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# **Worth the effort? An Examination of Re-Contact Strategies in F2F and Telephone Surveys**

Steve Schwarzer, Patrick Moynihan, Martha McRoy

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# Research Area

- **Declining response rates generally seen as an indication for less quality,**
  - A lot of effort goes into maintaining response rates
- **Non-response is seen as one cause of survey error and bias**
- **Non-response bias as the difference between estimates for survey respondents and overall population**
  - Increases of there is a relationship between study subject and likelihood of responding
  - Inverse of response rate

**How do survey estimates change with different levels of fieldwork effort (relative and absolute non-response bias)?**

# Literature

- **Keeter et al 2000, 2006** – reducing non-response in telephone surveys
- **Groves and Peytcheva 2008** – meta analysis of studies of absolute NR bias
  - Very low correlation between response rate and non response bias
  - Great variation within studies then across studies
- **Sturgis et al 2017** – meta analysis focusing on relative NR bias and FW effort
  - On average, questions about beliefs and attitudes tended to respond most to FW effort, behavioral questions not so much
  - Small number of variables with high relative bias
  - 4 call design has the most appeal
- **Sztabinski 2017, Fuchs et al 2013** – effort and data quality for ESS data

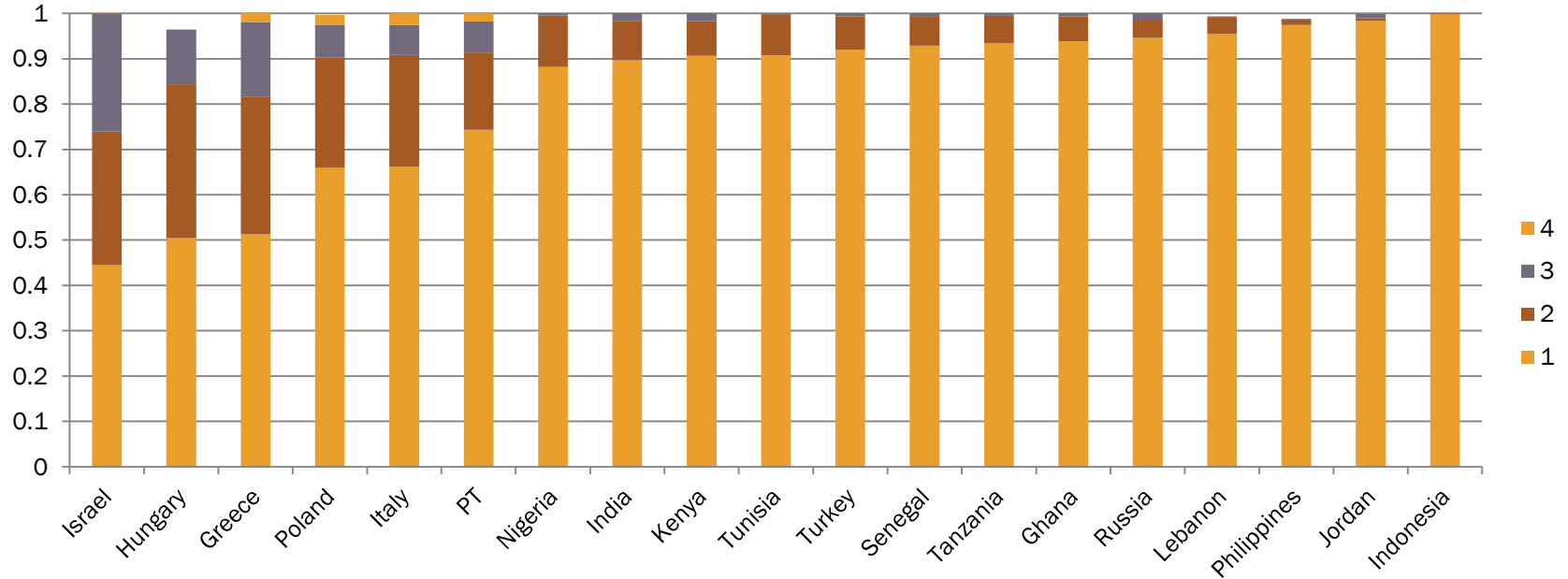
# Data Used

- 2017 Global Attitudes Spring surveys: Nationally representative telephone and face-to-face interviews with adults 18 years and older
- Scope would be 40 countries, but
  - 10 telephone countries are included (all)
  - 5 f2f countries included

BUT

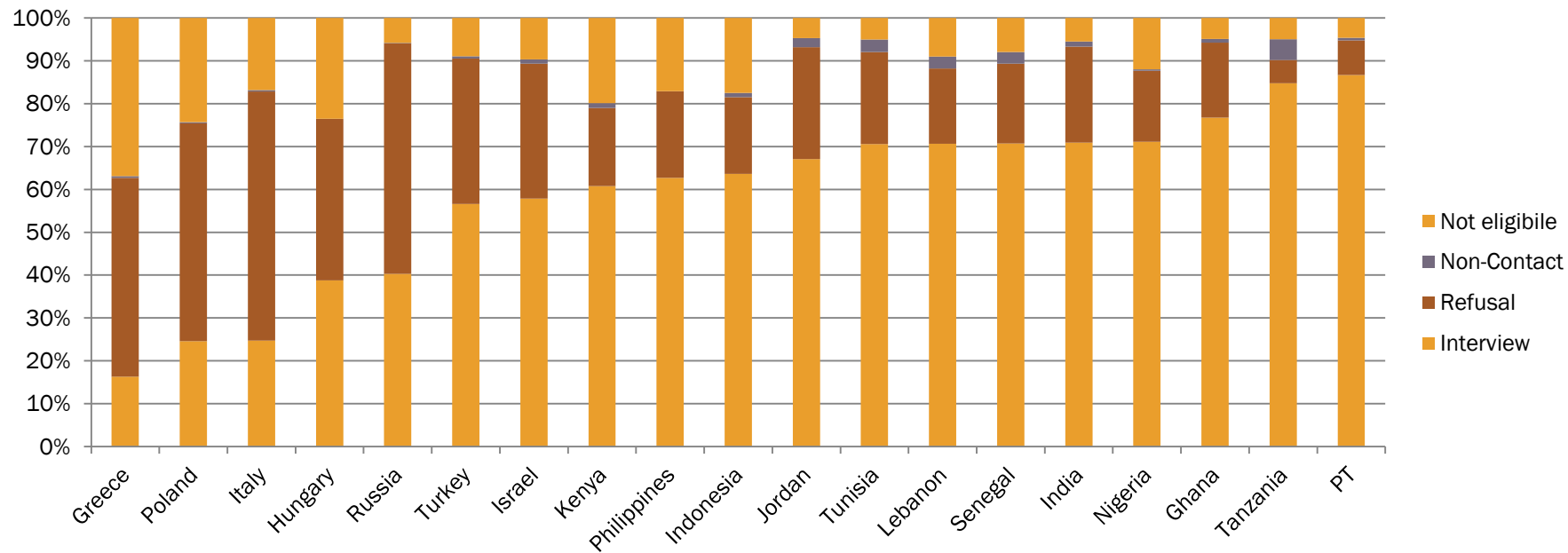
- 15 f2f countries excluded due to response rates higher than 70% on first visit
- 10 countries excluded because contact data unusable

# Fieldwork Efforts all F2F Countries



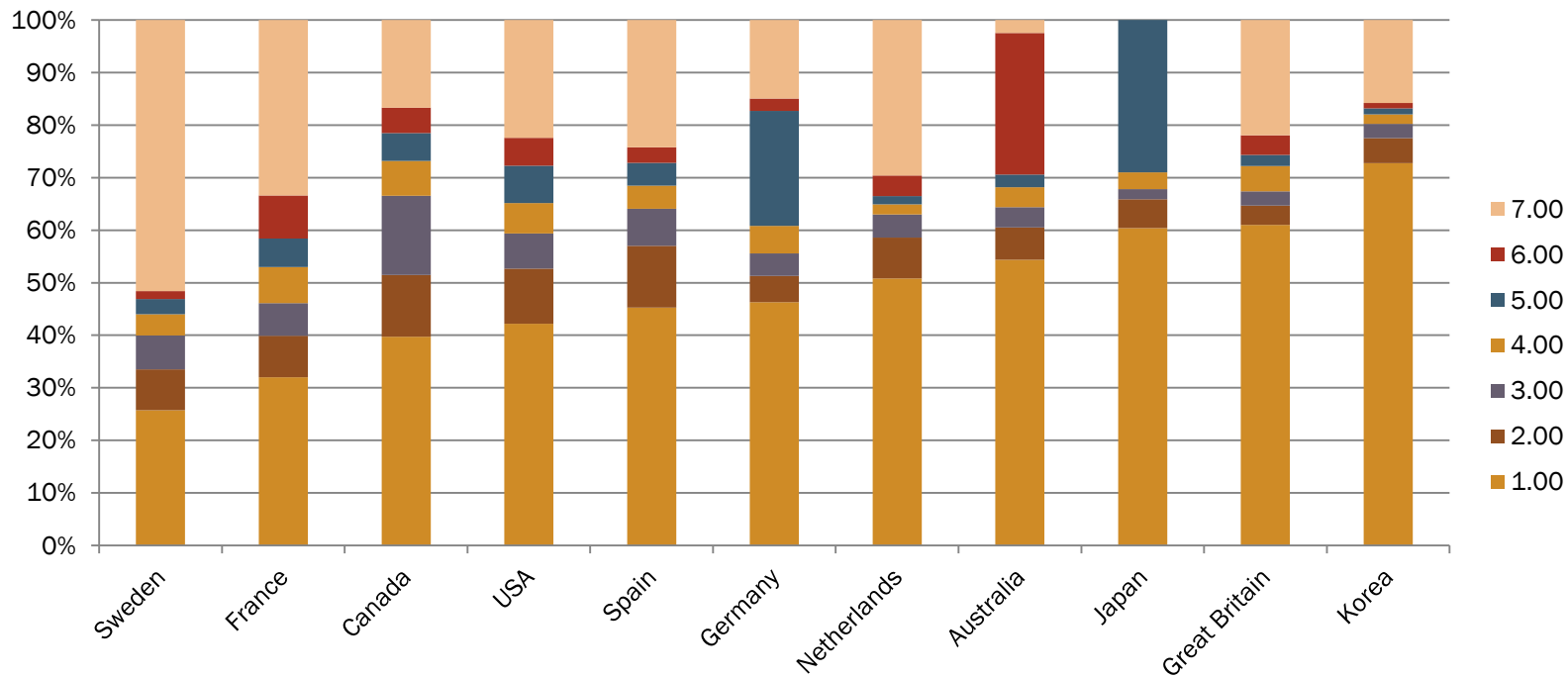
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Response Categories F2F Countries



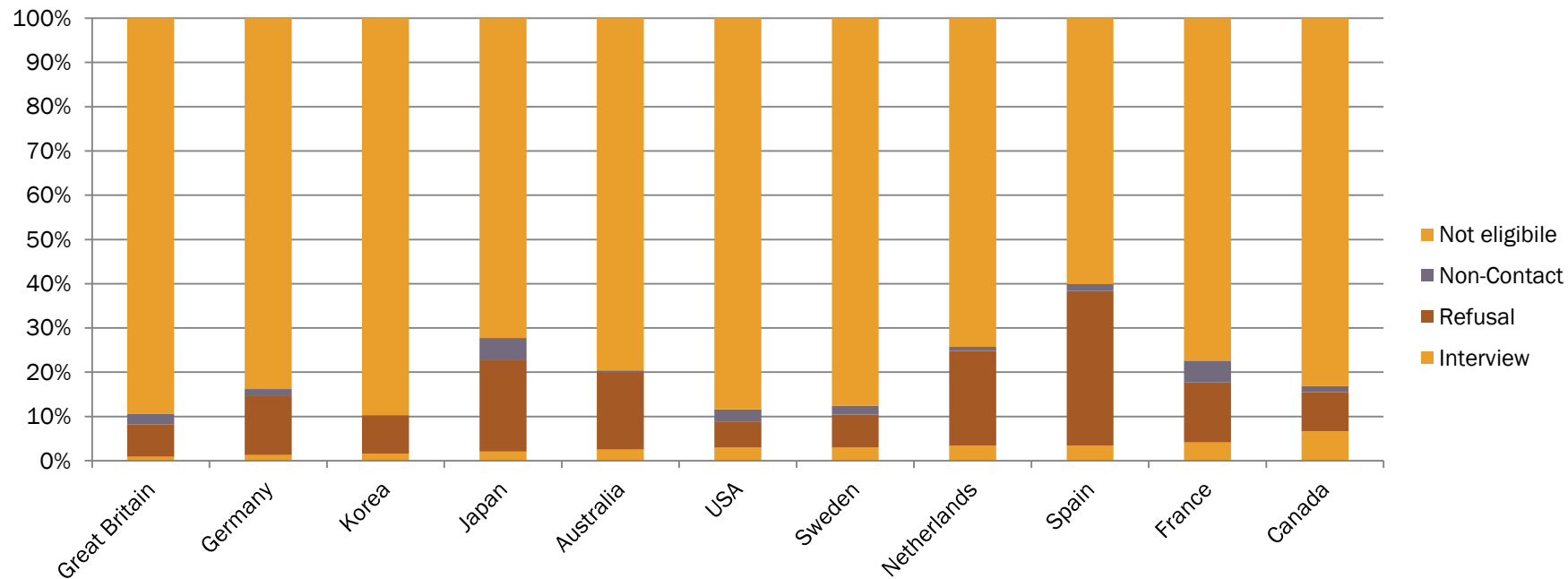
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# CATI Countries



Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# CATI Countries



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# Percentage of Interviews Completed by Fieldwork Effort

## Telephone (10 countries)

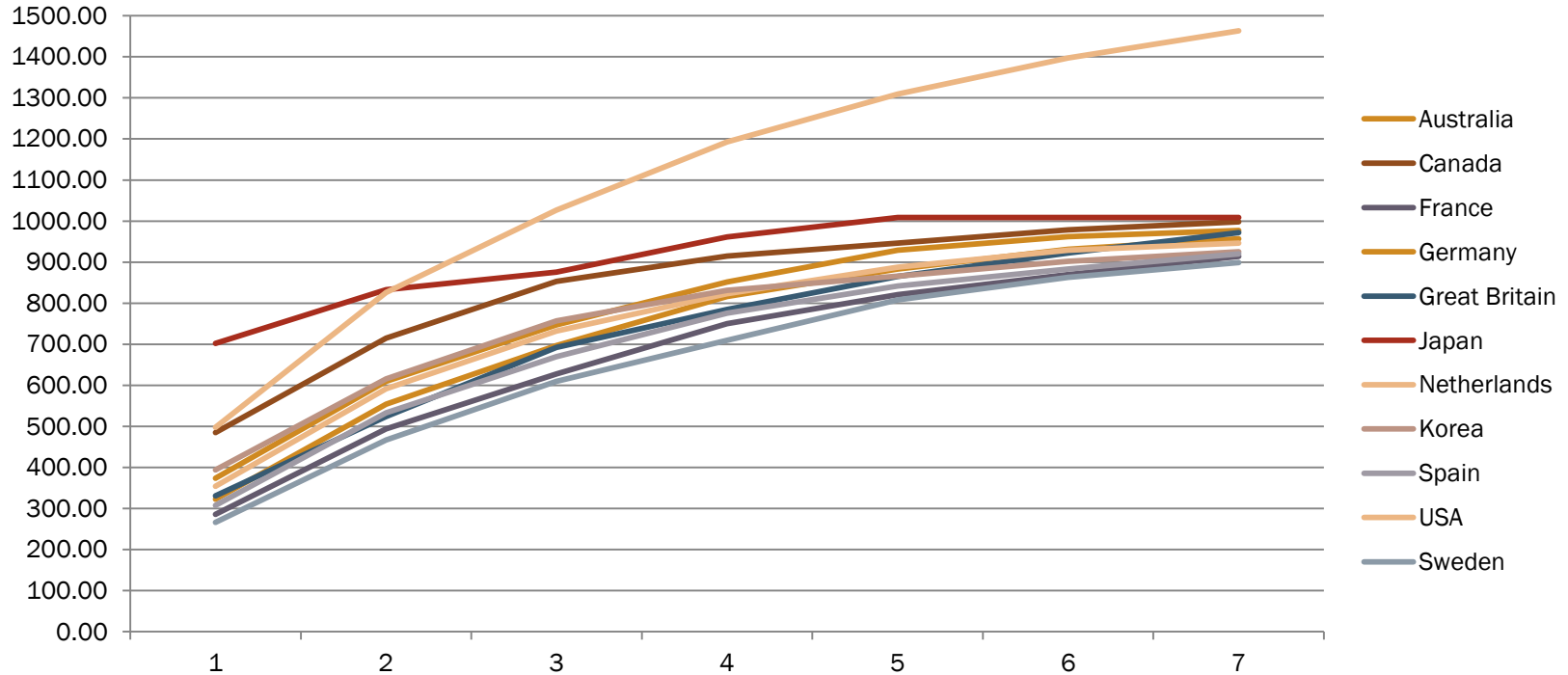
Callbacks	Number of completed interviews	Number of completed interviews
1	34%	34%
2	22%	36%
3	14%	
4	10%	17%
5	7%	
6	4%	7%
7	3%	

## In-person (5 countries)

Callbacks	Number of completed interviews	Number of completed interviews
1	56%	56%
2	29%	29%
3	14%	16%
4	2%	

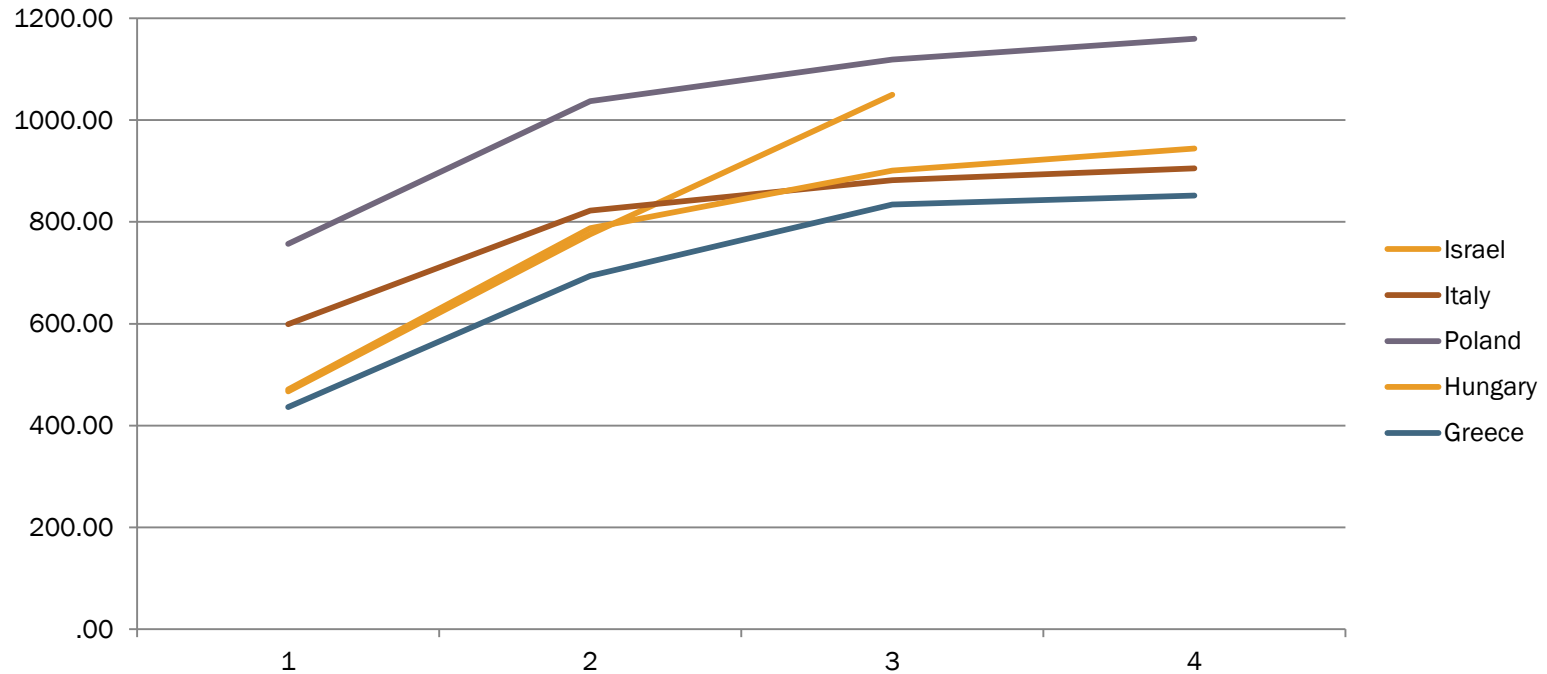
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Cumulative Interview Rates – Telephone Countries



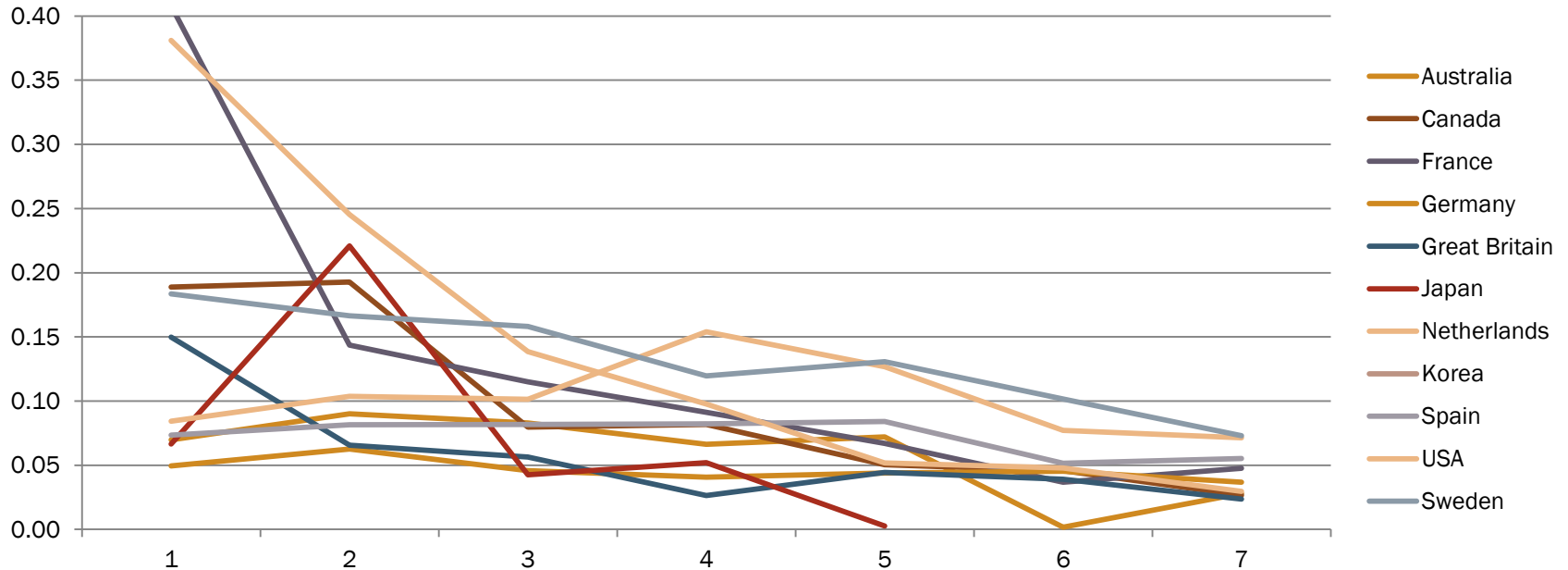
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Cumulative Interview Rates – F2F Countries



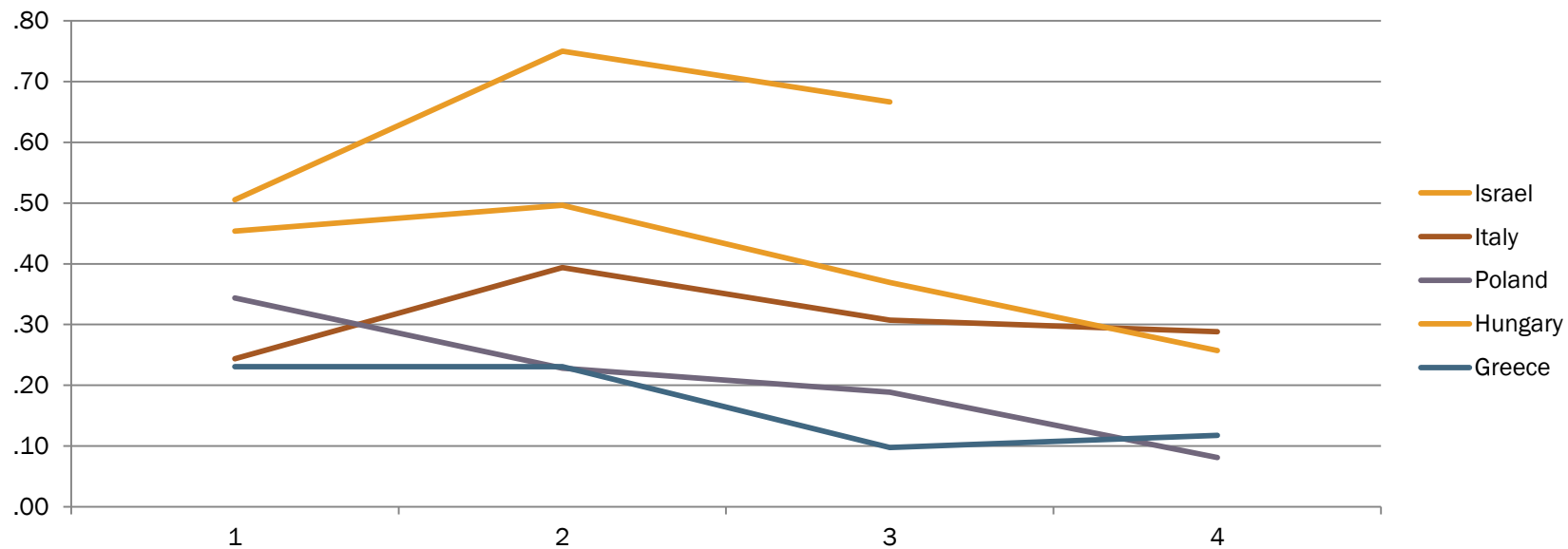
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Response Rates by Attempt – CATI Countries



Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Response Rates by Attempt – F2F Countries



Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Evaluating Variable Bias

Absolute bias (distance from true value – population estimate) measured after different FW effort levels measured for the following variables

- Sex of respondent
- Binary age variable (up to 49 years; 50 and more years of age)
- Binary education variable (higher secondary education or less; above secondary education)

Relative bias (distance from final estimate) measured after different FW effort levels

- 4 attitudinal questions - perception and respect of US, favorability Trump & Obama
- 4 technology related questions - use of internet, own cell, own smartphone, social networking

Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Differences by Attempt Structure – Phone (10 countries)

## Demographics

## Substantive questions

	Sex	Age (50+)	Edu (4+)	A1	A2	A3	A4	T1	T2	T3	T4
Easy to get (1)	0 (-6;8)	1 (-4;6)	-2 (-7;2)	-1 (-7;3)	0 (-1;4)	-1 (-3;1)	1 (-2;5)	-1 (-4;3)	0 (-4;4)	-2 (-7;1)	0 (-5;14)
Medium effort (2-3)	0 (-3;4)	2 (-5;8)	1 (-3;9)	1 (-4;7)	-1 (-12;5)	1 (-1;3)	0 (-4;3)	-1 (-9;3)	-1 (-5;2)	1 (-4;7)	-1 (-8;5)
More effort (4-7)	0 (-11;7)	-4 (-14;5)	2 (-5;8)	0 (-6;4)	0 (-6;4)	0 (-2;5)	-1 (-7;5)	2 (-2;7)	2 (-2;7)	1 (-4;8)	0 (-5;6)
Easy to get (1) vs. Medium effort (2;3)	0 (-9;6)	1 (-7;8)	4 (-5;13)	1 (-5;14)	2 (-14;6)	2 (-2;5)	-2 (-5;5)	0 (-10;7)	-1 (-6;5)	2 (-4;10)	-1 (-22;10)
Easy to get (1) vs. More effort (4 or more)	-1 (-19;12)	-5 (-19;6)	4 (0;12)	1 (-8;7)	0 (-8;6)	1 (-4;7)	-2 (-11;5)	2 (-3;7)	2 (-5;9)	3 (-1;14)	0 (-20;10)

Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Differences by Attempt Structure – F2F (5 countries)

## Demographics

	Sex	Age (50+)	Edu (4+)
Easy to get (1)	1 (-2;4)	-1 (-6;3)	0 (-1;1)
Medium effort (2)	-3 (-6;-1)	2 (-4;4)	1 (-4;4)
More effort (3-4)	-5 (-51;17)	-3 (-32;22)	-1 (-15;14)
Easy to get (1) vs. Medium effort (2)	-4 (-8;1)	4 (-7;14)	1 (-5;4)
Easy to get (1) vs. More effort (3 or more)	-4 (-51;19)	-9 (-32;11)	-2 (-11;4)

## Substantive questions

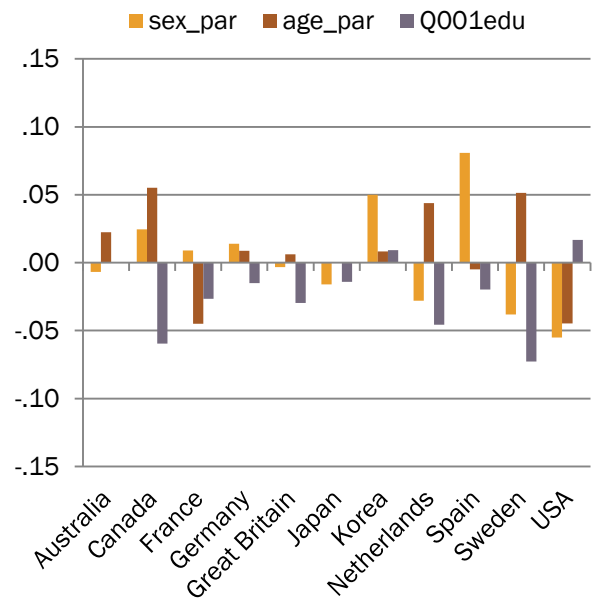
A1	A2	A3	A4	T1	T2	T3	T4
-3 (-6;-1)	-1 (-3;1)	0 (-2;2)	-1 (-4;4)	-1 (-1;3)	-1 (-4;2)	0 (-3;4)	-1 (-4;1)
3 (0;6)	1 (-4;9)	0 (-6;4)	4 (0;11)	0 (-6;4)	0 (-4;3)	1 (-6;4)	0 (-3;3)
-4 (-23;11)	6 (-7;22)	-4 (-58;21)	-3 (-9;1)	-3 (-32;12)	-3 (-26;5)	-9 (-16;-4)	11 (6;16)
6 (4;12)	1 (-4;12)	1 (-8;8)	6 (-1;14)	0 (9;7)	-1 (-5;5)	0 (-11;8)	5 (-2;15)
2 (-18;13)	4 (-7;13)	-9 (-57;11)	-3 (-15;11)	-3 (-32;11)	-3 (-26;7)	-4 (-17;9)	9 (-2;20)

Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

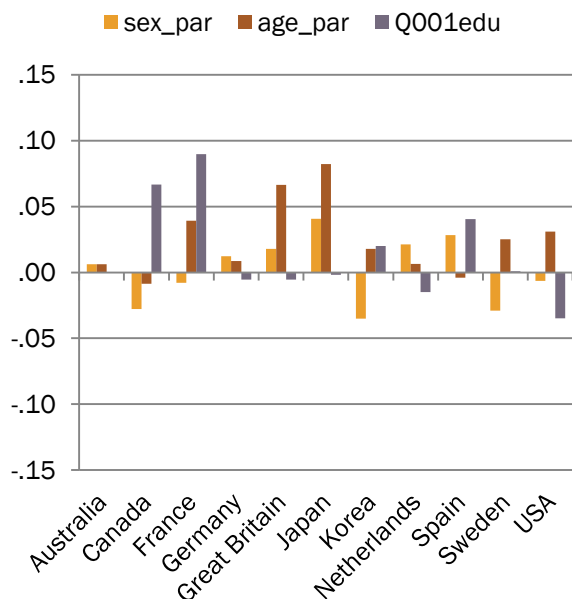


# Demographics by Fieldwork Attempt (CATI)

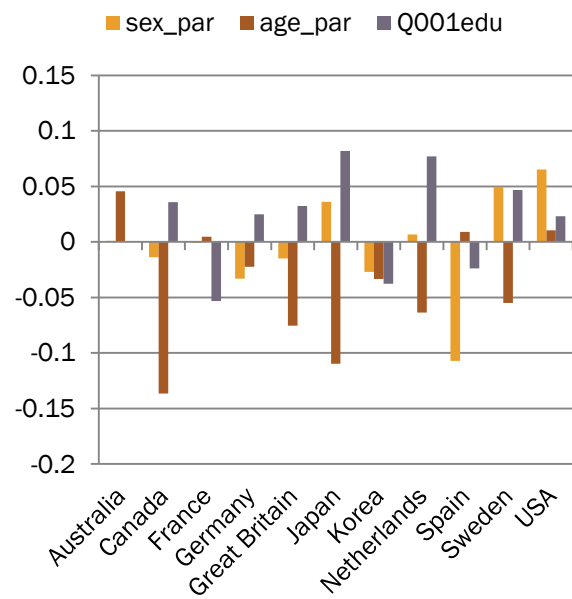
## Low effort



## Medium effort

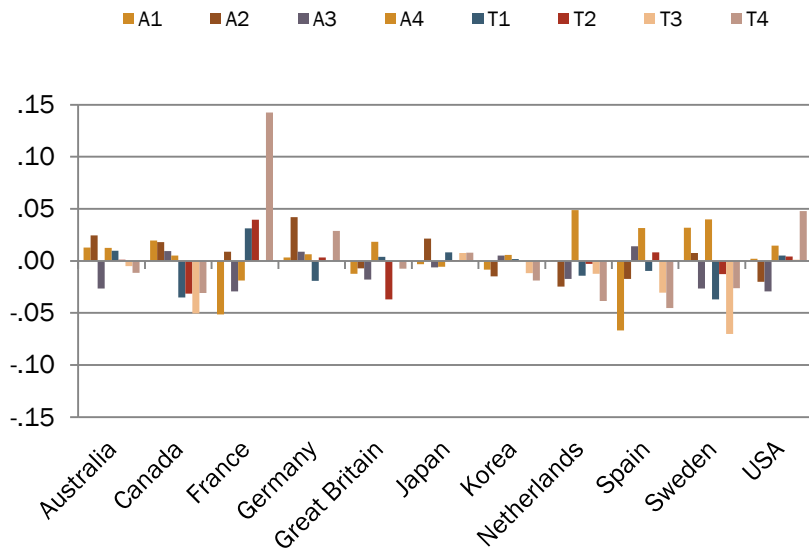


## High effort

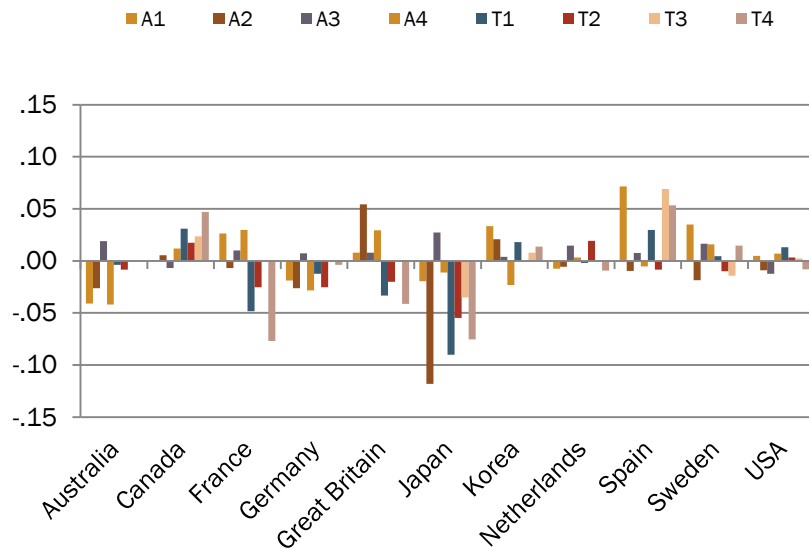


# Substantive Differences by Fieldwork Effort (CATI)

## Low effort



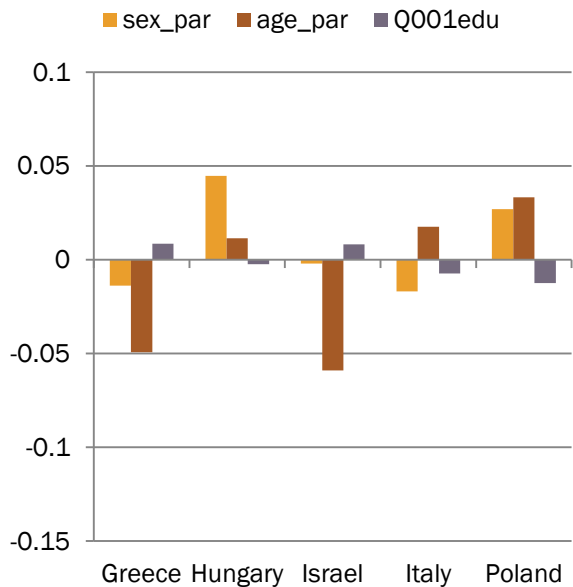
## Medium effort



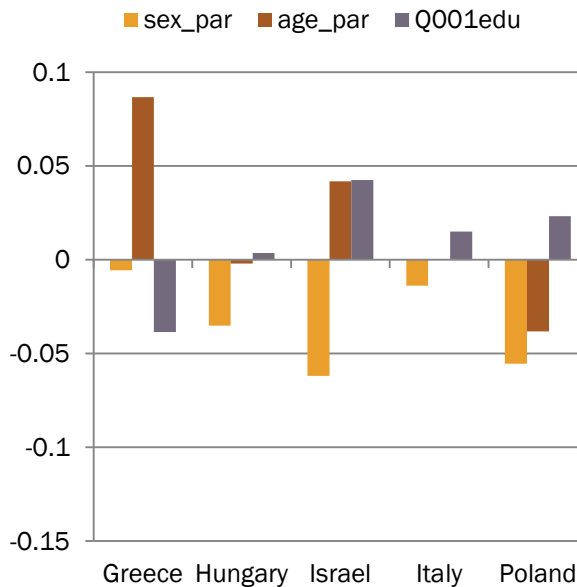
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Demographics by Fieldwork Effort (F2F)

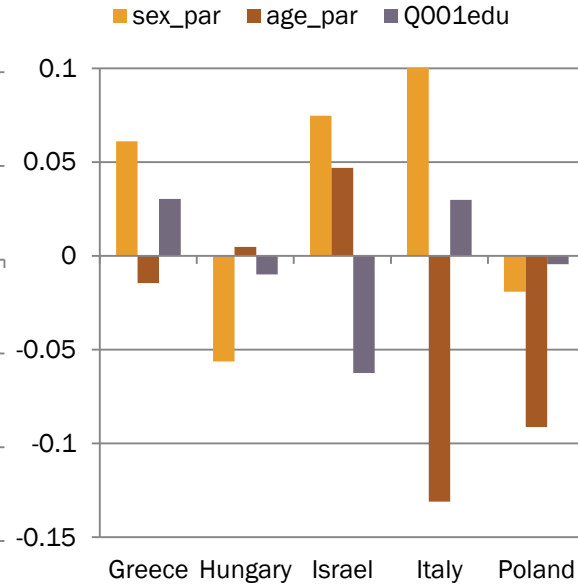
## Low effort



## Medium effort

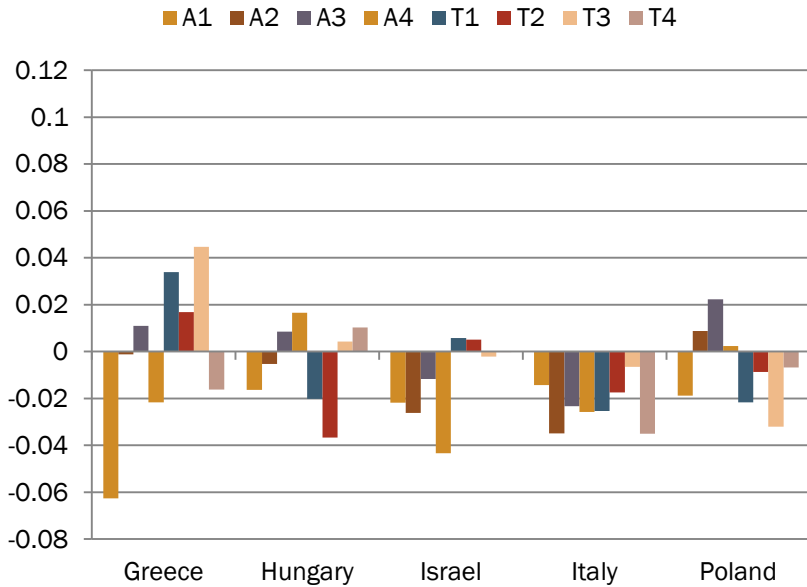


## High effort

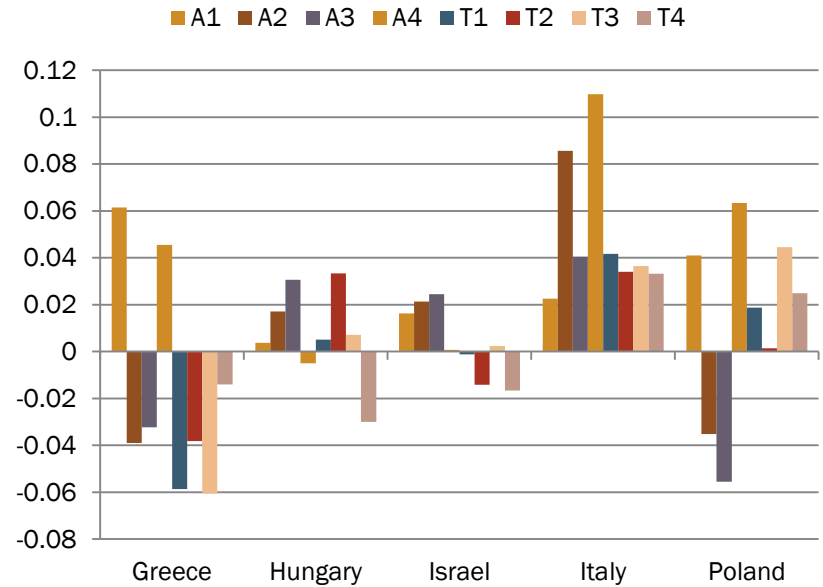


# Substantive Differences by Fieldwork Effort (F2F)

## Low effort



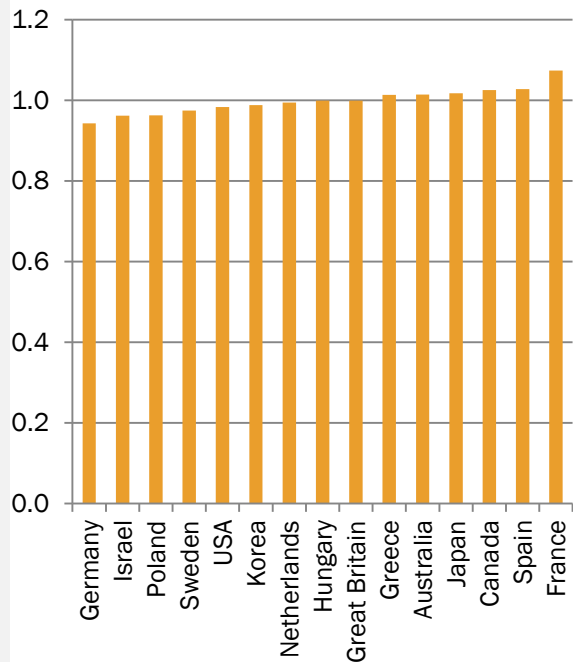
## Medium effort



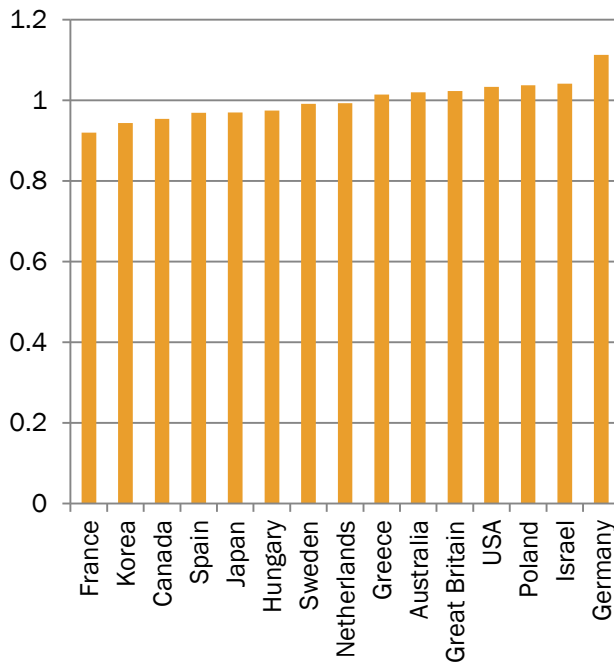
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Response Patterns Differ Across Countries (CATI)

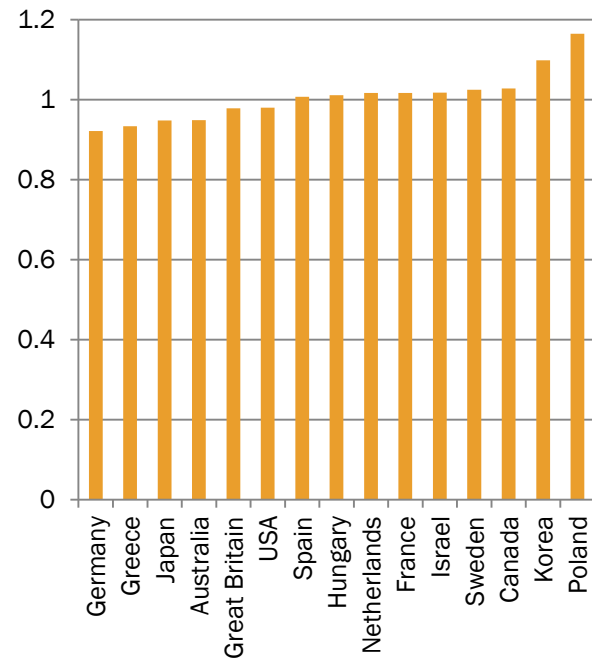
## Low effort



## Medium effort



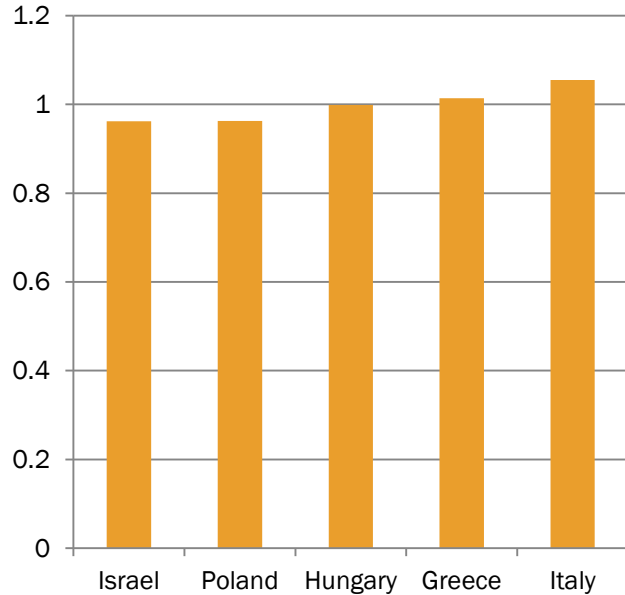
## Most effort



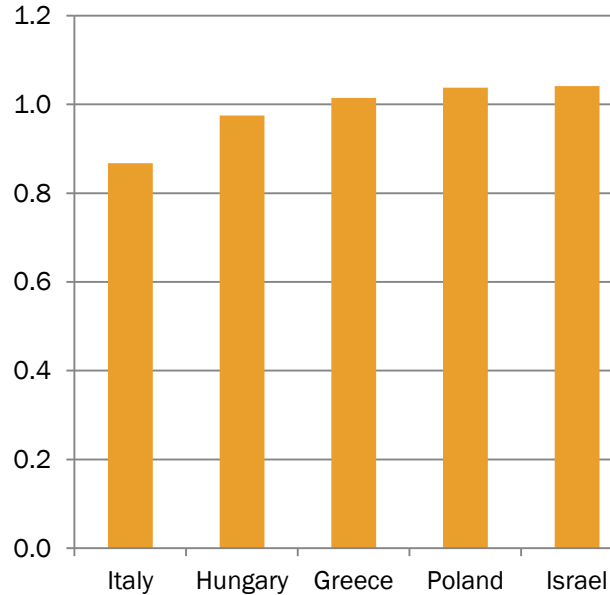
Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Response Patterns Differ Across Countries (F2F)

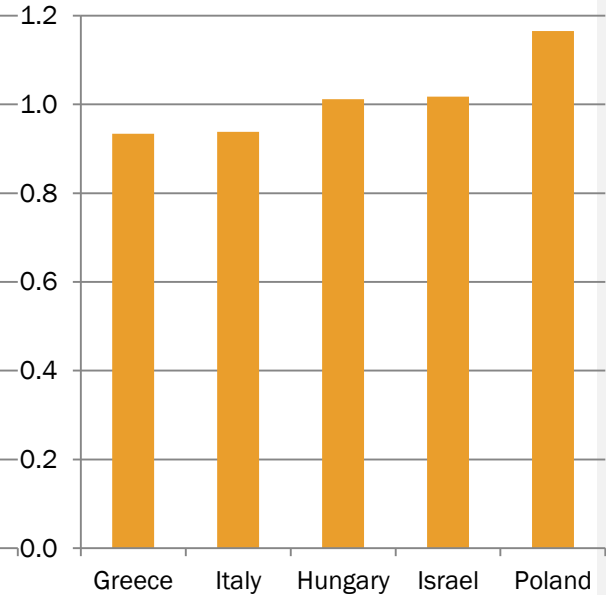
## Low effort



## Medium effort



## Most effort



Source: Global Attitudes survey, 2017.

# Conclusion and Limitations

- **Fieldwork effort matters, which is a reflection of the design**
- **But some effects seem to cancel each other out**
  - in CATI countries age and education
  - it is a country specific story for F2F
- **Substantive results shift when the sample composition by fieldwork effort changes**
- **Limitations**
  - F2F designs with a 1+2 design provide limited insights, but one can still find differences
  
  - Surveys in developing countries still show very high response rates generally, and 1<sup>st</sup> contact success rates that make the effort assessment difficult, if not impossible