

# Sustainability Leadership



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Class 3:

Part 1: Community and cultural biases

Part 2: Hazards





# Community and Cultural Biases

## Community and Cultural Biases

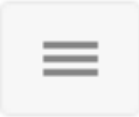
- immutable truth

## Community and Cultural Biases

- immutable truth
- partisan biases

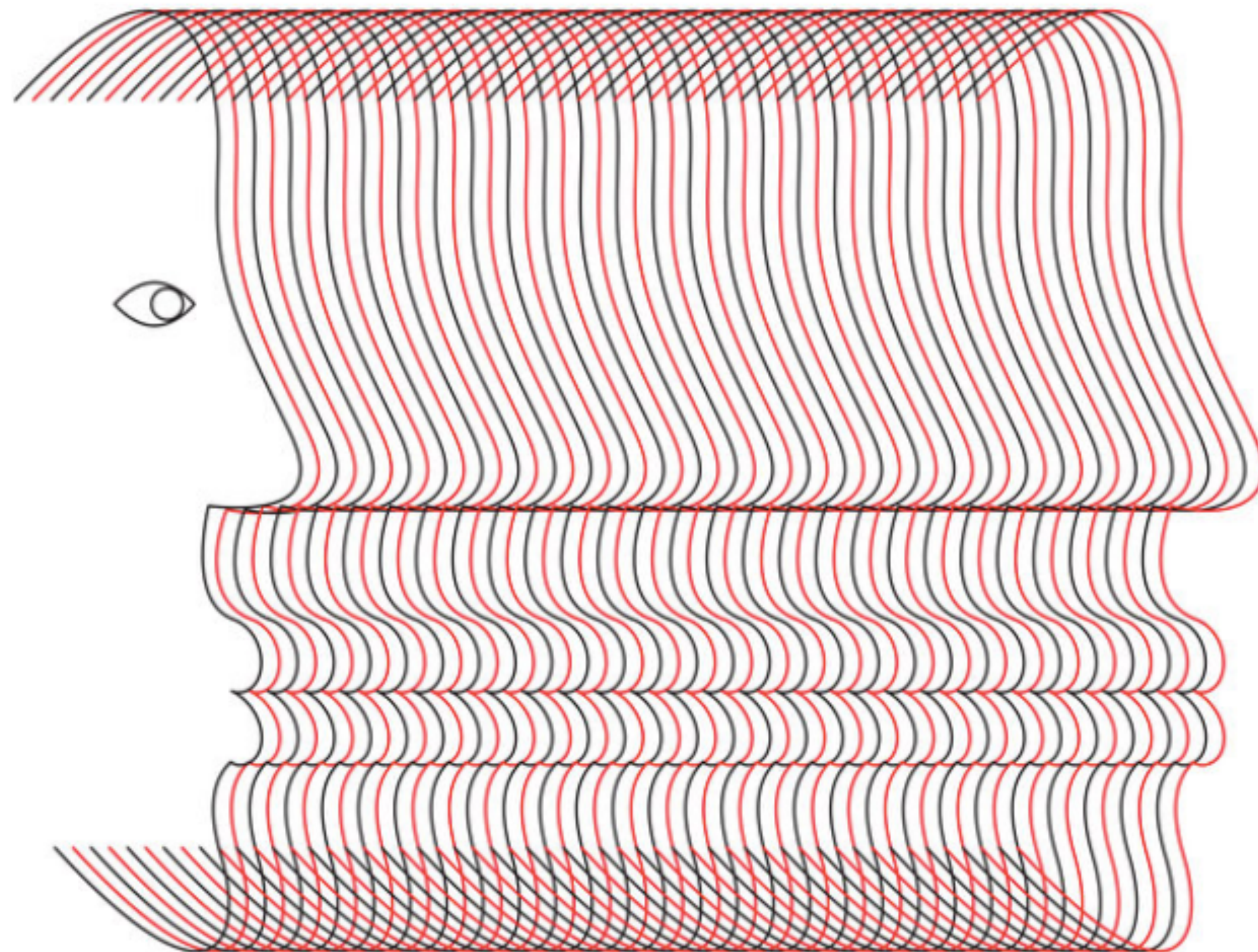
## Community and Cultural Biases

- immutable truth
- partisan biases
- nature of human beings



OPINION

## We Aren't Built to Live in the Moment



MAXWELL HOLYOKE-HIRSCH

By MARTIN E. P. SELIGMAN and JOHN TIERNEY

MAY 19, 2017

We are misnamed. We call ourselves *Homo sapiens*, the “wise man,” but that’s more of a boast than a description. What makes us wise? What sets us apart from other animals? Various answers have been proposed — language, tools, cooperation, culture, tasting bad to predators — but none is unique to humans.

What best distinguishes our species is an ability that scientists are just beginning to appreciate: We contemplate the future. Our singular foresight created civilization and sustains society. It usually lifts our spirits, but it’s also the source of most depression and anxiety, whether we’re evaluating our own lives or worrying about the nation. Other animals have springtime rituals for educating the young, but only we subject them to “commencement” speeches grandly informing them that today is the first day of the rest of their lives.

A more apt name for our species would be *Homo prospectus*, because we thrive by considering our prospects. The power of propection is what makes us wise. Looking into the future, consciously and unconsciously, is a central function of our large brain, as psychologists and neuroscientists have discovered — rather belatedly, because for the past century most researchers have assumed that we’re prisoners of the past and the present.

Behaviorists thought of animal learning as the ingraining of habit by repetition. Psychoanalysts believed that treating patients was a matter of unearthing and confronting the past. Even when cognitive psychology emerged, it focused on the past and present — on memory and perception.

# Community and Cultural Biases

- Threats

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- Threats

OUR PICKS   LATEST   POPULAR   **QUARTZ**   OBSESSIONS   🔍   ...

**AVAILABILITY BIAS**

## The psychology of why 94 deaths from terrorism are scarier than 301,797 deaths from guns



# Community and Cultural Biases

## - Threats

According to the [New America Foundation](#), jihadists killed 94 people inside the United States between 2005 and 2015. During that same time period, 301,797 people in the US were shot dead, [Politifact](#) reports.

At first blush, these numbers might seem to indicate that Donald Trump's temporary ban on immigrants from seven countries—a goal he said was intended to “protect the American people from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals admitted to the United States”—is utterly misguided.

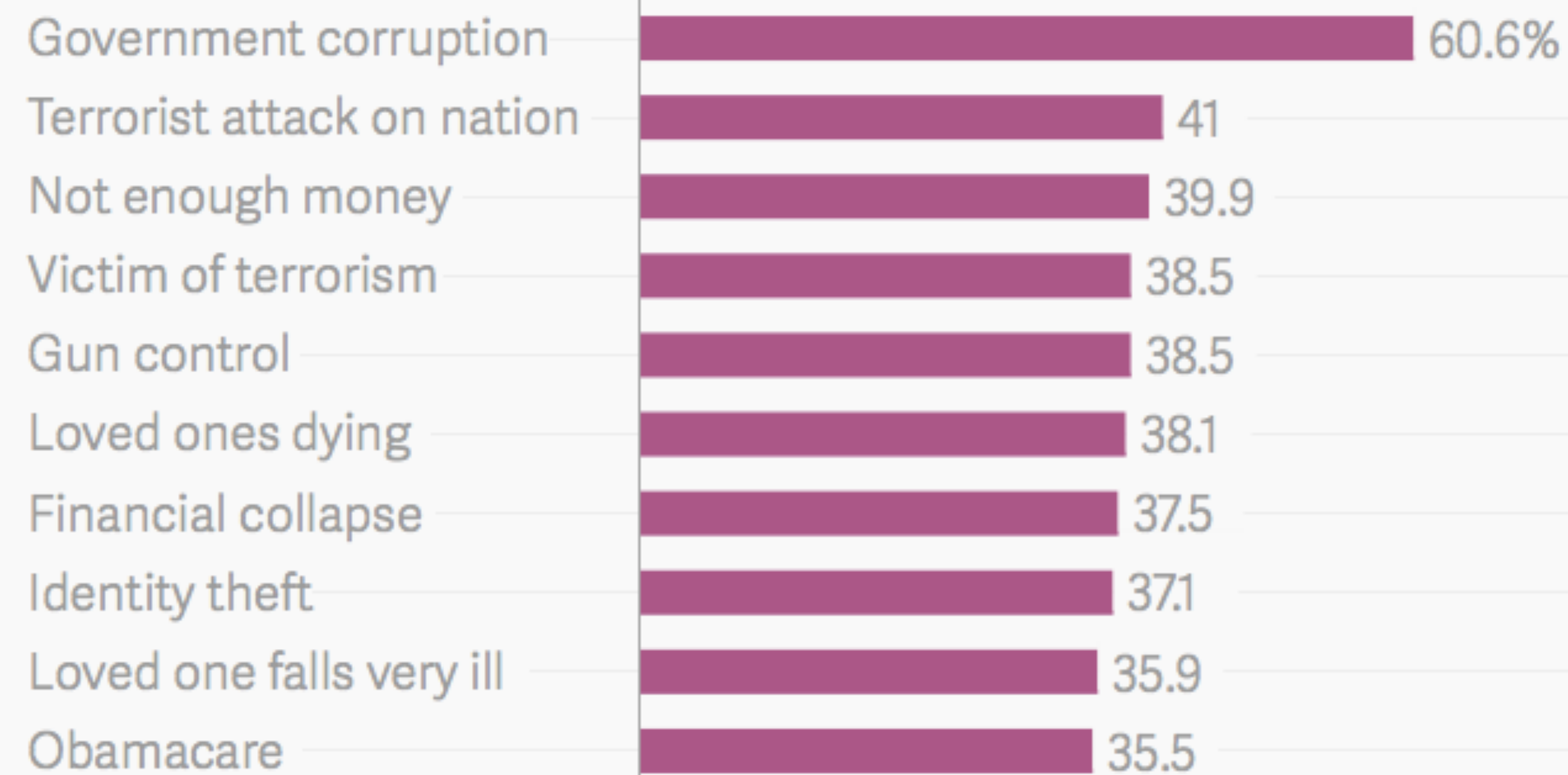
But Trump is right about at least one thing: Americans are more afraid of terrorism than they are of guns, despite the fact that guns are 3,210 times more likely to kill them.

Chapman University has conducted a [Survey of American Fears](#) for more than three years. It asks 1,500 adults what they fear most. It organizes the fears into categories that include personal fears, conspiracy theories, terrorism, natural disasters, paranormal fears, and more recently, fear of Muslims.

In 2016, Americans' number-one fear was “corruption of government officials”—the same top fear as in 2015. Terrorist attacks came second. In fact, of the top five fears, two are terror-related. And number five is not fear of guns but fear of government *restrictions* on guns. Fear of a loved one dying—whether by gun violence or anything else—came next.

### Americans who in 2016 were "afraid" or "very afraid" of...

(out of 1,500 people surveyed)





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- 2 Why are some low risk overemphasized and high risks almost ignored?
- 3 What is the main argument of Mason (2015)?
- 4 Mason's (2015) position on partisan-ideological sorting does imply a community bias that is both united and divided. How do you respond to such a paradoxical point of view?
- 5 Gee (2011) argues that “When major disasters strike, it isn't the disaster itself that is responsible for many of the deaths that occur. It's the disbelief of the people in the most danger from believing that the disaster is as bad as everyone says it is.” Do you agree or disagree? Briefly explain why.



## Part 2: Hazards

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