

Appendices

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A Panel Information

A.1 Recruitment

Data was collected by Amerispeak/NORC at the University of Chicago. Using address-based probability sampling, interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish according to respondent preference. Respondents could choose to be interviewed online or by telephone. In total, 2,759 people participated in both the pre- and post- election waves of the panel.

A.2 Survey Dates

- Pre-election: October 6 - October 30, 2020
- Post-election: April 6 - May 17, 2021

A.3 Demographics

Table 4 shows demographics of respondents who participated in both waves of the panel, relative to demographics of the United States population. 12 % of respondents dropped after the first wave, so did not participate in the full panel. Table 5 shows demographics of the respondents who participated in both waves of the panel, relative to demographics of respondents who dropped after the first wave.

Table 4: Respondent Demographics Relative to Population Benchmarks

	Panel Respondents	US Population, Feb 2020
Income		
Less than \$30,000	19.9	17.5
\$30,000 to \$74,999	40.7	33.1
\$75,000 to \$124,999	24.4	24.6
More than \$125,000	15.0	24.9
Age		
18 - 34	17.5	29.3
35 - 49	26.7	24.3
50 - 64	28.9	24.9
65+	26.9	21.5
Race/Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	73.1	62.8
Non-Hispanic Black	7.7	11.9
Hispanic	12.2	16.7
Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander	2.9	6.4
Non-Hispanic Others	4.1	2.2
Education Status		
Less than High School	2.5	9.8
High School or Equivalent	16.3	28.2
Some College/Associate Degree	38.0	27.7
Bachelor's Degree	24.1	21.8
Graduate Degree	19.2	21.4
Household Ownership		
Owner Occupied	70.2	67.5
Renter Occupied/Other	29.8	32.5
Children in Household		
With 1+ Under 18 Years	27.2	33.1
Without Children Under 18	72.8	66.9
Marital Status		
Currently Married	54.9	52.6
Separated/Divorced/Widowed/Single	45.1	47.4
Sex		
Male	49.2	48.3
Female	50.6	51.7

Note:

Percentages for panel respondents represent unweighted proportions of the respondents who participated in both waves of the panel. Population benchmark calculated based on Census Bureau Current Population Survey, February 2020. Percentages for each demographic may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

Table 5: Panel Respondent Demographics Relative to Attrition Respondent Demographics

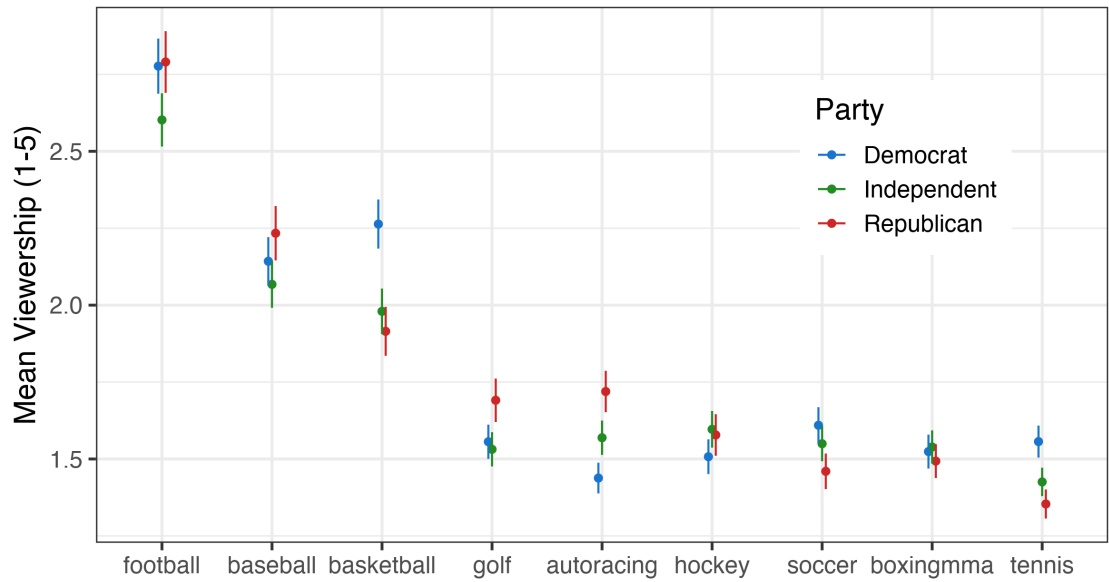
	Panel Respondents	Attrition
Income		
Less than \$30,000	19.9	33.7
\$30,000 to \$74,999	40.7	35.9
\$75,000 to \$124,999	24.4	18.9
More than \$125,000	15.0	11.5
Age		
18 - 34	17.5	28.2
35 - 49	26.7	24.7
50 - 64	28.9	23.3
65+	26.9	23.8
Race/Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	73.1	55.6
Non-Hispanic Black	7.7	16.4
Hispanic	12.2	20.8
Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander	2.9	2.7
Non-Hispanic Others	4.1	4.4
Education Status		
Less than High School	2.5	6.6
High School or Equivalent	16.3	24.9
Some College/Associate Degree	38.0	39.5
Bachelor's Degree	24.1	16.7
Graduate Degree	19.2	12.3
Household Ownership		
Owner Occupied	70.2	53.7
Renter Occupied/Other	29.8	46.3
Children in Household		
With 1+ Under 18 Years	27.2	31.5
Without Children Under 18	72.8	68.5
Marital Status		
Currently Married	54.9	41.9
Separated/Divorced/Widowed/Single	45.1	58.1
Sex		
Male	49.2	45.5
Female	50.6	53.7

Note:

Percentages for attrition represent unweighted proportions of respondents who participated in the first wave of the panel but not the second. Percentages for panel respondents represent unweighted proportions of the respondents who participated in both waves of the panel. Percentages for each demographic may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

A.4 Distribution of Sports Viewership

This figure shows the average level of sports viewership, split by sport and by respondent party identification (reported pre-election). This figure includes all sports including individual sports that were measured but not included in the main study analysis.



Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

Figure 6: Sports Viewership by Sport and Party Identification

B Panel Question Wording

B.1 Candidate Preference

“If the presidential election were held today, which candidate would you vote for?”

- Donald Trump, the Republican
- Joe Biden, the Democrat
- Will not vote for President
- Other

I treat those who expressed they would vote for Biden as “winners” versus those who would vote for Trump as “losers”.

B.2 Perceived Election Legitimacy

Questions 1, 2, 3, and 5 were asked on a Likert of “[Very likely, Somewhat likely, Not too likely, Not at all likely]”. Question 4 was asked on a Likert of “[Very confident, Somewhat confident, Not too confident, Not at all confident]”. Brackets indicate differences between in question wording between the pre/post election waves. Question 4 was reverse coded so that higher values of the index represented greater confidence in the 2020 election process.

- In the [upcoming/] presidential election, how likely is it that some votes [will be/were] cast by people who were not eligible to vote?
- In the [upcoming/] presidential election, how likely is it that some people who [are/were] eligible to vote [will be/were] prevented from doing so?
- In the [upcoming/recent] presidential election, how likely is it that some people [will vote/voted] more than once?
- How confident are you that the votes across the country [will be/were] accurately counted?
- How likely is it that foreign interference [will affect/affected] the outcome of the US presidential election?

B.3 Watching Team Sports

“When each sport is in season, how frequently do you watch? [Several times a week or more, Once a week, A few times a month, Once or twice a year, Never]”

- Football
- Basketball
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Ice Hockey

B.4 Television News Consumption

In the post-election wave, I used a program-list measurement (?), asking respondents a binary question they watched 38 popular television news programs. Respondents were asked to indicate which programs they watched at least once a month. I grouped these news programs into a set of categories based on the network they were broadcast on. Notably, there was one program on Newsmax, a network which became popular in the wake of the 2020 election due to its coverage claiming the election was stolen from Trump. Programs were displayed in alphabetical order, 10 at a time. I group them here by television network because that is how I use them throughout the paper.

“Please check any that you watch at least once a month:”

- **Fox News programs:** America’s Newsroom with Bill Hemmer and Dana Perino, America Reports with John Roberts and Sandra Smith, The Five, Fox and Friends, Fox News at Night, Hannity, The Ingraham Angle, Justice with Judge Jeanine, Life Liberty & Levin, Outnumbered, Special Report with Brett Baier, The Story with Martha MacCallum, Tucker Carlson Tonight, Your World with Neil Cavuto
- **MSNBC News Programs:** The 11th Hour with Brian Williams, All In with Chris Hayes, The Beat with Ari Melber, Deadline: White House, The Last Word with Lawrence O’Donnell, The Rachel Maddow Show, The Reidout with Joy Reid
- **CNN News Programs:** Anderson Cooper 360, CNN Tonight with Don Lemon, Cuomo Prime Time, Erin Burnett Out Front, The Lead with Jake Tapper
- **Broadcast News Programs:** 60 Minutes, ABC World News Tonight with David Muir, CBS Evening News with Nora O’Donnell, CBS this Morning, Face the Nation, Good Morning America, Meet the Press, NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt, PBS NewsHour, The Today Show, The View
- **Newsmax Programs:** Greg Kelly Reports

B.5 Attitudes Related to Race and Status

“How much discrimination is there in the United States today against each of the following groups?”[A great deal, A lot, A moderate amount, A little, None at all]

- Blacks
- Hispanics
- Whites
- Men
- Christians

The first and second items were combined into a belief in racial discrimination index (α .91) and the third through fifth items were combined into a status threat index (α .80). Both indexes were rescaled to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.

B.6 Demographics

I use the following demographics which are correlated with watching sports (Wann et al. 2001): Age, Sex, Race, Education, Income, and Religion. Age was measured in 7 bins, education in 4 bins (No high school, high school, some college, 4 years college and above). Income was measured in 18 bins, from less than \$5,000 per year to more than \$200,000 per year. Race was a binary white/nonwhite measure, as there were few non-white Trump supporters. Religion asked which of fourteen religions people identified with. I created binary indicators for the most popular religions: Protestant, Catholic, Other Christian, and Non-religious. All variables were measured pre-election and interacted with the wave variable. Age, education, and income were rescaled to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.

C Sensitivity to Unmeasured Omitted Variable Bias

To measure the sensitivity of my results to omitted variable bias for an unknown, unmeasured variable I use the approach of Cinelli and Hazlett (2020). This approach examines the amount of variance in both the DV of interest and the IV of interest which is explained by a variable. One then examines how much *more* variance would need to be explained by a hypothetical omitted variable to negate the relationship observed between the IV of interest and DV of interest. In my case, the variable that most strongly predicts the IV and DV of interest is the interaction between sex and the wave variable. I use that as the baseline to show how predictive an omitted variable would need to be, in terms of how much *more* predictive it would need to be than the most predictive variable I examine.

Outcome: Δ Perceived Election Legitimacy (Trump Supporters)

Treatment:	Est.	S.E.	t-value	$R^2_{Y \sim D X}$	$RV_{q=1}$	$RV_{q=1, \alpha=0.05}$
<i>sports:wave</i>	0.035	0.019	1.858	0.4%	5.8%	0%
df = 968	Bound (1x wave:female): $R^2_{Y \sim Z X,D} = 3.3\%$, $R^2_{D \sim Z X} = 2.3\%$					

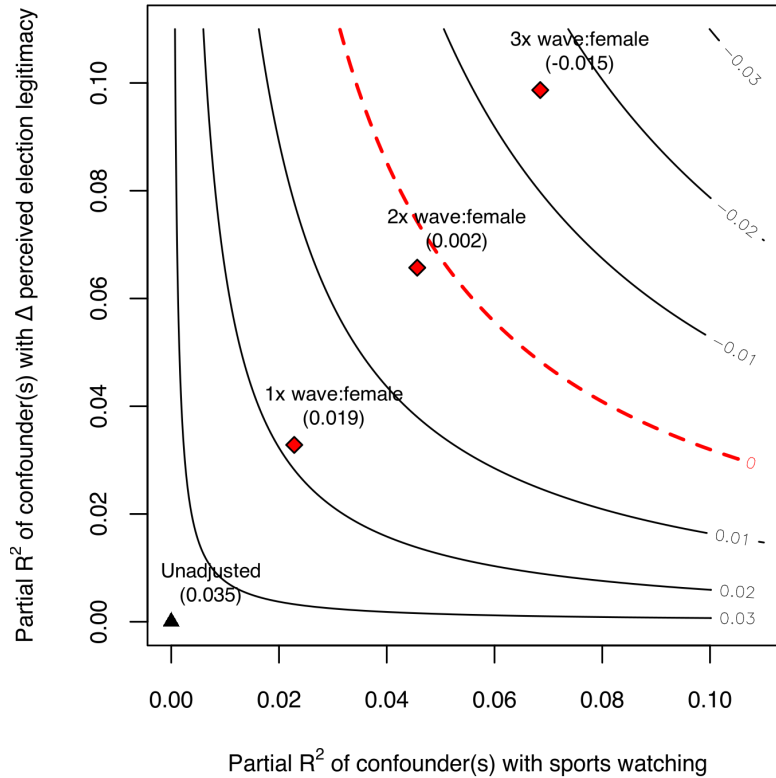


Figure 7: Sensitivity to Demographics (Trump Supporters)

D Text of Experimental Treatments

The video treatments seen by respondents are available at [[url blinded for review]]. The original, unedited videos are

Political Concession: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhHi_2AEPfM

Sports Concession: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahxLPIPC7vI>

Transcripts of the language used in the videos are below.

D.1 Political concession speech

All text spoken by 2023 Jacksonville mayoral candidate Daniel Davis. Brackets indicate where audio was manipulated, with the speaking congratulating the candidate the respondent did not select as their preferred choice.

Thank you so much. I called [David Talley/Thomas Dobson] earlier and congratulated him on being Mayor Elect of Jacksonville. I have said many times in public occasions that [David/Thomas] loves Jacksonville. There's no doubt in my mind that he does. And I just want to let you know I'm going to do everything I can to make sure Mayor Elect [Talley/Dobson] is successful in making Jacksonville the best Jacksonville it can be. I love my city. I will never stop loving my city. I'm going to serve my city till the day I die. It's just not going to be in the form that I thought it might be 24 hours ago. And that's okay. I talked to Rebecca and the kids earlier and obviously we're still kind of in shock of the results. And I want to make sure that we understand that this doesn't define us as a family. I did exactly what I know I was supposed to do. I was living life with purpose, caring about the citizens of Jacksonville. And what we're going to do next is make sure that Mayor Elect [David Talley/Thomas Dobson] is successful doing the exact same thing.

D.2 Sports concession speech

All text spoken by Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr.

First of all I want to congratulate the Lakers. They played a hell of a series; it's a great, great team. I want to congratulate Darvin and his staff; I thought they coached a brilliant series. Darvin has done an amazing job this year. You know in his rookie year as a coach he's pretty much seen it all and you know, you can see his poise and just his nature on the sidelines; how important that's been for their team given everything that that they've been through to get to this point. And so congrats again to Darvin and the staff and and their team of course. LeBron and A.D. are just brilliant players, they controlled the series. I thought we had our chances. To me the series came down to games one and four, and the Lakers outplayed us in the key stretches of those games, you know down the stretch and that's really the difference. But the better team won so congrats to them and good luck to them moving forward.

E Experimental Study Question Wording

E.1 Feeling Thermometer Covariate

“Please rate the following politicians on a thermometer that runs from 0 to 100 degrees. Rating above 50 means that you feel favorable and warm, and rating below 50 means that you feel unfavorable and cool.”

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden¹²

E.2 Candidate Selection

“If you were voting in this election, which candidate would you vote for? [Thomas Dobson (Republican)/David Talley (Democrat)]”

E.3 Perceived Election Fairness

“In the Jacksonville mayoral election, how likely is it that the following happened? [Very likely, Somewhat likely, Not too likely, Not at all likely]”

- [David Talley/Thomas Dobson] won fair and square
- People voted who were not eligible to vote
- Votes were accurately counted
- Some people who were eligible to vote were prevented from doing so
- Some people voted more than once
- Absentee votes were discarded by partisans
- Voting machines were rigged to favor one side
- Unexpected long lines at polling places caused people not to vote

¹²Respondents were asked about both, but only the Trump feeling thermometer was used as a covariate

F Panel Results by Sport

Here I break down results by sport, including individual sports (rather than team sports) that were not used in the main analysis. The individual sports measured were Boxing/MMA, Golf, Tennis, and Auto Racing. These were measured in the same way as the team sports. All sports were rescaled to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. I regress the predicted change in perceived election legitimacy among Trump supporters on watching each of the specific sports. This means I run 9 models bivariate models, regressing election legitimacy on viewing each sport. I then compare the coefficient for each sport.

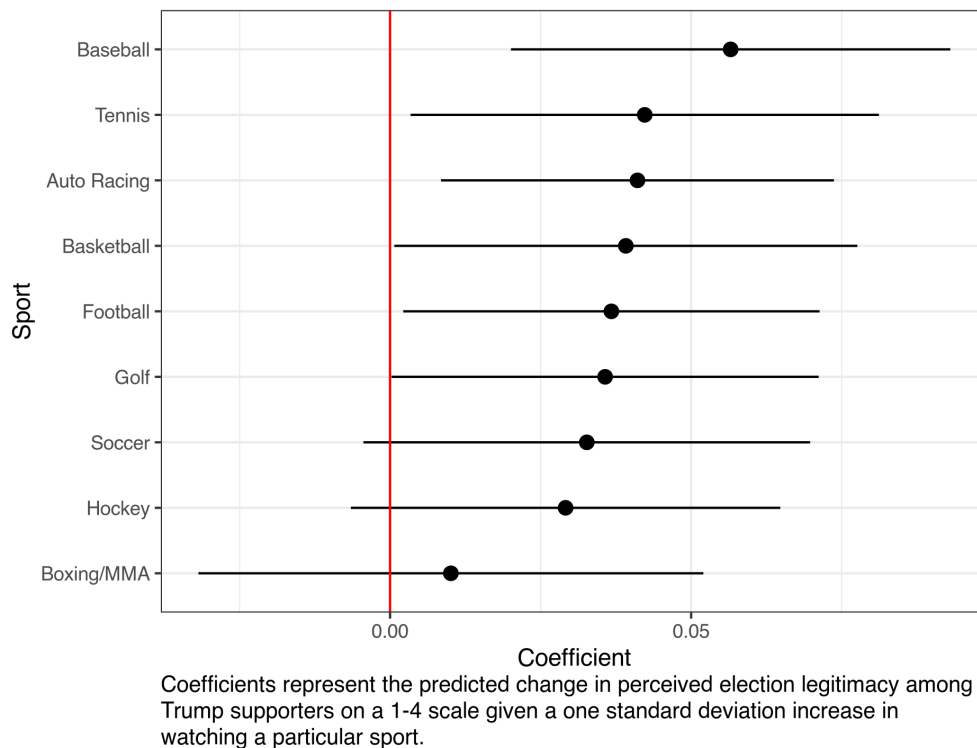


Figure 8: Watching Specific Sports and Change in Perceived Election Legitimacy Among Trump Supporters

Figure 8 shows the coefficients for each sport. There is some variation; Watching Boxing/MMA did not predict significantly higher increase in perceived election legitimacy among Trump supporters, while watching Baseball predicted the largest increase. But for the most part, the differences between the sports was small.

Figure 9 aggregates team sports (Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, and Hockey) and individual sports (Tennis, Auto Racing, Golf, Boxing/MMA), rescales those two aggregations to have a mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1, and examines the predicted change in perceived election legitimacy given a one standard deviation increase in either team sports or individual sports. The figure shows that both predict increases in perceived election legitimacy, but a greater increase for team sports.

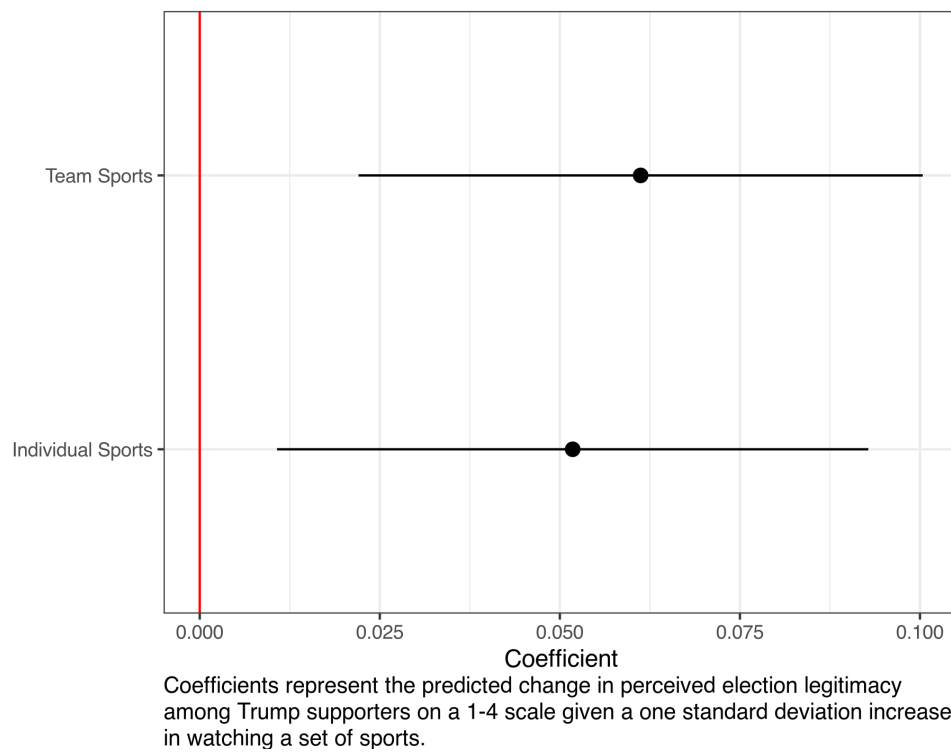


Figure 9: Watching Sets of Sports and Change in Perceived Election Legitimacy Among Trump Supporters

G Additional Experimental Results

G.1 Table of Experiment Results

This table shows the results from the preregistered model for analyzing the experiment.

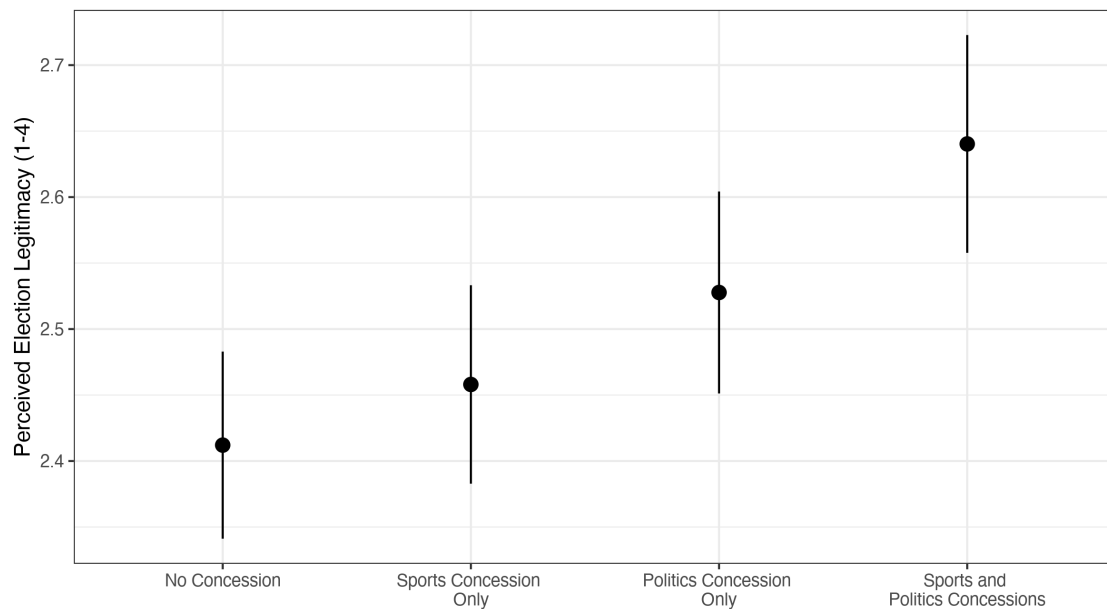
Table 6: Effect of Legitimizing Rituals on Perceived Election Legitimacy

	Perceived Election Legitimacy
Sports Concession	0.078(0.038)*
Political Concession	0.166(0.038)***
Trump Feeling Thermometer	−0.004(0.000)***
Age	−0.001(0.001)
Education	0.007(0.010)
Num.Obs.	1009

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

G.2 Raw Means by Condition

This shows the means and standard errors for each of the four conditions. These are not pooled and not adjusted for covariates.



Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals

Figure 10: Experiment Means by Condition, Unadjusted for Covariates

G.3 Results by Party

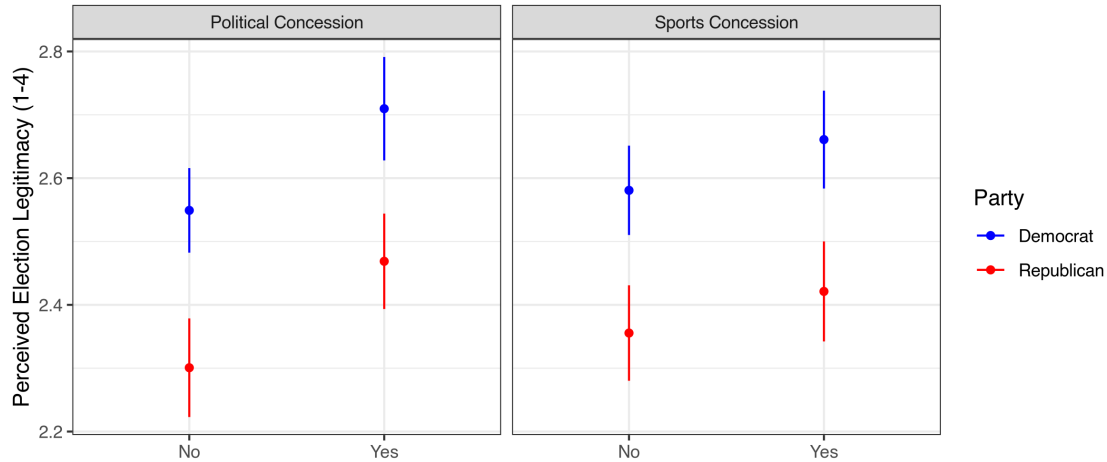
This shows the experimental results, split by the party of the respondent. I run the same model as in table 6, split by whether the respondents are Democrats or Republican.

Table 7: Effect of Legitimizing Rituals on Perceived Election Legitimacy, by Party

	Perceived Election Legitimacy (Democrats)	Perceived Election Legitimacy (Republicans)
Sports Concession	0.101 (0.053) +	0.049 (0.053)
Political Concession	0.17 (0.054) **	0.156 (0.053) **
Trump Feeling Thermometer	0 (0.001)	-0.007 (0.001) ***
Age	0.002 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)
Education	0.017 (0.014)	-0.014 (0.015)
Num.Obs.	511	498

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Figure 11 shows the pooled means for conditions in the experiment split by the party of the respondent. These means and confidence intervals are not adjusted for covariates.



Points represent raw means for pooled conditions, split by party. Points and confidence intervals are unadjusted for any covariates.

Figure 11: Experiment Means by Pooled Conditions, Split by Party

H Attention Checks

This shows the performance of respondents on each of the two attention checks used in the study. For both, over 80% of respondents correctly identified the winning candidate and the videos they watched. Interestingly, the worst overall performance was due to people who only watched the sports concession saying the video was about both sports and politics.

H.1 “Who won the recent Jacksonville Mayoral Election?”

Table 8: Percent Responses by Winner Name

	David Talley (Democrat)	Thomas Dobson (Republican)
David Talley (Democrat)	5.1	85.3
Jacob Bridges (Democrat)	1.9	4.6
Jeff Marshall (Republican)	3.5	2.8
Thomas Dobson (Republican)	89.5	7.3

H.2 “Which videos did you watch?”

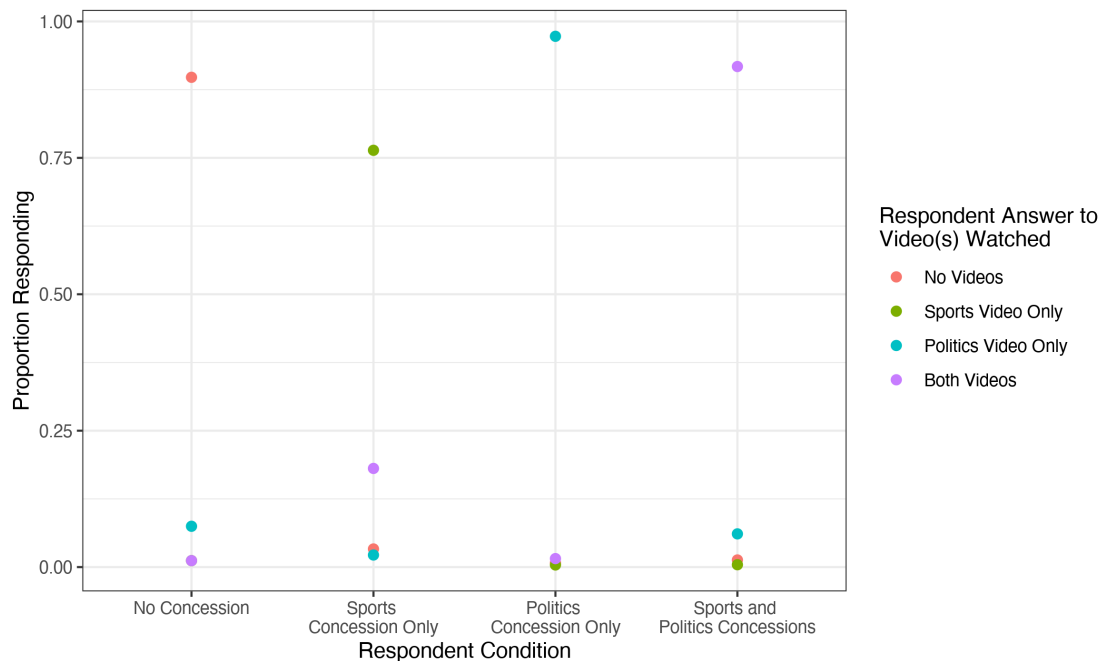


Figure 12: Percent Responses by Condition

I ANOVA Model

This is an alternate model of the experimental results, which includes an interaction between the sports and political concession conditions.

Effect	DFn	DFd	F	p	p<.05	ges
political_concession	1	1002	19.552	1.09e-05	*	0.01900
sports_concession	1	1002	4.366	3.70e-02	*	0.00400
trump_therm	1	1002	70.305	0.00e+00	*	0.06600
age	1	1002	0.561	4.54e-01		0.00056
education	1	1002	0.552	4.58e-01		0.00055
political_concession:sports_concession	1	1002	2.794	9.50e-02		0.00300