-0.426	-0.545	-0.296	-0.296	0.032
Morocco	0.598	0.596	0.965	0.614	0.646	0.609	0.552	0.552	0.806
Mozambique	0.271	0.133	0.144	0.157	0.332	0.299	0.287	0.287	0.351
Myanmar	1.376	0.981	0.000	1.280	1.421	1.334	1.192	1.192	0.001
Namibia	-0.342	-0.211	0.026	-0.245	-0.395	-0.345	-0.295	-0.295	0.117
Nepal	0.853	0.772	0.263	0.760	0.890	0.808	0.827	0.827	0.620
Netherlands	0.868	1.078	0.028	0.602	0.830	0.891	1.157	1.157	0.000
New Zealand	1.166	1.380	0.004	1.215	1.152	1.338	1.363	1.363	0.150
Nicaragua	-0.186	-0.065	0.040	-0.095	-0.268	-0.221	-0.113	-0.113	0.065
Niger	0.909	0.622	0.021	.	.	.	.	.	.
Nigeria	0.476	0.093	0.000	0.508	0.386	0.302	0.343	0.343	0.323
Northern Cyprus	0.044	0.008	0.445	-0.021	-0.046	0.048	-0.022	-0.022	0.020
Norway	1.474	1.820	0.000	1.483	1.511	1.538	1.634	1.634	0.126
Pakistan	-0.033	0.348	0.000	-0.058	0.108	0.146	0.042	0.042	0.055
Palestinian Territories	0.325	0.294	0.524	0.143	0.269	0.435	0.341	0.341	0.001
Panama	-0.088	-0.285	0.002	-0.248	-0.237	-0.123	-0.217	-0.217	0.351
Paraguay	-0.120	-0.073	0.441	-0.085	-0.191	-0.229	-0.078	-0.078	0.004
Peru	-0.300	-0.151	0.037	-0.681	-0.371	-0.150	0.037	0.037	0.000
Philippines	0.594	0.625	0.655	0.421	0.607	0.626	0.635	0.635	0.038
Poland	0.908	0.959	0.582	0.858	0.731	0.795	1.116	1.116	0.013
Portugal	0.978	1.101	0.134	0.657	0.995	0.926	1.043	1.043	0.000
Republic of Congo	-0.197	-0.312	0.064	-0.262	-0.324	-0.166	-0.301	-0.301	0.425

Romania	0.593	0.550	0.631	0.295	0.215	0.818	0.712	0.712	0.000
Russia	0.571	0.476	0.042	0.534	0.537	0.433	0.591	0.591	0.220
Rwanda	0.556	0.616	0.586	0.634	0.598	0.654	0.476	0.476	0.207
Saudi Arabia	0.615	0.626	0.897	0.650	0.638	0.556	0.615	0.615	0.544
Senegal	0.164	0.043	0.101	0.192	0.006	0.111	0.178	0.178	0.467
Serbia	0.046	0.427	0.000	-0.077	0.067	0.301	0.226	0.226	0.000
Sierra Leone	-0.093	-0.005	0.241	0.072	-0.030	-0.216	-0.120	-0.120	0.169
Singapore	0.656	.	.	0.257	0.692	0.840	0.795	0.795	0.003
Slovakia	0.419	0.455	0.698	0.020	0.303	0.528	0.576	0.576	0.000
Slovenia	0.551	0.668	0.123	0.330	0.423	0.601	0.791	0.791	0.000
South Africa	-0.072	-0.059	0.836	-0.059	-0.139	-0.138	0.087	0.087	0.119
South Korea	0.199	0.161	0.736	0.204	0.171	0.195	0.162	0.162	0.940
Spain	1.429	1.400	0.685	1.351	1.286	1.490	1.393	1.393	0.098
Sri Lanka	0.665	0.473	0.018	0.454	0.621	0.592	0.680	0.680	0.007
Sweden	1.086	1.267	0.009	1.190	1.047	1.098	1.272	1.272	0.200
Switzerland	0.761	0.907	0.007	0.734	0.840	0.798	0.804	0.804	0.784
Taiwan	-0.068	0.145	0.005	-0.050	-0.011	0.019	-0.027	-0.027	0.001
Tajikistan	1.043	1.538	0.000	0.946	1.214	1.157	1.025	1.025	0.266
Tanzania	0.997	0.828	0.056	0.980	1.013	0.933	0.927	0.927	0.954
Thailand	0.806	0.699	0.097	0.678	0.774	0.745	0.760	0.760	0.337
The Gambia	0.576	0.364	0.000	0.485	0.614	0.554	0.478	0.478	0.131
Togo	-0.905	-0.867	0.604	-0.997	-0.887	-0.898	-0.823	-0.823	0.548
Tunisia	0.255	0.431	0.004	0.265	0.356	0.284	0.398	0.398	0.016
Turkey	0.156	0.536	0.000	0.150	0.595	0.549	0.533	0.533	0.001
Turkmenistan	1.431	1.072	0.001	1.084	1.376	1.469	1.555	1.555	0.022
Uganda	0.279	-0.059	0.000	0.257	0.327	0.282	0.188	0.188	0.566
Ukraine	0.169	0.135	0.682	0.144	0.072	0.107	0.174	0.174	0.530
United Arab Emirates	0.544	0.719	0.014	0.545	0.599	0.762	0.710	0.710	0.014
United Kingdom	1.096	1.114	0.790	0.921	1.112	1.124	1.268	1.268	0.031
United States	0.956	1.335	0.000	0.989	0.975	1.269	1.392	1.392	0.026
Uruguay	0.506	0.586	0.244	0.163	0.208	0.636	0.633	0.633	0.000
Uzbekistan	1.749	1.496	0.000	1.610	1.728	1.678	1.665	1.665	0.485
Venezuela	0.105	0.116	0.880	.	.	.	.	.	.
Vietnam	-0.183	-0.302	0.196	-0.203	-0.319	-0.235	-0.214	-0.214	0.899
Yemen	0.181	0.097	0.327	-0.097	0.048	0.159	0.281	0.281	0.000
Zambia	-0.107	0.030	0.164	0.054	-0.184	0.043	-0.301	-0.301	0.013
Zimbabwe	0.081	0.115	0.617	-0.002	0.032	0.135	0.114	0.114	0.377

Source: Gallup's Wellcome Global Monitor 2018. Area type and household income were reported by the respondent.

Table S6. Correlations between mobility, trust in science and stringency.

	Mobility and Trust in Science		Stringency and Trust in Science		Mobility and Stringency	
	Corr.	N	Corr.	N	Corr.	N
after 100 cases	0.4995**	92	-0.5570**	102	-0.7836**	88
after 200 cases	0.4558**	84	-0.5079**	95	-0.7331**	80
after 300 cases	0.3673**	80	-0.3877**	87	-0.7523**	77
fixed at 28 th of Feb.	0.2522**	112	0.0299	121	-0.3916**	109
after 3 cases per million	0.4682**	96	-0.5095**	108	-0.7644**	94
after 4 cases per million	0.5170**	93	-0.5379**	105	-0.7668	92
after 5 cases per million	0.5275**	92	-0.5314**	101	-0.7740**	91

Notes: **p<0.01; * p<0.05

Estimates ‘After 100 cases’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 100th confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 200 cases’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 200th confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 300 cases’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 300th confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in the country. Estimates ‘fixed at 28th of Feb.’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the 28th of February 2020. Estimates ‘After 3 cases per million’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 3rd confirmed case of COVID-19 per million population in the country was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 4 cases per million’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 4th confirmed case of COVID-19 per million population in the country was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 5 cases per million’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 5th confirmed case of COVID-19 per million population in the country was identified in the country.

Sources: Trust in Science Wellcome Global Monitor 2018. Mobility: Google mobility trends. Stringency: Blavatnik School of Government Coronavirus Government Response Tracker.

Table S7. *Partial correlations between mobility, trust in science and stringency controlled for HDI, GDP per capita and urbanization level*

	Mobility and Trust in Science		Stringency and Trust in Science		Mobility and Stringency	
	Corr.	N	Corr.	N	Corr.	N
after 100 cases	0.3882**	91	-0.3995**	101	-0.7551**	86
after 200 cases	0.3797**	83	-0.3462**	94	-0.7136**	78
after 300 cases	0.2925**	79	-0.2368*	87	-0.7255**	75
fixed at 28 th of Feb.	0.2156*	111	-0.0167	121	-0.4045**	106
after 3 cases per million	0.1866	95	-0.1731	107	-0.6193**	91
after 4 cases per million	0.2579*	92	-0.2201*	104	-0.6025**	89
after 5 cases per million	0.2500*	91	-0.2120*	100	-0.6031**	88

Notes: **p<0.01; * p<0.05

Estimates ‘After 100 cases’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 100th confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 200 cases’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 200th confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 300 cases’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 300th confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in the country. Estimates ‘fixed at 28th of Feb.’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the 28th of February 2020. Estimates ‘After 3 cases per million’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 3rd confirmed case of COVID-19 per million population in the country was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 4 cases per million’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 4th confirmed case of COVID-19 per million population in the country was identified in the country. Estimates ‘After 5 cases per million’ refer to correlations when mobility and stringency are evaluated on the day when the 5th confirmed case of COVID-19 per million population in the country was identified in the country.

Sources: Trust in Science Wellcome Global Monitor 2018. Mobility: Google mobility trends. Stringency: Blavatnik School of Government Coronavirus Government Response Tracker. GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$) (GDP) come from the World Bank National Accounts database <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> accessed on 15 April 2020. Human Development Index 2018 (HDI) come from the United Nation’s Human Development Report <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi> accessed on 15 April 2020.