

The COVID States Project #39: Public attitudes towards the storming of the Capitol building | OSF Preprints

By David Lazer et al.

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The 2020 election produced two distinct perceived realities for the United States public. The first perceived reality holds that the election was conducted fairly, and that Joe Biden won. Individuals who hold this vision of reality feel their votes were counted accurately, and that the events of January 6th were repugnant. This is also the version of reality for 60-70% of the US population. This reality is documented by court cases, our government officials (Republican and Democratic) in charge of administering the election, and the credible news media. The second vision of reality holds that the election was essentially corrupt—driven, in particular, by illegal mail-in ballots, noncitizen voting, and voting machine fraud. In this perceived reality, Biden is a usurper to the presidency. Further, the people who stormed the Capitol had a point, although the worst actions were taken by individuals affiliated with Antifa activists masquerading as Trump supporters. This is the expressed reality of former President Trump, certain Republican leaders, a subset of conservative media, and certain corners of the social media ecosystem. This is also the reality for 25-30% of the US population, and roughly half of Republicans. These two perceived realities are not created equal.

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